STATESMAN FROM TEXAS, ROGER Q. MILLS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North Texas State College in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

by

Russell A. Purifoy, Jr., B. A.
Corsicana, Texas
August, 1954
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Roger Quarles Mills was born on the thirtieth day of March, 1832, the year which found Sam Houston entering Texas for the first time. A new nation was about to be born in that neglected region between the Red River and the Rio Grande. Both of these vigorous men were to play dominant roles in the development of Texas into a bright star in the galaxy that was, and is, the United States. Though there was never to be any direct contact between these two men, the Lone Star was destined to be a common star for both.

Neither was a native Texan. Houston had left tragedy in Tennessee to attain fame in and through Texas; Mills immigrated from neighboring Kentucky to attain fame in and through Texas. Houston was, first, a servant of Texas; Mills from the moment he reached Washington, was a servant of the nation. One withdrew his candidacy for the office of President of the United States; the other declined a nomination for the Vice-Presidency. Both men were soldiers and fought well, but it was in public office that each achieved the most. And because both were statesmen, they refused to play politics. As a consequence, both were denied even greater laurels than they obtained.
So far as we know, Roger Q. Mills came to Texas without some noble ambition burning a hole in his heart. He came without previous distinction, without instructions from a President of the United States. But, like Sam Houston, from the moment he arrived in Texas, men took note of him. And, like Houston, from that moment he began to set type for a page in history. He moved more slowly than had Houston, and his achievements were less spectacular, but not less enduring, not less beneficial. His achievements, no less than those of Houston, were gifts to the nation. He was the hoary-headed, silver-tongued defender of the common man and, though of a different political party, he helped lay much of the foundation upon which Theodore Roosevelt stood when busting the trusts.

He stood high in the state of Texas, and high above most of his peers in the Congress of the United States, where he served for two decades, from 1873 until 1892, in the House of Representatives, and for seven years more in the national Senate. Many were his duties in those hallowed chambers and numerous were the praises which were bestowed upon him. "He was a unique figure in our political history in more ways than one, and it is improbable that we shall see his like again." That

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1 Proceedings of the Navarro County Bar Association at the Carnegie Library, Corsicana, Sunday, September 24, 1911, In Memory of Roger Q. Mills.
appraisal of Mills, soon after his retirement from active politics, came from The Herald of Rochester, New York, two thousand miles distant from Corsicana, Mills' home in Texas. That it came while he was still living, and was but one of many contemporary appraisals of Mills, makes the words even more noteworthy. "He never straddled on political issues and never dodged one. His sincerity was never questioned by his foes, and his friends glorièd in his bravery, his eloquence and his character.... His patriotism was never questioned; his integrity was above reproach, his wisdom made him a giant among his fellows ... and he discharged every trust imposed upon him with fidelity and distinction.... He was an orator with few, if any, superiors, and must be remembered as long as virtue is esteemed by this people. In his convictions he was the ardor of his convictions; he never concealed or changed his views to gain or maintain popularity.... He was more than a soldier and just less than a sage."² Another contemporary said: "He was a forceful man. Of aggressive personality, wide information, profound intellect, Roger Q. Mills was a Titan in debate. And what gave his arguments irresistible force was the conviction of being in the right. A large part of his (persuasive) power

²Ibid.
was moral power..." And, during Mills' last year in
the Senate, a contemporary published, in a book on not-
able men, these words about Roger Q. Mills: "His voice
is soft and silvery, and rings like the martial notes
of a clarion, while his sentences flash with the con-
suming fires of eloquence..."^4

Though most of the praise heaped upon Mills came
from the people and the press of his adopted state, much
of it came from other parts of the nation. The mark of
the man is that he was praised while he was living. Even
his foremost foes were unable to write about him without
filling their articles with praise for his character.

During the years in which Mills fought for tariff re-
vision and reform, his opponents in the national press
consistently pointed to Mills as an authority on the
issue and as an honorable, diligent man. Few men have
been so honored by their opponents. Men might disagree
with Roger Q. Mills -- as many did -- but, always, they
would respect this American who held honor and principle
above all other virtues.

3 Ibid.

4 L. E. Daniel, *Personnel of the Texas State Govern-
ment*, with *Sketches of Representative Men of Texas*, p. 179.

5 See copies of the *Nation*, the *Tariff League Bulletin*,
and the *Tariff Review*. 
Roger Q. Mills was an orator and a parliamentarian, a legislative fighter for the things in which he believed. He stood tall in the eyes of men because he determined always to do that which he believed was right. "Here is a man, "eulogized one contemporary, "who has presented the simplicity of his private life, his fondness for Texas, his sympathy for the democratic masses, during a quarter of a century, passed amidst the temptations and magnificence of a great capitol city. No lobbyist can lay his finger on him to call for a return of favors. No corporation owes him anything for services rendered. After twenty-six years of official service, he is the same free and uncorrupted man that he was the day that he first entered congress. Such a record is not to be preserved, it is to be commemorated as long as truth and integrity deserve to command the veneration of ourselves, our children and our grandchildren."6

6Proceedings of the Navarro County Bar Association.
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In 1620, an English ship docked in northern Virginia at the thirteen-year-old village of Jamestown. Its cargo consisted primarily of members of the Virginia Company. One of these men was a Nicholas Mills. So far as is known there is nothing noteworthy about this particular colonist. Like his fellows, he carved a small farm out of the aboriginal forest and settled down, as best he could, to life in a foreign land. He is of passing interest only to this biography as he is believed to be the first American ancestor of Roger Q. Mills.

Several other Mills are mentioned from time to time down to the Revolutionary War. None of these seem worthy of more than passing notice either. Seemingly, they were all owners of large tracts of land upon which they raised tobacco. They owned slaves, as did their neighbors, for the purpose of planting and harvesting their tobacco and the other crops commonly raised by Virginia's early colonists. They seem to have differed little, if any, from their neighbors. Like them, they appear to have been industrious and prosperous.
With one exception, and this only temporary, the ancestors of Roger Q. Mills were professional men and slave-owning tobacco farmers in Virginia. A goodly number of them were Baptist ministers; several were lawyers. Roger, a lawyer, was an Elder in the Methodist Church. Of the exception among Mills' ancestors, we know only that he was Charles Mills, a lieutenant-colonel in the Virginia forces which fought the British in the war for independence. Probably he had been a planter before the war and returned to that occupation after its conclusion.

Charles Henley Mills, grandson of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Mills, immigrated from Virginia to Kentucky during the first decade of the nineteenth century. He met Tabitha Buckner Daniel, of Jefferson County, Kentucky, and married her on the second day of August, 1814. With his new bride, he moved to the southwestern part of Todd County, Kentucky. With his several slaves he hacked out a small plantation, built a temporary house with the assistance of his few neighbors, and settled down in his new home. He raised tobacco for a money crop, and corn and sorghum and the various other crops common to pioneers. Their conveniences could not have been many and their neighbors were few. At this early date, there were fewer than seventy thousand whites in all of Kentucky. But the needs of these frontier folk were few and simple, and life, for the most part, was enjoyable.
We can only speculate on the duties which fell upon young Tabitha Mills. Between the sundry chores she performed as a pioneer wife, she bore fourteen children for her husband. The eleventh of these was Roger Q. Mills. Because the Mills were prosperous, a doctor may have been in attendance on March 30, 1832, when Roger was born. Doubtlessly, his eldest sister, then seventeen, aided the doctor in his duties at the Mills' house that day. More likely, some of the neighboring women, from a mile or two down the road, were there to comfort Tabitha Mills and tend to the needs of the new baby. Or, maybe, a local midwife was the first to lay eyes on the fair, blue-eyed baby boy.

Little is known of Roger's early life. A family Bible was judiciously kept by his mother. It contains many pertinent dates, recording the births, deaths, and marriages of her offspring. But the little things which most interest a biographer seem to have been recorded only in Tabitha Mills' mind and in those of his brothers and sisters. They have all long since departed.

Undoubtedly, Roger's time, during his early years, was divided between school and simple tasks around the house which grew into more demanding chores as he grew older and more responsible. He attended the local schools in the "hazel-nut thickets" of Kentucky. Upon the completion of his public education, he was enrolled in the then
famous high school at Elkton, six miles from his home.\(^1\) Very likely young Roger had a horse of his own during these high school years inasmuch as fathers gave their sons horses then as they give them automobiles now.

About the time Texas became a state in the United States, one of Roger's older sisters married Judge Reuben A. Reeves and set out housekeeping in Palestine, Texas, a small village in the cotton belt of East Texas. She either asked Roger down for a visit, or requested that he remove to Texas and make his home with her and her husband in Palestine. That she had asked her brother to come live in Texas is more likely. Hundreds of miles from her kinspeople, the young woman must have longed for the association and companionship of a brother or a sister. Just out of school, Roger — whether he was a favorite or not — was the most likely candidate. The older brothers and sisters were married and settled. Those younger than Roger were girls.

At any rate, some time during the year 1849, seventeen-year-old Roger embarked upon a trip to Palestine, Texas. Many young men, at this period in history, were hitting the trails for Texas. They came from all parts of what was then the United States and from the other side of the Atlantic. Land aplenty was there for the

\(^1\)Virginia Historical Index, II, 519, and valuable information obtained from Miss Annie Lee Robbins, granddaughter of Roger Q. Mills. The family Bible of Mills' parents, in the possession of Miss Robbins, was also of great genealogical value.
taking and the growing population needed men of all callings. Texas was a land of unbounded opportunity, a land of promise. Kentucky was beginning to get a little crowded. Neighbors now lived within shouting distance and in Texas there was ample room for one to stretch in. And the new state was booming. It did not have the gold that had recently been discovered in California, but it offered the finest farm land in the nation. California was the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, but Texas offered gold too -- gold from cotton raised in the blacklands of East Texas.

Like many other level-headed young men, Roger was not inclined to run off chasing rainbows.

Roger took the water course to Texas. He interrupted his journey to Palestine to spend the winter in Jefferson, Texas, the terminus of the water route. At Jefferson he clerked in the store of August May. Cold weather may have encouraged Roger to temporarily abandon his journey, or he may have run low on funds. At every settlement there was some sort of work a traveler could do to earn a meal and shelter for the night -- or for a season. Travel was easy in frontier country, and it was a great adventure. When spring arrived, Roger bought a horse and continued on his journey to his sister's home.

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In Palestine, Roger lived with his sister and her husband. Judge Reeves was a community leader and well known over all of East Texas. As an attorney, he had occasion to meet everyone of importance, and it was probably through his influence that Roger obtained a position as clerk in the local post office. It was also probably through his influence that Roger began to study law. That Judge Reeves was an outstanding lawyer is evidenced by the fact that he was later appointed to the Supreme Court of the territory of New Mexico. We do know that he devoted much time to instructing Roger in law. Quite probably, he used Roger as a law clerk whenever possible and took him on some of his trips.

An apt student, Roger learned quickly and well. And he met a number of influential people. One of these was Dr. W. G. W. Jowers, a member of the Texas House of Representatives and a resident of Palestine. Dr. Jowers very likely served, also, in the capacity of instructor to Roger. Impressed by the young man, Dr. Jowers took Roger to Austin with him during a legislative session. Roger probably worked for the legislator as an assistant while in Austin. Pushing his protégé or, possibly because Roger requested it, Dr. Jowers nominated Roger for engrossing clerk. On the third ballot, Roger was elected to the position.3

The public life of Roger Q. Mills had begun; he was twenty-years-old. With time out for several years spent in private practice and service in the Army of the Confederacy, Roger Q. Mills was to serve the people of his state and his nation in its legislative halls until, almost seventy years of age, he retired to a life of ease and relaxed living.

Always looking ahead, Roger initiated action to enable him to immediately begin the practice of law. Not yet of age, he could not practice law — no matter how ready he thought himself to be for his chosen profession. Because he was a minor, his learning was not usable; he was merely drifting in mid-stream. But Roger was not one to wait for things to happen; he was a man of action, a man who could not stand still. His minority was a handicap and must be removed. On December 3, 1851, the Fourth Legislature passed an act to permit Roger to practice law in the courts of the state of Texas.\(^4\) The nineteen-year-old Roger then passed an examination before the Supreme Court of Texas and became a practicing attorney well before his twenty-first birthday. Early in 1852, he moved to nearby Corsicana and hung out his shingle. He practiced under the firm name of Reeves and Mills. Judge Reeves attended various courts of the state and was frequently on hand.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 259.
to personally advise young Mills in his practice. Roger soon became distinguished in his practice and was notable for the active and leading part he took in local affairs. He was young, but he commanded respect. That he was an associate of Judge Reeves greatly aided his practice.

At this period of Corsicana's history, the railroad from Houston terminated in the vigorous young town. The end of the line, Corsicana bustled with trade and transients. Living at the McKinney Tavern, the only hotel in the small metropolis, Roger undoubtedly met and conversed with many of these transients. In this manner, and through his growing practice, Roger grew in stature in the eyes of his fellow Corsicanans. In an age when educated men were esteemed, Roger stretched his five foot, ten inch frame until he stood high above his fellow townsmen.

In those early days, local citizens were given many duties to perform. One of these duties that fell to the lot of citizens of Texas communities was the building of roads between the various towns. Prominent men usually paid a sum of money to the county to be freed from donating their valuable time to such duties. This Mills declined to do when it came his turn to donate his services to the improvement of his state and community. Always, Roger Q. Mills was determined to fulfill the obligations thrust upon him. When he was appointed road overseer by the Navarro County Commissioners' Court, he accepted the position as an honor and
gave it his undivided attention. Under young Mills, the Corsicana-Waxahachie road was opened and various improvements were made in the existing roads under his jurisdiction. It was with this same devotion to duty that Mills attended all requests for his time and services. He was a leader and, as a leader, he ever furnished examples for others to follow. Never, throughout his life, was he too busy to serve those who called upon him.

In like manner, he made a name for himself in both civil and criminal practice. Because of his rhetoric, he was often called upon to make speeches. Roger was a handsome young man; a little under six feet tall, with sandy blond hair, twinkling blue eyes, and a ready grin. Undoubtedly the young lawyer was quite popular. He was skilled in his profession, thoughtful, courteous, and gentle. Children loved him because he was kind and always had time for them. A man of social prominence, a man with a future, the handsome young Mills doubtlessly drew sighs from the ladies.

One young lady who noticed this young man was Carrie Jones, lovely daughter of Colonel Henry Jones, rancher and Indian fighter of reknown. Daughter of a wealthy and famous father, Carrie no doubt entertained the more prominent folk with a ball from time to time. Roger was one of Corsicana's most prominent citizens. He was, beyond doubt, the

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5Proceedings of the Navarro County Bar Association.
most prominent thing in Carrie's eyes. With great pride, after a proper courtship, Colonel and Mrs. Jones agreed to the marriage of their daughter to the most promising young man in that part of Texas -- possibly the most promising in the entire state. He was intelligent; he was vigorous; he was ambitious; he knew the right people; he was personable and would be kind to their beloved daughter. And, as Carrie had pointed out, he was very handsome. On January 7, 1855, in the Jones mansion, eight miles south of Corsicana, Colonel Henry Jones gave his daughter's hand in marriage to twenty-two-year-old Roger Q. Mills.6

Mills and his eighteen-year-old bride moved into a small bungalow on Second Avenue, on the western edge of Corsicana. As the years passed, the cottage was replaced by a ten-room, two-story house with a columned front porch. The forty acres upon which it stood were well covered with oak trees, but their thick leaves could not hide the pretentious house which was the home of Roger and Carrie Mills for half a century. Their children, one son and four daughters, romped under those oaks, as did their children after them, to the delight of Roger and Carrie. Their shade would later offer comfort to a weary statesman whose shadow had grown long. He loved to sit under their shade, or to walk

6Information obtained from Miss Annie Lee Robbins and other reliable sources.
among his flowers during the years of his retirement. Almost always, passers-by would hear him whistling Methodist hymns as he strolled about his spacious grounds. His needs during these years of retirement and repose were provided for by a new income — from oil found under one of his farms.7

Corsicana, as the rest of the world, had changed. So had Roger Q. Mills. When he brought his new bride to the house on Second Avenue, Corsicana’s population was in the hundreds. Dallas, to the north, not then reached by railroad, was even smaller in size — and without promise. Houston was not then a shipping center, having no harbor facilities and no industry, and boasted of only 2,400 inhabitants. San Antonio, the largest city in the state, had a population of but 3,500. The total population of Texas was only a little over 200,000. There were few people in Texas in the middle of the nineteenth century but they were a vigorous people. The next half century would see great progress and growth, would see Texas become a great state. It would also see a young lawyer grow into a great statesman.

7Ibid.
CHAPTER II

SECESSION AND WAR

In 1858, now twenty-six years of age, Roger announced his candidacy for State Representative for District Number 43, composed of Navarro and Hill Counties. Judge Reeves and Dr. Jowers may have shoved Roger into the political arena since he was, more or less, the protege of both. Or, it may be that the citizens of Corsicana "drafted" Roger as their chosen candidate for the office. Dr. Jowers, the honored representative from the neighboring district to the southeast, surely used his influence to assure Roger's election. Quite possibly, he campaigned for his young friend. Judge Reeves, well-known and respected, was undoubtedly a great asset. But Roger's own record as a lawyer, in both civil and criminal practice, and as an outstanding citizen and leader of his community, was his greatest asset. He was duly elected and took his seat in the Texas Tenth Legislature, 1859-60.

Sometime during this term, presumably after the close of the legislative session, a committee of citizens from a small village in Hill County called on Roger. They were having trouble naming their town and wanted his assistance, no little honor for a young man in his late twenties. Some
where in the course of conversation one of the men laughingly said that the hamlet to be named was only a small borough. "Then call it Hillsborough," Mills said. 1 Satisfied, the delegation returned to the small borough in Hill County. Time has simplified the spelling and the city's younger citizens are unaware of the origin of the name of their community, but few old timers still remember and are proud of the knowledge that Roger Q. Mills, congressman and senator, colonel in the Confederate Army, named their town.

Roger served on the usual number of committees during the secession of the Tenth Legislature but he made few speeches, none of which are worthy of note. That he was already recognized as a speaker has been shown, and he continued to address, frequently, civic organizations and the community at large, but he was not yet an orator. In the Tenth Legislature he very possibly sat in awe and listened intently as other, older Representatives voiced their views. As he listened, always a good student, he learned. In a grander capitol, in a later era, older men, as well as young inexperienced legislators, would listen, spellbound, to the rhetoric of Roger Q. Mills of Texas. But in this early period, Mills was an observer, an apprentice, learning the tools of his trade. An older, wiser man, a silver-tongued parliamentarian, would spend a quarter of a century

1 Information obtained from Mrs. J. K. Parr, of Hillsboro, niece of Roger Q. Mills.
in the capitol at Washington. There, he would be the recognized leader of his political party, an orator without peer, parliamentarian unsurpassed, statesman from Texas.

At the end of the legislative session, Roger returned to his home in Corsicana. He was well received by his fellow Corsicanans. They commended him for his diligence and his close attention to his legislative duties. Roger was popular and, recognized as a leader, he was often called upon to address local organizations.

Mills was quite busy during the eventful year 1860. His part of Texas was the cotton-growing, slave-owning section of the state and there was considerable talk of secession. It was a trying, eventful year. If a Republican were elected President, war would be the only recourse. Down in Texas, Sam Houston was leading Democratic candidate for the office of President of the United States. But events for over two decades had produced conditions under which no Southerner — not even venerable Sam Houston, disciple of Andrew Jackson, darling of Tennessee, national hero, believer in an indestructible Union — could hope to become President. The North held numerical superiority and chose to be unyielding, uncompromising. In August, Sam Houston withdrew his

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2Myrtle Roberts, "Roger Quarles Mills," passim; and gleanings from several copies of the Navarro Express in 1860.
name from the list of Democratic candidates for the highest office in the land. The Democrats were split and would lose the election. Before the end of the year, South Carolina would be the first apple to drop from the tree that was the Union. And Sam Houston would try vainly to keep Texas in the Union. When that failed, he committed himself to the hopeless task of keeping his beloved state out of the Confederacy. So powerless was he now in the state he had helped to create that he could do nothing to soothe his enflamed people and avert the tragedy. He was even unable to dissuade his son from joining the Confederate Army.

Engaged in the growing of cotton, and having heavy investments in slaves, Mills' part of Texas was in favor of secession. Roger had been reared on a tobacco plantation in Kentucky and had been accustomed to slaves all his life. Carrie's father, primarily a rancher, owned a number of slaves. Quite likely, Carrie had brought an old handmaiden with her when she became Roger's wife. Such was the custom of the times. More than servant, such a slave would have been confidant and advisor as well, almost a member of the family. Like most of the men around him, Roger, without doubt, thought of slaves as wards to be treated kindly. And, in the slave-owning part of the nation, slaves were property. Mills was the kind of man who would not see a man deprived of property without due
process of law. He could not stand idly by while millions in property were freed. A man of firm convictions, he was undoubtedly outspoken in his stand.

Late in the year, he was called upon to address his fellow citizens in Corsicana's meeting-house. This meeting-house was the only church building in Corsicana at that time and the various congregations held their services there. Having the only auditorium in town, all civic affairs were conducted there. As the people of Corsicana were either slave-owners or dependent upon the fruits of the system, the question of secession was a civic affair of great moment. The meeting-house was crowded to overflowing to hear the young legislator speak. Full of the fire of youth, indignant because property rights were endangered, Roger Q. Mills thundered: "If we cannot live in peace in the union it (is) better that we should withdraw from the union and establish a government of our own...."

A mighty roar of approval met Roger's words. Passions were running high, and he had given voice to the will of his constituents as well as to his own fervent belief. Soon many of them would be wearing the grey of the Confederate Army and shouting the rebel yell. On January 28, 1861, when the Secession Convention of Texas met, Roger Q. Mills was a fire-eating delegate, speaking

3Proceedings of the Navarro County Bar Association.
and voting for secession. Of the one hundred seventy-four votes cast, only seven opposed secession. The most vociferous of these seven was the tall, magnetic James W. Throckmorton, Houston's minority leader in the Senate.⁴

On March 16, 1861, having refused to take an oath of allegiance to the Confederate States of America, Sam Houston was deposed as governor. Five days later he delivered his stirring farewell address and retreated to his home in Huntsville. Had he retained the fire and vigor of earlier years, he very likely could have kept Texas in the Union. Even after secession, there was hope in many hearts that the esteemed old Houston could keep Texas out of the Confederacy. But the fight was gone out of the old war horse. He had refused an offer of Federal troops to stop the secession movement. He was tired and in the twilight of life. A man who had written with a bold hand several thrilling pages of history, now refused to try to change its course at this late time. On April 12, 1861, Fort Sumter, South Carolina, had been fired upon. The war was on. Men throughout the nation flocked to don a blue or a grey uniform. Bands played Yankee Doodle and Dixie and flags were waved.

⁴Marquis James, The Raven, pp. 407-13. After dramatically and eloquently voting against secession, the magnetic Throckmorton, later to become a governor of Texas, was Texas first of all. In a few days -- having said: "My state right or wrong!" -- he joined the Confederate Army.
wildly. Principle had long since bowed to passion and hysteria ruled many for the moment. Somewhere in the South a yell—the famous rebel yell—was born.

Soon before or after his twenty-ninth birthday, Roger Q. Mills enlisted in Greer's Third Texas Cavalry as a private, and with this unit he served in Missouri and Arkansas. The only action he saw—with the possible exception of skirmishes—was in the battle of Oak Hill which occurred on August 10, 1861. Soon after this action he returned to Texas.

Allison Nelson was organizing the Tenth Texas Infantry upon Mills' return. As its organizer, he was chosen commander with the rank of colonel. Mills was made lieutenant-colonel. In the Confederate army, the officers did not receive their commissions through appointment but were elected to them by their troops. In choosing Mills for their second in command, the men of the Tenth Texas had chosen wisely and well. That they had chosen a man and a leader would soon become evident.

The Tenth Texas, under the command of Mills, was in its first notable action in the battle of Arkansas Pass, General Thomas J. Churchill was in command of the

4 Why Mills was in command is unexplained. No mention is made of Colonel Nelson in this action, and none precedes it to explain his absence.
Confederate troops. In Churchill's report he praised Mills. Mills led his troops against a body of the enemy occupying some cabins, and he drove them from the position, capturing several prisoners.

Colonel Mills and his regiment had been victorious, but the Confederates lost this battle and surrendered. A prisoner, Mills was sent to Camp Chase, Ohio. While there, he was informed that the governor of Ohio and Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee, future President of the United States, wished an interview with him. His answer was that the governor of Ohio could enter and would be received with respect, but that Andrew Johnson — probably considered by Mills to be a traitor — could not enter his presence except by force. As a result, neither man was admitted.

But Mills was not a prisoner for long; soon he was sent to City Point, Virginia, for exchange. He rejoined his old regiment — now in the Army of Tennessee attached to Deshler's brigade. He served in this outfit, under general Cleburne, throughout the remainder of the war.

Reunited with his men, Colonel Mills shared the command of the Tenth Texas with Lieutenant-Colonel T. S. Anderson.

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6 Ibid.
7 _War of the Rebellion_, Series I, XXVIII, p. 647.
This joint command was due to the fact that Colonel Mills was second in command of Brigadier General James Dashler's Brigade. He was not to occupy that position long. Hs next action, the battle of Chickamauga, brought him temporary advancement. The battle began on Saturday morning, September 19, 1863. Late that afternoon, General Dashler moved his regiment across a branch of the Chickamauga to a point where the battle was especially fierce. The firing was at close range and movement was slow. The coming of night did not, at first, cause the firing to diminish. The night was cold and the soldiers had to eat what they could uncooked. Because of the closeness of the enemy, fires for warmth and the cooking of food could not be chanced. Because of the darkness of the night, the cold, the hunger, the weariness, the opposing troops tired of firing at each other. The men had fired at each other across a distance as short, possibly shorter, than thirty yards; now, cold and hungry, they tried to sleep. Young men tossed on the wet ground trying to get relatively comfortable. They thought of buddies who had already been killed and wounded. With the dawn, there would be more bloodshed. In the cold, mountain air, without a star in the sky, youngsters, in a sudden maturity, wondered what glory there could be in war. But the action of the coming

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8Ibid., Series I, XXX, p. 156.
day would cause excited young hearts to beat rapidly, and the blood rushing through their veins would chase the chill away. The nervous tension of the first encounter would be replaced by the action of the coming fight.

About ten in the morning, Deshler's Brigade began to move forward. They were met by the fire of two or more long-range guns and by canister which killed fifteen or twenty men. The brigade occupied a position of the crest of a hill about two hundred yards in front of the union breastworks. They were met by a heavy barrage which pinned them to the ground. Firing from the crest of the hill, the troops of Deshler's Brigade were at a great disadvantage: they were exposed to the heavy fire of the enemy, and the union troops were protected by barricades. The yankees also had artillery, the rebels none. Matching rifle fire to the Yankee barrage, the Confederates held their own until about noon. The rebels then began to run out of ammunition. Mills sent a courier to General Deshler to find out where to obtain more ammunition. The general, not wanting to expose one of his staff to the heavy fire, began to approach Mills. When about forty paces away, the general was struck by a shell and immediately killed. The command of the regiment then fell to Colonel Mills. Mills ordered his men to fix their bayonets to repel an expected attack. Before it could occur, a messenger from Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson, commanding
four companies on Mills' extreme left brought the happy news that, being too far from the enemy for effective fire, they had held their fire and had plenty of ammunition. Mills ordered Colonel Anderson to move to the front of the hill and to hold the hill until he could get ammunition for his troops.

While searching for more ammunition for his troops, Mills was approached by a messenger from Cleburne advising him to hold the hill at all costs. He was not to retreat, nor was he to advance if an opportunity presented itself. To better protect his troops, Mills ordered them immediately behind the crest of the hill, leaving a group of sharpshooters on the crest of the hill to exchange fire with the yankees. Mills then ordered Lieutenant-General Coit, commanding Wilkis' regiment, to deploy some skirmishes in the path of a body of Union troops that were trying to move around the brigade's right flank. The skirmishers were too few and Mills sent two more companies to re-enforce them. This was sufficient and the Yankees were stopped. The battle became less intense from this time on.9

Mills' command of Deshler's Brigade was of short duration. After the battle of Chickamauga, Brigadier-General J. A. Smith was put in command of Deshler's

9See Appendix A for Mills' official report and an account written after the war by one of his men.
Brigade and Mills returned -- still a colonel -- to his ordinary command in the Tenth Texas Infantry. Why Mills was not promoted and given permanent command of Deshler's Brigade is obscure. It seems likely that Smith was already a general and without a command. By accepting command of this brigade, he cut off Mills' advancement. That, however, is only a calculated guess. But Mills would later get a chance to become a general.

Colonel Mills and the Tenth Texas were part of another important engagement within a few weeks. On November 25, 1863, they took part in the battle of Missionary Ridge. In this action, Mills received his first disabling wound. The Union forces had advanced to within fifty paces of the Confederate lines and Deshler's Brigade was ordered to repel them. General Smith led the attack, using the right of Mills' regiment and the left of the Seventh Texas. The advancing Union troops were routed and driven to cover. As usual, Colonel Mills was at the head of his troops. A vigorous man, five feet, ten inches tall, husky of build, sporting a mustache, Mills quite likely was roaring the rebel yell louder than anyone else on the field. A saber was probably the only weapon the charging colonel carried as he raced toward the firing yankees. How effective Mills and his saber were is unknown; the records do not show individual action. In the most vulnerable position of the charge, he was severely wounded -- possibly before he got
close enough to the enemy to stain his saber. There is no account as to when Mills was wounded. The Tenth Texas, with or without its dashing leader, captured four of the eight stands of colors taken that day -- twice as many stands as their nearest competitor. 10

One finds no distinguished mention of Colonel Mills in the official reports of the battle of New Hope Church, Georgia, which took place May 27, 1864. The omission was accidental. Mills was back with his troops and, as usual, displaying heroism and gallantry. In the following report it was Mills instead of Granbury who deserved, and later received, the laurels. General Granbury, who had replaced General Smith -- killed in the charge at Missionary Ridge -- was not present at this particular part of the engagement; he had been disabled from a wound earlier in the action and it was Colonel Mills who led the attack.

. . . The Texans, their bayonets fixed, plunged in darkness with a terrific yell and with one bound were upon the enemy, but they met with no resistance. Surprised, and panic struck, many fled, escaping in the darkness, others surrendered and were brought into our lines. . . . 11

In his next engagement, the battle of Atlanta, on July 22, 1864, Colonel Mills was again wounded. While he was convalescing at La Grange, Georgia, Mills received the

10 War of the Rebellion, Series Two, XXX, p. 752.
11 Ibid., Series Two, XXXVIII, p. 639.
ultimate compliment from the officers and men of Deshler's Brigade — now called the Texas Brigade — signed a petition requesting that Mills — who had so frequently led them in battle — be promoted to the rank of brigadier-general and be made permanent commander of the Texas Brigade. The petition was presented to the proper authorities and received the backing of the elected representatives from Texas. But it was brought to Mills' attention that another colonel out-ranked him by one day and, because of seniority, had a prior claim to the promotion. With his usual generosity, Mills waived his rights to become a general and the permanent commander of the Texas Brigade.

Recovered from his wounds, Mills returned to his brigade and was wounded again, also at Atlanta, on November 25, 1864. He saw no more military service, since the war ended before he was able to rejoin his brigade. As soon as he was able to travel, he returned to his home in Corsicana, Texas. Four years had passed since he had seen his beloved Carrie. And there were the three little girls he had seen so little of. Thirty-three years of age, in the prime of life, Colonel Mills had been separated from his family almost as many years as he had been with them. Never again, though, would he leave his family for very long at a time.
CHAPTER III

RECONSTRUCTION AND RETURN TO POLITICS

Colonel Mills had not been disfranchised but, under the Fourteenth Amendment, he was barred from holding public office. And, until the courts were reorganized, he could do little as a practicing attorney. Roger Q. Mills, however, was not the kind of man to be dismayed. Nor was a lawyer-friend of his, Judge Josh Halbert. They formed a partnership and hung out their shingles. As lawyers, there was no work or, at best, almost no work, for them to do. Very likely, these two energetic, young men poured over books and cases, brushing up on the knowledge that had lain dormant in their minds during the past four, active years. For relaxation, they probably swapped war stories for a few days. But study and stories do not feed families; something had to be done to meet immediate needs. Colonel Mills and Judge Halbert sharpened their axes and, for long months, fed and clothed their families with what money they could earn cutting and cording wood. During this time, what little law practice they had was mostly in the nature of advice and gained them little revenue, sometimes none. With the reorganization of the courts, they were able to devote more and more time to the practice of law and less and less time to chopping wood. In time,
their axes were laid aside and the callouses went away.

Once again, Roger Q. Mills was one of the leading lawyers in East Texas. Because of his eloquence, he was the most frequently heard speaker in Corsicana and the surrounding area.¹

During this post-war period the average citizen referred to Reconstruction as "reconstruction and destruction" and there was a growing reaction to the radical rule of the carpetbaggers and scalawags. The bitterness under Governor E. J. Davis was the most intense. He had drastically reorganized the government of Texas in the Constitutional Convention of 1868-9, lengthening the governor's term to four years and making a large number of offices appointive. Too, he had established a despised state police -- the Negro police. Though a good governor in a number of respects, Davis was hated. The powers of the governor had been increased to a point of danger, almost to the point of making him a tyrant. Many Texans hated this ruler who had, they seemed to think, arbitrary power. Some, like Roger Q. Mills, spoke out strongly against him and his tactics. In 1870, the Congress of the United States aided this growing opposition by partially removing the disqualifications of the Fourteenth Amendment, heralding the end of the Radical Republican rule.

¹Information from Mrs. J. A. Farr.
1872 was a momentous year for Roger Q. Mills. In that year, he re-entered politics and again became a father -- another daughter. The third daughter of Roger and Carrie Mills had died, aged five, in 1866, so they still had only three children. In the spring of the year, the Loyal League advertised a giant Negro barbecue to be held in Corsicana. Governor Davis was to make a political speech. Davis' Negro police were all around the arbor where the picnic was held. This arbor was roughly a quarter of a mile from Colonel Mills' house, located on a forty-acre farm on the western edge of Corsicana, barely outside the city limits of the small town. A large number of the white citizens of Corsicana attended the picnic. Colonel Mills was one of these. Because resentment against Davis was high, most of them were probably there with hopes of seeing some excitement. Anxious to get back into politics, Colonel Mills was very likely already running for office -- though not yet officially. When Governor Davis had concluded his campaign speech, the white people began to yell for Colonel Mills to speak.

"Don't bother to call," Mills replied, jumping upon the platform. "I'm like the girl getting married. When the preacher asked would she take this man, she said, 'I came a purpose.'"  

2Ralph Masterson, *Sketches from the Life of Dr. Horace Bishop*, p. 17.
A contemporary described Mills as launching "into a diatribe against the Davis administration not surpassed by Cicero." With roaring rhetoric, Mills denounced the administration and defied the guns of the Negro police. His oratory, which had long held white audiences spellbound, captured the Negroes. The Negro police forgot their duties and listened with awe to the eloquent Mills, and they joined the whites in vigorous applause of the speech. Without waiting to eat, Governor Davis climbed into his buggy and began the long trip back to Austin. Davis was so shaken by this event that he never made another campaign speech in this or in any other political race in Texas. The incident became the chief topic of conversation all over the state of Texas. The people were now determined to rid their state of the Radical Republicans. The days of the carpetbaggers and the scalawags were almost ended. Colonel Mills was one of the most popular men in Texas. In a few weeks — June 18–20 — the Democrats would hold their state convention in Corsicana. Mills was instrumental in arranging for the convention to be held in Corsicana.

Texas had suffered during the Reconstruction period, but not greatly. A vast state with vast resources, Texas was fairly prosperous. Too, the despised Davis had encouraged

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men from the East to build a number of railroads throughout the state. Corsicana was still the end of the line on the tracks going north from Houston and still got a great deal of transient trade. Railroad gangs were working out of Corsicana, extending the tracks farther north to the tiny village of Dallas. Corsicana was having its last big boom before Dallas became the metropolis of northeast Texas. As a result of this boom, the Methodists of Corsicana were numerous enough and wealthy enough to build a church of their own. They still used the meeting-house for their weekly worship, at the time of the convention, as their new building was not quite complete. The new building was, however, near enough finished to be used as a convention hall. A leading Methodist locally, Mills asked Dr. Horace Bishop, Corsicana's Methodist minister, for permission to use the building for the Democratic state convention. Dr. Bishop was reluctant to allow his church building to be used for such a purpose. Mills reminded him that the structure was at that time only a building as it had not been dedicated. He also promised to get the Democratic party to substantially reduce the four thousand dollar debt hanging over the church. To help diminish this debt, he donated twelve hundred dollars himself. The Reverend Horace Bishop listened to the arguments of the eloquent Mills and agreed to let him use his new church as the convention hall for the Democrats. "The church building was a one-story frame structure. Hogs slept and grunted in
the cool shade under its floors. Hogs have fleas. For obvious reasons, the convention later became known as the 'Flea Convention.'

This convention, the first "free" convention held in Texas since the end of the Civil War, was perhaps the most momentous ever held. Because of its magnitude, the Democratic executive committee declared that as the meeting would be the most important one ever assembled in Texas, no limit would be placed on the number of delegates sent to the convention by the various counties. The basis of representation, it said, would be fixed by the convention when it met. Each county was granted one vote for each one hundred voters and one vote for each fraction of fifty or more voters. Because of the record-breaking attendance — seven hundred and fifty delegates — there were many fractional votes. The convention met June 17 - 19, 1872.

Colonel Mills, because of his constant and caustic criticism of the Davis administration, was a leader in this convention. As has been seen, it was he who procured the building where the convention met. One of the most eloquent speakers in Texas, he was called upon to address the delegates. This he did with his accustomed fervor. He made a

4Ibid. and information from Mrs. J. K. Parr.

5Austin Tri-Weekly Gazette, June 26, 1872.
particularly denunciatory speech against supporting Greeley and Brown for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency. There had been strong sentiment on this question. On a national level the Republicans were split and the Democrats were ineffective. Grant was still the leader of the Radical Republicans, but the Liberal Republicans had held their own convention and had nominated Horace Greeley. Knowing their own candidates could not win, many Democrats in the nation had voiced support of Greeley. After all, when the southern states began to secede, Greeley had said that the Union should let them go in peace. And it had been Greeley who had gone Jefferson Davis' bail when the ex-Confederate President had been imprisoned. For these reasons, many southerners favored supporting Greeley. A vote on this question was taken after Mills' speech and the convention voted 540 to 44 against supporting Greeley.6

The main business of the Corsicana convention was that of nominating two Congressmen-at-large. There were three leading candidates for the two positions — A. H. Willie, J. W. Throckmorton, and Mills.

Judge Willie, formerly of the State Supreme Court, was nominated first and without much difficulty. A close contest developed between Throckmorton and Mills for the other

6Ibid. The Democrats held their national convention at Louisville, September 3, 1872. Styling themselves the "Straight-Out Democrats," they nominated Charles O'Connor for President and Charles Francis Adams for Vice-President.
place. When night came, the convention adjourned before counting the last votes. It appeared that Mills had obtained the necessary two-thirds vote, but his nomination was not then made definite. A more accurate study was needed to ascertain the accuracy of the count. The many fractional votes had created this bit of drama. The clerks were left to determine the exact number of votes of each aspirant and the delegates sought what relaxation could be found in Corsicana. The next morning, when reassembled, the drama was concluded with the posting of the count. As was believed before adjournment, Colonel Mills had gained the nomination, but he had won by only three-fourths of one vote.7 Perhaps no other candidate has ever been, or shall ever be again, elected to public office after winning a nomination so narrowly. The Democrats swept the state in the November elections and the state Republican party came to an end. So great had been the animosity toward the Radical Republicans that men remembered only that they were Republicans and refused to vote for any man of that party for almost six decades.

Colonel Mills, the first Texas Democrat in over a decade to go to Washington, took his seat as a member of the Forty-third Congress. Other than routine committee work, his first term in Congress was undistinguished. On January 5, 1874, Colonel Mills made his first speech in the

7Norman G. Kittrell, Governors Who Have Been, and Other Famous Men of Texas, p. 50.
House of Representatives. His speech was an attack on the Civil Rights Bill. He questioned the constitutionality of the bill and impressed his listeners with the social upheaval passage of the bill would cause. Colonel Mills returned to Texas at the end of the congressional session and was received with great favor by his constituents. The nearby Dallas Daily Herald praised him highly and announced its support of him for re-election, remarking upon the wisdom of continuing in office men who prove themselves worthy of public office. Having replaced Corsicana as the terminus of the railroad line from Houston, Dallas exploited this vantage position and rapidly became one of the leading cities in Texas. While it was growing to be the largest and most influential city in Texas, Dallas, mostly through the Daily Herald, supported Colonel Mills throughout his long political career. The Herald, always, was his greatest supporter and staunchest campaigner.

Colonel Mills was re-elected and returned to Washington. He spent most of his second term in Congress on matters affecting the welfare of Texas. It was during this session that he began the discussion on the tariff -- the problem

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8 Congressional Record, 43d Congress, 1st Session, II, 375.  
9 Ibid.  
10 Dallas Daily Herald, July 4, 1874.  
11 Congressional Record, 44th Congress, 1st Session, IV, passim.
which would later demand his full attention and bring him wide acclaim.

Another matter was more pressing at this time -- the disputed election of Hayes and Tilden. Though the Republicans outnumbered the Democrats, and though the issue was of a partisan nature, it seemed, for a time, that the United States would be without a President. Mills was eloquent in the resulting debate, but numerical superiority, despite a number of blunders, finally ushered Rutherford B. Hayes into the Presidency. It was during this controversy that Mills made one of the most eloquent speeches of his entire political career. A bill was proposed, as a compromise, to have a committee choose the President. The committee was to consist of five members of the House, five of the Senate, and five justices of the Supreme Court. Seven of these committee men were Democrats and seven were Republicans; the fifteenth member was one of the justices, chosen by the other four justices. Mills violently opposed lowering the Supreme Court to politics. This was a partisan question in which, he believed, the Republicans were wrong. More than that, the Republicans were determined to thwart the expressed will of the people. Always a man of firm convictions, always a fighter for his beliefs, he arose, the only Democrat on the House floor to offer opposition to
this partisan measure, and spoke his mind.\textsuperscript{12} After this speech, Colonel Mills was recognized as one of the most eloquent men who ever graced the halls of Congress.\textsuperscript{13} When the contest was over and Hayes had become President, Mills was quoted by the \textit{Dallas Daily Herald} as saying:

More than 800 years ago, William of Normandy set up a claim to the throne of England, much like the claim of Hayes to the presidential chair . . . History informs us that when the Norman presented his claim to the English throne to the Saxon king, Harold replied: 'Your claim is not worth a farthing. In this country the title to the throne is regulated by parliament, and your claim has not the sanction of parliament. Before you can claim the throne upon which I sit, it is essential that you have a decree of the two houses of parliament.' The Norman got the throne like Hayes got the Presidency, by conquest.\textsuperscript{14}

Roger Q. Mills became the Democratic leader in the House because of his eloquent speech and because he was a man of principle. Alone, he had stood up and had spoken out against the maneuverings of the Republicans and the meekness of the Democrats. The Democrats had not been so meek as they had seemed. They had not voiced a protest on the House floor -- or in the Senate -- but they had been busy trying to make some sort of a deal. No politician, Mills did not

\textsuperscript{12}See Appendix B for this most frequently quoted of Mills' speeches. See also Roberts, \textit{Roger Quailles Mills}, p. 144 for a description of the reception of this dramatic, theatrical speech.

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, VIII}, 403.

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Dallas Daily Herald}, April 1, 1877.
understand how to compromise with a political foe or how to
give that he might receive. Lack of this ability would
later keep him from becoming the Speaker of the House,
though the President showed a preference for him. But his
elocutance and his courage caused the Democrats to throw the
mantle of leadership around his shoulders. As he seasoned,
he became their official spokesman, an orator without equal
in either branch of Congress. He was dignified and deliber-
ate in debate, reasoning with convincing logic. Colonel
Mills did not try to outshout his opponents or to stampede
them; instead, he impelled them to listen to his rhetoric
and usually left them agreeing with him. No man -- politi-
cal friend or foe -- ever doubted his sincerity. Very few
ever doubted his judgment. It was known all over Washing-
ton that Colonel Mills spent much time in research in pre-
paring his speeches. He was a stickler for details and
facts and was prepared to show the sources for his material.
He was thorough and looked at both sides of an issue before
taking a stand. Without enough finesse to straddle fences,
he took a calculated stand on every issue that came up. As
a consequence, he was respected as much for his intellect
and opinion as he was for his eloquence. The announcement
that he would speak on a certain day was sufficient to fill
the galleries with spectators on that day.16

16 Ibid.
Apparently, Colonel Mills usually spoke from prepared speeches -- similar to the manner used in our time by Winston Churchill in the British Parliament. Nearly five hundred pages of speeches which were made on the House floor are found in the Mills collection in the archives of the Barker History Center of the University of Texas Library. A study of these speeches indicates that Mills spent much time in their preparation. He was not merely an office holder, not one to just occupy a seat. The people had sent him to Washington to represent them. He seemed to feel that it was his duty to study closely every question which confronted him in order that he could represent his constituents and his nation to their best advantage. He worked at his job in the only way he knew how to work -- by devoting his full attention and his full resources to it. Because he worked untiringly at his job, because he was a statesman instead of a politician, he was, after fewer than three terms in Congress, the most popular public figure in Texas -- with the possible exception of the governor.17

The Mills collection at the University of Texas also indicates how popular, and well-received, Mills was throughout a large part of the United States. The numerous speeches are not dated, and, often, their content is such that one cannot even approximate the dates. They do show that he

17Dallas Daily Herald, March 4, 1877.
spoke, at one time, to the graduating class of West Point, and also in most of the states from New York to Michigan, from Texas to Florida, and in almost all of the states between these four. There is no indication, however, that Mills ever made a public address west of a line drawn from Austin, Texas, to Chicago, Illinois. These speeches, too, show careful and laborious preparation. His attention to detail and his thoroughness are obvious in all the speeches. Wherever he spoke, in Washington or in Rochester, in Chicago or in St. Louis, he delivered an oration. With few exceptions, all of Mills' House speeches are long, the average probably taking well over an hour to deliver. As the content of each speech is precise and pertinent, one can only conclude that the scholarly Mills spent many hours in their preparation.\(^\text{18}\)

Because of his ability as a speaker, as an orator without peer, the people of Texas had great admiration and respect for Colonel Mills. His popularity was greatly increased by his fight -- alone -- in the Hayes-Tilden affair. The people of Texas knew now for certain that they had elected a man of high principles, a man who studied issues and -- after thorough consideration and weighing of the facts -- stood for what he believed was right. They

\(^{18}\text{See Mills Collection, Archives, Barker History Center, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.}\)
knew he was right, for Texas was solidly Democratic. He had vehemently opposed the commission set up to determine who should be President because he was afraid the measure would establish a dangerous precedent. Colonel Mills was a parliamentarian and a guardian of the rights and the welfare of the people. As such, the people of Texas determined to re-elect him to Congress until, in 1892, the Texas Legislature appointed him to fill the unexpired term of Senator Chilton.

During his fourth term in Congress, a bill came up concerning the refunding of the national debt. The issue was of great importance at the time and is of vast interest in this day of huge national debt. Mills delivered an eloquent and informative speech on the matter.

With this speech, Mills entered the field of political economy and governmental finances. In less than a decade he would be Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, and he would be recognized as the nation's leading authority on finances. It would be in this field, covered with briars, that Colonel Mills would gain the greatest respect of the people. They would honor him with their faith and their praises, and he would ascend almost to the Vice-Presidency.

19 *Dallas Daily Herald*, March 4, 1877.
20 See Appendix C.
Early in 1882, having completed his fifth term in Congress, Colonel Mills returned to Texas. He was greeted with the strong sentiment, surging through the state, that he run for governor. As usual, the Dallas Daily Herald was a leader, perhaps the instigator, in the move to get Mills to become a candidate for governor. 22 John Ireland, the leading candidate expected to file for the office, delayed his decision to discover what Mills was going to do. Colonel Mills was known to be impartial as well as industrious, and his location in the center of the state -- from the standpoint of population -- indicated that he would not favor one section to the disadvantage of the others. Too, his political record was proof that his concern was for all the people and his understanding of the needs of all the people was considered to be greater than that of any other public man in Texas. Mills was a Jefferson Democrat -- the most popular breed in Texas -- and was morally and politically unassailable. The state Democratic party had dropped almost to disrespect in the eyes of the voters. In Texas, however, there was no other party to turn to. It was hoped, therefore, that Mills would run for governor. The people of Texas were sure that the esteemed Colonel Mills would rid the party of its incompetents and its cooperation with combinations.

22 Dallas Daily Herald, April 16, 1882.
pools, and trusts. The people believed this and editors reminded them of it in their newspapers. Sentiment was so high that one editor, trying to urge Mills to announce his candidacy, wrote that "there is a voice from the people coming up from every portion of the State, an unanimity unparalleled in political history, whose will cannot be ignored, demanding that this distinguished citizen lead the Democracy to victory in the coming election." But Mills did ignore the will of the people. Instead of filing for the office of governor, as so many had hoped he would, Mills, as usual, announced his candidacy for re-election to Congress. As usual, he was returned to his seat in Washington. Many people were disappointed because Mills had not entered the race for governor, but not more disappointed than had been the officers and men of the Texas Brigade when Colonel Mills withdrew his name -- despite their petition -- and allowed another man to become their governor.

Colonel Mills turned most of his attention, now, to a long neglected, gingerly dodged issue -- the tariff question. To this problem he devoted most of the rest of his time spent in the House of Representatives. In the early years of this period of his life, however, another, more pressing interest

23 See Dallas Daily Herald, Austin Tri-Weekly Gazette, Denton Monitor, and others, issues of April and May, 1882.
24 Corsicana Courier, April 13, 1882.
demanded Mills' attention. This was the prohibition movement.

Roger Q. Mills was not a drinking man. So far as is known, he did not imbibe socially, medicinally, or otherwise. But he opposed prohibition so strongly that he devoted almost his entire attention to fighting it. His opposition to this movement, as in all things, was firm, logically founded, and uncompromising. His argument, first publically expressed in 1883, was that morality cannot be gained by legislative decree. Half a century later, after bitter experience, the national prohibition law would be repealed for this reason. Displaying a great deal of courage in attempting to thwart the crusaders for prohibition, Mills opposed their measures by standing on the honored argument of constitutional rights. But moralists do not always honor personal liberties and the rights of individuals. They would save men's souls no matter how vigorously they protested to being saved. All opposing arguments -- even those of esteemed and eloquent men like Mills -- could not gain entrance into their set minds. Mills, too, was a man of principle, but he apparently believed in the God-given right of a man to drink himself into Hell if he so chose. For his

25 Congressional Record, 48th Congress, 1st Session, XV, 191.
unyielding stand, some prohibitionists thought of Mills as a new Goliath and of themselves as the youthful, pure David.26

Texas was a stronghold in the prohibition movement and Mills' district was its center. In 1886, the prohibitionists offered a concerted effort to unseat their enemy. A vigorous man, a man of high ideals, Mills picked up the gauntlet thrown down by the prohibitionists and retained his seat in Congress. But this was the greatest threat that had faced Mills thus far in his political career, and caused him to conduct the most strenuous campaign of his political history. He made numerous campaign speeches -- a thing that had not been necessary before -- and many anti-prohibition speeches in other parts of the state. As part of his anti-prohibition crusade, Mills debated with leading prohibitionists. One of these debates was with J. B. Cranfill, at Crawford, Texas.27

Colonel Mills conducted his campaign, speaking in every town of any size in his district, on the basis of his beliefs. He fervently believed in the supreme right of personal self-government. Personal liberty, he believed, was the source of, and inspiration for, all other liberties.


27 See Appendix D for Cranfill's account.
He believed in a free mind, a free conscience, a free man. As ever, he was the defender of human rights. With these ideals, he met the prohibitionists in the political arena and defeated them so decisively that they never openly opposed him again. The race had been fearfully close until the very end of the campaign.

A new champion came forth to aid Mills in this campaign -- the *Dallas Morning News*. This newspaper declared that Roger Q. Mills was one of the most useful men in the congress, pointing out his value to the people of Texas. He was a statesman, the *News* asserted, who devoted his endeavor to legislation instead of to office brokerage. Mills had served his district and his nation well, the *News* said, and the prohibitionists would be playing into the hands of the tariff barons if they managed to defeat him.28

The election returns knocked the prohibitionists off Mills' back but, though they never again opposed him, they did not lessen their crusade to achieve morality through legislation. Early in 1887, a prohibition amendment was submitted to the Texas legislature. Mills was recalled to Texas to lead the opposition. He made a number of speeches against prohibition,29 and, when the election was held,

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28 *Dallas Morning News*, October 23, 1886. See Appendix E.

August 4, 1887, an overwhelming 2 to 1 vote defeated the proposed amendment. Mills returned to his duties in Washington and the prohibitionists sat stunned. But they would rise up to victory in a later age. That victory, on a national scale, proved to be their greatest defeat. It showed, beyond all doubt, as Mills had tried to tell them, that morality cannot be had through legislative decree.
The tariff question had caused politicians anxiety almost since the end of the Civil War. Both major parties were aware of the need for tariff revision, but the problem was so touchy that they side-stepped it as long as possible. In 1876, Henry Watterson, a staunch advocate of tariff reform, wrote the Democratic platform. He slipped in a plank calling for tariff for revenue only.\(^1\) Watterson, editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal, had long been writing editorials asking for tariff reform. Few people, however, were aware that tariff revision was a part of the Democratic platform in 1876. Though the plank had been nailed in permanently, it would not be noticed until 1880. After the election of 1876, a matter far more important than tariff revision attracted the full attention of both parties. This was the Hayes-Tilden election dispute. When the dispute was finally settled, subsequent events proved that the Democrats were split on the tariff issue. Randall was the leader of a group favoring a high, protective

\(^1\)Ida M. Tarbell, *The Tariff In Our Times*, p. 61.
tariff, and Carlisle, Morrison and Mills were the leaders of a growing group espousing tariff for revenue only.

Randall was chosen Speaker of the House in 1877 and the protectionists, Democrats as well as Republicans, were in full command of the situation. Fernando Wood, a protectionist from New York, was made Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means. He initiated the practice, now common, of having a sub-committee, composed only of members of the majority, prepare a tariff bill. Anticipating the type of bill Wood would prepare, Mills introduced a resolution instructing the Committee on Ways and Means to prepare a tariff for revenue only. Seven Republicans and sixty Democrats supported the measure, but twelve Democrats joined sixty-four Republicans in defeating the resolution. More influential upon the Ways and Means Committee were the 177 petitions asking that the tariff not be revised. The Loyal League of Pennsylvania was the "steering committee" behind these petitions. They had greatly influenced the Schenck bill of 1870 and had been responsible for the restoration of the 10 per cent cut made by the tariff bill of 1872.

2 Edward Stanwood, Tariff Controversies in the Twentieth Century, p. 197.
3 Ibid.
4 Tarbell, The Tariff in Our Times, p. 85.
The Wood bill finally ended up as a step in the right direction. It cut duties 15 per cent and reduced the number of dutiable items from 1,524 to 578. It also levied a 10 per cent retaliatory duty on goods coming from countries which discriminated against the United States. The bill also put duties on a number of raw materials. All in all, this bill changed the tariff picture very little. Most important, it did not reduce the revenue at all, and the rapidly growing surplus was causing alarm to certain influential men of both parties. The surplus was piling up in the treasury at the average rate of $100,000 a year.

In 1880, the tariff became an issue in the Presidential election. General Winfield S. Hancock, the Democratic candidate, made the mistake of calling the tariff a "local issue." The Republicans jumped on the statement and rode it to a narrow victory on the promise of tariff revision. Actually, the Republican party was sincere in its promise of tariff revision. Because of discrimination against the products of the United States--caused by America's high tariff--many business leaders were crying for tariff reduction. In 1882, President Arthur got Congress to establish a tariff commission. Arthur appointed seven eminent businessmen who were protectionists. After

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a thorough study of the problem, the committee recommended a 20 per cent reduction.

Several measures were attempted in both houses of Congress. A majority in the House desired to lower the tariff as recommended by the commission but, because of pressure from constituents, favored protection on varying items. No proposal was suitable to all. With time running out, Arthur sent a message to Congress declaring that he would call a special session if a tariff bill of some sort was not passed. The Republicans dragged out the debate as long as possible to avoid passing a bill then before them. By parliamentary tactics, the tariff-reform Democrats forced the Republicans to admit that they favored a high, protective tariff. Having ignored the President's message, Congress was not expected to pass the measure, but telegrams by the hundreds began to come in from the nation's businessmen demanding that a bill be passed. With a Presidential election coming up, the Republicans allowed the bill to pass. Grover Cleveland, the Democratic presidential candidate, ran openly for tariff reform and won with the help of many of the nation's businessmen.

Cleveland had not been popular with the Democratic party in 1884 because he was honest, impartial, and blunt.

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6 This debate covers 1,275 pages of the Congressional Record.
He had gained the nomination only because New York was doubtful and he was the state's popular governor. As President, he was not popular with the party because he did not assume the leadership of the party. His job, he believed, was administrative. In his desire to be a constitutional president, he spurned all advice to poke his finger into legislation. Without firm party leadership, the Democrats were divided and unable to accomplish much.

Randall, of Pennsylvania, was the leader of forty protectionists; Carlisle, Morrison, and Mills were the leaders of the reformers. Each faction had a program of its own, backed with firm convictions, and neither side, without executive prodding, would yield.

As time passed, Cleveland realized that he could not fulfill his campaign promises unless he was undisputedly the leader of his party. He would have to suggest and push legislation. This became very apparent after the off-year elections of 1886. In that election, the Democratic majority in the House dropped from forty to twelve. The Republican majority in the Senate had dropped too, from eight down to two, but this was not a gain for the President, as the Senate was protectionist — Democrats as well as Republicans. Senators were elected by the state legislatures, and many gained and maintained their offices through bribery. Trusts and pools sponsored a large number of them and spent large
suns to keep their friends in office. As a result, the Senate, for the most part, represented trusts instead of the people.\textsuperscript{7}

The tariff reform movement was almost the only issue in the Congressional elections of 1886. Businessmen, editors, economists, educators, and other intellectuals formed tariff reform leagues and were active enough, under the leadership of men like David A. Wells, to cause most Congressional candidates of both parties to declare for tariff reform and reduction. From the pulpit, Henry (Ward) Beecher attacked protectionism as "the jugglery of the devil" and declared with fire that "a paternal government is an infernal government."\textsuperscript{8}

Cleveland had not, until now, been overly strong for tariff reform. He had been a reform governor and was a reform President -- civil service reform being his most notable achievement. But he had given little outward attention to tariff reform. He had mentioned it in both his annual messages to Congress but had not pushed it. He did not like the company it kept, for the loudest tariff reformers were the free-silverites, and Cleveland was a sound money man. In his first annual message to Congress, he

\textsuperscript{7}Allan Nevins, Grover Cleveland, A Study in Courage, p. 343.

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., 284.
gave more space to the silver issue than to the tariff; the second annual message dealt more with the growing surplus. A new departure was decided upon now. Morrison, the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, Cleveland's whip in the House, had been defeated in 1886. With Morrison gone, Cleveland realized he would have to descend from his executive chair and take an active part in legislation.

Around the first of September, 1887, Cleveland invited Speaker Carlisle and his wife to visit him at Oak View. On September 5, Secretary Fairchild, William L. Scott, and Mills joined them. Sensing something big in the wind, that old protectionist from Pennsylvania, the stubborn Randall, came to Washington hoping to be invited to the conference. Cleveland ignored him. At this conference, it was decided that tariff reduction was imperative and Carlisle and Mills were told to begin work on a bill at once. Secretary of the Treasury Fairchild was instructed to advise them on the financial effects of the proposed tariff. Cleveland wanted to call a special session to study the tariff but Carlisle advised against it. The group then drafted a circular for the Democrats in Congress. The circular described the emergency and pointed out that tariff revision must be had. Soon after the congressmen had gone their separate ways, Cleveland wrote Carlisle again asking about a special session. Again Carlisle advised against it.9

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9 Ibid., p. 372.
When Cleveland first entered the White House he asked the notable Carl Schurz what issue was the most important to the interests of the nation. Schurz told him the tariff was the biggest issue at that time. Cleveland admitted his ignorance on the subject and Schurz gave him a list of books to read. Cleveland also received a great deal of uninvited advice from congressmen, primarily Morrison, professional reformers, businessmen, economists, and others. Now, after over two years of study, he was ready. He decided upon a bold plan of attack. In November, he invited A. K. McClure to read the annual message to Congress that he had just completed. McClure read the message with interest and agreed with its content but told Cleveland that it would cost him re-election. Cleveland's simple reply was that it was a duty that needed to be performed and that, regardless of the consequences, he would perform it. Not long after that, Cleveland told another friend that election or re-election is meaningless unless a man stands for something. 10

On December 6, 1887, Cleveland delivered his third annual message to Congress. The message was a completely new departure for Presidential messages to Congress and broke all established precedents. For the first time in history, the President of the United States sent a message

10 Ibid., pp. 376-7.
to Congress that dealt with only one topic. Everything else was omitted as though there were no other thing of importance to the nation. Every important newspaper in the country carried the complete message. No message since Lincoln's had received so much coverage and attention. It was favorable attention, the only criticism being that the message was long overdue.

"You are confronted at the threshold of your legislative duties with a condition of the national finances which imperatively demands immediate and careful consideration," Cleveland's message began. "It is a condition, not a theory, that confronts us," he said. The message was short but, as mentioned, concerned with only one subject. In this message, Cleveland spoke strongly upon the need for revision of the tariff because of the harm it was doing to the average man, the laborer and the farmer in particular. It was not a broad attack upon the tariff system but one dealing primarily with the high cost of the necessaries of life -- due to the tariff.

He also attacked various suggestions that had been made on how to reduce the surplus. To pay a premium for government bonds in order to retire them was unfair as it paid the investor class with money taxed from the people; to store the surplus in various banks, to redeem all the greenbacks with silver dollars, to spend the money lavishly in building a

11James D. Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897, VIII, 580.
greater navy, in subsidizing the mercantile marine was unwise and unjust. Cleveland was neither spendthrift nor politician, though he had used patronage to push some Democrats into line, but he would not spend the money of the people foolishly or wastefully. A program of constructing an Isthmian canal had been advocated but Cleveland was to leave that project to a later President, standing on the belief that no one power should solely control such a canal and that American treasure should not do more than help in its building. No, the tariff must be revised. Foreign countries discriminated against American trade because of the high tariff and the American public had to pay more for its goods because of it. Instead of benefitting the common man, the tariff allowed the manufacturer to charge more for his goods, pricing them just below the cost of imported items carrying heavy tariffs. Reduction of the tariff, then, meant reduction of the prices Americans paid for their food and clothing. The tariff was the prolific mother of trusts, he said, and imposed heavy burdens upon the farmer and the laborer.

Until this time, the Republicans had taken Cleveland's re-election for granted and had not planned much of a campaign for the coming summer, but Cleveland's message to Congress had given them an issue. And, as McClure had said, the tariff reform stand cost Cleveland the election. The tariff bill was introduced a few months after Cleveland's
message. The resulting debate was called the Great Debate. The debate was less on the tariff than it was a series of campaign speeches for both parties.

Mills began work on a tariff bill six months before the congressional session began. Whether Carlisle had indicated that Mills would be appointed chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means is unknown. Morrison had been the chairman and Mills sat in the number two position. When Morrison was defeated for re-election, Mills probably expected the chairmanship. With his reputation as a studious legislator, it is not surprising that he began preparing a tariff bill half a year before the beginning of the legislative session. The bill Mills prepared at home was an ad valorem bill. It was completely revised by the committee. Mills is quoted as saying: "When I got to work with my brethren on the bill I found it would not go and I had to abandon my ad valorem tariff bill. The schoolmaster had not been sufficiently around to bring our people back to the Democratic principle of taxation as to value."\textsuperscript{13}

On April 2, 1888, Mills introduced H. R. 9051 (already known as the Mills' Bill). At one o'clock, April 17, Mills arose to move that the House go into the Committee of the Whole to consider the tariff bill. The Republicans in the

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Tarbell, The Tariff In Our Times}, p. 155.

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 158.
House had promised not to oppose the motion. As Mills arose to make his resolution, tall Tom Reed, of New York, undisputed leader of the House Republicans, glared at his colleagues to make sure no one broke the pledge.\(^{14}\)

As a courtesy to Mills, William D. Kelley, a minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means, moved that Mills be allowed to speak as long as he desired, without regard to the time limit on debate. A contemporary described Mills as looking like a typical, old-fashioned Southerner, dressed in frock coat, with a dangling watch chain hanging from his vest. He was described as tall, with a loose figure, long mustaches, and quiet, blue eyes. To complete his Southern attire, Mills wore a soft, black hat when out of doors.\(^{15}\)

Mills spoke in his slow, quiet way for two hours, presenting a powerful argument.\(^{16}\)

One might argue that Kelley's motion to allow Mills to speak as long as he liked was made for political purposes. It may also be that Kelley was merely showing the kind of respect that was nearly always extended to Mills. A statesman instead of a politician, Mills busied himself with pouring over tables and reports while his fellow congressmen visited with their constituents, dined with each other and

\(^{14}\) Nevins, *Grover Cleveland*, p. 389.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., p. 388.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 389.
with lobbyists, looked after their fences, and performed similar chores. While other congressmen kept their ears to the ground, Mills had his eyes on some report. He was chivalrous and generous and his colleagues naturally extended every courtesy to him. In addition, Mills was one of the most respected men in Congress. Men might disagree with him—though not often—but they always honored him with their full attention when he spoke. He was intelligent and informed and they listened to him to learn. Instead of preparing his constituents that he might remain in office, Mills was that rare official who prepared himself to serve his constituents.

Though Mills had long been an advocate of free-trade, his bill made only a small reduction. He believed, as did Cleveland, that established businesses should not be jeopardized by a big change in the existing system. More important than complete correction of a system which had encouraged trusts were the interests of many thousands of laborers who worked for these trusts. His bill reduced the rate from an average of 47 per cent to 40 per cent.

17 Tarbell, The Tariff In Our Times, p. 155. Mills is described by this contemporary as being one of the few congressmen who never permitted his biography to be put into the Congressional Directory.
The bill was, decidedly, a partisan measure. Though there were several important Republicans who favored tariff reform, the party, as a whole, was protectionist. The forty-odd Democratic protectionists had been replaced in the elections of 1886 or had been coerced into supporting Cleveland and Carlisle. When the bill was at last passed in the House, only four Democrats voted against it. More than that, many Republicans voted for it. These Republicans were from the western states of Nebraska, Iowa, and Kansas. Most of their constituents were farmers, the group which seemed to be hurt the most by the protective tariff and its resulting high cost of living.

The debate began on April 17 and lasted through May 19. Mills and Carlisle, supported by McMillin, Wilson (later to sponsor the Wilson Tariff Bill), Cox, and Scott, were the principal speakers for the measure. They were opposed by Reed, Kelley, McKinley, and Burrows, who constantly drew attention away from the issue and spent as much time as they could on anything except the reduction of the tariff and the revenue. The Democrats, particularly Mills, continually returned to the need for reduction of the revenue and the harm being done by "protection" to the common man. The farmer and the laborer received the greatest amount of sympathy from the Democrats for the heavy burden placed upon them by "protection." After each of these returns to the subject theoretically being discussed, the Republicans would point
to the advantages of "protectionism" and then proceed to other subjects. Both sides were guilty of making lengthy campaign speeches instead of confining their oratory to the Mills Bill.

As chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, Mills received severe criticism for not yielding to the demand that manufacturers be permitted hearings by his committee. The reasons Mills gave for not wasting time with time-consuming hearings were typical of the man. He refused the hearings on the simple stand that more than enough material already had been collected. The tariff commission appointed by President Arthur had gathered the most revelant information and its two big volumes were considered, along with several more that had been compiled by Morrison's committee and the Senate Finance Committee in the early eighties. Much of the findings at hand was repetitious and Mills adamantly refused to spend weeks in recording the same information again.\textsuperscript{18}

After the changes made by the majority members of the Ways and Means Committee, Mills' bill changed the tariff schedules very little. In addition to the seven per-cent average reduction on dutiable items, the bill's principal cuts were on raw materials. Wool, lumber, flax, hemp, salt, tin plate, copper ore, and jute were placed on the free list.

\textsuperscript{18}Tarbell, The Tariff In Our Times, p. 157.
Cleveland was pleased with the bill, but Mills and his committee were severely criticized. A great deal of the criticism came from manufacturers who raised the prices of their articles to a point just below imported articles carrying a tariff. They bawled because tariff reduction meant smaller profits for them. Some criticism was just and deserved. The bill was sectional in its reduction of the tariff, maintaining most of the protection on items affecting the manufacturers of the South and the West while reducing more drastically the "protection" on items produced in the North. Though this type of criticism was just, Mills had done nothing that had not been done by his predecessors. The only difference was that in Mills' bill the South and West were favored instead of the North.

Mills began the discussion on the tariff by pointing out that duties on imports had been increased from an average of 18.84 per-cent in 1861, to an average of 40.29 per-cent for the 1862-66 period. This was, he continued, a war measure. More than twenty years had passed since the end of the war, he explained, yet the war taxes remained and were growing. In 1887, he said, the duty was 47.10 per-cent. The rate of taxation should have been reduced to a level sufficient to meet the needs of an efficiently administered government in time of peace, Mills said, pointing out that it continued to grow, filling the national treasury with money not required for public purposes. That
money, he contended, should have remained in the pockets of the people. All other taxes were repealed immediately after the war. The reason for this, he said, was that those taxes affected the rich. The duties on imported necessities, however, remained. Such a condition raised the cost of the necessities and were a burden to the people. These taxes, Mills pointed out, were so contrived as to fill the pockets of a privileged class, taking from the people five dollars for private purposes for every dollar that enriched the public treasury. Mills produced figures to prove his accusations. The income tax of 1866 gained the nation over $100,000,000. This revenue was taxed from 460,000 people whose incomes totaled nearly $800,000,000 annually. As soon as the Civil War ended, this income tax was abolished, as were the taxes on banks, insurance companies, and other big corporations. But high tariffs had not been reduced to lower the cost of the necessities. Protectionists argued that the high tariff created high wages; Mills denied that such was the case. To illustrate his point, Mills gave a hypothetical case.

Suppose a laborer who is earning a dollar a day by his work finds a suit of clothes that he can buy for $10.00 without the tariff tax, then the suit of clothes can be procured for ten days' work; but the manufacturer comes to Congress and says, 'I must be protected against this man buying this cheap suit of clothes,' and Congress protects him by putting a duty of 100 per cent., or $10.00 more. Now it will require the laborer to work twenty days to get his suit of clothes.
Now tell me if ten days of his labor have not been annihilated? Has he not been required to work twice as long under the tariff as he would have done without to obtain his suit of clothes? 

Mills went on to show that the extra ten dollars went to the manufacturer as profit and that the laborer got none of it. In pointing out that some woolen goods bore duties up to 180 per cent, he explained that he had chosen 100 per cent and ten dollars for the price of the suit only for the purpose of illustrating his hypothetical case. "The tax on the four hundred millions of goods imported goes into the public Treasury," Mills said; "the tax on domestic manufactures, by raising their price, goes into the pockets of the manufacturers." 

Mills next showed that the farmer had suffered greatly from the high import duties. Exports (which, at that time, were predominantly agricultural) were down because imports were down. "If the tariff imposed a revenue duty sufficient to obtain money enough to support the Government but not high enough to impede importation, then our foreign trade would grow rapidly and our agricultural products would find ample markets and good prices," Mills declared. "The tariff robs the farmer on one side by increasing the prices of what he buys; it robs him on the other side by decreasing the

19 Congressional Record, 50th Congress, p. 3058. 
20 Ibid.
prices of what he sells.\footnote{Ibid., p. 3059.} Mills argued that in the past, when the free list was larger and duties lower, that more trading was done. This was followed up by showing that the manufacturer under lower tariff would realize increased activity. Mills then struck a blow for free trade by asserting that, under a system of free trade, domestic manufacturers would maintain ninety per-cent of the sales. This was backed by a statement from ex-Consul Dudley, which he read. The statement said that practically all of the domestic articles could be bought as cheaply in the United States as they could be in England.

In dispelling the argument that high tariffs caused high wages, Mills said:

It is said a high tariff makes high wages for labor. . . . How is it high tariff makes high wages for labor? . . . Why, they say, as a matter of course, if you increase the value of the domestic product, the manufacturer is able to pay higher wages. Unquestionably he is, but does he do it? No. Mr. Jay Gould, with his immense income from his railroad property, is able to pay his bootblack $500 a day, but does he do it? Oh, no; he pays the market price of the street. He gets his boots blacked and pays his nickle like a little man.\footnote{Ibid., p. 3061.}

Mills then turned his dissertation to the high standard of living enjoyed by laborers in the United States. He showed it to be the highest of England, France, and Germany next in that order. England had free trade whereas France
and Germany had tariffs. After showing how much better off American laborers were than those of other countries, he was asked by Milliken what harm the tariff did. "What good does it do?" Mills replied. "It enables you to make 'trusts', combinations, and 'pools' by keeping foreign products out of the markets."²³

Mills had spoken for approximately an hour by this time and other Republicans began to interrupt him. Within a period of about fifteen or twenty minutes, half a dozen Republicans broke into Mills' lecture, asking questions comparable to the one quoted above. Pig Iron Kelley then said, "I protest against these interruptions of the gentleman's speech."

"I do not," Mills said and was greeted with applause from the Democratic side of the House.

"The gentleman, as the organ of his party," Kelley continued, "is expounding its doctrine, and these interruptions are, in my judgment, impertinences."²⁴ Laughter greeted Kelley's words but Mills continued his speech, for another hour or so, without interruption.

With examples, Mills pointed out that the tariff, which was supposed to be beneficial to labor, benefitted the manufacturer instead.

²³Ibid.
²⁴Ibid.
None of these tariff rates go to the laborer. . . . They cannot pass the pocket of the manufacturer. This 'great American system' that is intended to secure high wages for our laborers is so perverted that all its beneficence intended for the poor workman stops in the pocket of his employer. . . .

Here is a car-wheel weighing 500 pounds; cost $13; labor cost 85 cents; tariff rate is 2½ cents per pound, equivalent to $12.50, to cover a labor cost of 85 cents! (Laughter) Why, Mr. Chairman, these laborers of our ought to get immensely rich if they could get all that Congress votes to them, if the manufacturers did not stop the bounties intended to reach the pockets of the workingman.

... The working people are hired in the market at the lowest rates at which their services can be had, and all the 'boodle' that was granted by these tariff bills goes into the pockets of the manufacturer. It builds up palaces; it concentrates wealth; it makes great and powerful magnates; but it distributes none of its beneficence in the homes of our laboring poor.

It brings the tax-gatherer to them; it weighs them down as it goes; it compels them to pay out a large share of their daily earnings for the necessaries of life; and the money it raises by high prices on domestic manufactures it transfers not into the coffers of the Government, but into the coffers of private individuals. . . . The concentration of the wealth of the country in the hands of a few will in progress of time overthrow the very foundations of our free government.

After further arguments, Mills concluded his speech with:

Although the bill we propose is not all that we could have asked, although it is a very moderate bill, yet it will send comfort and happiness into the homes and bosoms of the poor laboring people of this country, and I ask you now in behalf of them to consider their claims and help to reduce the burdens that have so long been laid upon their shoulders.  

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25 Ibid., 3063.
Mr. Kelley, one of the leading Republicans of his day, answered Mr. Mills.

Mr. Chairman, in the course of an address delivered at Corsicana, Texas, on the 21st of May last, the distinguished gentleman who now presides over the deliberations of the Committee on Ways and Means said: 'We produce and exchange among ourselves and consume in the satisfaction of our wants more of the products of our own labor than the two hundred millions on the continent of Europe. We have invented and have now in successful operation more labor-saving machinery than all other people. We are turning out over six thousand millions of dollars' worth of products of manufactures every year, and producing them at lower cost of production, and at the same time paying higher wages to our workmen than any other people.'

Kelley then proceeded to tie the bill in with slavery, saying that free trade necessarily goes hand in hand with slavery. This bill, he continued, if it became a law, would close the coal mines, the ore banks, and the factories; that the world owed the abundant supply and low price of sugar to the protective policy. He praised the natural resources of the country; America's high standard of living; hit the whiskey trust; and concluded by saying:

For myself, I will stand for the protective system and the maintenance of such rates of duties as will insure the development of all the resources of the country, increase the number of its industries, and perpetuate its independence, commercial and industrial as well as political. This happy consummation can not be achieved if the internal tax system is to be maintained, for the surplus is a condition that can not be perpetuated with safety to our republican institutions.

26 ibid., p. 3071.
The purity of the Government, the safety of business, and the morals of the people demand the abatement of the surplus by the repeal of the special war taxes from which it flows. If we shall fail to abolish these taxes, and in addition to the hoarding of millions of dollars in the Treasury of the United States, we also maintain a system of securities by which from seventy-five to one hundred millions dollars more of our money shall be applied exclusively to the use of the whiskey trust in its war upon our industries and national independence, history, when referring to the surplus and its demoralizing influence, will impute the crime that perpetuated it and the consequences with which it is fraught to the Fiftieth Congress.

Mills and Kelley had made the opening speeches for their respective parties, speeches which were directed more to the public than to the opposition. These speeches were at a later time circulated among the constituents of the various members of the House. A week passed before the next pair of speeches were made. McMillin spoke for the Democrats; Burrows spoke for the Republicans. McMillin pointed out that "protection" had failed (after twenty-seven years) to result in peace, quiet, and prosperity to the laborer as it was claimed it would. Following Mills' attack, he brought attention back to the people who were favored by tariffs — at the expense of the laborer. The Republicans, notably Kelley, sniped at his speech at every opportunity. They quipped and continually dragged the issue away and brought it back as something else. Continually, they forgot that the issue was reduction of the revenue, or even that tariffs

27 Ibid.
were being discussed. McMillin reiterated that the tariffs put excessive profits into the pockets of the manufacturer at the expense of the laborer. The Republicans replied that people were better off than ever before, that Americans were favored with the highest standard of living in the world. But they failed to mention the tariff.

For a while, Burrows got away from the tariff by advocating that the surplus be used in the repair and expansion of the Navy and the merchant marine, a plan previously rejected by Cleveland as unnecessary and wasteful of the people's money. This, he contended, would enlarge American trade, thus increasing prosperity. He hit Mills' hypothetical story about the suit, saying that the manufacturer did not pocket the money which was the normal difference between the price on foreign goods and the price they would be without the tariff. The manufacturer, he said, did not raise the price of his article to a figure just under the price of the foreign article with tariff included. To strengthen his argument he gave several examples. The best was:

Previous to 1864 there was not a pound of soda-ash manufactured in the United States. We consume annually 175,000 tons. . . . Previous to 1864 we imported every pound of it at an average cost of $48 a ton. A duty of $5 was imposed, and the Solvay Process Company was organized. . . . Was the duty of $5 added to the
advancing the cost to $53 a ton? On the contrary, it fell in the American market as low as $28 a ton in three years...28

Burrows then launched an attack upon the Democratic members of the Committee on Ways and Means (all Southerners with the exception of one Pennsylvanian) saying they had discriminated in favor of the South and that such was a pity. He explained that free trade would stop the greatness of the South looming just around the corner. He could see the South as a great industrial center -- if they abandoned free trade and adhered to "protection."

Representative Reed was one of the outstanding speakers for the Republican, "protection" side of the issue. Like his fellow Republicans, he spent much time dealing in personalities and other trivia not connected with the surplus or the tariff. His quips were sharper, especially those aimed at Mills, and gained more laughter and applause than did those of anyone else. However, some of what he had to say did deal directly with the question under discussion. After listening to one of Mills' speeches, Reed tore into free-trade with:

There is never an argument (from the Democratic side) in favor of putting anything on the free-list which is not an argument for putting everything upon it. The declaration in each case is that the duty is, in the first place, a tax on the people, going into the Treasury to the extent of the goods imported; and, secondly, a much wider

28 Ibid., p. 3311.
and larger tax upon the domestic production, going into the pockets of the manufacturers. Yet I venture the prediction that the Presidential campaign now opening will not be two months old before every one of these gentlemen will be endeavoring to explain his position consistently with protection in certain geographical localities.29

This was the first distinct comment showing the political nature of the speeches taking place in the House of Representatives during the late spring and summer of 1888. The debate was of high quality even though the Republicans found it hard to stick to the subject of the bill they were considering. Actually, they were considering how their speeches were to affect the voter.

Mills complained upon occasion that the Republicans were so intent upon finding things wrong with the bill, so intent on failing it, that they had done nothing to assist the Democrats in working out its kinks. Reed was quite clever in his answer to such charges.

A large number of amendments had been attempted by the Republicans; each had failed. Another of these had just failed and Mills had called for cooperation from the Republicans in readying his bill for passage. Reed said:

The gentleman from Texas complains that we do not help him improve his bill. (Mills had earlier asked for cooperation, pointing out that his bill was based upon a previously attempted Republican measure.) Why, we have been trying to do that

29 Ibid., p. 5645.
ever since the discussion began; but we have never received from him the least assistance in the world. (Laughter.)

Why, if he would allow us to improve that bill we would make it a fit, reasonable, and suitable bill. We would get rid of the surplus. We would relieve the country from jeopardy of its industries so great that gentlemen from every district could see it even when beaten on the broad field of conflict. (Laughter and applause.)

I want to say another thing. Why was it we were not allowed to improve the bill a little more when in Committee of the Whole? Why were the manufacturers shut out? Why were members upon this floor prevented from improving the bill? Why did the gentleman not ask us for assistance a little earlier; and why was he not a little more disposed to agree when it was proffered to him? (Laughter and applause.)

William McKinley reached his first national prominence during the Great Debate. His speech created great excitement. During his speech, he pulled a suit of clothes from his desk and declared that he had bought it for ten dollars. The young McKinley had pushed Mills' words down his throat. In his hypothetical case, Mills had stated that a suit that would cost ten dollars without the tariff, cost twenty dollars because of the tariff. McKinley had triumphantly displayed a ten-dollar suit. But Mills was not to be outdone. He traced McKinley's suit down, bought one, and obtained the figures on its cost. In his first speech he displayed these figures. His had been a hypothetical case to illustrate a point and not an attempt to indicate how much a

Ibid.
suit of clothes actually cost. In his closing speech he used the actual figures. These figures showed that his theory had been correct, though his hypothetical prices had been wrong. In his final speech, Mills was so full of other facts and figures that he had forgotten about the McKinley suit. His son, however, was sitting in the gallery and sent a note reminding him of the suit. Reading the note, Mills smiled and presented his figures. Without the tariff, the suit of clothes actually cost $4.98 to manufacture. The wool in the suit cost $1.70 and the labor $1.65. Re-adding these to the suit, the cost was $7.33. In addition, the manufacturer was allowed a 40 per cent duty to compensate for the tax on the wool, and 35 per cent to protect him from the imported suit. The total cost, plus the three tariffs, Mills said, was $10.71. Since the manufacturer had to undersell the imported suit, he sold his $4.98 suit for $10.00.31

This incident brings out two things characteristic of Mills—he searched out all the facts, having traced McKinley's suit to the manufacturer, and he usually emerged victorious, though his victories were often gained after defeat—or were the victories of defeat because he clung to honor. In conclusion, he said:

31 Tarbell, The Tariff In Our Times, p. 162.
We are proposing to reduce the price of woolen goods by taking the tax off wool. . . . There has been a great deal of sympathy manifested on the other side for the sheep. They tell us by heavily taxing the wool more wool will grow on the back of the sheep. It is the back of the man we are caring for on this side of the House, and we propose to bring down the price of woolen clothing so that poor people can get enough to wear in the winter. But we are met at the threshold with a proposition from the other side to increase the duties on wool and woolen manufacturers $16,000,000. This would practically prohibit the importation of either wool or woolen goods. . . . We put it safely when we say our product does not exceed 300,000,000 pounds. Our annual consumption is about 600,000,000 pounds. Now if we refuse the importation of the foreign wool to satisfy the wool growers, and refuse the importation of woolen goods to satisfy the wool manufacturers, what are we to do for clothing? I suppose they expect the people to go naked and vote the Republican ticket. (Applause.) But we say to you we shall have plenty of good woolen clothes. Serve the Lord and vote the Democratic ticket.

. . . We stand here today in the eyes of the American people, and in their name, and demand that the Government shall stop taking their money not needed for the support of the Government. From every part of the country they are calling upon us for justice. They are appealing to us for protection in its better and higher sense. They are appealing to us to take the band of the robbers out of their pockets and let them have the benefits of their own labor and enjoy the rewards of their own toil; and, Mr. Speaker, we intend to do it. (Loud and prolonged applause on the Democratic side.)

The "Great Debate" of 1868 ended on this note. The bill passed the House, yeaes 162, nays 149, not voting 14.

Briefly, the Mills Bill was a general reduction of protective duties, its main features being a large substitution

32 *Congressional Record*, 50th Congress, p. 6658.
of ad valorem for specific duties, and the transfer of several raw materials to the free list. The revised schedules, according to the committee, would have reduced customs revenues well over fifty million dollars yearly -- roughly half the amount that was annually increasing the national surplus.

The Great Debate, as it was commonly called, consisted of 151 major speeches. Having begun in the middle of April, the Great Debate was still under way during the political conventions in the summer of 1888. The Democrats re-nominated Cleveland and the Republicans, turned down by Blaine, chose Harrison as their candidate. When the conventions were over, the Democratic majority in the House passed the Mills Bill, and referred it to the Senate Finance Committee. There the Mills Bill became so mutilated as to be unrecognizable. After the election, which the Republicans interpreted as a mandate for protection, the Senate, with thirty-nine Republicans and thirty-seven Democrats, substituted another measure, the Allison Bill. This was a "protectionist" measure and was passed, 39 to 37, and sent to the House. The House refused it, saying that the Constitution requires revenue bills to originate in the House. It was forgotten. The election had been won and the Mills Bill defeated. The Republicans were so pleased with these results that they began work immediately upon a "protectionist" bill, the McKinley Bill.
The Democratic platform of 1888 was based on the Mills Bill and the President's annual message. In part, the platform declared:

"Excessive taxation," "unjust taxation," "unfair taxation" and "unequal taxation," etc. was mentioned every other sentence throughout the platform. The platform also called for speedy passage of the Mills Bill, and Mills made many campaign speeches for fellow Democrats.

The Republican platform stood for "protection," the American system; it denounced the Mills Bill.

The Nation, in a July issue, favored Mills and strongly supported his stand. In the same issue, it pointed to some of the defects of the Republican "protection." For Mills, it said:

(Mills' speech to Tammany) was a model of its kind, and we fully agree with an estimate

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33 Edward Stanwood, A History of the Presidency from 1788 to 1897, p. 468.
34 The Nation, Vol. XLVII, No. 1202, p. 35.
which a Tammany leader made of its influence, that it was worth at least 10,000 votes for the Democratic ticket. . . . Mr. Mills confined himself to a frank and simple explanation of what his bill really proposes to do. . . . 35

The Nation continued by saying that not one man in one hundred knew what the bill actually is and that the Republicans had read neither the bill nor an accurate outline of it. 36

After praising the Democrats, especially Mills and Cleveland, The Nation lashed into the Republicans.

To not only exempt one industry from taxation, but to make it the recipient of taxes, is to give to it the feudal privilege of legal robbery. When, through our local governments, the favored industry subjects property-owners to contribution, the courts have uniformly denounced the crime as 'robbery.' If our national Government should subject the laborers of the country to contribution in order to grant a bounty to the sugar-planters of Louisiana, the same crime would be involved. The Republican party is incapable of reducing the surplus. The policy advocated by one faction violates the moral instincts of the nation; the policy advocated by the other violates the principles of its constitutional law. 37

Another source has this to offer:

Mr. Speaker Carlisle appointed Roger Q. Mills, of Texas, to be chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means. Mr. Mills was no mere 'revenue reformer,' he was an avowed free trader. His opinion upon the character and the effect of protection was expressed in a resolution already quoted, introduced by him in the Forty-fifth Congress. His Democratic colleagues were, most of them, as radical as he. . . . The theory which he, the Speaker and his party associates held, that the tariff must be reduced in the

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., p. 24.
interest of the great body of the people, and with no other tenderness for the so-called rights of manufacturers than was necessary to avoid too abrupt and injurious change, made it entirely proper to disregard the claims of manufacturing centers to be represented upon the committee.

... It was not a new practice to exclude the minority until the bill was ready to be reported. But in this case there were dark hints that the measure was concocted in a subterranean room in the Capitol, that the Committee entrusted the preparation of its machinations against the manufacturers to certain professional pamphleteers of the free trade school, and that clerks in the Treasury department were detailed to assist in making the bill as harmful as possible to the protected industries.

On the other hand, the Democrats maintained that "the withdrawal of protection would be of general advantage, and that ultimately it would benefit manufacturers."39

Notwithstanding the extraordinary assistance from without which the committee is supposed to have had, and its freedom from partisan opposition in the preliminaries, the bill was not in a state to be reported to the House until April 2, four months after Congress was informed by the President of the instant need of a reduction of the surplus. ... The main features of the measure were: (1) a transfer of raw materials to the free list, (2) a large substitution of ad valorem for specific duties, and (3) a general reduction of protective duties.40

... Not one of the speeches was made with the idea that the arguments adduced would change the opinion or the rate of any member. They were, without exception, inspired and permeated with a political purpose.41

39 Ibid., p. 232.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid., p. 234.
Several of the Republican states wanted a reduction, revision and simplification of the tariff. This was characteristic of the party in the Northwest -- Minnesota, Iowa, and Nebraska were struggling against the rest of the Republican party; they were strongly in favor of reduction. They "condemned a system of revenue that compels the farmer of the West to pay tribute to the manufacturer of the East."\(^4^2\)

Some members, on the other hand, were not averse to an excessive revenue, for generous schemes were on foot for the construction of war-ships, coast defenses, and river improvements.\(^4^3\)

Others, too, favored a tariff so high as to be prohibitive to importation, thus reducing the revenue. Cleveland had previously argued against this on the grounds that such a course would also reduce the average family's purchase of consumer goods.

The campaign was based entirely upon the tariff question and the reduction of the revenue. "Societies were organized to promote tariff reform and to defend protection; tons of pamphlets were circulated; never before had there been such a 'campaign of education.' . . . Stump-speakers went up and down the country explaining to farmers, artisans, and miners the significance of the schedules proposed by the Democrats. . . .\(^4^4\)

\(^4^2\) Ibid., p. 68.
\(^4^3\) Ibid., p. 69.
\(^4^4\) Ibid., p. 71.
The President had found an issue upon which to stand in the election of 1888. The leaders of his party had been solidly behind him. Too, those who had opposed him had either been converted or had become impotent opposition. Randall was the outstanding dissenter; and only three other Democrats dared vote against the Mills Bill. The Mills Bill had been the symbol of Cleveland's fight against "protection" and it had been defeated. So was he -- though with a great victory of his own. Harrison had gotten 233 electoral votes to his 168, but he had gotten a popular plurality exceeding 100,000.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, each candidate could claim a victory; and each did claim it as a mandate from the people on the tariff question.

The election of 1888 had not been a vote for protection. Harrison had won with 233 electoral votes against Cleveland's 168, but Cleveland had polled over 100,000 more popular votes. Money and politics had won this election. Opposed to Cleveland, Tammany had used every maneuver at its command to swing the vote to the Republicans. Manufacturers -- particularly those of the iron works -- placed notices in the pay envelopes of their employees threatening unemployment if Cleveland remained in office. In addition to the above, most writers of the period agree that there was a great deal of bribery -- principally in New York and

\textsuperscript{45}Allan Nevins, Letters of Grover Cleveland, p. 168.
Indiana -- and that fear among the laboring classes elected Harrison.

During the debate on the McKinley Bill, Mills said that the Republicans had a majority in both House and Senate and could pass the bill whenever they desired. It would then have a "Hell Gate" to pass through, he warned them. In October of 1890, just before the off-year elections, the McKinley Bill became law. The "Hell Gate" was not passed and the people elected an overwhelming Democratic majority to the House. The Democrats also won control of the Senate.

Prices went up considerably after the passage of the McKinley Bill and merchants throughout the nation laid the blame on the McKinley Bill. Foreign nations accused the United States of raising a Chinese wall around its trade, and they decreased their exports to American shores. Because of the widespread discomfort caused by the provisions of the McKinley Bill, Cleveland was re-elected in the Presidential election of 1892. However, with a strong majority in both Houses, and a definite mandate from the people calling for tariff reform, the Democrats turned their attention to the solving of a question more important to the party -- the silver question.

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46 The Democratic majority in the House was 236 to 88, a loss of 78 seats by the Republicans.
CHAPTER V

THE SPEAKERSHIP AND THE SENATE

As a reaction to the business recession and high cost of consumer items caused by the McKinley Bill, the Democrats were swept back into office in the off-year elections of 1890. As a result of the Great Debate, next to Cleveland, Mills was the most popular Democrat in the nation. The press and the people were of the opinion that he should be and would be elected Speaker. There were two other candidates for the position -- Charles F. Crisp, of Georgia, and William M. Springer, of Illinois. On Tuesday before the Democratic caucus, Mills had 120 votes pledged, but Crisp led on the first ballot. Crisp led because he was an advocate of free silver, and that movement was just beginning to flex its muscles. In temporary retirement in New York, Cleveland, a sound-money man, expected and hoped that Mills would win. Mills had been loyal to him and was a man of principle. Because of the split building up over the silver question, he wondered what would happen to the promises the Democrats had made to the people if Mills were not elected. But he was confident that Mills would be elected and pull
the party together. In a letter, he wrote that, unless 
Mills was elected Speaker, the party would split its seams.¹

During the contest, Springer sent word to Mills that 
he would withdraw and support him if he could be promised 
the chairmanship of the Committee on Ways and Means in re-
turn. Mills refused. Tom Johnson, devoted to Mills, came 
over and said, "I do wish you wouldn't be a fool; give me 
two chairmanships and ask me no questions and I will elect 
you on the next ballot."² Again Mills refused. He would 
not buy the Speakership; if he could not win on his merits 
alone, he would not win. Then the Republicans sent word to 
Mills telling him that if he would withdraw and throw the 
contest into the House that they would elect him.³ On the 
thirtieth ballot, Crisp was elected. He won by only one 
vote and named Springer to head the Committee on Ways and 
Means.

Had he been a little more the politician and a little 
less the man of principle, Mills could have been elected 
Speaker. An idealist, Mills was disillusioned as well as 
defeated. Crisp offered him the number two position on the 
Committee on Ways and Means. Mills refused.

Having been a member of the Committee on 
Ways and Means for ten years, the chairman in

¹Edward Stanwood, A History of the Presidency from 
1789 to 1897, p. 272.
²Tarbell, The Tariff In Our Times, p. 212.
³Ibid.
the fiftieth Congress, the reasons which have in your judgment rendered my appointment as chairman unwise would disqualify me for service on any other part of that Committee, and it would not be sincere to say that it would be agreeable to accept your tender. 4

Crisp then asked Mills to take his pick of several none-too-important chairmanships. Mills had lost to perhaps the ablest politician in the House; he had lost because of politics; he would not tell that politician what position to give him. He was not so constructed; besides, he was bitter. For the rest of his service in the House, a very bitter Mills did little more than occupy a seat.

After the Speakership contest, Mills thumbed through a copy of the Congressional Directory. He checked off the names of twenty-four men who had asked for committee assignments in return for their votes. 5 Undoubtedly, he came very close to apoplexy while engaged in this pastime for, surely, many, if not all, of the twenty-four had received those very assignments from Speaker Crisp. Such was the nature of politics.

In 1891, the Railroad Commission of Texas was created. The chairmanship of the newly-created commission was offered to Senator John H. Reagan, long-time political and personal friend of Mills. Upon Reagan's acceptance, Governor Hogg was obliged to appoint someone to fill the Senate

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p. 211.
vacancy. He appointed Horace Chilton, and a loud cry of protest was heard from every part of the state. The people and the press had no argument against Chilton, but they thought that Colonel Mills, the most popular man in the state and one of the most important and respected Democrats in the nation, should have received the appointment. Bowing to popular sentiment, Chilton resigned from the Senate and the Texas Legislature appointed Mills to finish the term. This term expired March 3, 1893, and Mills was re-elected.

On March 29, 1892, Mills sent a note to Speaker Crisp announcing his resignation from Congress. The next day, his sixtieth birthday, he presented his credentials to the Vice-President and was sworn into the Senate. He assumed the duties of his predecessor and was undistinguished during the remainder of this short term. Because he had so ably headed the Committee on Ways and Means, he was offered a chair in the Senate Finance Committee. As this committee was filled, to make room for Mills, a resolution was unanimously adopted increasing the committee's membership by one. Tired from overwork in the House, Mills declined the offer. Re-elected to the Senate the following year, he was assigned to that committee at the beginning of the legislative session.

Mills first year in the Senate was undistinguished and uneventful. He was sixty years of age, tired, defeated (in
the Speakership contest), and disillusioned. His body had undoubtedly been weakened by the three wounds received in the Civil War. Though all three wounds were serious, the third was so severe that he had not been expected to live. And the two decades in the House -- where he had given his complete attention to his legislative duties -- had sapped much of his great vigor. His body demanded a rest; his service merited one. But Senator Mills could not rest. He was busy writing political and financial articles for several of the leading magazines and, due to his popularity and knowledge, he spent a great deal of time making speeches and engaging in debates. In the Senate, however, his only important speech in the short term was one opposing the Navy Appropriation Bill. He spoke with a brief return of his old fire, voicing his belief that the public debt should be decreased instead. 6

Until 1893, Senator Mills was less prominent as a Senator than he was as a writer and a speaker. As an indication of his prominence on the tariff question, he was quoted in the law-making bodies of foreign countries as an international authority on taxation. 7 In 1893, however, the tariff question again jumped into the center of the political and legislative stage in the form of the Wilson Bill.

6 Congressional Record, 52nd Congress, 1st Session, p. 4267.
7 Stanwood, Tariff Controversies In The Twentieth Century, p. 201.
The principal features of this bill were (1) free raw materials, (2) reduced duties on most factory-made articles, (3) increase of the internal revenue tax on liquors, and (4) an income tax on incomes over $4,000.00. The income tax had been attached because of pressure from the Populists. With seventeen Democrats voting against the bill and no Republicans voting for it, it passed the House 204 to 140. Many had opposed it because it contained an income tax, but the Populists would not vote for any revenue measure which did not contain an income tax.

Senator Voorhes, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, turned the Wilson Bill over to Mills, Vest and Jones. These men then spent seven weeks revising the bill by lowering the duties proposed by the House. The Democrats had a thin majority in the Senate, even with the support of the four Populists in that body, and several Democrats opposed some features of the Wilson Bill. Jones took personal charge of the bill and asked the opposing Democratic Senators what they had to have changed to support the measure. The bill was then modified to please these Senators and was passed by a strictly partisan vote, one Democrat voting nay. Mills was not in the least satisfied with the bill but is quoted as saying he would vote for any bill which reduced the tariff by as much as a nickle.8

8Stanwood, Tariff Controversies In the Twentieth Century, p. 575.
About this same time, Senator Mills made a speech on a question of growing national importance. One strong group favored the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands and another powerful group opposed annexation. Mills delivered two major speeches in the Senate opposing annexation. In his first speech, he said that the islanders should be allowed to work out their own problems. He believed in a free government for others as well as for the United States but he opposed annexation because the Hawaiian sugar planters, not the people, would gain unjustly if the islands were annexed. Because of the sugar bounty, Hawaiian planters would profit greatly from annexation. His second speech differed little from the first one.9

In December, 1896, Mills again attained the prominence in debate that he had known during the late eighties. Two things stirred him from his seat and brought forth speeches from him. A bill had been passed by the House during the previous session that greatly offended Mills. When it came before the Senate, Mills had a prepared speech ready to deliver. The bill was to exclude illiterate immigrants over the age of four from gaining entrance into the United States. Showing the most fire he had unleashed in almost a decade, Mills condemned the measure. Mills spoke eloquently and passionately but the bill passed. President

9Congressional Record, 53rd Congress, 1st Session, p. 7061, and Ibid., 3rd Session, p. 1329.
Cleveland vetoed the measure only to have it passed again. Mills' opposition was not in vain, however, for the bill was amended to exclude only those illiterates over the age of sixteen.

In his speech, Mills protested against the banning of illiterates as he believed that the ability to read and write did not necessarily make a good citizen of a person. Our government, Mills declared, was originally and fundamentally an asylum for the down-trodden peoples of the earth. Only paupers and criminals were excluded. Do not give them an educational test, Mills declared. If they are not paupers or criminals, let them enter.10

In his annual message of December 7, 1896, President Cleveland directed attention to the Cuban insurrection against Spain. He pointed out that the United States had financial as well as sentimental interests in Cuba. Property interests, Cleveland said, as well as philanthropic interests have led to a demand for intervention on the part of the United States. Several courses of action had been suggested to the President by a concerned public. He should confer belligerent rights to the insurgents, or he should recognize the independence of the insurgents. This second course of action was not possible, said Cleveland, because of the lack of any semblance of government by the insurgents.

10See Appendix F for Mills' speech.
Others declared that the United States should buy Cuba from Spain. Still others, said Cleveland, favored armed intervention. The general sentiment was that a war with Spain would be small and of short duration. Two days later, Senator Mills introduced a joint resolution directing the President to take possession of Cuba and hold it until its people were able to establish a republican government and an adequate defense.11 Two other similar measures were introduced on the same day. The administration, however, chose to ignore these resolutions and the demands of the press that the United States take a hand in the Cuban affair.

On January 7, 1897, Mills again focused attention on Cuba -- which the press had never let die down -- by introducing a resolution directing the President to recognize the independence of Cuba. The resolution was tabled but Mills was only beginning. On January 11, he made a major speech on the Cuban question. The speech was an emotional plea for action. It pictured Spain as a tyrant and the Cubans as poor, defenseless peoples desiring freedom. This speech was the principal speech in support of the resolution he had introduced four days earlier. He condemned Cleveland for adhering so strongly to the neutrality laws

11 Congressional Record, 54th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 39.
that he had not even sent an American warship into Cuban waters. The Cubans were suffering, he declared, and should be freed. Cleveland's neutrality was supporting Spain, and 99 per-cent of the American people sympathized with the Cubans.\textsuperscript{12}

At this juncture, a new President took over the reigns of the nation, William McKinley, political enemy of Senator Mills. At first, he too turned a deaf ear to the demands of an aroused press and public that the United States recognize the independence of Cuba and send American troops to aid them in securing that independence. Neither the press nor Senator Mills had lessened their demands for intervention. On April 18, 1898, Mills again made an emotional plea on the behalf of Cuba.\textsuperscript{13}

This was Mills' last speech in Congress. Unlike most of his other major addresses, this speech achieved Mills' goal. As had been previously predicted, the war was short and inexpensive. Soon after this, a weary Mills asked to be relieved of committee duty. He was old and his vitality had been sapped by a quarter of a century of devoted duty in the legislative halls of the United States. The political career of Roger Q. Mills was almost ended. Because of his stand on the silver question, because he had not given

\textsuperscript{12}See Appendix G for excerpts from Mills' speech.

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Congressional Record}, 55th Congress, 1st Session, p. 990.
support to Bryan in the Presidential campaign of 1896, Mills was not supported by the Democratic party and withdrew from the Senatorial race on March 5, 1898.\textsuperscript{14} A year later, when his term expired, Roger Q. Mills retired to his home in Corsicana.

\textsuperscript{14}The Dallas Morning News, March 7, 1898.
CHAPTER VI

RETIREMENT AND RETROSPECTION

From Roger Mills, he became known with increasing respect as Judge Mills, Colonel Mills, and Senator Mills. During his retirement, he could have been very appropriately styled Author Mills. As has been stated before, much of the time he was in the Senate was devoted to writing and speaking. As a writer, he confined his discourses to political and economic questions. Mostly, he wrote on the tariff and was recognized as an international authority on the subject. In brief, his writings ranged from the tariff problem to the Gladstone-Blaine controversy. During the nineties, he was a frequent contributor to Forum and the North American Review. During a period beginning with his appointment as chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, he was often written about in the leading newspapers and magazines. His greatest friend seems to have been Public Opinion and his most persistent enemy was, undoubtedly, the American Economist and Tariff League Bulletin. This publication, dedicated to a high tariff, continually referred to Mills as a crank and a demagogue. In almost every issue of the journal, beginning in the spring of 1888, some reference is made to Mills. The editor frequently
quoted opinions of Mills -- his own and those of the "protectionist" New York Sun. Strongly prejudiced, the magazine denounced Mills for being a "free-trader" instead of a reformer; it would then denounce him for being a reformer. Contradiction meant nothing, apparently, to this magazine. Whatever epithet that seemed handy was applied to Mills.

The editor seems to have relied more on passion than reason in most of his attacks on Mills. In condemning him, they sometimes praised him. In one issue, the magazine declared that Mills favored an income tax and quoted him on his free-trade stand.

Our fathers granted to us a free government. We have established free institutions. We have secured free thought and free speech and free press and free religion and free labor, and we intend to press on until we capture the last gem that burns in the constellation of liberty by restoring to our people the God-given right of free-trade.¹

Upon another occasion, the magazine derisively ridiculed Mills for making speeches all over the country (at $200 apiece) when he should have been in Washington earning his salary.² When Mills was a candidate for the Speakership, this magazine viciously opposed him.³ Another issue

¹American Economist and Tariff League Bulletin, IX, (February 12, 1892), 80.
²Ibid., VI, (October 10, 1890), 230. This is quoted from New York Sun, October 4, 1890.
³Ibid., VII, (May 15, 1891), 297.
displays a derogatory cartoon of Mills and quotes him as saying, "I believe in Free-Trade, free labor, free speech, and a free press." In view of a previous quotation of similar nature, and the use of capital letters in the Free-Trade, it appears that this is not an authentic quotation.

Besides these magazine articles and his many speeches, Mills spent the first few years of his service in the Senate engaged in writing a book. The book is titled Plutocracy and Protection and was never published. With perhaps a little bitterness, Mills dedicated the book, "To those who by their ballots have enslaved themselves and their fellows this little book is respectfully dedicated with the hope that it may hasten the coming of the day of their emancipation." The book contains 299 pages and is divided into ten chapters. The first chapter, "The Rightful Province of Free Government," attempts to show that it is the duty of government to declare and enforce the natural rights of the citizen. Each citizen, Mills wrote, owes himself and his fellows his support of the government. Chapter two, "Just and Unjust Taxation," points out that each person should contribute to the support of government in proportion to the protection of his interests by the government. Accumulated wealth should be taxed, but taxes on the annual products of labor are unequal. When imposed for foreign products at

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5 The manuscript is in the archives of the Barker Historical Library, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.
high rates, the taxes are unnecessary. Chapter three is on duties. It states that high duties decrease wealth instead of increasing it. They also increase the amount of labor required to produce a given product and make labor less productive. Instead of creating wealth, high duties merely transfer and concentrate it. Mills then endeavors to show the effects of concentrated wealth in the United States. Chapter four is an argument for free trade. Employment, production, and consumption are decreased by restricted trade. We import the things we do not produce or cannot produce in sufficient quantity to satisfy demand, Mills argued, and we export our surplus to pay for our imports. He then compared the production and imports in iron and steel. Chapter five returns to duties, showing that high duties make high prices. Prices, he wrote, are reduced by lowering the cost of production and increasing competition. Duties and bounties simply increase the price the consumer must pay for goods. In chapter six, Mills tried to show that wages decrease in proportion to the increase in taxes. Wages, he pointed out, are highest where machinery is used. He compared free-trade England to protected America here to prove his point. In chapter seven, Mills showed that import taxes decrease the value of agricultural products and concentrate wealth. The concentration of wealth, Mills cautioned, fosters aristocratic feelings and anti-republican tendencies. Chapter eight compares the industrial states to
the agricultural states. Mills then turned his attention to the advantages of an income tax and showed the development of some anti-republican tendencies. Chapter nine deals with the treasury system and irredeemable paper money. He attacked the free-silver supporters. Chapter ten is a summary of his arguments for free-trade. The book concludes with Andrew Jackson's farewell address. Though all of the chapters are applicable, to a limited extent, today, chapter eight seems to hold just as true today as when it was written, half a century ago.

Mills book, as the above synopsis indicates, deals almost entirely with the tariff problem. The tariff was the one thing which commanded his full attention for nearly all of his public service. Because he traced things back to their sources, he knew more about the tariff than many of his contemporaries. He believed strongly in free-trade, but he was too much the conservative to advocate such a policy for his country. Mills moved slowly, but no hazard could discourage him from moving.

During the most productive period of Mills' literary career, he received, in 1894, an honorary L.L.D. degree from Washington and Lee. Other than favorable press notices, Mills received few other honors. The others that were offered him were refused, as has already been seen — when

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6Walter Prescott Webb, The Handbook of Texas, p. 201.
he withdrew his name for promotion to general, when he would not allow his name to be put in for nomination as the Democratic candidate for Vice-President. In that same convention, Mills' friend, Tom Johnson, made a motion that Mills -- next to Cleveland, the most popular Democrat in the nation -- address the convention. The motion was unanimously received but Mills was nowhere to be found. He had left the convention hall. No explanation revealing why Mills refused to speak has ever been offered.  

From 1888 on, Mills and McKinley were frequently called upon to debate on the tariff question. One such debate was held in March of 1891 at Williams and Rogers' Rochester Business University. Each man was introduced as the foremost speaker on his side of the controversy. In editorial comment, one newspaper said:

"The principle enunciated, and the line of argument followed by Mr. Mills, are, of course, familiar to the minds of democrats. But in advancing the latter, his style is original, his illustrations forceful, and his conclusions unquestionable."

In another encounter, McKinley made a few derogatory remarks about an illustration from Adam Smith that Mills had used. Mills answered him with another illustration. A small boy had been caught stealing and was reprimanded by

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8 Rochester Daily Union and Advertiser, March 11, 1891.
his mother. "Don't you know it's wrong to steal? Don't
you know what the Bible says?" she asked. "That's an old
story," the boy answered. "Moses told it 4,000 years
ago."9

In the House, after the election of 1882, Mills rose
to the defense of McKinley; the Democrats had a very narrow
majority and were attempting to unseat McKinley. Mills
would not have it. He was convinced that McKinley had won
the seat fairly and should have it. With fire in his voice,
he said:

We are not to determine as partisans, but
as fair and impartial judges. We are not to
determine who ought to have been elected, but
who has been. . . . I would be less than a man
if I should sit here and permit party clamor
around me to drive me to vote against my con-
victions.10

Mills had taken the same stand on the same question in
the previous session.11 In 1882, some Negroes had been
elected as representatives from South Carolina. Mills was
the only Southerner who openly opposed the attempt to un-
seat them. They had been elected, he said, and they must
be seated.12

9 Tarbell, The Tariff In Our Times, p. 163.
10 Congressional Record, 48th Congress, 1st Session,
p. 4587.
11 Ibid., 47th Congress, 1st Session, p. 4459.
12 Ibid., 48th Congress, 1st Session, p. 4763.
During the first session of the Forty-seventh Congress, a resolution was proposed to censure William G. Kelley and White, of Kentucky, for a violent exchange that had occurred between them on the floor. Some swearing had been done, and Springer introduced his resolution because he thought it was the proper method of restoring the dignity of the House. Mills arose to Kelley's defense. Though he did not say so, Mills' words indicate he believed that Kelley was justified in his action. His speech was short but emphatic. He would not vote for the resolution; Kelley was old and had been of great service to his country. He should be excused. The resolution was withdrawn by Springer.  

During the time of the writing of the Mills Bill -- when the measure was in committee -- Mills was often approached by various lobbyists. To avoid repetition and a great loss of time, Mills refused to allow the various manufacturers hearings. As he pointed out, there were already several volumes of recent material available that had been collected by preceding committees. One evening a sugar lobbyist came to Mills' house on L Street, to plead with him. Leaving the sugar baron waiting at the door, the maid went upstairs to Mills to announce the visitor. His bombastic words were heard all over the house, "Tell Mr. _______ that Colonel Mills is not at home."  

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13 Congressional Record, 47th Congress, 1st Session, p. 4905.
14 Information from Miss Annie Lee Robbins.
Others tried to push Mills into hearing the arguments of the various manufacturers and other lobbyists. The "Parsee Merchant" was the most prominent of these. He was a noted reporter, writer, and economist and associated with most of the famous and wealthy men of Washington. In trying to get Mills to meet one particular, important lobbyist, he invited Mills and the other members of the Ways and Means Committee to dinner. During the meal, a card was brought in to the host. He glanced at it and announced with assumed surprise, "Why, it's my friend Mr. Havermeyer; bring him in." Mills was not going to be trapped so easily; as Havermeyer came in one door, he left by another.15

Mills was recognized by his fellow congressmen as one of the most studious and informed men in the House. As an orator and a parliamentarian, Mills showed his greatest talent in the Great Debate, in arguing for his own bill for tariff reduction. That he was a guardian of liberty and the rights of men has been seen, particularly in his eloquent pleas for the Cubans. His most successful struggle in defense of men's rights, and as a parliamentarian, however, was in the session of 1889-90. The Republicans had a very slender majority in the House. It was to their advantage to unseat a number of Democrats. This they set about trying to do, claiming that their action was not a partisan

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move but an attempt to maintain the purity of national elections. Under the leadership of Mills, the Democrats used every parliamentary tactic they could think of, as well as eloquent arguments, to keep their fellow Democrats in Congress as long as possible. One contemporary appraised Mills' contribution to this Democratic victory in the following manner:

His masterly generalship in the successful struggle against the tyranny of Speaker Reed, resulted in preventing the passage of the infamous Elections (Force) Bill, will go down in history as one of the grandest parliamentary battles ever fought in the cause of civil liberty. . . .16

Speaker Reed, called "Czar Reed" by many historians for his conduct in this session, used his official powers to recognize only the members of his own party. On one occasion, the Democrats refused to answer roll call, thus the House failed to reach a quorum. Speaker Reed was not to be hamstrung so easily. He called out to the clerk the names of many of the Democrats seated before him and gained a quorum. Violating long-established custom, Reed counted these men as present but not voting. So angry were many Democrats over this and other tactics of Reed that at times they moved toward the chair with menacing and denunciatory

shouts against the Speaker. On other occasions, they left the hall in a body.17

Speaker Reed was severely criticized for his arbitrary conduct throughout this affair and received much newspaper publicity, some editors calling him "Czar Reed." To make Reed's methods the established rules of the House, the Committee on Rules introduced a new code to the House on February 6, 1890. It came up for debate on February 10.

Mills was the first Democrat to speak on the new code. He criticized the code as a new departure in parliamentary procedure, declaring that it would reverse the forward evolution of legislation. The code, he said, presented the conception that minorities have no rights and that the majority, like ancient kings, could do no wrong. It was a very eloquent speech and, like many Mills delivered, a lecture on the proper process of government and the rights of people.18 He concluded what seems to have been about an hour-long speech by saying, probably with a tilted chin, "We appeal to the judgment of the people of the country, and by that judgment we are perfectly willing to abide." Great applause met Mills' ringing conclusion, both from the galleries and the Democratic side of the House. And, in the following

17Marion Mills Miller, Great Debates In American History, p. 342.
18See Appendix H for excerpts from Mills' speech.
election, the people upheld Mills by their judgment and re-elected Cleveland and an overwhelming Democratic majority in Congress.

During the quarter of a century that Roger Q. Mills served in the national House and Senate, he took a stand and made an eloquent speech on every controversial issue that came up. Sometimes he was the calm teacher, sometimes the irate, offended defender of democracy, as he understood it. He served under only one Democratic President, Cleveland, and was almost always a member of the minority party. He had not been in Congress long before he was recognized as the minority leader, a position he maintained throughout all of his career except when his party was in charge of legislation. So high was he in the esteem of his fellow Democrats that they referred to him as the "Lion of Democracy."\(^{19}\)

Roger Q. Mills is important for his fight for tariff reform and his ability as a parliamentarian. A student and a statesman rather than a politician, he did not rise to supreme heights in his party. Except for his tariff reduction bill and his thwarting of the arbitrary tendencies of Speaker Reed, he receives no place in our history books. He should be remembered, however, primarily as a man who held honor dear and upheld, always, the democratic principles as put forth by Jefferson. Though an orator without

peer, it was as a ready defender of the rights of the people, not as a ready debator, that his career is most important to America. His actions were always calculated, for he always had posterity in mind. Though one of the foremost legislators of his time, Roger Q. Mills, the "Lion of Democracy," is more deserving of our attention as a teacher of democratic principles. It was not enough to speak on such things, as Mills eloquently did; Mills set an example by the way he conducted his life, an example that could not be ignored.
APPENDIX A

COLONEL MILLS' OFFICIAL REPORT

"This brigade, composed of Colonel Wilkes' Texas regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison's Arkansas regiment, and Captain Douglas' Texas battery, under command of Brig. Gen. James Deisher, moved about 3 p.m. on Saturday, the 19th ultimo, from a point near the junction of the La Fayette and McLemore's Valley roads, toward our extreme right and in rear and parallel with our line of battle.

"About 4:30 p.m. we crossed a branch of the Chickamauga and moved directly and hastily forward to the extreme right, where the battle seemed raging with great fierceness. After passing for some time through swarms of stragglers, wounded, and prisoners, we arrived on the line and were formed, facing our right flank, and moved forward to the attack, and proceeded some 200 yards, when the brigade was halted and ordered to lie down. In a few minutes we rose up and advanced to the front, and occupied some time in getting our position. It was now after dark, but the firing was heavy and constant between the enemy and some brigade opposite our extreme right and perpendicular to our line. We were not more than a hundred yards from his right flank, where he had a battery of artillery firing at the troops.
on our right. We remained there some minutes. Brigadier-
General Deshler did not know but that the battery was our
own, and declined to advance upon it in the dark, it being
then impossible to distinguish friend from foe. The con-
test in front of our right was soon decided in favor of the
Confederates. The enemy was beaten back, and there was a
temporary lull on the field. The skirmishers from Colonel
Wilkes' regiment, moving forward in the dark, came suddenly
and unexpectedly on the enemy's line and were captured.
He, in attempting to retreat from the brigade in his front,
as unexpectedly came upon Colonel Wilkes' regiment, on his
flank, where he was greeted with a volley that killed and
wounded several and caused them to propose a surrender,
when about 100 prisoners (including several officers) were
taken, together with 2 stand of colors, from the Seventy-
seventh Illinois and the Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania, by
Colonel Wilkes' regiment, against which the main force came.
Some dozen or more were taken each by Lieutenant-Colonel
Anderson and Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison.

"In this affair Colonel Wilkes also recaptured his
skirmishers. This, with the exception of occasional firing
by our skirmishers, terminated the firing for the night.
We moved back several hundred yards and formed line of bat-
tle, and lay down to rest till morning. In the night our
line was again reformed, throwing forward our left wing.
"About 9:30 o'clock on the morning of the 20th, we moved off a short distance by the left flank and then advanced to the front, passing through a portion of Major-General Cheatham's division. Having gained an open ground several hundred yards in our front, the enemy began, from one or two long-range guns, to shell our line, and as we approached nearer gave us several shots of cannister, killing or wounding some 15 or 20 men.

"We finally arrived about 10 a.m., on the ground we were ordered to occupy. We found it being abandoned by the troops who were occupying it before we came. We advanced to the crest of the hill, some 200 yards in front of the enemy's barricades and breastworks, when he opened a destructive fire upon us. We were ordered to lie down and commence firing. We now began the engagement in earnest, but at great disadvantage. The enemy was behind his defenses and we were without cover. He had two batteries of artillery; we had none, our own battery not being able to get a position to give us aid. Captain Semple's splendid battery was on the hill with us and on the extreme left of the brigade when we moved up and occupied the hill. It fired a few shots, and was moved to some other portion of the field. The enemy poured on our heads from 10 a.m. to 1:30 or 2 p.m. a constant and terrible fire of artillery and musketry, which we returned with our rifles with the same constancy and stubbornness."
"About 12 a.m. our supply of ammunition began to give out, and I sent a courier to Brigadier-General Deshler to inform him of the fact, and to ask where we could get more. A few minutes after I saw him coming toward my right, some 40 paces from me, when he was struck by a shell in the chest and his heart literally torn from his bosom.

"I may pause here and pay a passing tribute to the memory of our fallen chief. He was brave, generous, and kind even to a fault. Ever watchful and careful for the safety of any member of his command, he was ever ready to peril his own. Refusing to permit a staff officer to endanger his life in going to examine the cartridge boxes to see what amount of ammunition his men had, he cheerfully started himself to brave the tempest of death that raged on the crest of the hill. He had gone but little way when he fell -- fell as he would wish to fall -- in the very center of his brigade, in the midst of the line, between the ranks, and surrounded by the bodies of his fallen comrades. He poured out his own blood upon the spot watered by the best blood of his brigade. Among the host of brave hearts that were offered upon the altar of sacrifice for their country on that beautiful Sabbath, there perished not one nobler, braver, or better than his. He lived beloved, and fell lamented and mourned, by every officer and man of his command. He sleeps on the spot where he fell, on the field of his country's victory and glory, surrounded by the bodies
of those who stood around him in life and lie around him in death.

"A messenger from Colonel Wilkes' regiment informed me of the fact soon after General Deshler fell; also that Colonel Wilkes was wounded and not with the regiment. Just at this critical juncture our ammunition was exhausted, and no one knew where to get more. I assumed command, and supposing that the enemy would advance as soon as the firing ceased, I ordered bayonets fixed and the cartridge boxes of the wounded and dead be gathered, and one round from them to be given to each man to load his gun with, and hold his fire in reserve to repel an assault. While this order was being executed, Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson, who was on the left of my regiment, sent Lieutenant Graham to inform me that the four left companies had not been firing. Being of too great a distance from the enemy, he had the good sense to keep them from wasting their ammunition unnecessarily. I immediately ordered those four companies to the front of the hill, where the fire was hottest, and ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson to take command of them, and hold the hill at every hazard till I could get ammunition and have it distributed. I soon procurred the ammunition and refilled my cartridge boxes.

"At this time the major-general's staff came to me and informed me that I was ordered to hold the hill on which the brigade was formed; I was not permitted to advance, and must
not retire if it were possible to hold my position. I therefore moved my command at once some 20 or 30 paces to the rear of the crest and on the side of the hill, for cover, leaving a body of sharpshooters behind trees on the top of the hill to keep up a fire with the enemy. The enemy's fire soon slackened down to a contest between the skirmishers. At the same time he advanced a line of skirmishers toward the open space between my command and Brigadier-General Polk, on my right. I soon received information from Lieutenant-General Coit, then commanding Wilkes' regiment, that the enemy was moving around my right flank in force. I ordered him to throw out a company of flankers and engage them. In less than twenty minutes I was informed that our skirmishers were retiring before the enemy. I immediately ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison to reinforce the skirmishers with one company from his regiment, which was promptly done. Still hearing of this flank movement, I ordered Captain Kennard, of Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson's regiment to re-enforce the two companies with his, take command himself of those companies, put his men under good cover, and hold the enemy in check at all hazards. He very promptly moved his company to the ground, assumed command of the three companies, repulsed the enemy's skirmishers, and held his position without serious struggle. A straggling fire was kept up between the enemy and my sharpshooters till late in the evening, when the advance of our
left wing caused him to abandon his works and take to his heels.

"The troops of my command, both officers and men, behaved with the greatest bravery, coolness, and self-possession during the whole engagement. They advanced with a steady step, under heavy fire of shell, cannister, and musketry, to their position, and held it with firmness and unwavering fortitude throughout the fight. Texans vied with each other to prove themselves worthy of the fame won by their brothers on other fields, and the little handful of Arkansas troops showed themselves worthy to have their names enrolled among the noblest, bravest, and best of their State. It is scarcely possible for them to exhibit higher evidences of courage, patriotism, and pride on any other field. They were not permitted to advance and would not retire, but as brave men and good soldiers they obeyed the orders of their general and held the hill.

"Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson, Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison, and Major Taylor remained constantly in the line, handled their commands with ability, and conducted themselves gallantly through the entire action."

Post-War Account of William Hugh Roberts, Civil War Veteran of Mills' Regiment

"... The real fight at Chickamanga began Saturday morning on the Federal left. ... It was at carbine range, too, and there they stood, both sides, for nearly four hours
at times not further apart than across a Washington street. . . . Saturday night was cold. The battle raged as long as either side could see. The men, terribly fatigued with the long, terrible, nervous tension of the whole day's battle, fell back, established a thin line of pickets along their fronts, and without fires, ate what they had to eat, and lay down shivering with the cold mountain wind to get as much sleep as they might before the next day's terrible death-grapple began. . . . Never was there better fighting material than in that Arkansas and Texas brigade. It was composed of Nineteenth and Twenty-fourth Arkansas regiments of infantry, the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, Twenty-fourth, and Twenty-fifth Texas regiments -- formerly cavalry, but having their horses killed or worn out and being themselves reduced to skeleton battalions, were consolidated into one regiment called the 'first Consolidated Texas' -- and the Sixth, Tenth and Fifteenth regiments of Texas infantry, these with James Douglas! Texas battery made first Doshler's then Mills' brigade at Chickamanga.

"It must have been about 10 o'clock when this part of Cleburne's division began to advance. The Federal line was formed on the crest of a low ridge. They had hurriedly protected themselves by low breastworks and defenses made of clogs and fence rails. Two hundred yards in front of these works the Texas command advanced three lines deep, with hats drawn over their faces bending forward as though they were
in a terrible hailstorm. So it was, but it was a hail whose stroke was death. The rapid well delivered fire of the trained Union soldiers, sometimes not fifty yards distant, seemed not to have the slightest effect upon the courage of those veterans. When at last they had to fall back, when their lines were enfiladed by double shattered batteries, whose brass guns leaped from the ground, like things of life, when they were fired -- even then they stood and fought with cool desperation.

"You have seen Mills in the house in debate when he was stirred. Did you ever note how the man seemed to grow taller when he went into action? The thing I am talking of happened twenty-eight years ago. He was a young man then, though he is but in his prime now. The lower part of his face was set as though it were cast of iron. There he sat on his horse, to the right of his leading regiment, a little advanced, as firm and unchangeable as though man and horse were cast of iron.

"The loss in Cleburne's division, to which this command belonged, was 34 per cent.

"Mills had a fine martial figure then, and was a typical Confederate Colonel -- prepared to be obeyed when he commanded, and to equally himself obey. Gen. 'Pat' Cleburne came along that part of his line when the fire was hottest. He remarked Mills, and said to Calhoun Brenahan, his adjutant general . . . who happened to be with them:
'By ——, did you ever see a finer personification of cool courage than that Texas Colonel at this point?' pointing with his sword to Mills.

"... Never will I look upon a man who ... bore himself more gallantly and better looked the officer and gentleman—that he was and is—than did Roger Quarles Mills at Chickamauga's bloody stream, well named by the Cherokees the 'river of death!'"
APPENDIX B

EXCERPTS FROM MILLS' SPEECH ON THE
HAYES - TILDEN ELECTION CONTROVERSY

"I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet-hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed."

"My convictions of duty compel me to oppose the com-
promise of the joint committee. Having sworn to support
the Constitution, without any 'mental reservation or pur-
pose of evasion,' I will endeavor to keep the obligation
that oath imposes without variableness or shadow of turning.
It is the supreme law of the land, and it extracts obedi-
ence from every citizen. I have been taught to believe
that it created a government whose power was divided into
three co-ordinated and independent departments -- that
every step toward the concentration of these three into one
is a step fraught with great peril to popular liberty, and
when this union is consumated we should have the very es-
sence and definition of despotism.

"For a century the Constitution had borne the people
of the United States through the storms of domestic and
foreign wars and was able to take them through this storm.
In objection to the Constitution was the popular demand for its disobedience.

"Difference in opinion about who is elected and who will count the vote? On previous occasions, the votes have been sent to the Vice-President and in presence of both houses counted.

"There is a serious objection to this bill on the score of policy. It is the first step toward an alliance between the legislative and the judicial department; and when the union is completed the judiciary must pass completely under the influence of the legislative department; it will lose its independence and its integrity and become the mere serf of political power. It will be degraded. Each of these departments must be kept perfectly independent of each other or civil liberty must perish. . . .

"If the Constitution is assailed by a powerful combination for its overthrow, we can best do our duty by rising to the highest courage in its defense. . . . Let us 'ask nothing but what is right and submit to nothing that is wrong.' These, sir, are the lights that fall along my pathway, and these are the lamps by which my feet are guided, and I will follow them with the faith and devotion that the philosophers had who followed the star that led them to the author of truth."
APPENDIX C

SPEECH CONCERNING THE PUBLIC DEBT

"The adherents of one (theory) maintain that a public debt is a public blessing; that it is so much added to the national wealth; that it facilitates exchanges, stimulates trade, promotes agriculture, and encourages every species of industry; that it brings prosperity and power to a nation, and makes it independent and self-supporting in war as well as in peace. All these advantages, so incalculable in their value, flowing directly from a funded debt, open to them every avenue to their individual improvement and remove every impediment in the path of their progress upward as well as downward. Let us secure to them the enjoyment of every reward that labor offers as an inducement to toil. Then the Government will feel its greatest strength as it confidently leans for support upon all the arms and heads and hearts of its people."
APPENDIX D

J. B. CRANFILL'S ACCOUNT OF A POLITICAL
DEBATE WITH MILLS

"No telegram I ever received on any political or
commercial question affected me as did this one. (This
was a telegram inviting him to come to Crawford, Texas,
to meet Colonel Mills in debate on the prohibition ques-
tion.) I was not present when David received the challenge
to go out and meet Goliath, but I entered into his feeling
when this request to debate with Roger Q. Mills came to me.
At that time, Mr. Mills was the most interesting figure in
Texas politics. He had been greatly honored by the people,
and was on the tidal wave of prestige and popularity. The
prohibition question was being agitated from one end of
Texas to the other, and Mr. Mills had taken the side of the
whiskey men. In former years he had been an advocate of
temperance and prohibition. In 1856 he was the editor of
the Prairie Blade, published at Corsicana. It was a very
ardent and unflinching advocate of temperance and prohibi-
tion. I had in my possession certain quotations from this
paper. These I had filed away for reference, but did not
know that I should need them so soon.
"That night I do not think I slept a wink. I was busied with the ardent task of preparation for the ordeal of the next evening. I reached Crawford about five o'clock. Mr. Mills had preceded me. He was stopping at the little Crawford hotel. The appointment was his and not mine, so the Prohibition Committee was indebted to him for the courtesy of a division of time. I had previously met Mr. Mills, so it was pleasant to renew our acquaintance. He was exceedingly courteous to me, and repeated to me what he had said to the committee — that he was glad to have the pleasure of dividing time with me.

"We began the meeting at eight o'clock. He spoke first. The agreement was that he would speak for one hour, that I should follow in a speech of an hour and a half, and that he would then close in a speech of a half hour. The audience met in the largest hall in the village. The house was packed to suffocation. There was no standing room anywhere. Perhaps never before or since has such a large audience assembled at Crawford. When Mr. Mills arose to speak, he was greeted with thunderous applause. He was a popular man, highly esteemed by his personal friends, and idolized by his political supporters.

"He began his speech by quotations from three distinguished authorities — Thomas Jefferson, Horatio Seymour and Samuel J. Tilden. He traversed the beaten track of anti-prohibition declarations. He rang the charges on
personal liberty, democracy and 'prohibition won't prohi-
bit,' setting great store by the quotation made from the
three statesmen named. I, of course, was unable to verify
his quotations, but I did not call them in question. His
hour speedily passed. He made a magnificent presentation
of the whiskey side of the prohibition question, and an
ovation was tendered him as he took his seat.

"I had taught at Crawford, and had married there.
Most all of those who were present remembered me. It had
only been seven years since I had left that community.
There was perhaps not a man or woman present who believed
that I would be able to vanquish the anti-prohibition giant,
but I had determined to give him the best I had in my shop.

"I opened my speech by the statement that following
the lead of Mr. Mills in giving authorities on his side, I
would quote from three eminent authorities on the prohibi-
tion side of the question. My first quotation was from the
Bible, from the book of Habakkuk, 'Woe unto him that givest
his neighbor drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and
makest him drunken.' I enlarged upon the teachings of God's
Word concerning the question of tempting others to do wrong,
and particularly dwelt upon the verse that has been quoted.
I next introduced the testimony of William E. Gladstone, at
that time and for many succeeding years the foremost states-
man of the English-speaking world. I quoted from him as
follows: 'It is the duty of government to make it easy for
people to do right and hard for the people to do wrong.' I spared no encomiums in my treatment of these historic and heroic words from the apostle of English patriotism.

"The next authority I introduced, I heralded as one of the great men of our time. I spoke of him as one who had received the suffrages of his people, and who step by step had been advanced to one of the chief posts of responsibility and power in our nation. I referred to him as the orator of the silver tongue, as the majestic statesman, as the generous and open-hearted friend, and as the masterful leader of a great political party. As impressively as I could, I then read the extracts from The Prairie Blade, which I deeply regret that I cannot here present. After having read these, I said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, the quotation I have just read is from the pen of Honorable Roger Q. Mills, of Texas!'

"I have witnessed many outbursts of applause and enthusiasm, but the terrific vociferations that followed the reading of this extract and this announcement, I have never seen equalled. Mills turned all sorts of colors. He turned and twisted in his seat. He saw that the tables had turned. Like a Goliath fallen, he felt the weight of the point I had scored against him. . . ."
APPENDIX E

QUOTATION FROM THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS
OF OCTOBER 23, 1886

"There are occasional whispers and hints from the
Ninth Congressional District which, coupled with attendant
incidents, indicate that a movement is on foot to retire
Roger Q. Mills from Congress. Perhaps the people of the
Ninth Congressional District can afford to do this, but if
they should do it neither the people of Texas as a whole
nor the Democrats of the United States will be inclined to
thank them for their action. Roger Q. Mills is one of the
most useful and able men in the House of Representatives.
He is respected by honest men of all parties. He is a
philosophical statesman, rather than a 'practical' politi-
cian, and confines his work to legislation rather than to
office brokerage. It is easy to understand why many of the
ambitious politicians of Waco, Belton, and Brenham would
like to have an agent in Washington to look after their
spoils. Mr. Mills has not banked on the spoils as the
chief prop of his ambitions. He made no attempt to bribe
the politicians of his district with postoffices, Indian
agencies, revenue collector-ships, United States marshal-
ships and other specimens of federal bounty. He has at-
tended to the wants and wishes of his constituents. When
they desired a postmaster appointed he presented their petition to the Postmaster General, and if the people were unanimous for one person he recommended the appointment. If there were factions supporting different candidates, Mr. Mills would decline to take part, but gave all an equal chance. He is not the spoilsman's friend. Now, it appears that the spoilsmen, the Prohibitionists and those ambitious for succeeding Mr. Mills, are paving the way for his defeat. The Waco Examiner, which prides itself on its promptness to sneeze when the machine politician takes snuff, joins with feeble alacrity in the anti-Mills crusade.

"It is true that it is the duty of good Democrats to support Mr. Mills, not because he has what the organs call the 'regular nomination,' but because he is one of the ablest, clearest, boldest Democrats in the country. Carlisle, Morrison and Mills have done more to keep the Democrats in the House of Representatives from aping the Republicans than any three men in the country. Mills has been a thorough Democrat on the stump, a thorough Democrat in all his acts and teachings. Though there are more Prohibitionists in his district than in any other district in the state, he has not been afraid to meet them face to face and to combat their propositions. In Congress Mr. Mills has worked persistently and earnestly to lift the burdens of unjust and unequal taxation from the great consuming masses of the country. While other Congressmen were hinting in the
departments for offices for their henchmen, Roger Q. Mills was attending to his duties as a legislator, laboring with Democrats to wipe out war taxes and the whole system of robber devices with which class legislation had saddled the people. Surely there must be too many good Democrats in Mr. Mills' district to allow this sacrifice. But if he should be defeated, the tariff barons and the whole tribe of beneficiaries of legislative devices for spoilation will rejoice, and true Democrats the country over will be grieved. . . . "
APPENDIX F

MILLS' SPEECH AGAINST BILL TO EXCLUDE ILLITERATE IMMIGRANTS

"I do not believe that the ability to read and write constitutes the whole sum of what it takes to make a good average citizen of the United States. This is a change of the policy of our Government adopted at its very foundation. We are losing sight of a fundamental truth that was at the bottom of our Government when it was formed, that we were erecting on this continent a government which was to be set free and the home of a free people, that it was to be the asylum of the downtrodden and the oppressed of other countries. We admitted all to come to our shores except paupers and criminals. The pauper who could do nothing to support the government or to help build up the society which sustained him had no right to put himself upon our society to become a charge. The criminal is a violator of law, and we have a natural right to exclude all such from coming to our shores. That has been the policy of our Government from its foundation until the present time. Now, sir, it seems the civil-service idea has taken such a hold upon the American people that we are extending it to the immigration of foreigners coming to this country; and we are, I imagine,
to establish a civil-service commission to try these people so as to determine whether they can read and write, and whether they understand the Ten Commandments in the Bible or the ten commandments in the Constitution the first ten amendments which were referred to by the Senator from Alabama [Mr. Morgan].

"I remember some years ago a distinguished citizen of Ohio was telling me about some Irishmen who sought naturalization in one of the courts of Cincinnati. One of the judges told the leading Irishman who had his fellow countrymen in charge to take them out, to read to them the Constitution of the United States, to explain it to them, and see whether or not they understood it, and then to come back and report in court after he had performed his duty. He took them out and read the Constitution to them from beginning to end, and explained it to them, and brought them back into court. The judge said: "Pat, have you read the Constitution to them?" "Yes, sir." "Do they understand it?" "Yes, your honor; they understand it and are delighted with it." [Laughter]

"I am opposed to making an educational test of citizenship for those who are coming to this country. I am willing to receive them if they are not paupers and criminals and give them an opportunity to be educated and become good citizens here. Some of the very best citizens we have in this country are men who have come to us from foreign
countries. Our forefathers were foreigners; great numbers of them could not read and write; and yet they laid the foundation of the greatest republic of the earth.

"This is a free country. We have hitherto invited the oppressed of the world to come and enjoy the blessings of liberty with ourselves, and now we say:

Because your government is a despotic government and has enslaved you and your children and it is impossible for you ever to educate them, you shall be proscribed from coming to this country and enjoying the blessings of a free government.

"This is the only really free country in the world.

It is a peculiar government among the governments and nationalities of the world. This continent was dedicated to liberty when this Government was erected, to be the home of a free people, of a self-governing people, of a people who held their liberties in their own hands; and now we are told that the civil service must apply to the immigration of people coming from foreign countries, and a man or his children who cannot stand the test of a civil-service examination must be remanded back to despotism again because they have lived in a despotic government which cared not for them.

"Mr. President, I am opposed to the educational test. The capacity to read and write is no evidence of virtue either in manhood or womanhood, and I have not a doubt but that the penitentiaries of every State in the Union are full of criminals who can read and write, and read and write well.
I have not a doubt that the majority of the wretches whose necks have been broken on the gallows could read and write. The acquirement of the capacity to read and write does not dispel vice and wickedness from the heart. On the contrary, there are thousands and hundreds of thousands of good people in this country and in other countries who cannot read and write. I doubt very much if one in ten of the men and women who first came to this country could read and write, but yet see what a precious heritage they have created in this country and bequeathed to us.

"These, sir, are the reasons which constrain me to vote against this bill, and to preserve and persevere and continue in the policy of our fathers to keep the test of pauperism and crime the only test to be applied to foreigners coming to enjoy this heritage of liberty with us."

APPENDIX G

EXCERPTS FROM MILLS’ SPEECH OF JANUARY 11, 1897, ON CUBA

"Do we owe no duty to the poor, struggling people whom Spain is butchering every hour. We have said for one hundred years, and we say it to-day, and the President repeats it in this very message, that we will let no other power interfere in Cuba. We will not let them go and assume a protectorate over that island. We have shut them out from all houses of refuge; we have condemned them to slavery and to the despotism of the assassin who occupies the throne of Spain. We have done it; and we repeat it day by day, and yet shall we sit still in the Senate and in the House of Representatives and in the Executive chair of this nation and talk about our duty to Spain? We owe no duties to a despot, except the duties that we have covenanted in treaties that we have made with her, and which she has persistently refused to execute.

"We owe a duty to the people of Cuba. We said in the very beginning of our history that Cuba should remain under the dominion of Spain. We said no other European government should acquire it. We said France should not have Louisiana, and we compelled her to sell it to us. We took the same ground with reference to Florida in 1811. We were then in
a condition of quasi war with England and France. It was apprehended by our people that Great Britain was trying to get possession of Florida. On the 3d of January, 1811, Mr. Madison sent a message to Congress in which he said the country east of the Perdido River was so intimately connected with the security and tranquility of the United States that he asked Congress to say by a declaration 'that the United States could not see, without serious inquietude, that country pass from the hands of Spain into that of any other foreign power.' Congress passed the act, and authorized him to take forceable possession of the territory, which he did, and occupied it with the army, notwithstanding Spain was the proprietor of the territory; and from that day on to the day when the gallant Colonel Monroe, as President of the United States, threw the gauntlet of the Young Republic at the feet of the Holy Alliance and dared them to lift it have we said that this hemisphere was not to be dominated by European influence.

"Mr. President, we owe something to our people in conjunction with the debt we owe the poor, oppressed people of Cuba. If I had the place which the President has I would call upon the Congress of the United States to give me the power to take the armed fleets of this Government to Habana, and I would there protect the people of the United States or I would reduce those fortresses to a mass of martar and ruin." [applause in the galleries]
Mills continued to warm with each phrase which flowed from his lips. In reference to the execution of Sanguilly, he roared, "... I care nothing about the verdicts of the courts of Spain or the courts of any other country on earth. If the citizen of the United States, in the judgment of his own Government, has violated no law, if he does not merit the punishment prescribed by a foreign government, I would make the atmosphere around Madrid smell of sulphur for a month. [applause in the galleries]"

He concluded with the following paragraph.

"Mr. President, I feel that the people of the United States are honor bound to interfere for the deliverance of these people; that they are in honor bound to protect our own people on that island to see that when they are in possession of their rights not a hair on their heads shall fall to the ground. Whether the Congress of the United States or the President shall go forward to the discharge of their high duty, so long as I remain in this body as a representative of the people of Texas I will speak their views in favor of the discharge of every obligation of this Government and in favor of rescuing those poor people from the dungeon into which we have committed them. [applause in the galleries]"

The debate raged on in the Senate for two more years, and, finally, under another President, the United States went to war in Cuba's behalf. Mills -- and others -- had
never, in the two-year interval, lessened their efforts to have the United States recognize the Republic of Cuba and to back it up with guns, if necessary.
APPENDIX H

EXCERPTS FROM MILLS’ SPEECH AGAINST PROPOSED NEW CODE OF HOUSE RULES

"The code of rules which the majority of the committee have reported to the House for its adoption is a new departure in parliamentary law. It is a proposition to reverse the legislative engine and to run back on the track upon which we have been running forward for a whole century. It is based upon the newly discovered idea, that in this country minorities have no rights, and that majorities are all-powerful, that they speak by inspiration, that their utterances are infallible and their actions impecable. It is the resurrection of the old, exploded idea of centuries ago that the king is the divinely appointed agent of the Almighty, and of course 'the king can do no wrong.'

"It is not, Mr. Speaker, the theory upon which our fathers built this great temple of free government. It is not the theory upon which our Government has been administered for a century. The great object of our Government, as proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence, is to secure the inalienable rights of the citizen..."

"How are these rights to be secured? Certainly not by subjecting them all to the caprice and whim of a majority."
Oh, no. . . . Why, sir, they knew that power when vested in a million of people or in one man, without any limit upon its exercise, is a tyrant. Hence our Government is a government of checks and balances. It is a government of limitations, delegations, and prohibitions.

"Within the jurisdiction of the majority, the majority is supreme. . . ."

". . . But there are some powers our fathers thought it dangerous for majorities to have, and they said that majorities should not have them. They put majorities under the ban of suspicion. They surrounded them with limitations. . . . A majority can raise and support an army, but it cannot raise and support a church. It can create a court, but it cannot create an establishment of religion. In that the minority is superior to the majority.

"A majority can create a navy, but it cannot create a military commission to try any citizen in time of peace. A majority can close our ports, but it cannot close our mouths. . . . A majority may suppress an insurrection, but it cannot suppress the freedom of the press. . . . A majority may prevent the assembling of a hostile army, but it cannot prevent the peaceable assembly of the people to petition the Government for a redress of their grievances. . . ."

"Mr. Speaker, it is not only in our national Constitution we see these limitations thrown around majorities. It is so in every State constitution in the Union. What is it
for? It is to protect the minority. . . . It is a check to the madness of the majority, or its caprice, or its wantoness, to use the word employed by Mr. Jefferson. . . .

"The rules prescribed under the power conferred by the Constitution of the United States are for the protection of the minority. . . . That is one of the objects of making rules. . . . Of course rules are intended to secure the orderly procedure of the business of this body, but at the same time, they are intended to cause the House to halt, to pause, to reflect, and in some instances . . . to go back and inquire of the sober second thought of the people again. . . .

"Mr. Speaker, we have appealed to the sober second thought of the people with the claim that the majority shall first make rules for the conduct of the business of the House, and, having done that, then try the case presented upon its merits. If, in that event, the contestant was entitled to his seat, award it to him; but if, on the other hand, the contestee was admitted to have the right to the seat, let him hold it. But instead of that they said they intended to empty the seat, that they had the power and the manhood to do it, and that they would do it. And so, Mr. Speaker, they did. But I once heard a story that is applicable here, a story of a little bull that had the hardihood to get in front of a locomotive running at sixty miles an hour and boldly challenge its advance. He did not stay
very long, it is true. After the train passed, there was
nothing left of the belligerent little bull but his horns
and hoofs; and some one standing by and watching the con-
test said, 'Little fellow, I admire your courage, but damn
your judgment.' [Laughter.]

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