A STUDY OF SOUTHERN INSURGENCY WITHIN THE TEXAS
CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, 1933-1938

THESIS

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

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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Denton, Texas
August, 1976
Haney, Jan P. A Study of Southern Insurgency Within the Texas Congressional Delegation, 1933-1938. Master of Arts (History), August, 1976, 126 pp., bibliography, 100 titles.

This study focuses upon the Texas congressional delegation from 1933 to 1938 in an attempt to determine the extent of southern insurgency within that group. Following an examination of the Redeemer-insurgent dichotomy in southern politics since Reconstruction, the thesis analyzes roll-call votes on New Deal legislation concerning agricultural, financial, relief, and labor reform issues to demonstrate that a spirit of southern insurgency existed in Texas politics in the 1930's.

The study concludes that Morris Sheppard, Sam Rayburn, Maury Maverick, W. D. McFarlane, R. Ewing Thomason, and Lyndon B. Johnson were politicians in the tradition of southern insurgents. The influence of these men, especially Sheppard, Rayburn, and Maverick, on the passage of legislation reflecting insurgent demands is demonstrated to be significant.
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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF SOUTHERN POLITICS, 1877-1933

Nearly one hundred years after the official end of Reconstruction in the South, the effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction still influence the nature of politics in Texas as in other southern states. Long after other sections of the United States had ceased to exploit the emotionalism of the war period in their political arenas, the South continued to be influenced by a glorification of the Lost Cause and the myth of Reconstruction with the threat of renewed outside interference into the social and political affairs of the section. The symbol of the lasting effects of the war and Reconstruction upon southern politics is the fidelity the section maintained to the Democratic party from 1877 to about 1938 which led to the myth of the Solid South. Southern society, however, has always been "more complex, differentiated, and internally at odds than myth would indicate." ¹ These differences, therefore, in a one-party system have had to be contested most often within the ranks of the Democratic party.

During the 1870's, conservative Democrats gradually began to wrest control of the state governments in the South from the Republicans who had been in power during the Reconstruction period. These men claimed to "redeem" the states from the excesses of Republican rule and to return power to native white southerners. These Redeemers would dominate southern politics until after the turn of the twentieth century, and although "they were often of the planter class and they acted and talked like traditional Southerners, . . . they were hardly in the old agrarian tradition." They drew support not only from the historic centers of southern wealth and power, the black belts, but also from the industrial centers which represented the commercial classes. In order to overthrow the Reconstruction governments, these men had to require unusual party discipline, and after they attained power, the Redeemers attempted to maintain control by recalling the past and the myths of the Lost Cause and Reconstruction.


4Williams, Romance and Realism in Southern Politics, p. 46.
told a grim story of human suffering and of the southern battle for civilization during Reconstruction, and their story became an article of faith in the household of almost every white Southerner.\textsuperscript{5} These new leaders envisioned a new prosperity for the South based on "machines and factories, not from unprocessed fields of white cotton," and forged a partnership with northeastern capitalists to industrialize and urbanize the South.\textsuperscript{6}

The South, however, has never been a monolith. Diversities and divergences have always existed among the southern people, not just between the races, but also among the whites.\textsuperscript{7} Almost from the outset the Redeemer governments were faced with insurgent groups within the Democratic party and in splinter parties opposed to the business orientation of the Redeemer leaders who supported the New South ideology. There was a conflict over which direction the South should take--should it align itself with the commercial, conservative northeast or should it join its interests with the more radical, agricultural west? The conservative politicians in control attempted to avoid a conflict by maintaining that

\textsuperscript{5}Grantham, \textit{The Democratic South}, p. 21.


economics had no relationship to politics. They believed "no issue must be permitted to divide white solidarity." They were not successful in holding down dissident elements, however, and insurgent groups continued to emerge to challenge the Redeemer dominance in southern politics. Although issues changed from movement to movement and from state to state, in all of these insurgent uprisings, certain common elements emerged, such as concern for agriculture and economic affairs, reform measures, and the race problem.

In the late nineteenth century, the insurgent movements began among farming groups attempting to combat a government they believed unresponsive to their needs, since the Redeemer governments exhibited a definite favoritism toward commercial enterprises through tax exemptions or low tax assessments for railroads, utility companies, and insurance companies. In Texas, Governor Oran M. Roberts vetoed state appropriations for schools because of a lack of funds, but soon afterward he urged the legislature to exempt manufacturing capital from all taxes for the next ten years. The South at that time was overwhelmingly rural and agrarian; thus, many farmers believed that they were burdened by discrimination in the tax structure, in the rates charged by the railroads, and in the interest they were charged on loans.

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8Williams, Romance and Realism in Southern Politics, p. 47.

Many maintained that the Redeemer governments were corrupt and charged the conservatives with using the Negro vote to retain power. Grievances such as these led to revolts within the Democratic party and the emergence of third-party groups who often referred to themselves as Independents.

One of the first Independent movements to emerge in Texas was the Greenback party, part of a national farmers' movement, which held its first state convention at Austin in 1878. Formed to take positive action to remedy the tight currency supply brought about by the panic of 1873, the Greenbackers declared that the old political parties had "carried on a financial system so radically wrong as to pauperize the masses to support a chosen few in idleness and luxury." In their platform, the delegates to the convention supported issuance of the greenback dollar as legal tender, an overhaul in the tax structure, a graduated income tax, free public schools, reforms in the convict labor system, universal manhood suffrage, "no squandering of the public domain upon private corporations" and "honesty and economy in the administration of public affairs."

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12Ibid.
Greenback party elected ten representatives to the state legislature and one United States Congressman, George W. Jones of Bastrop. In 1882, Jones ran for governor on an Independent ticket supported by a fusion of Greenbackers and Republicans, gaining the largest popular vote ever polled by a losing candidate in Texas to that time.

The party was losing strength, however, and waged its last campaign in Texas in 1884. The reasons for the failure of the Greenback party foreshadowed the eventual failures of all later insurgent efforts. The Greenback party was "at best no more than a group of dissatisfied Democrats and Republicans, political malcontents who were only too willing to return to the fold of their respective parties" after existing several years with few tangible results. A more important reason for the failure stemmed from the fact often one or both of the major parties recognized and incorporated in their own platforms some of the demands of the Greenback party. Time and again Democrats would use this method to undermine insurgent political uprisings, a technique particularly significant in view of the psychological difficulty southerners experienced when breaking away from the Democratic party. The Greenback movement was not distinct from other national or local agrarian movements. It was simply "a chapter in the story of the liberation of the farmer, and

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14 Ibid., p. 171.
15 Ibid., p. 176.
not . . . an organization isolated from others immediately preceding and following it."\textsuperscript{16} Other insurgent movements were active in the South during the 1870's and 1880's including the important Readjuster movement in Virginia, the "liberal" party in North Carolina, as well as other Greenback movements in states such as Mississippi and Alabama.\textsuperscript{17} The question of Negro political activity plagued the Independents. In Virginia the insurgent Readjusters made a decision to include blacks in their movement, and the call to the convention "was 'issued without distinction of color.'"\textsuperscript{18} Until that time the attitude of the Redeemer leaders toward the Negro had been paradoxical. In an attempt to prevent division within the Democratic party these men had employed the specter of Negro-Republican control during Reconstruction; however, they did not deny suffrage to the Negro. This was not merely because of a fear of further northern interference but also in consideration of practical politics.

As the vote of a propertyless class, it was something to be watched and kept in hand. But as the vote of an inferior and inert people, it was something that could be manipulated for the benefit of the rich whites, the only class that had the means to do the manipulating.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 162.

\textsuperscript{17}Degler, The Other South, p. 288; Albert D. Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics 1876-1925 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1951), p. 21.

\textsuperscript{18}Degler, The Other South, p. 276.

\textsuperscript{19}Williams, Romance and Realism in Southern Politics, p. 49.
The Readjusters realized that in order to overthrow the entrenched Redeemer government in 1878 Negro votes would have to be won over.\textsuperscript{20} William Mahone and his followers attempted to place class interests above race interests and succeeded for a time.

The combination of insurgent white and Negro votes, however, which led to the success of the readjusters also caused their demise. The conservative Democrats were quick to seize upon the racial issue and begin a cry of "race treason."\textsuperscript{21} In Virginia, as well as in other states where insurgents attempted to win Negro votes, the conservative forces fought back with cries for white solidarity; and if that proved ineffective, they used fraud and violence in order to retain political control. Once the issue of race was injected into the battle, third-party men had little chance.\textsuperscript{22} Although only the Readjuster movement could actually have been considered a success, these dissenting groups had their impact upon southern politics; and even though the party died, "agrarian discontent lived on, to be stimulated into renewed activity by the hard times of the early nineties."\textsuperscript{23} In the later movements as in the early Independent efforts, many of the issues involved matters of economics, reform, and race.

\textsuperscript{20}Degler, \textit{The Other South}, p. 277.
\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., p. 105.
\textsuperscript{23}Richardson, \textit{Texas}, p. 328.
As in the rest of the South, in Texas during the decades following the Civil War the attitude toward business was friendly. In spite of criticism by the Grange and the Greenback party, the dominant party continued to encourage capital and advocated few regulatory measures. During the 1880's the demand for regulation increased and the number of people dissatisfied with the Redeemer elements in government grew rapidly. In 1887, after a series of regulatory bills failed to pass, thirty-two members of the legislature, mostly representing the farmers, signed a protest against their colleagues.24

During the eighties a new agrarian crusade began in Texas as the Farmers' Alliance. In 1887 the leader of the Alliance in Texas, Dr. C. W. Macune, organized the National Alliance, which in Texas and throughout the South attempted to secure certain reform measures and concessions for the farmer through the Democratic party.25 As the year 1890 approached the farmers increasingly suffered under most of the same conditions they had complained of since the end of the war. Problems with the system of taxation, with regulation of monopolies, especially the railroads, as well as the shortage of currency still existed. In Texas, through pressure from the Farmers' Alliance, the Democrats were forced

24 Ibid., p. 351.

to take action on the major grievance of railroad regulation by nominating for governor James S. Hogg who supported the proposition for a railroad commission. Hogg disappointed Alliance members when he ignored an Alliance request that one of their leaders be appointed to the railroad commission. This disillusionment with the Democratic party along with other factors prepared Texas farmers to make a break from the Democratic ranks and enter the Populist party when it organized.

Throughout the South, the Alliance made its presence felt by the conservative forces. While working within the Democratic party they were able to elect six governors who supported Alliance principles, claimed a majority in eight state legislatures, and had over fifty Congressmen pledged to the Alliance platform. The conservatives fought against many Alliance proposals, however, and the nomination of Grover Cleveland by the Democrats in June, 1892, encouraged southerners to bolt the Democratic party and join the newly formed Populist party. Persuaded that the southern masses were being deprived of all hope for the future by the economic and political system established by the Redeemers, "the desperate agrarians who joined in the Populist movement naturally fixed on the New South doctrine of progress,

26 Ibid., p. 25.  
27 Ibid., p. 29.  
29 Ibid., pp. 242-43.
prosperity, sectional reconciliation, and racial harmony as their principal target."30 Not surprisingly, the agrarians opposed the ideas of the Redeemers because historically, from the days of Thomas Jefferson, "the South fought longest against the triumph of commercial and industrial capitalism."31

The Populist movement invigorated the politics of the South and brought to the surface divisions which the Redeemers had never been able to completely suppress. Along with the challenge to the New South doctrine, it led to a "revival of Jeffersonian and Jacksonian principles [and] popularized the concept of positive government."32 The basic ideology behind the Populist movement was expressed in the older creed of "equal rights to all, special privileges to none."33 They believed that the working men and especially the agricultural classes had been subjected to economic inequalities that could only be adjusted by government regulation. If regulation failed to eliminate economic inequality, they then maintained government control would be necessary, and as a


33Martin, The People's Party in Texas, p. 46.
last resort, public ownership of all industries which affected the public interest should be considered. 34

The Populists, also concerned with the government's responsibility in other economic areas, demanded the abolition of the national banking system, an enlargement of currency in circulation, and a system of commodity credit similar to the subtreasury plan. They called further for the repossession of large quantities of land and resources for corporations. 35 This opposition to alien ownership of land was particularly strong in Texas. The state had maintained a policy of liberal land grants to railroads, and a total of 32,250,000 acres were disposed of in this fashion, an area as large as the state of Alabama. Critics claimed that possession of this land, principally by holding companies, retarded the development of the state and led to an inequitable tax structure. 36

The rise of Populism had an impact on southern politics which transcended mere economic issues. According to historian, T. Harry Williams,

Southern Populism collided full tilt with the whole edifice of Southern politics, with the romantic attachment to images of the past; with the separation of politics and economics; with the entombing one-party system; and with the folk unity forged by Reconstruction. The Populists talked the language of economics and self-interest. They spoke of class consciousness and class legislation, of combining

34 Ibid.


36 Richardson, Texas, p. 350.
farmers and laborers and sections in one party, of using government to solve economic problems. Most alarming of all, they said that economic self-interest transcended race. They proposed to fit the Negro in somewhere in their great combination.\(^{37}\)

The Southern Populists, the most radical elements of the national Populist movement, based their political strategy on "combinations and alliances along regional, class, and racial lines." They proposed an alliance between the South and the West, between the farmers and city and factory laborers, and "a practical union with Negro farmers and laborers within the South."\(^{38}\) The Populists expanded upon the ideas of the earlier Independent movements in their stress on a class consciousness which cut across sectional and racial lines.

The alliance with the Negro was the most important to the success of Southern Populists. This group realized, as had the Readjusters, that only through a fusion of white insurgents with Negroes and Republicans was there a chance of overcoming the control of the Redeemers. Negroes were actively encouraged and were elected to party councils in Texas and in other states and were given a voice in the party organization.\(^{39}\) Texas could claim one of the most effective Negro Populists in J. B. Rayner, who bolted the Republican party to join with the Populists. He was extremely influential

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\(^{37}\) Williams, *Romance and Realism in Southern Politics*, p. 52.


\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 256.
in bringing other Negroes into the party.40 As with the previous attempts to form political unions along economic class lines, the necessity of fusing with Republicans and actively campaigning for Negro support contributed to the failure of the Populists. Regardless of the sincerity of the Populist leaders, the majority of the people to whom Populism had the greatest appeal "cherished stronger feelings on race than any other group in the South."41 The Redeemer again employed charges of race treason, violence, intimidation, and corruption in an attempt to destroy the Populist party. The adoption of certain Populist issues, such as a free silver platform, in addition to the race conflict, finally killed the Populist movement following the 1896 election. When the Democrats nominated William Jennings Bryan for president in 1896, the Populists were faced with a serious dilemma, having fought against the Redeemers in alliance with Republicans at the local level, yet in 1896, they were expected to fuse with the Democrats at the national level.

The pattern of confusion that had betrayed the Independents and Readjusters in the seventies and eighties had been repeated in the nineties. With the agrarian radicals in alliance with the party of big business and party of white supremacy in combination with Negroes against lower class whites, it was little wonder that the masses lost confidence and became apathetic.42

41Williams, Romance and Realism in Southern Politics, p. 53.
It is ironic that the force which seemed to launch the most formidable opposition to the New South creed ultimately assured the longevity of the Redeemer elements. After the defeat of Populism, the new wave of Redeemer leaders built their political machines upon the models of the old order and were more strongly entrenched than before. Once again, "the black belts and their allies overcame their opponents and used the specter of insurgency as a means of suppressing future nonconformity." From 1896 until the mid-twentieth century, white southerners never again in any significant numbers participated in a third-party movement. The bitter experiences of Populism made them determined to confine any future political battles within the Democratic party. After the Populist defeat in 1896, conservatives and insurgents resolved to prevent Negroes from becoming the balance of power in the South. Thus in addition to any constructive measures achieved by the Populists, they also contributed to a move for black disfranchisement. Disfranchisement of the blacks was initiated soon after the 1896 election and completed and maintained by the Progressives who emerged as an insurgent group in the early twentieth century.

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The Progressive movement, extending from about 1900 to 1914, represented the second phase of a reform movement which lasted from about 1890 to World War II. This "surge of reform, though largely turned back in the 1890's and temporarily reversed in the 1920's, has set the tone of American politics for the greater part of the twentieth century." In many ways the Progressive movement in the South was similar to the movement in the North. The South, as the rest of the country, had been affected by the problems of industrialization and financial difficulties. The reformers of this period in the South were generally urban and middle-class, businessmen or small-town professionals. Their views on government centralization, federal power, improved public services, and regulation of corporations were similar to those of northern Progressives. But the southern movement was influenced by the agrarian crusade of Populism, and in the South rural southerners often aligned themselves with their urban counterpart "to oppose a common enemy in the early 1900's, bringing a unique and distinct flavor to the Progressive movement in the South." 

Although both Populism and Progressivism attacked big-business and proposed a restoration of the economic position of the common man, Progressivism advocated more moderate reforms

47 Billington, The Political South, p. 3.
of the economy and avoided the extreme rhetoric of Populism.48 In fact, it was often difficult to distinguish between the conservative Democrats and the insurgent progressives simply on the basis of their programs. Since the conservative wing of the party had overcome previous insurgency by adopting various aspects of the platform, on many issues the conservatives and the progressives advocated similar measures. However, the progressives solicited the support of a different group than did the conservatives. The progressives appealed to the common man and "served as a safety valve for the discontented."49 There was also a difference in the definitions of conservative and progressive. Whereas the conservative attempts to maintain the status quo by a "reasoned or unreasoned resistance to change," "progressive" implies a philosophy that welcomes innovations and reforms in the political, economic, and social order." Progressives also attempt to assure the people a "broader control of their governments."50

Few Progressive leaders were concerned about the paradox between their progressive ideas and their advocacy of black disfranchisement. Although the laws affecting disfranchise-

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48 Williams, Romance and Realism in Southern Politics, p. 58.

49 Billington, The Political South, p. 9.

they were generally supported by the progressives as a part of the campaign to clean up southern politics. Maintaining that the tendency of both Redeemers and insurgents to purchase black votes led to a corruption of the political system, many progressives turned to race baiting in order to attract white votes. Thus even when the Negro was removed from the practical political arena, the politics of the South continued to revolve around the race question.\textsuperscript{51}

The events of the Progressive period show, however, that "Southern politics was far more than a politics of sectionalism or Negrophobia."\textsuperscript{52} Real economic and social differences divided southerners, and at times, the progressives were able to put their beliefs into action. Although every southern legislature and governor did not support all progressive reform, some of the measures that were passed in various states included unfair practices laws, child labor legislation, safety and inspection procedures for mills and mines, pure food and drug laws, penal reform measures, prohibition, appropriations for charitable institutions, bridges, and highway systems. They also passed laws which attempted to remove graft and corruption from southern politics.\textsuperscript{53} In general, progressives advocated democratic reforms such as

\textsuperscript{51}Key, Southern Politics in State and Nation (Vintage Books, 1949), p. 5.

\textsuperscript{52}Grantham, The Democratic South, p. x.

\textsuperscript{53}Billington, The Political South, p. 6.
the party primary to bring government closer to the people; efficiency in government which would eliminate waste; government action against abuses by corporations and monopolies; social legislation which included reforms from prohibition to labor legislation; and an extension of governmental responsibilities to include a wide range of direct services to the people including good roads, education, public health services, welfare, rural credits, and conservation.54

As in other periods of insurgency, a significant amount of competition existed in intraparty politics during the Progressive era which reflected the historic divisions and changing nature of southern society.55 These divisions existed in Texas politics as they did throughout the South. At the turn of the century Texas politics was dominated by the conservative wing of the Democratic party under the leadership of men such as Senator Joseph W. Bailey and E. M. House. Their views reflected the increasing importance of business and industrial elements in the economy and politics of Texas, and their business views permeated the administrations of Charles A. Culberson, S. W.


Lanham, and Joseph D. Sayers; however, by 1906, public sentiment swung away from conservatism and Thomas M. Campbell was elected governor. He favored an anti-lobby law, tax reform, and generous support of state institutions. Once in office he urged passage of the Robertson insurance law which strictly regulated the insurance business in the state.

In the early part of the century the influence of southern progressives was beginning to be observed at the national level. Of the hundred-odd southern congressmen in any given Congress during this period, approximately twenty-five "revealed more than passing Progressive tendencies." They supported and often initiated progressive measures, thus exposing "as myth the idea that only die-hard conservatives represented the South."

The influence of southerners in Washington increased after Woodrow Wilson was elected president in 1913. Texas progressives, struggling against the entrenched power of the Bailey machine, "produced the most effective Wilson organization in the nation." Although the Texas progressives

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58 Billington, *The Political South*, p. 20.

59 Ibid., p. 22.

won this battle, it is ironic that it was Wilson's Texas advisors, Albert S. Burleson and E. M. House, who helped to further entrench southern conservatives at the state level through their views on patronage. Burleson argued to Wilson that the president must dispense patronage to the powerful southern leaders in order to gain their support for his progressive programs. Thus when the progressive minorities in the southern states turned to Washington for assistance they often discovered Wilson cooperating with their opponents.

There existed a group of southern agrarians in Congress during the Wilson era, however, who were to play an important role in the Wilson administration. These agrarians were often far to the left of the regular party line, and "in the end they helped to make Wilson an advanced progressive and helped commit his administration to a broad program" of legislation dealing with regulation of railroads and corporations, low tariffs, long-term and short-term rural credit, tax legislation, and other bills to aid agrarians. Thus it can be seen that the strain of agrarian radicalism which is an element of southern politics often has had more than a mere regional significance. Among

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the bills the southern agrarians influenced were the Rural Credits Act of 1916, the Lever Warehouse Act in 1914, the Smith-Lever Act for rural extension work in 1914, the Smith-Hughes Act for vocational education, the Underwood tariff bill, the Federal Reserve Bill, and a program of federal subsidies for highway improvements.63

While agrarian progressives exerted their influence at the national level, local politics in the South was generally controlled by a conservative courthouse ring who "for years controlled political offices, consolidated economic power, and enjoyed social prestige." These leaders, in the heritage of the Redeemers, advocated increased economic development in the South and participated in "industry-hunting forays" to attract business to the area. The voters began to demand positive stands from candidates on industrial development, and "southern politics and economic development were more than ever securely tied together."64

As early as 1910 in Texas, the election of Oscar B. Colquitt as governor signified a change in the "unfriendly attitude" toward organized wealth that had existed during the Campbell administration. Encouraged by the governor, commercial organizations began inviting investors to the state with a promise that "their honest investments would be protected."

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63Ibid., pp. 88, 91-95.

64Billington, The Political South, pp. 31-33.
This trend was continued during the first administration of the colorful James E. Ferguson which began in 1915. Although he aimed his appeal at the more populous tenant farmers, Ferguson was not unfriendly to corporate wealth and industrial enterprise. One of his first moves was to encourage the repeal of the Robertson insurance law.\footnote{Richardson, \textit{Texas}, pp. 401, 408.}

The First World War and the attendant industrial boom in the South caused major political changes in the section. After the war the South was more deeply involved in national rather than strictly local affairs. Along with the unity demanded during war years and the continuation of the industrialization of the South in the post-war period, this shift to a more national perspective contributed to an adjustment in southern politics. Southern progressivism, which had been relatively dormant during the war, resurfaced as "business progressivism in the 1920's with a devotion to the South's material progress as its prime characteristic."\footnote{Billington, \textit{The Political South}, p. 38.} Most of these business progressives were basically post-war Redeemers who had accommodated themselves to certain progressive ideas, especially those themes which related to efficiency in government and public services.\footnote{Tindall, "Business Progressivism," p. 94.} They normally advocated the "business class political philosophy
of the New South," but broadened their programs to include programs of highway improvement, educational expansion, and health regulation. These business methods in government tended to "get the right of way over the ideas of checks and balances, and governmental functions [tended] to expand in response to social or business needs."68 The "progressive" community during the twenties was one that had "good governments, great churches, improved schools, industry and business, real estate booms." Several limitations existed in the business-progressive philosophy: "race relations were assumed to be a settled problem. The larger economic problems of the underprivileged, farm tenants and factory workers were not its problems; their remedy would come, if at all, through economic expansion."69

In most states during the 1920's, however, several groups usually contended for political power, and this multi-factionalism kept any one group from dominating state politics.70 Conservative, reactionary, and agrarian groups still fought intraparty battles to gain control of the Democratic party. In Texas, for a brief period from 1922 to 1924 the Ku Klux Klan was a strong political influence

69 Tindall, "Business Progressivism," pp. 95, 106.
70 Billington, The Political South, p. 44.
on state politics, and Earl B. Mayfield was elected to the Senate in 1922 as the first "genuine Klan Senator." The agrarian groups had not been totally silenced, however.

Southern agriculture during the prosperous twenties was in a state of decline. Cotton growers associations sprang up and pushed for legislation concerning rural credit, holding company operations, and crop limitation and diversification. Many wanted a legal monopoly on marketing cotton. More and more people were forced into sharecropping and "never before were there so many landless farmers or so great a mire of rural poverty." Agrarians achieved some success with legislation at the national level during the early 1920's, constituting the "core of progressive strength." They succeeded in enacting the most advanced agricultural legislation to that date which included the McNary-Haugen bill, the initial development of TVA, and legislation against utilities, only to face vetoes from the Republican presidents of the twenties.

After 1929 all sectors of the southern economy felt the impact of the worsening agricultural conditions. It

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especially affected textile manufacturing but also had an influence upon activities such as transportation and banking. "Southern banks suffered greatly because so many of them were undercapitalized, poorly managed, and inadequately regulated." In the South following the crash, per capita income declined faster than in the nation as a whole, and many southerners were unemployed. Although some state governments attempted to solve the problems, they did not have the financial resources to handle an economic crisis of that magnitude. Some made little effort. The Texas governor believed the unemployed were at fault because they did not try hard enough to find work.\(^7\) It is not surprising, therefore, that southerners, as most Americans, turned to the national government for a solution. Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal offered hope to a destitute, frightened nation.

The southern Congressmen at the beginning of the New Deal were in a unique situation. An important consequence of the one-party system in the South is the tendency to return representatives and senators to Congress without much opposition; thus within the seniority system, southern Congressmen were able to gain influential places on the major congressional committees. "With such knowledge and

\(^7^4\) Billington, *The Political South*, pp. 58-59, 61.
and experience in national affairs, they become the logical leaders of the Party in Congress."75

During the New Deal period, southern Congressmen were in just such a position, and the influence of Texans in the national government was greater than ever before.76 A Texan, John Nance Garner, was elected Vice-President in 1932, and because of the seniority system the Texas congressional delegation "was the most important group of Texans in the administration's hierarchy."77 The basis of the delegation's power rested in their control of important congressional committees. Of the eleven committees considered most important in the House, Texans held the chairmanships of four. One of the most important committees in the Senate was also chaired by a Texan.78 These congressmen and their committees were: James P. Buchanan, Appropriations; Hatton W. Sumners, Judiciary; Sam Rayburn, Interstate and Foreign Commerce; Marvin Jones, Agriculture; and Senator Morris Sheppard, Military Affairs. Texas congressmen were also chairmen of less important committees including Joseph J. Mansfield, Rivers and Harbors; Fritz Lanham, Public Buildings and Grounds; Milton

76 Richardson, Texas, p. 479.
77 Lionel V. Patenaude, "The New Deal and Texas" (PhD diss., University of Texas, 1953), p. 73.
78 Ibid., pp. 81-82.
West, Election Number 1; and Senator Tom Connally, Public
Buildings and Grounds. Several members of the delegation
also held rank on important committees. Roosevelt realized
the strength of the Texas delegation and once remarked that
he sometimes believed Texas was "running the government of
the United States more largely than any other state."80

Much has been written comparing the New Deal to the
insurgent Populist and Progressive movements, and, in spite
of the differences from those movements, much of the legis-
lation considered was in the tradition of those earlier
insurgents.81 Considering the nature of the New Deal and the
significance of the Texas Congressional delegation in deter-
mining its course, it is useful to analyze the reactions of
the delegation to New Deal legislation; therefore, this study
will focus upon the Texas Congressional delegation from 1933
to 1938 in an attempt to determine the extent of insurgency
within that group of men. In keeping with the trends of
southern insurgency, legislation influencing agricultural
and economic measures, reform and relief, and racial issues
will be investigated to attempt to demonstrate that a spirit
of insurgency still existed in Texas politics in the 1930's.

79 U.S., Congress, Official Congressional Directory, 73rd
to 75th Congresses, passim.
81 C. Van Woodward, The Burden of Southern History (Baton
Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1960), pp. 141;
CHAPTER II

THE TEXAS DELEGATION AND AGRICULTURAL AND FINANCIAL ISSUES OF THE NEW DEAL, 1933-1938

During the 1930's Texas remained predominantly a southern agricultural state. In 1930 the state's population was classified as 59.0 percent rural as opposed to 41.0 percent urban, and in 1940 it remained classified as a rural state with a population division of 54.6 percent rural, 45.4 percent urban.\(^1\) In addition, approximately one-third of the population over fourteen years of age in the labor force were employed in agriculture.\(^2\) Considering that urban areas encompassed any incorporated place having a population of 2,500 or more inhabitants, it is easy to realize the rural orientation of most Texans.\(^3\) The Texas congressional delegation from 1933 to 1938 reflected the rural nature of the state, and thus these congressmen were vitally interested in


the various New Deal measures involving agricultural and financial issues. Much of this legislation was in the southern insurgent tradition; thus a delegate's reaction to such legislation gives insight into whether he aligned with the southern conservatives or with the insurgent group.

The need for some type of emergency farm legislation in 1933 was apparent since no group in the population was more severely affected by the depression than the farmers. Farm income in 1932 was less than one-third what it had been in 1929, and violence erupted or was threatened throughout the farm belt.4 Due to the seniority of southern congressmen and their interest in a solution to the farm crisis, agricultural legislation was greatly influenced by southern congressional leaders.5 In consultation with farm leaders, Henry Wallace and his assistants in the Department of Agriculture drew up an omnibus farm bill which Roosevelt sent to Congress on March 16, 1933. The basic purpose of the bill was to increase the purchasing power of farmers by attempting to restore the balance between production and consumption. The framers of the bill hoped to return agricultural purchasing power to the point it had been in


the pre-war period, August 1909-July 1914. In order to reach this goal, the bill gave wide authority to the Secretary of Agriculture. He was to be given the power to contract with farmers for voluntary reduction in acreage or production to be compensated by rental agreements or benefit payments as well as the authority to enter into marketing agreements with producers, marketing agencies, and processors. In addition he was empowered to license processors handling agricultural products; to employ the provisions of the Smith cotton-option-contract plan on the 1933 cotton crop; and to impose taxes on the processors of basic farm products to collect funds used to compensate the farmers under contract who reduced their acreage or production. Wallace, as Roosevelt, regarded this bill as a "major social experiment ... to subdue the habitual anarchy of a major American industry and to establish organized control in the interest not only of the farmer but of everybody else." 6

Public reaction to the proposed bill was swift in coming. Governor Sennett Conner of Mississippi issued a statement on behalf of a special committee of the Conference of Governors of Cotton Growing States which expressed support for the legislation. A telegram voicing approval of the measure was sent to the Senate Agriculture Committee signed

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by leaders of the major agricultural associations. Meanwhile the opposition was forming. The processors were opposed to the bill, and the cotton trade associations in New York objected to this "vicious farm legislation" claiming it was "demoralizing cotton goods and cotton markets as well as undermining confidence in security markets." In Congress, supporters and opponents often divided along similar lines, with most opposition expected from eastern Democrats and Old Guard Republicans.

In the House, the bill was sent to the Agriculture Committee chaired by Marvin Jones of Texas. It passed quickly through the committee, and was put before the House with a message from the Rules Committee, which had been contacted by Jones, that general debate be limited to four hours with no amendments allowed, with the exception of one motion to recommit. There was a heated debate over considering the bill under this rule, but it was agreed to by a vote of 184 to 102. The measure was introduced by Representative Hampton P. Fulmer of South Carolina, second ranking Democrat on the committee, after Jones declined to

7 *New York Times*, 18 March 1933, p. 3.
8 Ibid., 20 March 1933, p. 1.
sponsor it. Although Jones managed the debate he declared that he was not in agreement with some of the provisions. However, he also said he would support Roosevelt's bill due to the emergency situation. Jones compared the times to a wartime emergency and stated, "While this war is on, I am going to follow the man at the other end of the Avenue, who has the flag in his hand. I am not going to quarrel with the Commander in Chief while the great emergency is on." Jones was not opposed to farm relief per se, but supported a different type of agricultural program. In fact, Jones was very instrumental in the passage of all agricultural legislation. Roosevelt wrote that "Marvin Jones has guided every important piece of Agricultural legislation through the House." 

Other members of the Texas delegation, as most southern Democrats, supported the farm bill with mixed feelings. Some, such as W. D. McFarlane, were totally committed to the bill. Wright Patman, in a lengthy speech on the floor of the House referred to the bill as "a long step in the right direction," and argued that


The Government has come to the aid and rescue of the railroads, banks, and other big business interests of the Nation. As a matter of common justice it should pledge its credit to help the people who are the backbone of this Nation. The farmers and wage earners build our country in time of peace and save it in time of war; they are now in distress; they have not caused this distress to come upon themselves; it has been brought about by the control and manipulation of money and credits over which they had no control.14

Wright Patman's argument thus employed many ideas of the populist and progressive traditions. Various schemes for voluntary reduction of production to raise the price of cotton had been advocated as early as 1902 by the Farmers' Educational and Co-operative Union of America with an increasing movement toward government regulation of any business affecting the farmer.15

There were also some Texas congressmen who supported the bill not out of conviction, but because of party loyalty. Richard Kleberg was one of those who felt the need to support the measure in order to remain loyal to Roosevelt.16 Those in Congress who opposed the legislation discussed its constitutionality and the amount of power the bill conferred upon the Secretary of Agriculture and the President. When the bill came to a vote, it passed 315-98 with only twenty-four Democrats opposed, including three from Texas:

14Ibid., pp. 736-37.


16Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 1st sess., 1933, 77, pt. 1:685.
Passage of the farm bill was more difficult in the Senate than it had been in the House. In the Senate it "faced a renewed agrarian insurgency."\textsuperscript{18} Senator John A. Simpson proposed a plan to guarantee farmers the "cost of production" which was passed by the Senate 47-41 after a heated debate and with opposition from the Department of Agriculture. Both Texas senators, Tom Connally and Morris Sheppard, voted against this agrarian amendment, probably due to the position of the administration on this issue.\textsuperscript{19} The other major agrarian amendment proposed in the Senate received the support of both of the Texas senators. Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma sponsored an inflationary amendment as a part of the farm bill, "and for a time the ghost of Bryan stalked the Capitol."\textsuperscript{20} As finally passed the Thomas amendment authorized, but did not require, the President to issue greenbacks, remonetize

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Johnson & Thomason & \\
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Kleberg & & \\
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\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., p. 766.
\textsuperscript{18}Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, p. 393.
\textsuperscript{19}Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 1st sess., 1933, 77, pt. 2:1637.
\textsuperscript{20}Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, p. 393.
silver, and alter the gold content of the dollar. Connally and Sheppard both voted for this amendment, and in support of it Connally asked consent to print in the Congressional Record excerpts from various newspaper editorials approving the idea of inflation.\textsuperscript{21}

When the bill returned to the House, debate centered on these two amendments. Marvin Jones argued against the "cost of production" amendment on the grounds that the administration was opposed to it, and several congressmen who probably would have normally supported such a measure also went along with the administration. In the Texas delegation, these included men such as Jones and Sam Rayburn. The "cost of production" amendment was defeated in the House 283-109, but the Texas delegation exhibited a great division on this issue:

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Strong & Kleberg \\
Terrell & Lanham \\
Thomason & Mansfield \\
 & Rayburn \\
 & Sumners \\
 & West\textsuperscript{22} \\
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\textsuperscript{21}Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 1st sess., 1933, 77, pt. 3:2561-62.

\textsuperscript{22}Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 1st sess., 1933, 77, pt. 3:3079. Although Maury Maverick was not a member of Congress when this vote was taken, a guaranteed "cost-of-production" was part of the sixteen point legislative program
There was no roll call vote in the House on the Thomas amendment, but it was given support during the debates by members of the Texas delegation, especially Wright Patman who said it would "take control of money and credits away from a few powerful bankers and restore it to the Government of the United States where it properly belongs." When the farm bill went to the President for signature it contained three parts. Title I was the Agricultural Adjustment Act, Title II was the Emergency Farm Mortgage Act, and Title III was concerned with monetary issues including the Thomas Amendment. Overall, the bill had the support of the majority of the Texas delegation. In later years Sam Rayburn referred to it as "about the best farm program that was ever passed."

The Agricultural Adjustment Act, as the farm bill became known, was only the first of the agricultural bills of the New Deal period that were of importance to Texans. In 1934 identical bills were sponsored in the Senate and House by the Bankhead brothers of Alabama which exemplified how "Southern

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23Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 1st sess., 1933, 77, pt. 3:2713.

24U. S., Statutes at Large, v. 48, pp. 31-54.

agrarians kept pushing the New Deal toward increased governmental intervention."26 This bill, the Bankhead Cotton Control Bill, written to change the voluntary reduction of cotton production under the AAA to a compulsory reduction, was of vital importance to the Texas delegation as it would affect the majority of farmers in that state. In 1930, 349,458 out of 495,489 farms in Texas were principally devoted to raising cotton.27 As the largest cotton producing state in the nation, any legislation concerning cotton necessarily drew the attention of Texas congressmen; hence, most of the Texas delegation favored this legislation as best for the majority of farmers. The bill would limit the amount of cotton ginned each year to 10,000,000 bales, or about two-thirds of the production of the preceding years, in order to decrease the tremendous carry-over of American cotton on the market from one season to the next which kept the price of cotton low.

In order to hold the marketed crop down to the 10,000,000 bale limit, the bill proposed a confiscatory tax of 50 percent of the market value of cotton on all cotton ginned during the 1934-1935 crop year in excess of the prescribed amount. Under the law, each cotton producing state, county, and farmer would have an allotted quota of cotton which could be produced.

26Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, p. 396.

The bill gave "the country its first taste of compulsory crop control, and [was] considered one of the most radical ever passed by Congress," according to Newsweek. The supporters of the Bankhead bill pointed to the uncooperative farmers who refused to abide by voluntary controls and submitted as evidence in support of their position the results of a Department of Agriculture questionnaire sent to cotton growers throughout the South. Answers to the questionnaire showed "that 95 percent of those engaged in cotton production favor some method of inducing those on the outside to work in harmony with the movement." The Bankhead bill for compulsory control of production can be seen as a natural progression of the demands by agrarian groups. The farmers' movements from the Grange, through the Populist and Progressive movements, had continually advanced farther toward establishing "the principle of governmental regulation of any business affecting the public welfare;" and the Cotton Control Bill was based on that concept.

Arguments on the Bankhead bill centered around issues of property rights, the constitutionality of the tax, and


29Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1934, 78, pt. 4:4431.

sectional privilege. The latter complaint against the measure arose because the bill was basically for the relief of southern farmers. In answer to those opposing the bill on the basis of property rights, Marvin Jones stated,

But there is a more important principle than property, Property was created for people and not people for property. Between property rights and human rights there is little choice. We ought to keep on the side of the human rights.\(^{31}\)

He continued that the majority of people involved in growing cotton wanted the bill to protect their property rights and to promote "the welfare of their community." Jones also argued that the bill was constitutional based on recent court decisions.\(^{32}\)

The sectional issue brought forth arguments in the tradition of the agrarian conflict with the northeast. Representative Fish of New York maintained that most of the money for the cotton-crop reduction program would come from taxes paid by citizens of New York and other northeastern states. This accusation brought forth replies from Luther Johnson and Thomas Blanton of Texas. Johnson reminded Fish that "most of this money that goes into Mississippi for the payment of this plowed up cotton, finds its way back to New York in the purchase of goods," while Blanton pointed to the large amount of money earned by New Yorkers in interest on tax-exempt bonds sold in New York for southern projects.\(^{33}\)

\(^{31}\)Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1934, 78, pt. 4:4434.

\(^{32}\)Ibid.

\(^{33}\)Ibid., pt. 5:4654-55.
One of the major purposes of this legislation was to put agriculture on an equal basis with industry, enabling agriculture to adjust production to demand as was done by industry. Jones argued that "... a planless agriculture in the presence of a planned industry would, in my judgment, condemn the South to a continuation of the conditions that have existed down there at intervals for many years."\(^4\) It was hoped that by enabling farmers to adjust acreages they would be able to "maintain a stable and decently fair level of prices." Most supporters of the bill realized that farmers were not able to adjust supply to demand individually, and thus government regulation was thought to be necessary.\(^5\)

Although the idea of compulsion might have been distasteful to many, the bill was to be in effect only two years. Sam Rayburn was one who recognized that there had to be two approaches to the farm problem, the short range as well as the long range solutions, and he supported the Cotton Control Act as a necessary short range part of the overall agriculture program.\(^6\) Jones also pointed out that it was only a two year program which had to be approved by two-thirds of those engaged in cotton production before it went into effect for the second year. The continuing agricultural

\(^{34}\)Ibid., pt. 6:6775.


\(^{36}\)Dorough, Mr. Sam, p. 234.
crisis also swayed votes for the measure. Representative Joseph Eagle of Texas, opposed to the bill in theory, considered it an emergency measure worth trying for a short time period.37

When the bill came to a vote in the House it passed 251-115. Again most of the Texas delegation supported this agricultural measure.

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The Senate passed the bill in similar form 46-39 with eleven not voting. On this legislation Connally and Sheppard voted for the original Senate bill and also for the conference report. In the House when the conference report came up for a vote, Sanders and Mansfield joined the majority of the delegation in voting for the measure leaving Terrell the only delegate voting "nay." Bailey was involved in a pair on this vote, but he indicated he was for the bill.39

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37Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1934, 78, pt. 5:4651, 4650.

38Ibid., pp. 4628-29.

39Ibid., pt. 6:5712, 6620, 6775-76.
Despite the intentions of most of the supporters of the AAA and Cotton Control bills to improve the conditions for all farmers, these measures complicated the problem of farm tenancy in the South. The percentage of farms in the South operated by tenants had shown an increase since 1880 until the period 1930-1935 when there was a 2 percent decrease followed by another decrease from 1935-1940. Tenancy in Texas, where 57 percent of all farmers were tenants, exhibited the same type of decrease from 1930 to 1940 as the rest of the South, with a decrease of 32.2 percent in the number of farms operated by tenants. This decrease is primarily attributable to the reduction in cotton acreage brought about by the AAA and Cotton Control Act. In spite of clauses in both acts to protect cotton farm tenants and sharecroppers from displacement, it is clear that this reduction drove the tenant and the cropper from the farms, and "landowners, with the connivance of local AAA committees which they dominated, cheated tenants of their fair share of the benefits." 

Included among the many results of this displacement were a swelling of relief rolls, wandering groups of unemployed,

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40 Bureau of the Census, 16th Census of the United States, 1940: Agriculture, v. 3, pp. 151, 188.

violence in the countryside, and even the formation of a tenant farmer's union. Of even greater consequence was the effect it had on the racial tension in the South. In the South approximately four-fifths of the Negro farm operators were tenants at that time. Thus any displacement of the overall number of tenants would have an impact on the racial question in the South. Negro leaders recognized the problem and protested AAA policies which evicted Negro tenant farmers and sharecroppers from the farms while "white landlords pocketed government checks." The racial problem was severe in Texas as in other southern states. Although there was a 27.3 percent decrease in the number of white tenants from 1930 to 1940, the decrease in Negro tenancy reached 50.1 percent. The situation worried anti-New Deal leaders as well as more socially concerned individuals. One editorial writer foresaw increased crime and a "serious dislocation of the South's social order" as a result of the eviction of so many Negroes as well as poor whites from the cotton fields.


44Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, p. 185.


Others criticized the AAA and Cotton Control Act on racial grounds but from a different perspective. They believed that plantation owners were sacrificing white tenants and replacing them with Negro workers.47 Thus men with varying philosophies joined together in attempts to find a solution to the old problem of farm tenancy.

Sponsors of the AAA and Cotton Control Act, aware of the possible consequences of acreage reduction on the tenant classes, attempted to protect them with certain contract requirements. The tenancy issue emerged during the debate over the Cotton Control Act in 1934, but Marvin Jones answered that "we have everywhere in this bill written in a protection for the tenant on a share-crop basis."48 It soon became evident, however, that the protection clauses were not adequate. Appeals were made to Roosevelt, but he asked patience, stating that "he did not propose to attempt to revolutionize social relations in the South."49 Nevertheless, congressional leaders attempted to pass legislation to relieve the situation. In 1935 Senator Bankhead introduced a bill providing federal loans to capable tenants to enable them to become farm owners. Passed in the Senate the bill never made


48 Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1934, 78, pt. 4:4433.

49 Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, p. 137.
it out of the House Agriculture Committee partly because of lack of support from the administration. Officials within the administration believed Bankhead's bill would aid only a small portion of the tenants and thus would not be a solution to the overall problem. Also, they contended that large scale farming under modern methods was displacing the small, individual farmer; thus they maintained that the government should "develop large-scale farm projects to be operated by a number of former farm tenants on a community basis under a lease and purchase plan." With this idea in mind, Roosevelt in April, 1935, established the Resettlement Administration under the leadership of Rexford Rugwell. The Resettlement Administration hoped to purchase submarginal land and put it back into forests or grass. The government would help families living on such land buy new property on easy terms or aid them to settle on subsistence homesteads where they could work part-time in factories and part-time at farming. In many places the Resettlement Administration established new rural communities, 105 in Texas alone, where the settlers could rent their homes with an option to buy. Although Tugwell and the Resettlement Administration were plagued by a

50"The Nation-Wide Problem of Farm Tenancy," Congressional Digest 16 (February 1937): 37.

51Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 2nd sess., 1936, 80, pt. 4:4069, 4071, 3611.
lack of money and thus unable to meet the problems of the tenant farmers and sharecroppers, they received pledges of support from two members of the Texas delegation. Maury Maverick on two occasions defended Tugwell and the Resettlement Administration on the floor of Congress. He stated that the work of the RA was "essential to this country" and was "putting strong props under American agriculture, the weakest spot in our whole economic system." George H. Mahon also declared himself "100 percent favorable toward the purpose of its program."52

In March 1936, Maverick and Ewing Thomason of Texas joined with representatives from nine southern states to press for "economic justice" for the South through congressional legislation. The group placed strong emphasis on achieving passage of the Bankhead Tenant Bill. Maverick claimed the "down and out position of old King Cotton" was to blame for southern economic problems along with exploitation of the South by the North and East. Maintaining that "the heaviest responsibility for remedying conditions lies in the Southern Congressional representatives,"53 Maverick continued to urge passage of the Bankhead bill, including farm tenancy as a major issue that needed to be considered

52 Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 2nd sess., 1936, 80, pt. 4:4069, 4071, 3611.

53 Clipping from Washington Daily News, 17 March 1936, Maury Maverick Papers, University of Texas Archives, Austin, Texas, Congressional Scrapbook #2.
by the new Congress elected in 1936.\textsuperscript{54} He had been calling upon Congress to aid the tenant farmers since 1935. During consideration of the Soil Conservation Act as a replacement for the AAA following the invalidation of that act by the Supreme Court, Maverick proposed an amendment requiring the Secretary of Agriculture to prescribe rules and regulations for equitable distribution of payments among tenants, sharecroppers, and farm workers in addition to the landlords. He produced studies which indicated that tenants and sharecroppers would be left out, with most benefits going to the landlords under the Soil Conservation Act.\textsuperscript{55}

By late 1936 Roosevelt gradually yielded to pressure for a solution to the farm tenant problem and encouraged Bankhead and Marvin Jones to cooperate on a bill designed to meet the problem. After establishing a special committee under Henry Wallace to study farm tenancy, the President made this an issue in the 1936 election and discussed it in his Address to Congress on January 7, 1937.\textsuperscript{56} Several bills on farm tenancy were proposed in the Senate in January 1937, including one by Senator Bankhead and one by Tom Connally of Texas. In the House, Marvin Jones introduced a bill practically identical

\textsuperscript{54}Maury Maverick, "The Next Four Years: Maury Maverick on Congress," The New Republic 89 (25 November 1936): 102.

\textsuperscript{55}Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 2nd sess., 1936, 80, pt. 3:2552.

\textsuperscript{56}"President Roosevelt Urges Farm Tenancy Legislation," Congressional Digest 16 (February 1937): 45.
to that of Bankhead. All plans were designed to enable tenant farmers to buy farms at low interest rates over a long period of time, changing tenants into individual farm owners. The bills submitted by Bankhead and Jones received major consideration. The Bankhead bill embodied many of the recommendations of the President's committee including plans for a tenant purchase corporation. Jones in his bill preferred granting land purchase loans without governmental supervision.57 Although overwhelmingly supported by the Texas delegation, some Texas congressmen attempted to amend the Jones bill in a way that threatened to exclude many of the tenants the measure proposed to help. Representative Mahon proposed an amendment which would have limited the amount loaned to any one applicant to $6,000 and would have required a down payment of at least 5 percent of the purchase price of the farm. He claimed this initial investment would give the former tenant "a pride of ownership" as opposed to a feeling of being on a "semirelief basis and a client of the Government." Representative Thomason echoed these sentiments. Those who realized that tenants, especially during times of economic distress, would not be able to make such a down payment defeated the amendment.58

57Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, pp. 424-25.
58Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 1st sess., 1937, 81, pt. 6:6436, 6562.
Other Texas representatives believed the bill did not go far enough. Luther Johnson expressed his disappointment that the bill would furnish aid "only to a very small number of tenant farmers" given the amount of money authorized under the bill. Patman supported the bill but argued that it approached the problem of farm tenancy from only one angle and that without better farm prices as well the tenant situation could not be improved.59

The Jones bill passed in the House by a vote of 308-25, with 99 not voting. Only Kleberg of the Texas delegation voted against the bill, although Johnson and Mansfield were involved in general pairs.60 The Senate passed the Bankhead version without a roll call vote, and the bills went to conference. The conference version of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act provided for purchase loans repayable over forty years at 3 percent interest. It contained the Senate principle of supervision and a five year prohibition against sale. Under the bill $10,000,000 was authorized for purchases the first year, $25,000,000 the second, and $50,000,000 thereafter. A new agency, the Farm Security Administration, would replace the Resettlement Administration to administer the program.61 Conservatives in Congress, although in some cases having voted for the bill, attempted to emasculate the program through the Appropriations Committee. Originally,

59Ibid., pp. 6566, 6439-43. 60Ibid., pp. 6582-83.
61Statutes at Large, v. 50, pp. 522-33.
sponsors of the bill had proposed much more than $10,000,000 for the first year's operation but scaled down the amount at the request of the administration. The Appropriations Committee, however, failed to appropriate the necessary funds, claiming the problem was too large to solve with the amount requested under the bill. Among the Texas delegation Jones, Poage, McFarlane, and Garrett rose to condemn the committee for eliminating the entire appropriation for the first year.62 One historian has concluded that political considerations primarily account for the FSA's lack of effectiveness:

The FSA had no political constituency--croppers and migrants were often voteless or inarticulate--while its enemies, especially large farm corporations that wanted cheap labor and southern landlords who objected to FSA aid to tenants, had powerful representation in Congress. The FSA's opponents kept its appropriations so low that it was never able to accomplish anything on a massive scale.63 Thus, a congressman could vote for a measure and appear to support agrarian legislation but cripple its effectiveness through lack of appropriations.

By 1938, even with a continuation of the farm crisis, some Texas congressmen began to outwardly display their basic conservative tendencies even on agricultural legislation. By 1938 it was obvious that the voluntary production limitations under the Soil Conservation Act had failed. The South

63 Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, p. 141.
produced an 18,000,000 bale crop and cotton prices tumbled. Both those considered New Dealers and the conservative Democrats realized more legislation was necessary to control production.\textsuperscript{64} Democrats from the South demanded a bill that included unlimited production and higher subsidies, with the surplus crop to be dumped onto foreign markets. Congress fought off many of these demands, and in February 1938, passed the second Agricultural Adjustment Act. The act in its final form made a start toward an ever-normal granary, established soil conservation as a permanent program, authorized crop loans, proposed crop insurance to protect wheat growers from the consequences of drought, and gave the Secretary of Agriculture the power to assign national acreage allotments and subsidies to staple farmers.\textsuperscript{65} In the House the vote of the Texas delegation was

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In the Senate, Connally and Sheppard once again supported legislation aimed at relief of the farm crisis.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{64}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 254.

\textsuperscript{65}\textit{Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 34d sess., 1938, 83, pt. 2:1870.}

\textsuperscript{66}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 1727, 1881.
When considering agricultural legislation some division between insurgents and conservatives in the Texas delegation can be observed in spite of the agricultural orientation of the state and the tendency of much of the legislation to favor large farming operations at the expense of the small farmer and tenant classes. Richard M. Kleberg, Fritz Lanham, George Terrell, Joseph Mansfield, and Joseph Bailey emerge as definite conservatives on New Deal agricultural measures from 1933-1938. Others in the delegation exhibited conservative tendencies from time to time but continued to vote for most of the proposed legislation.

The division between insurgents and conservatives in the Texas delegation also becomes evident in the consideration of some of the major financial legislation of the New Deal from 1933 to 1938. The emphasis in most financial bills during that period concerned the elimination of financial abuses of large corporations, Wall Street, and public utility holding companies. As with agricultural legislation, a large part of the measures reflected the demands of the earlier agrarian and progressive movements, and thus received the support of rural progressives such as Sam Rayburn of Texas. The first bill of such nature was the Securities Act of 1933 proposed by Roosevelt in a presidential message of March 29, 1933. The President said that the government could not guarantee the value of securities but
There is, however, an obligation upon us to insist that every issue of new securities to be sold in interstate commerce shall be accompanied by full publicity and information, and that no essentially important element attending the issue shall be concealed from the buying public.

This proposal adds to the ancient rule of caveat emptor the further doctrine: "Let the seller also beware." It puts the burden of telling the whole truth on the seller.67

He expressed the hope that the bill would encourage "honest dealing in securities" and thus return public confidence to the market.68

When the original bill was sent to the House, the Speaker, Henry Rainey, was in doubt as to which committee should receive it. Sam Rayburn, as chairman of the Interstate Commerce Committee, requested his committee handle the legislation and Rainey was glad to comply with Rayburn's desire. In the House, the substitute bill, written by James M. Landis and Benjamin Cohen reflected the Brandeis tradition of opposition to bigness. Rayburn, without previous experience in such complicated financial matters, conducted extensive hearings on the bill while withstanding the onslaughts of lobbyists against it.69 The Securities bill, which passed with relative ease without a roll call vote, required that securities sold in interstate commerce be registered

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68 Ibid.
with the Federal Trade Commission. The registration statement had to contain complete information about the security including "the names of officers and directors of the issuing company . . . a detailed description of the business and financial condition of the company, and the salaries of its officers." In addition it held all officers of the issuing company as well as the underwriters and dealers civilly and criminally liable for any evasion or misrepresentation of material facts. Rayburn fought hard for the passage of this bill calling it "a peculiar symbol of the New Deal." He said, "Almost more than other legislation passed by the last Congress, it speaks for the forgotten man--the twenty million American investors that Wall Street, once it sells them, wishes to forget."  

The Securities Act of 1933 was only one of the financial measures shepherded through Congress by Rayburn with his "Southerner's and Westerner's distrust of Wall Street and concentrations of big business." A companion bill to regulate stock exchanges was drafted and introduced by Senator Fletcher in the Senate and Rayburn in the House. The

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original bill had three basic objectives. One was to protect investors from manipulation of the securities market by insiders through federal supervision of trading practices. Another objective was to eliminate misrepresentation to investors by requiring registration of all securities traded on the exchanges. Finally, the bill aimed at reducing speculation by regulating margin requirements. The law, to be administered by the Federal Trade Commission, caused the business community to rise in opposition to the bill. Rayburn stated that the bill had been worked out "under the pressure of the most vicious and persistent lobby . . . ever known in Washington." Despite some concessions to the opponents of the bill, the measure emerged from the Senate and House committees giving the government regulatory powers over the exchanges. There were basic differences between the Senate and House versions, however. Rayburn's bill retained the Federal Trade Commission as the regulatory commission and favored statutory margin requirements. The Senate version, however, provided for a new regulatory agency and wanted the margin requirements set by that commission and the Federal Reserve Board.


74 Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1934, 78, pt. 7:7693.

75 Schlesinger, The Coming of the New Deal, p. 466.
The House passed the Rayburn bill 280-84 with all members of the Texas delegation voting for the measure except for Sanders who was involved in a pair but was for the measure. In the Senate the measure passed 62-13. Connally voted for the measure, but Sheppard was absent. The terms of the bill were settled in conference with the House accepting the new commission and the Securities and Exchange Commission, while the Senate agreed to limit margins to 45 percent but giving the Federal Reserve Board authority to alter this according to business conditions.

Historian Arthur Schlesinger observed that the final composition of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 was the result of the "parliamentary strength and skill" of Sam Rayburn, "who stood off pressures with cool composure and an astute sense of political possibility." Thus, once again, the Texas delegation, insurgents and conservatives alike, stood behind their congressional leader to control financial manipulation from Wall Street.

More division arose among the delegation when an attempt was made to regulate and eliminate public utility holding companies. The Public Utilities Holding Company bill, authored by Thomas Corcoran and Benjamin Cohen, was introduced in the

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76 Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1934, 78, pt. 8:8116-17, 8714.


78 Schlesinger, The Coming of the New Deal, p. 467.
Senate by Burton K. Wheeler and in the House by Sam Rayburn.
The bill had two main titles. Title I empowered the Securities
and Exchange Commission to begin simplification of the holding
company system and a "reintegration on a basis which would
make geographical and economic sense." The bill provided
that up until 1940 this would largely be a voluntary process;
but after January 1, 1940, the SEC could compel the dissolution
of every holding which "could not establish an economic rea-
son for its existence."79 This clause, labeled the "death
sentence" by the utility interests became one of the most
controversial issues of that phase of the New Deal. To the
conservatives and the "Power Trust" the clause, which became
section 11, was aimed at destruction of private property and
eventual government ownership of public utilities.80 Pro-
gressives, such as Wright Patman, however, viewed the bill as
an attack on bigness and monopoly. Patman maintained the
bill was "a step in the direction of taking special privileges
and rights away from the big, powerful bankers of Wall Street"
and returning the business of the country back to the people.81
Others in the progressive mold viewed the bill as an attack on
the corruption of the holding companies. W. D. McFarlane of

79Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Roosevelt, v. 3,
The Politics of Upheaval (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1960),
p. 306.

80Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 1st sess., 1935, 79,
pt. 10:10519.

81Ibid., p. 10522.
Texas accused the utility holding companies of robbing "widows and orphans, both through sale of worthless securities and through excessive rates . . .," and Maury Maverick spoke of the "thieves in the utility business." Rayburn argued against holding companies with the same implications. He stated:

> What I want to do is to take from the backs of the clean, honestly operated companies of this country these leeches and bloodsucking holding companies, who perform no service, but who are milking to death the local operating companies under their control and are milking to death those who have invested their hard-earned money in the securities of these local operating companies.

The utility interests immediately began an intensive lobbying effort to defeat the bill, or at least emasculate it. It came up for consideration first in the Senate. With the encouragement of the utility lobby, conservative senators attempted to cripple the bill with amendments. The key amendment in the Senate was offered by William H. Dietrick, Democrat from Illinois. This amendment substituted regulation for dissolution and would have destroyed the "death sentence." When it finally came to a vote in the Senate, the Dietrich amendment was narrowly defeated 45-44, with both Texas senators opposing the amendment. This close victory was capped by the passage of the entire bill with the "death sentence."

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82 Ibid., p. 10538; undated clipping Maury Maverick Papers, Congressional Scrapbook #1.

sentence" intact by a 56-32 vote. Again, Connally and Sheppard voted for the bill.\textsuperscript{84}

The utility lobby then intensified its efforts to persuade the representatives to kill the "death sentence" provision. With the bill still in committee, the power lobby rushed "shock troops" to Washington. According to an estimate by Scripps-Howard, the six hundred utility lobbyists in Washington outnumbered the members of Congress.\textsuperscript{85} Rayburn blasted the extreme pressures the lobbying group put on his committee, but the power group must have believed their ends were gained when the Interstate Commerce Committee, over the objects of chairman Rayburn, reported the bill out of committee without the "death sentence."

Rayburn privately told friends that he did not feel obligated to support the actions of his committee by protecting the bill on the floor, and there were reports that Roosevelt had indicated to Rayburn that the chairman was not necessarily expected to support his committee's bill as was traditional in the House. There were some indications that Rayburn might even take the floor in opposition to the modified bill reported by his own committee.\textsuperscript{86} Rayburn did introduce the majority report, however, but indicated his advocacy of the "death sentence" provision. He also appealed

\textsuperscript{84}Ibid., p. 8:9053, 9065.

\textsuperscript{85}"Utilities," \textit{Newsweek} 6 (13 July 1935): 5.

to Representative John O'Conner of New York, chairman of the Rules Committee, for a debate on the provision limited to three hours divided equally between himself and Representative Cooper of Ohio, the ranking Republican of the committee. He also pushed for a roll call vote on the "death sentence." O'Conner overruled Rayburn on both points, limiting the debate to two and one-half hours, with a five minutes limit, and calling for a teller count rather than a roll call vote. 87 After bitter debate in which several members of the Texas delegation including Rayburn, Maverick, McFarlane, Patman, and Blanton argued in favor of the "death sentence" provision, the debate was closed and the teller vote taken. Reporters for Scripps-Howard newspapers watched from the House gallery to record the votes of individual congressmen as they passed between the tellers. According to their unofficial tabulation, in which the provision was defeated 224-152, the Texas delegation divided in the following manner:

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87 Ibid., 2 July 1935, p. 8. 88 Ibid.
The next vote taken was on a motion to substitute the House bill for the Senate bill. Those supporting the "death sentence" were to vote "no" on this measure. If the proposal were defeated, then the House would vote on the Senate bill, which if passed would go directly to the President for signature. If the substitution proposal passed, the bill would go to a conference committee. Rayburn, at this point, refused to vote for complete substitution of the Senate bill for the House bill claiming he preferred some of the provisions of the House bill and wished to solve the differences in conference. He took this position even though his fellow supporters of the "death sentence" stated that an "aye" vote on this proposal would be a vote for the "Power Trust." The motion to substitute the House bill for the Senate bill passed 258-147 with the Texas vote as follows:

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Dies was absent and originally involved in a general pair, but Cross announced that had Dies been present he would have voted "aye."89

The final vote on the House version was then tallied, and the House bill, minus the "death sentence," was passed 323-81. On this vote, all members of the Texas delegation except Eagle and Sanders voted "aye," with Sumners involved in a general pair. Thus the bill went to a conference committee for final settlement.

In actuality, there was little difference between the House and Senate versions. The Senate bill placed the burden of proof on the holding companies whereas in the House version the SEC had to prove dissolution would be in the public interest. Neither side was willing to give in, however, and the battle was renewed in the conference committee.

Maverick continued his effort to reinstate the "death sentence" in the House version. During the initial fight he had made speeches on the floor of Congress, addresses over radio, and called strategy meetings for supporters of the provision. As the conference committee became stalemated, Maverick began a drive to restore the "death sentence" by a "systematic campaign of contacting state delegations. . . ." 

90 Ibid., pp. 10639-40.
With neither side yielding in the conference committee, Rayburn made another attempt to secure House support for the "death sentence" by calling for passage of a resolution instructing House conferees to agree on the provisions of section 11. Again, the House refused to accept the provision by defeating the resolution 209-155. The Texas delegation still exhibited some division on this vote:

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Finally a compromise was worked out and the bill passed both houses on August 25. Under the final version all utility companies more than twice removed from the operating company were dissolved, and the SEC was permitted to "eliminate companies beyond the first degree that were not in the public interest."  

The bill had been of intensive interest to many Texas congressmen, the debates revealing the extent of the "Power Trust" control in Texas. McFarlane was especially critical of the lack of regulation of utility companies in Texas and

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94Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, p. 156.
urged passage of this bill for federal regulation. The influence of the power lobby over Texas congressmen surfaced in the subsequent congressional investigation of power lobby activities during consideration of the holding company legislation. In testimony before the investigating committee it was alleged that Nat Patton of Texas had accepted a bribe from the son of John W. Carpenter, president of Texas Power and Light. Although never proven, and denied by both Patton and Carpenter, there was much speculation about the contents of the newspaper wrapped box that young Carpenter gave to Patton immediately prior to the "death sentence" vote. Thus the voting records on this legislation are important in a determination of the conservative or insurgent tendencies of the congressmen.

Through an analysis of the reaction of members of the Texas delegation to some of the major agricultural and financial legislation of the New Deal from 1933 to 1938, it is possible to separate the conservatives from the members who exhibited some degree of insurgency. In the conservative group were George Terrell, Joseph Bailey, Fritz Lanham, Richard Kleberg, Joseph Mansfield, Joseph Eagle, and Nat Patton. When considering particular portions of bills which embodied


true insurgent demands such as the cost-of-production amend-
ment to the original Agricultural Adjustment Act and the
"death sentence" provision of the Public Utilities Holding
Company Act, James Buchanan and Milton West show conservative
tendencies. Luther Johnson exhibited conservative leanings
by often being paired or uncommitted when key votes were
taken. It should not be assumed that all the remaining mem-
bers of the Texas delegation were true insurgents, for many
factors influence a congressman's vote on a particular issue;
however, these men should be basically considered moderate to
insurgent. Some of the delegates did show definite insurgent
beliefs. Included in this group were Maury Maverick, W. D.
McFarlane, Sam Rayburn, Wright Patman, Marvin Jones, and
Ewing Thomason from the House and both Senators, Tom Connally
and Morris Sheppard. Before a conclusive determination of
the degree of insurgency within the Texas delegation can be
made, it is necessary to analyze the position of the members
on the reform and relief measures of the period. However,
since agricultural and financial issues have traditionally
been the focal points of insurgent demands, the voting records
on the key legislation of this type give a good indication that
a spirit of insurgency was strong in the Texas congressional
delegation from 1933 to 1938.
CHAPTER III

RELIEF AND REFORM AND THE TEXAS DELEGATION

During the New Deal period from 1933 to 1938, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Congress were confronted not only with problems relating to agricultural and financial abuses but also with the necessity of relieving the effects of the depression on the nation's industrial community. An immediate problem in 1933 was unemployment relief, but Roosevelt realized that "recovery and reform must be permanent partners in permanent well-being."¹ Therefore, from 1933 to 1938 Congress had to consider legislation that effected reform in areas of labor relations as well as providing direct relief to persons in distress. Much of this legislation conflicted with the New South emphasis on industrial growth while reflecting an extension of earlier insurgent demands, and the reaction of members of the Texas delegation to these reform and relief measures thus can give a further indication of the extent of an insurgent conservative division within this group.

Unemployment relief was considered essential to the recovery program of the new administration, and Roosevelt

believed that the problem was a national rather than a local concern. The resources of the various states and municipal governments were overburdened, and private philanthropy was proving inadequate in providing the necessary relief; therefore, on March 21, 1933, Roosevelt requested that Congress establish the office of Federal Relief Administrator and pass legislation extending grants to states to aid their relief programs as well as legislation aimed at a broad public works program.\(^2\)

The first bill for relief purposes considered by Congress was the Federal Emergency Relief Act of 1933. This act called for the establishment of the office of Federal Emergency Relief Administrator and allocated funds from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation not to exceed \$500,000,000\ to carry out the provisions of the bill. Under the measure the Administrator could use up to \$250,000,000\ to make grants available to the various states equal to one-third of the amount expended for relief by that state. The remaining \$250,000,000\ would be distributed in grants to the states at the discretion of the Administrator. This money was to be used "to aid in meeting the hardship and suffering caused by unemployment in the form of money, service, materials, and/or commodities to provide the necessities of life to persons in

\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 80-83.
need. . . ." The House considered the bill under a rule limiting debate to two hours, and most of the arguments against the legislation concerned the role of the federal government. Some conservatives argued that relief should remain the responsibility of the state and local governments and private charities; others labeled the plan socialism.

The change from the unworkable loan policy of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to outright grants to the states brought charges that the nation was heading toward the dole system. There was also opposition to the broad powers conferred upon the Administrator. Most congressmen realized, however, that some effort on the part of the federal government was necessary. For example, Martin Dies of Texas declared that "we cannot permit American citizens to suffer and starve in the midst of plenty. . . . and no government can remain inactive when any substantial portion of its citizenship is suffering from hunger, cold, and destitution." Some conservative opposition was neutralized by the fact the funds would be channeled through state agencies and welfare departments, and the bill passed by an overwhelming vote of 331-42. Not all members of the Texas delegation could agree to this necessary relief legislation, and their lack of support for an administration measure early

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4Ibid., pp. 2108-09.

5Ibid., p. 2126.
in 1933 exemplified their basic conservatism. The vote of the Texas delegation was

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Representatives Richard M. Kleberg and George B. Terrell were absent but it was announced that both would have voted "yea." The defection of Marvin Jones at this point is significant in determining his insurgent or conservative tendencies. In the Senate, both Tom Connally and Morris Sheppard voted for the bill.

From the very beginning under FERA, Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins, the Administrator, preferred a policy of using the funds for work rather than a dole. For the first few months the make-work projects were operated by the various state or local agencies, but in November, 1933, faced with a hard winter ahead and four million men unemployed, Roosevelt created the Civil Works Administration financed jointly from funds from the Public Works Administration and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. Harry Hopkins was charged

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6 Ibid., pp. 2129-30.  
7 Ibid., p. 1042.  
with the added responsibility of administrating this new agency. This was the first major federal involvement in a works program, since the Public Works Administration, established under the National Industrial Recovery Act, had been slow in getting started. Objections surfaced in relation to the CWA which were to recur in the opposition to the succeeding works programs of the federal government. Many believed that the works programs put the government in competition with private business and thus retarded recovery; and since the CWA paid workers the prevailing hourly rates of the community, conservatives complained that the program was too costly and that the wage rates drew workers away from lower paying jobs in the private economy. Southern planters were especially resentful because they believed that the work relief projects made it impossible to secure cheap Negro labor. The best method of determining a representative's position on these issues is through an analysis of the roll call votes on various appropriations measures for work relief.

The first congressional consideration of such appropriations occurred in February, 1934, when President Roosevelt requested an appropriation of $950,000,000 for emergency relief and to carry forth the CWA program. James P.

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9Ibid., p. 454.

Buchanan of Texas, as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, was instrumental in securing approval for the money to continue the works program, emphasizing the positive accomplishments of the CWA and its preferability over direct relief or the dole which he claimed "produces moral disintegration, destroys industry, self-reliance, and initiative."\textsuperscript{11} The appropriations measure passed the House with George B. Terrell of Texas having the distinction of being the only member of the House to vote against the bill.\textsuperscript{12} Both Texas Senators supported the bill although there was not a roll call vote. Connally maintained,

\begin{quote}
The program of relief, the program of rehabilitation, the President's program of redemption from the horrors and the miseries under which the American people suffered four long, bitter, trying years—that program is working. It is lifting the American people out of economic mire and putting them on the highway toward their return to prosperity and to happiness ...\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

He urged a quick passage of the appropriations bill by the Senate.

In general, even conservatives were hesitant to vote against appropriations for relief and public works programs because of the funds spent in their own districts. They did attempt, however, to weaken the various measures through amendments relative to the division of funds between direct

\textsuperscript{11}Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1934, 78, pt. 3:1910.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 1945.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 2453.
relief and work relief and in relation to the wage scale paid. During consideration of the 1935 appropriations bill for relief and work relief, much debate concerned the provision in the bill which limited the monthly average wage paid to one individual to fifty dollars. Representative Lawrence J. Connery from Massachusetts proposed an amendment calling for payment of not less than the prevailing wage of the locality in which the project was undertaken. Tom Blanton and James Buchanan of Texas spoke in opposition to this amendment, both claiming the President did not favor such a wage scale. The arguments of Blanton betrayed a basic conservatism which went beyond mere support of Roosevelt's plan. In reply to how he would explain his position to skilled workmen in his district he said,

I will tell them that this is strictly an emergency measure. I will tell them that it is not a wage-scale measure. I will tell them that it is not a bill to provide a decent living wage for American workmen in private industry.14

His opposition to wage-scale legislation acquires a greater significance combined with his reputation for unwarranted attacks on the labor movement.15

Buchanan pointed out that the President's message had specifically requested that compensation on public projects be greater than was currently given as direct relief but not

15Ibid., 73rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1934, 78, pt. 6:6253.
so high as to discourage workers from accepting jobs in private industry, but his arguments against this liberalizing amendment appear to be rather conservative in tone. At the end of the debate on this issue, the amendment was rejected on a teller count. When the entire appropriations bill came to a vote, none of the Texas delegation voted "nay;" however, Fritz Lanham and Joseph Mansfield were involved in a general pair.

The same type of amendment to pay the prevailing wage scale was proposed in the Senate. Tom Connally argued forcefully against this amendment claiming that "no matter what the wage is, so long as he is given a job and put to work, are we not adding to the strength of the wage structure rather than destroying it?" The supporters of the amendment emphasized that the President would still have the power to enforce the fifty dollar average monthly wage if he so desired, but that workers would be paid the prevailing wage scale. Although the Senate did not take a roll call vote either on the amendment or on passage of the bill, Connally's strong opposition to paying workers the prevailing wage scale is noteworthy.

The bill as it emerged from the conference committee also continued the practice of wage differentials for various parts

17Ibid., p. 942.  
18Ibid., pt. 2:2269.
of the country. The PWA wage scale at that time for skilled laborers was $1.00 per hour in the South, $1.10 per hour in the middle states, and $1.20 per hour in the east and north areas. For common labor the hourly rates were $.40 in the South, $.45 in the middle zone, and $.50 in the east and north zones of the country. These differentials were rationalized at that time by the myth that the cost of living was lower in the South, but in reality it reflected the New South philosophy of maintaining a low wage scale in an attempt to attract industry to the area.

The issue of wage differentials reemerged during debate over WPA wage scales in the 1938 appropriations bill for work relief. It was brought out in a statement given by Harry Hopkins, the Administrator of WPA, that the wage scale "is not based [as] much on the cost of living as it is on the standard of living." Maury Maverick of Texas was outspoken in his belief that the wage differentials should be abolished, claiming it was "nonsense to say that the Federal Government should pay more to a person in the North than it does in the South." An amendment to eliminate differentials was defeated, however, without a roll call vote.

19 Ibid, pt. 1:924.
21 Ibid., p. 6806.
22 Ibid., p. 6808.
A roll call vote was taken in the House on passage of the conference report, and in the Texas delegation only Kleberg and Milton West voted against the bill although Mansfield was involved in a general pair. Thus when a public stand had to be taken on appropriations measures, most Texas congressmen voted for work relief funds whether motivated by progressive ideals and human compassion or by the political potentials of relief projects. Several members of the delegation were strongly in favor of the various public works programs of the federal government and made public statements supporting these measures, including W. D. McFarlane who listed a long-range program of public works as a part of his 1938 campaign for reelection. Sam Rayburn in 1938 also praised the Public Works Administration and the Works Progress Administration, maintaining that "some consequences of their activities will endure to the advantage of the Nation to the end of time," further stating in a radio address given in 1938 that federal money allocated for work relief had been well spent in an attempt to reach permanent recovery and prosperity.23

Senator Morris Sheppard was also supportive of the relief programs of the federal government. In his opinion, Industry refused to assume responsibility for the 15 million men and women it had cast out of jobs, as it always had in the past. Industry was interested only in profit taking. It was not interested in

23 Ibid., pt. 11:3304, 2958; Ibid., pt. 10:1842-43.
adequate wages or decent hours. Industry was not interested in keeping men and women at work. It was not interested in creating jobs. It was not then; it was not before; it has not been since. That problem industry has left to government; and this Democratic Administration has taken up the problem and created jobs for men and women and put them to work.24

He, as Rayburn, believed that WPA funds were not wasted but rather relieved distress and gave encouragement to American citizens.25 Also advocating a strong public works program, Maury Maverick called for the establishment of a permanent federal department for welfare and public works.26

The unity of the Texas congressmen on relief bills considered necessary for economic recovery did not carry over to the reform measures which came before Congress from 1933 to 1938. The major divisions within the delegation were over reforms in labor legislation. Beginning with the early insurgent movements of the 1880's in Texas, there were demands for government action to improve labor conditions. The convention of the Grand State Farmers' Alliance of 1886 demanded that the state and national governments pass "such legislation as shall secure to our people freedom from the onerous and shameful abuses that the industrial classes are now suffering

24 Undated speech, Speeches: New Deal, Morris Sheppard Papers, University of Texas Archives, Austin, Texas.

25 Ibid.

26 Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 3rd sess., 1938, 83, pt. 6:6652; clipping from Washington Daily News, 1 January 1936, Congressional Scrapbook #2, Maury Maverick Papers, University of Texas Archives, Austin, Texas.
at the hands of arrogant capitalists and powerful corporations." Some of the explicit labor oriented demands of the group were recognition of trade unions, establishment of a national bureau of labor statistics, and laws compelling corporations to pay their employees in legal money according to contract. The Farmers' Alliance also recommended that a call be issued for a national labor conference "to which all labor organizations shall be invited to send representative men, to discuss such measures as may be of interest to the laboring classes." 27 By 1892 the People's Party of Texas had extended such support of labor legislation to include demands for an eight-hour day and creation of a state board of arbitration "to adjust all differences between corporations and employees." 28

The supporters of Woodrow Wilson controlled the Texas Democratic State Convention of 1912 and included in the platform a recognition of the right of labor to organize as well as a statement favoring a national board for voluntary labor arbitration. Thus, in spite of suggestions by Thomas Stokes of the Washington Daily News that legislation concerning labor problems was foreign to Texas congressmen in the 1930's, insurgent groups in the state had traditionally been interested

28 Ibid., p. 315.
and supportive of labor. Therefore, the position of members of the Texas New Deal delegation on such legislation is important in determining insurgent strength within that body.

One of the first bills to come before the House which included measures to improve labor conditions was the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933. On May 17, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt sent a message to Congress requesting it to "provide for the machinery necessary for a great cooperative movement throughout all industry in order to obtain wide reemployment, to shorten the work week, to pay a decent wage for the shorter week, and to prevent unfair competition and disastrous overproduction." The National Industrial Recovery Act, which represented an experiment in government-industry cooperation, consisted of two principal parts. Title I of the act dealt with industrial recovery, and Title II concerned public works. Under Title I, any group or organization within a trade or industry was permitted to draw up a code of fair competition setting forth the standards covering trade and competitive practices within that industry. The NIRA relaxed the anti-trust laws, creating a dilemma for many progressives in Congress because passage of anti-trust legislation had been a major progressive achievement in the


31 Ibid.
late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In exchange for concessions to conservatives in regard to the anti-trust laws, Senator Robert Wagner of New York insisted on the inclusion of Section 7(a) in the act. This section required that every code guarantee the rights of employees to organize and bargain collectively through their representatives, that an employee could not be forced to join a union or forced to refrain from joining a union as a condition of employment, and that all employers comply with any regulations set forth by the President concerning maximum hours, minimum wages, or other working conditions.32

In the House, the bill was discussed under a rule which limited debate to seven hours with no opportunity given for amendment except to the Ways and Means Committee.33 The discussions in that chamber involved the many diverse features of the bill. George B. Terrell of Texas was one of those who criticized the almost unlimited powers given to the President under the bill. He advanced an argument for states' rights claiming the federal government had no constitutional authority to control the wages and hours of labor or even to regulate child labor; in addition he opposed the taxes necessary to finance the bill.34 Others also objected to the taxes involved, especially to the proposed gasoline tax. In a motion to recommit the bill to the Ways and Means Committee,

32Ibid.  33Ibid., 27 May 1933, p. 9.
34Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 1st sess., 1933, 77, pt. 5:4332, 4374.
conservatives attempted to replace the gasoline tax provision by a manufacturer's sales tax. Those favoring the gasoline tax over the general sales tax argued that the gasoline tax would not be a concealed tax and thus easier to remove at a later date, and added that the gasoline tax would not fall so indiscriminately on those who were unemployed as well as those who were employed. When the motion to recommit came to a vote only Buchanan and Kleberg of the Texas delegation voted in favor of recommittal and thus for the manufacturers' sales tax, although Rayburn was involved in a general pair.

Generally, labor and capital joined in support of the National Industrial Recovery Act with both William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor and Henry I. Harriman, president of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, endorsing the bill immediately. The National Association of Manufacturers, however, opposed the bill. Not only did Robert Lund, its president, claim the bill was unconstitutional, but he also objected to the labor provisions saying they "might further serve to force employers to deal with communistic or racketeering organizations."

For southern congressmen, the act with its purpose of stabilizing business in addition to its labor provisions

38 Ibid., 18 May 1933, p. 11.
presented a dilemma. This doctrine of stabilization, according to historian George B. Tindall, "was largely the restrictive doctrine of a mature economy. . . . Both in theory and practice it ran headlong into conflict with the creed of the New South, the doctrine of industrial growth that was written in the prophets." When the measure came to a vote, however, several conservatives in the Texas delegation cast their vote for the bill probably because in addition to the national emergency, it offered protection from the anti-trust laws. The vote of the delegation was

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<td>Blanton</td>
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<td>Buchanan</td>
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<td>Cross</td>
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In the upper chamber, the Texas Senators split over the issue of NIRA. Tom Connally, a member of the Finance Committee which handled the bill in the Senate, was one of the two members of that committee who opposed the legislation, claiming that the NIRA represented an "unconstitutional delegation of the legislative authority." He stated that "the government

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40*Congressional Record*, 73rd Cong., 1st sess., 1933, 77, pt. 5:4373.
has no power to delegate the direction of an industry to a
commitee of its members."\textsuperscript{41} In the committee hearings,
Connally opposed the increase in basic tax rates proposed as
one of the methods for financing the bill, and attempted to
substitute a 10 percent levy against the net tax of every
taxpayer for the increase in basic tax rates.\textsuperscript{42} Even though
the Supreme Court did declare Title I of the act uncon-
stitutional, the decision was widely considered the action of
a conservative group of court justices. In their attempts
to defeat many of the New Deal measures, conservatives often
attacked the consitutionality of the legislation; thus
Connally's opposition to the NIRA on these grounds disclosed
his basic conservatism.

When the measure came to a vote on the floor of the
Senate, Connally again voted against the bill, which passed
58-24, but Morris Sheppard favored the act.\textsuperscript{43} Sheppard con-
sidered the NIRA, along the the AAA, "the heart of the New
Deal," believing the measure essential to permanent recovery.
He realized that the problems of industry, as well as those
of agriculture, were "national as well as local problems and
must be solved by national as well as local action." Favoring

\textsuperscript{41}Tom Connally as told to Alfred Steinberg, My Name is

\textsuperscript{42}New York Times, 30 May 1933, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{43}Congressional Record, 73rd Cong., 1st sess., 1933, 77,
pt. 6:5424-25.
the minimum wage provisions of the law, he stated, "The right to opportunity for work in order to achieve liberty and the pursuit of happiness today means opportunity for work with returns sufficient to maintain a decent physical existence. . . ."44

The divisions in the Texas delegation widened on a 1935 bill designed to stabilize the bituminous coal industry. After the Supreme Court declared NRA unconstitutional the United Mine Workers demanded permanent legislation to halt the disintegration of the coal industry, which led to passage of the Guffey-Snyder Coal Act, often referred to as a "little NRA" specifically for the coal industry. It established a national coal commission, similar to the National Labor Relations Board of the NRA, with codes that governed minimum prices, wages, hours, collective bargaining, and trade practices. The bill provided for a 15 percent excise tax to be levied on the entire industry, but operators who cooperated with the codes were allowed a 90 percent rebate; thus the tax was provided to help enforce the codes.45 The House Ways and Means Committee debated the bill for weeks, finally reporting

44 Undated speech, Speeches: Campaign and Domestic Topics, Morris Sheppard Papers; undated speech, Speeches: New Deal, Morris Sheppard Papers.

it out by a vote of 12-11. Among the members of the committee who signed the minority report against the bill was Morgan G. Sanders of Texas.\textsuperscript{46} Again the debate revolved around the constitutionality of the bill. Maury Maverick believed the measure was constitutional and necessary "for the preservation of the industry and labor and to follow the policies of conservation of the Democratic Party." He further advocated passage of the bill "not only for the good of the coal-mining States but for all the States of the United States of America. What helps one part of the United States helps another part," he declared.\textsuperscript{47} The vote on this measure showed a great division within the Texas delegation:

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YEA & NAY & PRESENT & NOT VOTING \\
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Eagle & Buchanan & West & Blanton \\
Jones & Dies & & Cross \\
McFarlane & Johnson & & Kleberg \\
Maverick & Lanham & & Mansfield \\
Patton & Mahon & & Patman \\
Rayburn & Sanders & & Sumners \\
South & & & \\
Thomason & & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

The following members were paired: Blanton (against); Cross (for) with Patman (against); West (for) with Kleberg (against); Mansfield and Sumners were involved in general pairs.\textsuperscript{48} The


\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., pt. 13:13666-67.
vote on the Guffey-Snyder bill, with its labor provisions, is important in determining the true attitudes of the individuals in the Texas delegation toward such labor legislation. The bill did not directly affect Texas, and thus the congressmen did not have to contend with pressures from special interest groups among their constituents. Some of those who voted for the measure may have done so merely as a favor to congressmen from other states, but special consideration should be given to the opposing votes.

The Texas Senators were again split on the Guffey-Snyder Coal Act with Sheppard supporting the measure and Connally opposing it. Connally pursued his constitutional attack on the bill, claiming it was "absolutely beyond the proper functions and the proper powers of the Federal Government" because coal was produced in one local area and therefore not under the commerce clause of the constitution. Believing the act was socialistic and an attempt to "sovietize" American industry, he joined other conservatives in attempts to weaken the bill. Although Connally did not vote on a crippling amendment aimed at striking out the tax to enforce the act, he did support a succeeding amendment to reduce the excise tax from 15 percent to 5 percent. Both of these amendments designed to emasculate the Guffy-Snyder bill were defeated with Morris Sheppard joining in the majority.

49 Ibid., p. 14066. 50 Ibid., pp. 13982, 13985, 14084.
decision. Finally the bill was passed by the Senate, 45-37, Sheppard voting "yea" and Connally voting "nay." After amending the bill, the House took a final roll call vote on the Guffey-Snyder Coal bill, which passed 186-150. The division in the Texas delegation was as follows:

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<td>West</td>
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In this instance, O. H. Cross voted "aye" rather than being paired with Wright Patman, who in turn voted against the measure. A similar situation occurred in the Milton West-Richard Kleberg pair, although Kleberg was again paired against the bill. Hatton Sumners also emerged from a general pair to oppose the legislation. Tom Blanton, Joseph Mansfield, and Nat Patton were involved in general pairs, Patton changing from having voted "aye" on the original vote. The bill was to be short-lived, however, as the Supreme Court, in a 6-3 decision, declared it unconstitutional in 1936 on the grounds that coal mining was a local activity and thus under the jurisdiction of the individual states.

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50 Ibid., pp. 13982, 13985, 14084.  
51 Ibid., p. 14364.  
If Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act or the similar section of the Guffey-Snyder Coal Act had been strictly enforced it would have "meant a major shift of economic power to unions and a limitation of employer control of industry." However, the constitutional and legal difficulties of enforcing Section 7(a) became increasingly apparent even after the creation of the National Labor Board. The Board, weakened both by its lack of enforcement powers and by the hesitance of the Justice Department to take legal steps against truculent employers, operated ineffectively. As early as February 1934, Senator Wagner had introduced a bill to solve these problems. Based on the theory that continuing strikes interrupted and affected the flow of interstate commerce and thus harmed the general welfare of the citizens of the United States, the bill proposed the establishment of a permanent labor board to prevent unfair labor practices that interfered with the rights of employees to organize or which discriminated against union members. This board was given the power to arbitrate labor disputes as well as prevent unfair practices. Instead of this bill, Congress passed a resolution which authorized President Roosevelt to establish a temporary board, the National Labor Relations Board. By 1935, enforcement of Section 7(a) had been weakened by a


54Ibid., pp. 61-62.
stream of court decisions as well as by Roosevelt's order removing from the jurisdiction of the NLRB all cases involving industries whose codes provided for labor boards. In February 1935, Wagner reintroduced his labor bill, which passed the Senate 63-12 just eleven days prior to the Supreme Court decision in *Schechter Poultry Corporation v. United States* which declared Title I of the NIRA unconstitutional. Both Connally and Sheppard voted for Wagner's National Labor Relations Act. The act, which recognized "the inequality of bargaining power between employees who do not possess full freedom of association, or actually liberty of contract, and employers who are organized in the corporate, or other forms of ownership association . . .," guaranteed the rights of employees to organize and to bargain collectively. Further, it forbade employers to engage in certain "unfair labor practices." These unfair practices were: interference with the right to union membership and collective bargaining; domination or interference with any union organization; discrimination against union members; and the discharge or discrimination against a member who filed charges under the act. The national labor relations board established to administer this law had the power to hold elections and to

55Ibid., pp. 66-70; Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 1st sess., 1935, 79, pt. 7:7681.
certify the union selected by the majority of the employees as the exclusive bargaining agent for all the employees.\textsuperscript{56}

Roosevelt belatedly threw his support behind the bill after its passage by the Senate, which assured its passage by the House. Since it passed the House without a roll call vote, the position of all members of the Texas delegation cannot be determined. Sam Rayburn was one who did support this measure, referring to it as one of the "principal contributions of a permanent character, which have been made by this administration, to the promotion of the security, prosperity, and general well-being of the people of this country."\textsuperscript{57}

Many were surprised by the ease of passage of this bill; in fact, historian William E. Leuchtenburg observed, "no one, then or later, fully understood why Congress passed so radical a law with so little opposition and by such overwhelming margins."\textsuperscript{58}

The relative lack of opposition to a labor bill did not carry over to the consideration of wages and hours legislation during the 1937-1938 congressional sessions. For many years Roosevelt had wanted to guarantee minimum wage, maximum

\textsuperscript{56}\textit{Congressional Record,} 74th Cong., 1st sess., 1935, 79, pt. 7:7483; "By the Editor," \textit{American Federationist} 42 (August 1935): 802.


hours, and child labor restrictions, but had feared opposition from the Supreme Court. After the Court began reversing its earlier conservative direction in 1937, the President submitted a special message to Congress proposing such legislation. A bill, drawn up and introduced in the Senate by Hugo Black of Alabama and in the House by William P. Connery, Jr., gave Congress the power to set minimum-wage scales and maximum-hours schedules and proposed outlawing transportation through interstate commerce any goods produced by industries employing child labor. Under this act an independent five-man labor board would be appointed by the President having authority to administer the law as well as fix fair minimum wages and a reasonable work week for industries where attempts at collective bargaining had failed.\footnote{James T. Patterson, \textit{Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal} (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967), p. 149; testimony of Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor, in committee hearings on Black-Connery bill reprinted in "Fair Labor Standards Bill," \textit{American Federationist} 44 (July 1937): 711.} The bill immediately faced opposition in the Senate. Southern conservatives, especially, opposed the bill because it threatened to eliminate the competitive advantages gained by lower wages in southern industry. Even labor leaders lacked enthusiasm for the bill, fearing the government would take over the role of unions in collective bargaining, in addition to distrusting a board whose composition could change according to the political philosophy of the president in office.
Connally argued forcefully against the bill using statements by William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, that the bill did not meet the expectations of labor in his attempt to influence the Senate to recommit the bill. Although Connally declared he favored some type of wages and hours bill different from the one under consideration he did not suggest what he considered to be a good bill. Voting for nearly every amendment designed to exempt certain classes of workers from coverage under the legislation, at the close of debate, Tom Connally made a motion to recommit the bill to the Senate Committee on Education and Labor. The motion to recommit was defeated 48-36 with Morris Sheppard voting against recommittal and Connally voting for the motion. The Black-Connery Wages-Hours bill was then passed by the Senate 56-28 with Connally voting with the minority against passage. Sheppard favored the bill declaring, "The Democratic labor program, including the bill relating to wages and hours, advances the well-being of individual laborers, placing the great private enterprise they serve on firmer and safer foundations."

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60 Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 1st sess., 1937, 81, pt. 7:7933; ibid., pp. 7749, 7887, 7926, 7947, 7948, 7949, 7950, 7952, 7954, 7956, 7957.

61 Ibid., pp. 7954, 7957.

62 Undated speech, Speeches: Campaign and Democratic Topics, Morris Sheppard Papers.
In the House, the Labor Committee released a wages and hours bill somewhat different from the Senate version. Fairly certain the bill would pass the House if allowed to come to a vote, conservatives opposed the bill and hoped to block consideration of the measure in the House. The bill could not be considered without a special rule from the Rules Committee. Among the members of that committee was Martin Dies of Texas, one of the opponents of the labor bill. Earlier in the session he had attacked sit-down strikers and expressed suspicion of organized labor. As one writer reported the events, "Led by the reactionary Martin Dies, five Democratic members of the committee flatly refused to report a rule for the bill although House leaders admitted that 'three-fourths' of the members favored it." Liberal supporters of the bill attempted to circumvent the Rules Committee through a discharge petition, but it failed to receive enough signatures. Thus the first session of the Seventy-fifth Congress closed without a House vote on the wages-hours legislation.

The Black-Connery bill was finally pried out of the Rules Committee during the 1937 special session through another discharge petition. A great deal of political trading occurred in gaining signatures on the petition, leading Dies to complain, "They have swapped everything today but the Capitol."

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63 Patterson, Congressional Conservatism, p. 179; Charles Malcolmson, "XX Marks Spot Where Texas Gang Knifed New Deal," Philadelphia Record, 28 August 1937, clipping in Congressional Scrapbook #5, Maury Maverick Papers.
With Joseph Mansfield affixing the final signature to the petition, the wages and hours bill was opened for debate in the House. 64

Rayburn and Maverick, who was particularly critical of southerners opposed to the act, were among those congressmen urging passage of the bill. Maverick wrote:

The industrialists of the South oppose this legislation. Why? Because they want cheap labor. And how is wide support gained for their big idea? By bringing in the Negro in one way or another. And how have wages been kept low in the South? Again, the Negro, who is used to force a lower and lower scale upon the white worker. 65

Maverick thus touched on the racial problems which had traditionally complicated all phases of southern life. Although Maverick favored full economic equality for the Negroes, others in the Texas delegation retained the basic southern attitudes on that issue. Martin Dies, for example, opposed the bill for reasons which included the prospect of equal wages for blacks. He argued, "There is a racial question involved here. Under this measure what is prescribed for one race must be prescribed for the others, and you cannot prescribe the same wages for the black man as for the white man."66

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The battle for passage of the bill became even more confused when William Green of the A.F. of L. sent telegrams to all members of the House requesting recommital of the committee bill and suggested his own version of such legislation. Green was jealous of the possible gains the CIO and other labor organizations might receive as a result of the legislation, and he also believed the bill should be totally inflexible in establishing wage and hours scales. Maverick wrote to Green informing him that the labor leader's suggested bill was unconstitutional and would be impossible to enforce; hence Maverick opposed the proposal to recommit the bill. Rayburn, too, pleaded against recommital stating it would be "the death of wage and hour legislation." Nevertheless, a combination of southern and rural conservatives combined to achieve recommital of the Black-Connery Wages-Hours Bill in the 1937 special session by a vote of 216-198. The majority of the Texas delegation voted for recommital as indicated:

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Kleberg was involved in a pair but was for recommital.  


68 Ibid., p. 1835.
In April 1938, the Labor Committee again attempted to draw up a bill establishing fair labor standards. Rejecting a compromise suggestion providing for regional differentials and an independent five-man commission, the committee finally wrote a bill which failed to provide for regional differentials and established a wage and hour scale beginning with a twenty-five cents per hour minimum and a forty-four hour maximum. Within three years this was to be increased to a forty cents per hour, forty hour per week scale. For the third time the bill was denied a rule with Dies and four other southern members forming the major part of the opposition. Once again, a discharge petition was placed on the Speaker's desk by Mary T. Norton of Jew Jersey, chairwoman of the Labor Committee. This time within two hours and twenty minutes the necessary 218 names were affixed to the petition. Among the twenty-two southern Democrats who signed the petition were Rayburn, Maverick, McFarlane, Lyndon Johnson, Thomas, and Thomason of Texas.

Arguments over the bill varied from attempts to establish regional differentials to demands for greater flexibility and decentralization of the enforcement procedure. Dies was a

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69 Ibid., 75th Cong., 3rd sess., 1938, 83, pt. 7:7280; Patterson, Congressional Conservatism, p. 242.

70 Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 3rd sess., 1938, pt. 7:7275; Patterson, Congressional Conservatism, p. 244; New York Times, 7 May 1938, p. 2.
major proponent of the latter argument. Having argued in the prior session that the bill was too flexible, in 1938 he denounced the bill as inflexible. Although claiming he did not want differentials for the South, he still contended "that every industry, regardless of where it is situated, should be able to appear before some decentralized agency to present the facts and arguments if it contends that it cannot pay the 40 cents an hour."71

Maverick argued strongly against differentials for the South. As one of the leading spokesmen favoring the bill, he chastised southern chambers of commerce for advertising "cheap and docile labor."72 At the close of the debate, once again a motion was made to recommit the bill but was defeated 315-96, with eight of the Texas delegation voting for recommittal. When the final House passage occurred by a vote of 314-97 these same men cast their ballot against the Fair Labor Standards Act. The Texas division was as follows:

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71 Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 3rd sess., 1938, 83, pt. 7:7276.
72 Ibid., p. 7292. 73 Ibid., pp. 7449-50.
Concerning this vote, James Patterson observed that only the "most intractable southern Democrats had dared to oppose the administration." The stand of these Texas congressmen on the Fair Labor Standards Act thus gives a clear indication of their conservative beliefs.

The major differences to be overcome between the two houses in the conference committee involved settlement on regional differentials and the board, both of which were provided for in the 1937 Senate version of the wages-hours bill. The House had not included differentials and had replaced the provision for the five-man board with one placing administration of the bill under one man in the Labor Department. Anxious to adjourn, the conferees reached a compromise with the Senate agreeing to accept the change from the board to a single administrator while the House gave in on the issue of regional differentials. In addition some changes were made in the schedule under which the minimum wage had to reach forty cents per hour. The final bill reflected the southern and rural pressures because it "exempted large numbers of agricultural workers and permitted many businesses to postpone paying what liberals deemed a living wage." Finally after being considered during three sessions of Congress, a wage

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74 Patterson, Congressional Conservatism, p. 245.
75 Ibid., pp. 245-46.
and hours bill became law. Even Martin Dies of Texas cast his vote for the conference report. The Texas division on this report was:

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<td>Mahon</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
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<td>Maverick</td>
<td>Thomason</td>
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W. D. McFarlane considered passage of this act one of the important accomplishments of the 1938 session. He observed that the "legislation marks another milestone of progressive legislation that will set a better standard of living and increase purchasing power to buy the products of farm and factory." Likewise, Sam Rayburn referred to the bill as "one of the most important pieces of legislation passed in the Seventy-fifth Congress." 

The Fair Labor Standards Act, in addition to the other labor and relief legislation of the New Deal, was a logical extension of the insurgent demands of previous movements. With an emphasis on improving the lives of common men, New Deal acts reflected the same concern for the individual as opposed to business interests as emerged in the populist and

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76Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 3rd sess., 1938, 83, pt. 8:9267.
77Ibid., pt. 11:3298. 78Ibid., p. 2967.
progressive periods. There was much more division within the Texas delegation on such labor legislation than on bills relating to agricultural and financial issues, and this aids in determining actual insurgent strength within the group. Several members exhibited themselves as true insurgents in regard to relief and labor reform acts. They were Maury Maverick, W. D. McFarlane, Sam Rayburn, R. Ewing Thomason, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Albert Thomas in the House and Morris Sheppard in the Senate. Joseph Eagle supported the early measures, including the Guffey-Snyder Coal Bill, but was not in Congress to vote on later issues; thus he possibly could be included with the insurgent representatives in regard to labor legislation. At the conservative end of the political spectrum on labor issues were Joseph Bailey, Fritz Lanham, Hatton Sumners, Martin Dies, George B. Terrell, Richard Kleberg, Tom Blanton, Joseph Mansfield, Luther Johnson, Milton West, Nat Patton, Clyde Garrett, and Morgan Sanders in the House and Tom Connally in the Senate. The remainder of the delegation cannot be placed in either category on the basis of the evidence presented because their support varied on different bills. Marvin Jones, for instance, opposed FERA and NIRA but supported such controversial measures as the Guffey-Snyder Act, Black-Connery Wages and Hours Bill, and the Fair Labor Standards Act. George Mahon and Wright Patman were in a similar situation, opposing the Guffey-Snyder bill and voting to recommit the Black-Connery bill, while voting for the Fair
Labor Standards Act. Charles South wavered only in his vote to recommit the Black-Connery Act. Although he only voted against the Guffey-Snyder Act, James Buchanan appeared to be rather conservative in his arguments on appropriations measures even though he supported the measures as the committee chairman. He died prior to the later legislation, and thus there is no way to determine how he would have voted on the more controversial bills. It is difficult to classify William Poage. A new congressman in the Seventy-fifth Congress, of the measures considered, he only voted on the 1938 appropriations bill, the Black-Connery bill, and the Fair Labor Standards Act. On those, he voted for recommittal of the original wages and hours legislation but supported the Fair Labor Standards Act as well as the appropriations bill. Thus, with this limited information, he too must be considered middle-of-the-road on such legislation.

Although the majority of the Texas delegation from 1933 to 1938 must be considered conservative or moderate on relief and labor reform measures, it is significant that nearly one-third of the group were southern insurgents. The influence of these men on such legislation cannot be minimized. Sam Rayburn, who had been chairman of the Interstate Commerce Committee, was elected majority leader of the House in 1937, and had great influence on legislation; Maury Maverick, outspoken in his support of such measures, was a leading liberal in the House; Morris Sheppard, as Dean of Congress, was well
respected and influential in his quiet way. Therefore, in passage of relief and reform legislation, the Texas insurgents were important much as they had been in relation to agricultural and financial matters.
CHAPTER IV

SOUTHERN INSURGENTS IN THE TEXAS CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, 1933-1938

In examining the role of the Texas delegation in relation to major agricultural, financial, relief, and labor reform legislation of the New Deal from 1933 to 1938 it appears that much of that legislation reflected the demands of the southern insurgent elements which had struggled against the business-oriented, conservative politicians in the South since the end of Reconstruction. By focusing on the roll-call votes taken on the key bills a spirit of insurgency emerges from within the Texas congressional delegation from the Seventy-third through the Seventy-fifth congresses. Attempts to categorize representatives on the basis of voting records can often be misleading unless a large sample of legislation is considered because of the various factors which influence such a vote. Often avowed conservatives in the Texas delegation voted for an insurgent piece of legislation despite their objections to the measure, such action usually being for political reasons. Hatton Summers gave an excellent reasoning for such behavior in a letter to a friend concerning his opposition to the growth of a system of
centralized power in the United States brought about by New Deal measures. He wrote,

I have been doing my best to try to hold things more or less together up here and head them in the right direction as I see it. That means a lot of work more or less on the quiet, and it certainly means the abandonment of all effort to maintain a consistent position because you have to push a little on first one side and then the other. As I told a friend today when you are trying to turn a fat hog in the Summer time you sometimes have to go with him a while in order to have a chance . . .

In addition to planned inconsistency, in the early phases of the New Deal most of the members of the Texas delegation supported administration measures because "they were Democrats, and not because they were imbued with any profound conviction of the ultimate value of the New Deal." 

Thus in determining insurgent tendencies among Texas congressmen, the votes of members of the delegation were analyzed with special consideration given to key votes such as the "death sentence" of the Public Utility Holding Company Act and the vote to recommit the Black-Connery Wages and Hours Bill, as well as to statements made by the Texas congressmen in debates in Congress or on other occasions. On the basis of the evidence presented it is apparent that in the Texas congressional delegation, from 1933 to 1938,

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1 Hatton Sumners to J. L. Gammon, 16 July 1935, General Correspondence: 1934-38, Hatton Sumners Papers, Dallas Historical Society, Dallas, Texas.

several representatives followed in the tradition of southern insurgent politicians. Included in this group were Senator Morris Sheppard and Congressmen Sam Rayburn, Maury Maverick, W. D. McFarlane, R. Ewing Thomason, and Lyndon B. Johnson.

Although these Texas insurgents were in the minority in a delegation considered to be the most conservative as well as the most powerful group in Congress during the New Deal period, their influence cannot be minimized. Just as Arthur S. Link argued that southern representatives influenced the progressive direction of Wilson's administration, one might argue that the Texas delegation rather than reflecting an influence of unreserved conservatism, actually, through certain influential members, abet, even encouraged, New Deal progressivism. Combined with other members of the delegation who exhibited some degree of insurgent beliefs, the insurgent Texas congressmen were powerful in putting legislation through Congress. The entire Texas delegation "possessed a degree of control out of all proportion to Texas' importance in the Union," and the insurgent members of the delegation, especially Sheppard, Rayburn, and Maverick, were extremely influential.3 A greater

understanding of the nature of southern insurgency in twentieth century Texas can be attained through a closer examination of these three men.

Morris Sheppard, first elected to Congress in 1902, was the Dean of Congress in the 1930's and until his death in 1941, having served in Congress longer than any other member. He championed progressive causes throughout his years in Congress, being best known for introducing the prohibition amendment to the Constitution. Although the prohibition crusade was the only vestige of progressivism for many southerners in the twenties, Sheppard continued to embrace all aspects of the progressive movement. As one writer observed, Senator Sheppard "was pursuing many of its purposes before there was a New Deal. He was truly a progressive in the days when the country dreamed its foolish dreams of endless prosperity during the era of Harding-Coolidge-Hoover."4

Revering Thomas Jefferson as the founder of the Democratic Party, Sheppard maintained the New Deal "began in principle when Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence and founded the Democratic party to carry out that declaration." A believer in individual liberty, Morris Sheppard supported an active role for the government in providing the atmosphere for the exercise of such liberty. He

4Clipping from Houston Chronicle, 6 July 1936, Scrapbook #2, 1936-37, Morris Sheppard Papers, University of Texas Archives, Austin, Texas.
claimed Jefferson was neither afraid of governmental assistance in the securing of human rights nor did he believe such assistance would weaken human character as charged by many conservatives.\(^5\) Thus Sheppard, in the insurgent tradition of the twentieth century, saw the necessity for government action in achieving progressive goals. Realizing individual liberty and democratic principles were "meaningless if the masses build and the few control," Sheppard viewed the use of government agencies as "one of the most powerful instruments of collective effort" in securing the human rights designated in the Declaration of Independence and in "bringing economic emancipation to the people."\(^6\) Sheppard believed himself to be following the example of Jefferson in opposing monopoly and maintained that the Democratic party during the New Deal period was reasserting "the tendencies and beliefs of Jefferson."\(^7\)

Eager to aid Roosevelt in passing measures to help the unfortunate and underprivileged and to defy any opposition from privilege and power, Sheppard used his influence and position in Congress to achieve such ends. In a 1936 campaign speech he stated in regard to New Deal legislation that

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\(^5\)Campaign speech given at Corsicana, Texas, 4 July 1936, Speeches: Campaign and Domestic Topics, Morris Sheppard Papers.

\(^6\)Undated speech, Speeches: Campaign and Domestic Topics, Morris Sheppard Papers.

\(^7\)Ibid.
"such an array of constructive and efficient effort in behalf of the masses of the people as the Democratic party enacted has never before been equalled in this or any other country." He continued that such legislation had "taken this country from the brink of collapse and placed it on foundations of new hope and strength."  

Morris Sheppard supported the agricultural, financial, relief, and labor reform legislation of the New Deal not only because he was a regular Democrat but also because such measures were in harmony with his basic political beliefs. Never considered radical, he was still classified by many observers as left of center on most issues. Wettish union labor favored Sheppard despite his strong views on prohibition, and he was considered pro-farmer and anti-Wall Street. In sum, he was a classic example of a southern insurgent politician.

Perhaps even more than Morris Sheppard, Sam Rayburn epitomized the characteristics of a southern insurgent leader. As described by George B. Tindall, Rayburn was "'small-townish, agrarian, nationalistic, individualistic, anti-Wall Street,'" a man of "rural background and humble

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8Campaign speech given at Corsicana, Texas, 4 July 1936, Speeches: Campaign and Domestic Topics, Morris Sheppard Papers.

origin who had struggled hard for an education, who felt an instinctive sympathy for the 'little fellow.' "\(^{10}\) Although some of his beliefs were conservative ones, it would be inaccurate to consider Rayburn a conservative. One writer claimed Sam Rayburn pleased "neither professional conservatives nor professional liberals," and some colleagues classified him as a "reluctant political Liberal." Many of his liberal leanings can be attributed to his rural childhood and his early beliefs that "the plain people got the short end from the government." \(^{11}\) Rayburn, basically conservative by temperament, nevertheless did not believe in strict adherence to the status quo. For example, although a firm believer in states' rights, he gradually came to advocate a stronger role to the federal government because the states were not accepting their responsibilities in aiding the unfortunate and in controlling big business. \(^{12}\) The sponsor of major legislation to control big business, Rayburn believed in regulation not destruction of big business.


maintaining that legislation should never be an instrument of revenge but rather "' . . . be fair. And ordinarily it's a question of regulating the minority--the pistol-toting minority.'" If any label other than southern insurgent could be applied to Sam Rayburn, it would be that of a solid progressive.

First elected to Congress in 1912, at the height of the progressive movement, Rayburn was considered by 1931 "one of the small group of members who really counted in the House" when he became chairman of the Interstate Commerce Committee. As chairman of this powerful committee he became a national figure, and through his struggles with such legislation as the Securities Exchange Act and the Public Utility Holding Company Act he became a good friend of Roosevelt. The president considered Rayburn "the most valuable man in Congress while the . . . programs of the New Deal were fighting for survival," and following his elevation to majority leader of the House in January 1937, he became even more important as a legislative tactician for Roosevelt's programs. Thus Rayburn, a southern insurgent "passionately interested in the welfare of underdogs," was one of the most important

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13 Quoted in Cohn, "Mr. Speaker," pp. 75, 76.


members of the Texas congressional delegation from 1933 to 1938 and as such could influence other members of the delegation to support legislation favorable to insurgent demands.¹⁶

A distinctly different breed of man than either Sheppard or Rayburn, Maury Maverick, a freshman congressman from San Antonio in 1935, was also to have a strong influence on the course of the New Deal. Although freshman congressmen normally remain fairly quiet, relatively anonymous, and slowly learn to work within the congressional system, Maverick, whose grandfather gave his name to unbranded cattle which run against the herd, established himself in his first term as one of the foremost liberal spokesmen in Congress. Maverick was considered the "moving spirit" of a bloc of congressmen who believed the New Deal to be more than emergency legislation and who were determined it "should not be allowed to wither and fade, choked by a reform-weary Old Guard."¹⁷

Maury Maverick was not only vocal on the floor of Congress in his advocacy of New Deal and liberal issues but also made radio speeches, authored books, and wrote articles for various magazines. Many people considered Maverick one of the most radical members ever elected to the United States

¹⁶Cohn, "Mr. Speaker," p. 75.

Congress. As one reporter phrased his opinion of the San Antonio representative, Maverick was "not only an insurgent Democrat. He is also an insurgent insurgent."¹⁸ He supported agricultural and financial legislation and was a leading advocate of labor reform as well as a champion of civil liberties. Profoundly sympathetic with the poor and underprivileged, Maverick also believed in the "possibility of social meliorism through democratic processes."¹⁹

Even though Maverick took a national rather than a sectional outlook on issues, he remained concerned about the problems of the South and attempted to correct what he believed to be the social and economic injustices suffered by the region. However, his ideas for solutions to southern exploitation by the North through absentee landlordship and northern ownership of southern business and property, in addition to the other social problems encountered in the South, often separated him from his fellow southern representatives, especially those of conservative persuasion. He maintained that the South "cannot have social and economic justice unless we have the widest type of freedom of speech


guaranteed by the Federal government of the United States," and to Maverick this freedom of speech included full economic justice and protection of civil liberties for black and other minorities as well as for white southerners.\textsuperscript{20}

As a strong opponent of special privilege, Maverick was opposed in elections by the machine politicians and special interest groups from San Antonio. In the 1936 election campaign Maverick estimated that his opponent, Lamar Seeligson, backed by oil men, public utilities, old machine politicians, big businessmen, and the newspapers of the district spent "over fifty thousand dollars on election day for purchase of votes."\textsuperscript{21} Reelected in 1936, he was defeated by a strong anti-New Dealer in 1938. In his two terms of office, however, Maury Maverick was extremely influential in aiding passage of legislation steeped in the southern insurgent heritage.

Morris Sheppard, Sam Rayburn, and Maury Maverick along with the other strongly insurgent members of the Texas delegation, W. D. McFarlane, R. Ewing Thomason, and Lyndon B. Johnson, were to play a part in the changing nature of politics in Texas and the rest of the South brought about as a result of New Deal policies. According to historian Dewey

\textsuperscript{20} Speech to American Civil Liberties Union Dinner, 20 April 1936, Speeches, 1936-1938, Maury Maverick Papers.

\textsuperscript{21} Maury Maverick to Rodney Dutcher, 22 June 1936, General Correspondence, 1936, Maury Maverick Papers.
Grantham, throughout the South the New Deal "frightened the conservaties . . . promoted the growth of organized labor, and encouraged the spread of liberal ideas" while inducing "the first real stirring of the southern 'proletariat'--submerged elements like the sharecropper, the textile worker, and the Negro domestic servant." 22

In Texas, the disagreements over national policies during the period caused the development of "the most bitter intra-Democratic fight along New Deal and anti-New Deal lines in the South." 23 Since the New Deal, the terms "liberal" and "conservative" have had increased significance in Texas politics, and V. O. Key has demonstrated that within the state "voters divide along class lines in accord with their class interests as related to liberal and conservative candidates." 24 This division along class lines is similar to that advocated during the Populist period, thus reflecting a continuation of the conservative-insurgent struggle in Texas politics which has remained fairly constant in the state's politics since the New Deal period.

Although the conservatives have retained the majority in Texas, insurgents have continued to play a major role at the


24 Ibid., p. 261.
national level. Sam Rayburn became Speaker of the House on September 15, 1940, a position he retained until his death on November 16, 1961. He continued to champion progressive legislation through the years, declaring his allegiance to the New Frontier of John F. Kennedy as he had to the New Deal of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Indicative of Rayburn's enduring impact on Texas politics is the fact that another leading Texas insurgent of the post New Deal period, Ralph Yarborough, described himself in his 1954 gubernatorial campaign against conservative Allan Shivers, as a "Sam Rayburn Democrat." Yarborough, who served as a senator from 1957 through 1970, remains the leader of the liberal faction in Texas politics.

Another Texas product of the New Deal period to make his mark on national politics was Lyndon B. Johnson. Elected to the House in 1937 upon the death of James P. Buchanan, Johnson was a strong supporter of Roosevelt and New Deal policies. Although he tended to become more conservative and business oriented during his tenure in the Senate, Johnson's populist-progressive heritage reemerged in the domestic policies during his own presidential administration. The social and economic ideals of the Great Society as envisioned by Lyndon Johnson strongly reflected his earlier insurgent tendencies.

26Ibid., p. 469.
Thus it can be shown that a spirit of southern insurgency was strong in the Texas congressional delegation from 1933 to 1938. Politics in Texas, as in the rest of the South since Reconstruction, has reflected the bitter struggle between Redeemer and insurgent groups for control of southern politics. During the New Deal period this conflict heightened and thus has given a further dimension to Texas politics since that time.
# APPENDIX

## BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF MEMBERS OF THE TEXAS CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, 1933-1938

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Age in 1933</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Tenure in Office</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Connally (Marlin)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>lawyer</td>
<td>(H) March 3, 1917- March 3, 1929</td>
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<td>58</td>
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<td>Mar. 4, 1923- July 17, 1946</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Marvin Jones (Amarillo)</td>
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<td>Richard Kleberg (Corpus Christi)</td>
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<td>Sam Rayburn (Bonham)</td>
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<td>Apr. 22, 1933- Oct. 28, 1948</td>
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