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The Character of the Congressional Revolution of 1910

JOHN D. BAKER

THE defeat of "Cannonism" in March 1910 by an alliance of Republican Insurgents and Democrats is often considered as a page in the progressive reform chapter of American history. Through this link with the broad progressive movement which sought to restore Jeffersonian republicanism by returning the power of government to popular control, the Insurgents have emerged as heroic figures. Their attack on the evils of the speakership is assumed to have been motivated by the same righteous idealism that marked the wider progressive movement. But is this characterization in fact true? Was the congressional revolution a part of the progressive movement or an isolated maneuver motivated largely out of political self-interest? The evidence suggests a possibility that its inclusion in the progressive reform movement is largely the result of its chronological position and not due to the real character of the action itself.

In the years immediately preceding the March revolution, the House had been the scene of a series of sporadic but unsuccessful attempts to overthrow the power of Speaker Joseph G. Cannon. Under William Hepburn's leadership in 1908 and 1909, a few Republicans had sought revision of the rules, but each attempt had ended in almost total defeat. The rebels, unable to gather sufficient Republican support or to work out an effective coalition with the Democrats, had been forced to settle for little save Calendar Wednesday, and that had been purchased at a very high price. Cannon, in retaliation for their acts, deprived them of committee chairmanships and positions of seniority.¹

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¹ Richard Lowitt, *George W. Norris: The Making of a Progressive, 1861-1912* (Syracuse, 1963), 140-43. Calendar Wednesday provides that Wednesday of each week will be set aside for a roll call of all House committees. On that day the chairman or a designated member may call up bills reported by their committee without Rules Committee action. The procedure can be dispensed with by a two-thirds vote. In practice, Calendar Wednesday has been very ineffective as a way around the Rules Committee and has been used rarely.

Then what had seemed impossible was hailed as accomplished, and the Insurgents were lauded as "the advocates and exponents of new policies."² Characterized in the nation's press as "the most resolute, the most courageous . . . and the ablest body of Republicans" ever to revolt against "the old Republican spirit,"³ the Insurgent revolution came to be viewed as motivated by the spirit of progressive reform. The action of March 1910 remains generally seen as George W. Norris described it: the act of a group "fighting for a principle."⁴

There are, however, some elements concerning the revolution that raise significant doubts about this characterization. Despite the fact that some of the Insurgents later identified themselves politically as progressives (see Table I), the issue remains as to whether the revolution itself was basically the result of progressive motives. The Insurgents are identified as the forty-three members of the Republican party who voted for the Norris resolution (see Tables I and II).

The first area of concern is relative to the conception of the revolutionary instrument itself. It is important to determine whether it was designed as a real effort to change the power relationship between the speaker and the membership or whether it was constructed largely as an impressive but essentially non-critical revision. If the latter is the case, then it may indicate that beneath the surface is a significant but silent purpose substantially different in character.

Assuming the goal was as stated—the elimination of Cannonism—did the Norris resolution offer a real hope of achieving it? In their assessment of Cannon's control, Norris and others of the Insurgent group had on several occasions pointed out that Cannon's power rested on three basic elements: his power to refuse recognition on the floor of the House; his membership on, and appointment of, the Rules Committee; and his power to appoint all committee members and chairmen, a control that Norris had often singled out as the key.⁵

Despite the Insurgents' correct assessment of the sources of Cannon's power, their resolution was silent on two of the three items. Only the Rules Committee was to be changed by the proposal. Certainly men of the caliber of the Insurgent leadership, with a sophistication in parliamentary procedure which they were to demonstrate in the revolution, must have thoroughly and accurately evaluated the effects of the resolution. If its aim cen-

² "The Uprising against Cannon," *Literary Digest*, XL (March 26, 1910), 574.

³ *New York Times*, March 19, 1910.

⁴ *Ibid.*, March 20, 1910.

⁵ *Cong. Record*, 61 Cong., 2 Sess., 6275-76 (May 14, 1910).

TABLE I
PROGRESSIVE INSURGENTS VOTING ON SELECTIVE "PROGRESSIVE" ISSUES

	1	2	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H		I	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cary, William (Wisc)	X		NV ¹				N		Y		Y		Y		Y		Y		Y	
Cooper, Henry (Wisc)	X		Y		Y				Y		Y		Y		Y		Y		Y	
Davis, Charles (Minn)	X		Y		Y				Y		Y		Y		Y		Y		Y	
Gronna, Asle (N D)	X	X	Y			N			Y		NV		Y		N		Y			
Haugen, Gilbert (Iowa)	X		NV		N							N								
Hubbard, Elbert H. (Iowa)	X		Y		N				Y				Y							
Lenroot, Irvine (Wisc)	X		NV		N				Y		NV		Y							
Lindbergh, Charles (Minn)	X		NV		N				Y				Y							
Madison, E. H. (Kansas)	X		NV		Y				Y		NV		Y							
Martin, Eben (S D)	X	X	NV		Y				Y				Y							
Muller, Clarence (Minn)	X		Y		N				Y		NV		Y						Y	NV
Morse, Elmer (Wisc)	X		Y		Y				Y		NV		Y		N				Y	
Murdock, Victor (Kansas)	X		NV		Y				Y				Y		NV				Y	
Nelson, John (Wisc)	X		Y		Y				Y				Y						Y	
Norris, George (Neb)	X		Y		NV				Y				Y						Y	
Poindexter, Miles (Wash)	X				Y				Y				Y						Y	
Totals			7	0	5	6	5	10	9	7	9	2	14	0	6	8	13	1	6	7

^a Partial listings when combined provide the roster from Kenneth W. Hechler, *Insurgency Personalities and Politics of the Taft Era* (New York, 1940), 202 and Russel B. Nye, *Midwestern Progressive Politics: A Historical Study of Its Origins and Development, 1870-1958* (New York, 1959), 247-48, 261

^b *The World Almanac and Encyclopedia, 1913* (New York, 1913), 721-69

^c *Cong Record*, 60 Cong., 1 Sess., 6034 (May 9, 1908)

^d *Ibid.*, 2 Sess., 3566-67 (March 1, 1909)

^e *Ibid.*, 61 Cong., 1 Sess., 4755 (July 31, 1909)

^f *Ibid.*, 2 Sess., 3438-39 (March 19, 1910)

^g *Ibid.*, 9027 (June 24, 1910)

^h *Ibid.*, 3 Sess., 1708-09 (Jan 30, 1911)

ⁱ *Ibid.*, 2563-64 (Feb 14, 1911)

^j *Ibid.*, 62 Cong., 1 Sess., 268-69 (April 14, 1911)

^k *Ibid.*, 559-60 (April 21, 1911)

^l NV = not voting

TABLE II
NON-PROGRESSIVE INSURGENTS VOTING ON SELECTIVE "PROGRESSIVE" ISSUES

	1	2	3	4	A		B		C		D		E		F		G		H		I	
					Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ames, Butler (Mass)	X		X		Y	NV	Y	NV	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NV	Y	NV			Y
Barnard, William (Ind)					Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N					
Davidson, James (Wisc)	X	X			Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	NV	Y	N				
Dawson, Albert (Iowa)					Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N				
Fish, Hamilton (N Y)					Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	NV				
Foelker, Otto (N Y)		X			Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	NV				
Fowler, Charles (N J) ^a			X	X	NV		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	NV	N	N	N		N
Gardner, Augustus (Mass)					NV		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	NV	N	N	N		N
Good, Jas (Iowa)					Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N		N
Hayes, E. A. (Cal)					Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Huashan, Edmund (Neb)					Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Hollingsworth, David (Ohio)	X				Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Howland, Paul (Ohio)		X			Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Johnson, Adna (Ohio)					Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Kendall, Nathan (Iowa)					NV		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	NV	N	N		N
Kindcaud, Moses (Neb)			X		NV		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Kopp, Arthur (Wisc)			X		NV		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Kusterman, Gustav (Wisc)					NV		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
McLaughlin, James (Mich)	X			X	NV		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Morrison, Martin (Ind)					NV		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Parsons, Herbert (N Y)					Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Pickett, Charles (Iowa)	X				Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Stevenson, Halvoe (Minn)					Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Taylor, Edward (Ohio)			X		Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Townsend, Charles (Mich)			X		Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Volstead, Andrew (Minn)					Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Woods, Frank (Iowa)					Y		Y		Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N
Totals	6	4	3	6	9	8	22	5	1	26	7	12	20	1	9	12	3	5	11			

C Payne-Aldrich Tariff, 7-31-1909
D Removal of Speaker, 3-19-1910
E Forest Preserve, 6-24-1910
F Tariff Board, 1-30-1911
G Canadian Reciprocity, 2-14-1911
H Campaign Publicity, 4-14-1911
I Canadian Reciprocity, 4-21-1911

1 Defeated 1910^a
2 Did not run 1910^a
3 Did not run 1912^b
4 Opposed Progressive Candidate, 1912^b
A Child Labor, 5-9-1908
B Forest Reserve, 3-1-1909

^a *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1971. The Continental Congress September 5, 1774, to October 21, 1788, and the Congress of the United States from the First through the Ninety-First Congress, March 4, 1789, to January 3, 1971, Inclusive* (Washington, 1971), *The World Almanac and Encyclopedia, 1911* (New York, 1911)

^b *World Almanac 1913*

^c Defeated for Senate

tered on but one of Cannon's controls, it could not possibly destroy Cannonism. At best the resolution would weaken the speaker's position and lessen his prestige, but unless other action was taken, Cannon would remain in command. Norris stated that the group agreed solely to the resolution and expressly limited its compact to avoid any commitment to remove Cannon from the speaker's chair.⁶ Even when the speaker offered the opportunity—in fact demanded the Insurgents remove him from office—only ten members of the group were willing to go further than the Rules Committee revision.⁷

If the Insurgents were unwilling to remove Cannon from office, they were also unwilling to seek membership on the newly organized Rules Committee and, thereby, implement their attempt by effectively weakening Cannon. Although Norris was offered support for a bid for Rules Committee membership, he refused it and permitted Cannon's lieutenant, John Dalzell, to secure the balance of power for the speaker.

Even the basis of the Democratic alliance is indicative of a willingness on the part of the Insurgents to score a very limited victory. The Democrats were not eager to destroy the sources of the speaker's power, since they fully expected to occupy that position after the fall elections.⁸ Consequently, they sought to redeem their 1908 pledge to end Cannonism as cheaply as possible.

The Insurgents aimed at far less than the real destruction of domination of the House membership by the chair and spent their time after the revolution justifying their action. The impression given currency by the press and endorsement by the general silence of the rebels was that the monster of machine control had been slain and that democracy could reign anew within the halls of the nation's legislature. Lost in the general acceptance of accolades were the evaluations of the revolution made by Miles Poindexter and Victor Murdock, who denied that the revolt should be considered a victory and insisted that it was only the first of many reforms needed to secure democratic government within the House of Representatives.⁹ It is in the general willingness of the participants to accept the illusion of great change in the face of only a partial solution that the revolution of 1910 suggests not the progressive spirit but the demands of practical political advantage.

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ The ten Insurgents were William Cary, Henry Cooper, Charles Davis, Asle Gronna, Irvine Lenroot, Charles Lindbergh, Martin Morrison, Victor Murdock, John Nelson, and Miles Poindexter

⁸ George W. Norris, *Fighting Liberal: The Autobiography of George W. Norris* (New York, 1945), 118

⁹ *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 27, 1910

The second question remains. Was the Insurgent group in fact progressive as a bloc? In considering the question of an Insurgent-progressive link, Norris distinguished between the two groups in a series of articles written after the revolution for *LaFollette's Magazine* and saw them as quite distinct. The Insurgents, he wrote, were united for the sole purpose of affecting the Rules Committee revision; the progressives were united by their search for widespread political, economic, and social reforms—reforms never agreed to by the Insurgents. Norris noted that within the Insurgent group were both progressives and others whom he considered to be standpatters on all issues but the rules question.¹⁰ Years later Norris reinforced this view by stating unequivocally, "I know it to be a fact that the single objective which brought these men together was the taking from the Speaker of the vast, brutal power which the rules of the House gave him. . . ."¹¹ Clearly in Norris' opinion, the revolution of 1910 was a singular, isolated effort, distinguishable from the progressive movement.

An analysis of some of the roll call votes both before and after March 1910 tends to confirm Norris' view of the singularity of the alliance. The voting records of the Insurgents reveal both an absence of group voting on a number of issues and a serious gap between the views of many of the Insurgents and the professed ideological position of the progressives as defined in the Progressive party platform of 1912.

The elimination of child labor offers an opportunity to examine Insurgent support and cohesion in the roll call vote of May 9, 1908. On the bill to abolish child labor in Washington, D C., sixteen of the thirty-one future Insurgents then in Congress voted for the bill. Recorded as not voting were eleven members.¹²

Insurgent votes were badly split again on the forest reserve bill of 1909, another progressive concern. Of thirty Insurgents recorded in the roll call vote, thirteen supported the bill, twelve voted against it, and three are recorded as not voting.¹³ Again in 1909, future Insurgents lined up on opposite sides of the political fence on the critical Payne-Aldrich tariff bill. Twenty-seven voted for the bill and fifteen opposed it, suggesting not only a lack of agreement but a split on the major issue of the session.¹⁴

On the provision for a constitutional amendment to permit a federal graduated income tax, strong cohesion might be suggested by the Insur-

¹⁰ Lowitt, *George W. Norris*, 168

¹¹ Norris, *Fighting Liberal*, 108

¹² *Cong. Record*, 60 Cong., 1 Sess., 6034 (May 9, 1908)

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2 Sess., 3566-67 (March 1, 1909)

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 61 Cong., 1 Sess., 4755 (July 31, 1909)

gents' almost unanimous support of the proposal. Only Poindexter and William Cary did not vote for the amendment. Little significance, however, can be drawn from this vote because of its overwhelming margin of victory in the House, 318 to 14.¹⁵

If the future Insurgents lacked voting unity before the revolution, there is little evidence to indicate that the coalition provided any long-range agreements after the revolution. The forest preserve bill of June 1910, another conservation measure, continued to find an Insurgent split—sixteen voted for it, fourteen stood in opposition, and eleven were recorded as not voting.¹⁶

Although 1911 produced some examples of possible Insurgent unanimity in the support of thirty-four of the group for the tariff board issue¹⁷ and of twenty-five for the campaign fund publicity bill,¹⁸ the issue of Canadian reciprocity again produced a wide split. Fifteen Insurgents supported the February legislation,¹⁹ and eleven continued to support reciprocity expansion in the April 1911 roll call.²⁰

Certainly for the Insurgents there was neither widespread agreement on common legislative goals nor with progressive policies either before or after the revolution of 1910. Even in the election of 1912 there were wide differences; some ran as Progressive candidates, and six of the Insurgents ran as Republicans against Progressive party opposition (see Tables I and II).

Something that the Insurgents did share in 1910, however, was the specter of Democratic victory in the coming elections. The congressional Republicans, without the pull of Theodore Roosevelt's magic and beset by strong public concern over the question of business domination of government, faced a campaign certain to center strongly on the issue of the tariff and Cannonism. Indeed, the Democratic platform of 1908 had already raised the Cannon issue, and the Payne-Aldrich tariff was widely indicted as a Republican breach of faith.

The term Cannonism had become synonymous in the public mind with machine politics backed by strong vested business interests and was unavoidably welded to the Republican party. Norris, long a Cannon foe, reported some shock at the intensity of anti-Cannon feeling among his audiences on his Chautauqua tour of September 1909. His speech entitled

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 4440

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 2 Sess, 9027 (June 24, 1910)

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 3 Sess, 1708-09 (Jan 30, 1911)

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 62 Cong, 1 Sess, 268-69 (April 14, 1911)

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 61 Cong, 3 Sess, 2563-64 (Feb 14, 1911)

²⁰ *Ibid*, 62 Cong, 1 Sess, 559-60 (April 21, 1911)

"Cannonism and the Remedy" was the only one his audiences wanted to hear, he told his colleagues afterwards.²¹

Other indications of the strong anti-Cannon tide of opinion were apparent in the popular press. Dramatized by the writings of the more idealistic Insurgents such as Norris and Murdock, who portrayed "Uncle Joe" as one of the major evils in American political life, the issue had become one of interest to the magazine polls. Although obviously oversimplified in statement and of questionable validity in sample, the opinion polls underlined the importance of the issue. In asking its readers' views on whether the speaker should control House committee memberships, *Success* magazine reported in February 1909 that in a sample of 11,500, 11,134 persons were opposed. In response to an even broader question, the *Topeka Daily Capital* found 1,579 of 1,660 respondents "opposed to the rule of Cannon" in January 1910.²² Not only was the public at large anti-Cannon but also the *Chicago Tribune* found eastern Republican newspaper editors resoundingly opposed to the reelection of Cannon as speaker. Polling 1,034 editors, the *Chicago Tribune* reported 879 rejecting Cannon.²³

Although Hamilton Fish had sufficient evidence to substantiate his statement that the nation's attention was "more centered on the rules of this House than on any one question,"²⁴ others feared that its second concern was the Payne-Aldrich tariff. Faced with a defense of their record on the tariff, many of the Insurgents were concerned with their political futures. Those who had voted against it would still be charged as members of the party that passed it, and those twenty-seven who had voted for the tariff would be hard pressed to explain their reasons.

The fact that the Insurgents were thinking about the tariff as a major problem is borne out by repeated references to it in the debate on the Norris resolution and in the aftermath of the revolution. Insurgents Henry Cooper, John Nelson, Gilbert Haugen, and Poindexter all took the floor of the House during the rules debate to cite the tariff as one of the primary abuses of the Cannon regime.²⁵ Murdock, in an article published in May 1910, also noted the tariff as a primary example of the Cannonism that had to be destroyed.²⁶ The press was also well aware that the tariff had played a prominent role in the revolt. Both the *New York Times*²⁷ and the *New*

²¹ Lowitt, *George W. Norris*, 153-55

²² *Ibid.*, 167

²³ *Chicago Tribune*, March 23, 1910

²⁴ *Cong. Record*, 61 Cong., 2 Sess., 3301 (March 17, 1910)

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3296-97

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6276 (May 14, 1910)

²⁷ *New York Times*, March 26, 1910

York *Evening Post*²⁸ cited the tariff as the chief cause of the revolt. An editorial in the Buffalo *Express* claimed "the basis for the insurrection . . . is simply the tariff."²⁹

If most of the Insurgents were to face Democratic attacks on the tariff, others were going home to constituents bitterly disappointed in the failure of Congress to pass a parcel post bill. Again the charge of vested interest domination of the Congress was a virtual certainty in the coming campaign. At least one Insurgent, freshman Representative Fish, spoke out bitterly during the rules debate about the failure of the parcel post bill. Fish, particularly sensitive on this issue since he had been removed from the Post Office Committee, spoke at length on the repeated refusal of the committee to either report the bill or even to discuss it.³⁰ One leading newspaper in its analysis of the revolution found in the parcel post issue a concern as significant as the tariff. The New York *Times* laid Cannon's defeat at least partially to "'Uncle Joe's' friendly consideration for the express companies. . . ."³¹

With the stigma of Cannonism and the need to provide explanations for the failures to pass either a parcel post bill or a lower tariff as fuel for rebellion, the repeated destruction of Insurgent congressional power also provided a basis for coalition. Certainly the removal of committee power by Cannon and the withdrawal of patronage by President William Howard Taft both hurt and angered the Insurgents.³² In his analysis of the revolution, Cannon charged that Cooper was an Insurgent solely because of his loss of committee position.³³ Cooper gave some support to Cannon's assignment of his anger to the loss of position in his remarks during the rules debate. Cooper described the unfairness of his removal by Cannon from the chairmanship of the House Committee on Insular Affairs. He also cited the mistreatment of Norris and Murdock in their reassignment to committees with a consequent loss of seniority rank.³⁴ Other Insurgents also raised the chairmanship issue during the debates and in their writings. Nelson rose twice to protest the loss of chairmanships,³⁵ and both Murdock³⁶ and Nor-

²⁸ "The Uprising against Cannon," 574

²⁹ Quoted in "Are the Insurgents Traitors?" *Literary Digest*, XL (April 23, 1910), 793

³⁰ *Cong Record*, 61 Cong, 2 Sess, 3300 (March 17, 1910)

³¹ *New York Times*, March 20, 1910

³² Lowitt, *George W. Norris*, 161-62

³³ L. White Busbey, *Uncle Joe Cannon The Story of a Pioneer American* (New York, 1927), 256-57

³⁴ *Cong Record*, 61 Cong, 2 Sess, 3320 (March 17, 1910)

³⁵ *Ibid*, 3304, 3327

³⁶ *Ibid*, 6274 (May 14, 1910)

ris³⁷ wrote at length of the unfairness and seriousness of the political punishment administered by the speaker.

Based upon the political necessities of congressional survival, the opportunities for political advantage within the attack on Cannon may well have been critical to its success. Although hardly an impartial witness, Cannon described his views of the Insurgent rebellion to his secretary, L. White Busbey, and found practical politics in it "Many of the Insurgents were honest and really believed they were the victims of the Speaker and a self-appointed cabal," Cannon admitted, but despite his acceptance of some of the Insurgents as sincere "more were dishonest and disgruntled and loaded their failures on the Speaker."³⁸

Asher C. Hinds, the House parliamentarian under Cannon, writing in the wake of the revolution, also attributed the attack on Cannon to the use of some old political devices. Hinds saw in the move an attempt to provide a scapegoat for the failures of many of the members of Congress. It is not a new or an uncommon technique, argued Hinds, to use an alibi when fearing defeat. Fifty years before, Hinds noted, Representative Thomas S. Bock of Virginia had said, "Whatever goes wrong in the House of Representatives, whatever a man has to explain before his constituents, he is very apt to attribute to the rules of the House of Representatives."³⁹ In Hinds' view many of the recruits to the Insurgent camp were men who either had been frustrated by their inability to pass legislation they believed important or faced a severe challenge in the coming elections.

Additionally, for some of the Insurgents who had attempted in earlier sessions to change the rules of the House, there was no longer anything to lose in a new attack on Cannon. Already denied patronage and stripped of committee power, there was a great opportunity in the prospect of successful revolution. An attack upon Cannon offered a chance to retaliate for the loss of power at his hands and also an opportunity to prove to their constituents that they were not powerless. Certainly to return home a victor over machine politics offered a general curative for a wide variety of campaign ills. It offered a chance to escape the onus of Cannonism that threatened to pull down weaker congressmen in its shadow, and it offered the role of noble reformer rather than a variety of less pleasing characterizations certain to be offered by many of their opponents.

For men such as Ohio Congressman Paul Howland, the removal of Can-

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 6278-79

³⁸ Busbey, *Uncle Joe Cannon*, 246

³⁹ Asher C. Hinds, "The Speaker and the House," *McClure's Magazine*, XXXV (June, 1910), 195

non became the central point of the 1910 campaign. Howland, in a series of debates with William Gordon, his Democratic opponent, continually stressed his part in the revolution, making it a defense for his entire congressional record. In his debate of September 28, Howland raised the Cannon issue no less than three times.⁴⁰ The following evening Howland again stressed the importance of the congressional revolution by poking fun at Gordon's inability to answer adequately Howland's question relating to an explanation of the "liberalization of the House rules."⁴¹ Howland made the crusade an umbrella for all charges. On being accused of voting against the campaign publicity bill and for the tariff, Howland showed the value of having been an Insurgent by replying that "the power of Czar Cannon has been totally destroyed. And that's due to the Republicans in Congress. Then they indict me for voting for the Payne tariff bill."⁴²

Together with the preceding evidence, further analysis of the Insurgents along the lines suggested by Norris indicates that he was correct in questioning the progressive motivation of many of the Insurgents. In fact they can be categorized as two groups—progressive Insurgents and nonprogressive Insurgents. In designating the members of each group, it is recognized that no congressman is totally consistent and that no grouping can accurately reflect the divergence within its own group. However, despite these limitations, progressive Insurgents are distinct from nonprogressive Insurgents. Progressive Insurgents are defined as being those who either joined the National Progressive Republican League (NPRL) in 1911 or ran as Progressive party candidates in 1912, even though they did not join NPRL. The assumption is that those who were most dedicated to the progressive cause would be those who committed their political fortunes to the organizational expression of progressivism. In this regard it should be noted that only one opponent of the Insurgents, James Tawney of Minnesota, joined NPRL. But Tawney, Cannon's whip, could hardly have been expected to join in an attack on the speaker.

The twenty-seven nonprogressive Insurgents are defined in negative terms. They voted for the Norris resolution, but did not join NPRL or the Progressive party. The validity of this grouping is not established but is underscored by the fact that six of the seventeen nonprogressive Insurgents who ran for office in 1912 opposed Progressive party candidates.

Any attempt to use voting records as criteria for groupings would be

⁴⁰ Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, Sept 29, 1910

⁴¹ *Ibid*, Sept 30, 1910

⁴² *Ibid*, Oct 27, 1910

fraught with such subjective perils as to make membership in divergent groups almost impossible to ascertain with any degree of assurance (see Tables I and II). As Norris indicated and evidence confirms, there were wide splits between the Insurgents and within the progressive group on so-called "progressive" issues both before and after the congressional revolution.

Dividing the Insurgents in this manner, a comparison of the progressive Insurgents with the nonprogressive Insurgents reveals a number of distinctive and significant differences between them. First, the nonprogressive Insurgents had overwhelmingly supported the Payne-Aldrich tariff bill. Twenty-two of the twenty-seven nonprogressive Insurgents had voted for the tariff. The progressive Insurgents had voted by a three-to-one margin against the tariff issue, five in favor and ten opposed. Facing an election in which the tariff was considered to be a clear liability to its supporters, the nonprogressive Insurgents were much more in need of an electoral scapegoat than the progressive Insurgents.

The nonprogressive Insurgents were also in more serious trouble in their home districts than the progressive Insurgents, a fact which might well be expected in light of their position on the tariff. An examination of the results of the election of 1910 indicates that six of the nonprogressive Insurgents were defeated in their bid for election and four of them chose not to run. In each case the defeated or retiring nonprogressive Insurgent had supported the Payne-Aldrich tariff bill. The progressive Insurgents, however, were all reelected to office in 1910.

Although other splits in voting patterns are also apparent (for example, nonprogressive Insurgents rejected the forest bill of 1909 by a margin of 40 percent in favor to 60 percent opposed, whereas progressive Insurgents supported the bill, 82 percent to 18 percent), internal divisions within the groups show little voting cohesion either before or after the revolution except in the wide divergence over the tariff and the vote on the removal of Speaker Cannon. On the Cannon roll call, only one of the twenty-seven nonprogressive Insurgents (3 percent), Martin Morrison, voted to oust Cannon from office. The progressive Insurgents, however, voted nine to seven to remove Cannon from the speaker's chair (56 percent). This split seems to suggest that the intensity of the reform spirit varied substantially between the two groups. Those with the most to gain from the illusion of the destruction of Cannonism—the supporters of the Payne-Aldrich tariff bill—were most quickly satisfied with the results of the Norris resolution. Indicative of this, all the nonprogressive Insurgents who opposed the removal of Cannon had voted for the tariff. All the progressive Insurgents who voted to remove Cannon plus Morrison, the one nonprogressive Insur-

gent who voted for removal, had voted against the tariff bill. The progressive Insurgents who voted to retain Cannon in office included four members who had favored the tariff and only two who had opposed it. An analysis of roll calls indicates that those who sought to secure the most radical reform, the removal of the speaker from office, had the least to gain from the illusion of reform (see Tables I and II). They voted overwhelmingly against the tariff bill, they supported the campaign publicity bill by a 6 to 0 margin, and they voted 7 to 0 for the forest reserve bill of 1909. A small nucleus—Poindexter, Asle Gronna, and William Cary—centered around Murdock and voted strongly with him and against Norris on the legislation cited.

It would seem that the congressional revolution of 1910 was not motivated either solely or primarily by the progressive spirit of men such as Norris and Murdock. It arose from the practical considerations of men such as Howland, who could see in it a means to preserve their own political careers. Without denying that progressivism was a factor, it would appear that the major concerns which united most of the Insurgents and gave the impetus to success were not the ideals of reform but retribution for old political wounds, the need of a scapegoat for a public angered by tariff and legislative abuses, and the very practical desire for political survival in the coming election of 1910.

As the product of a coalition of hardheaded politicians wedded to progressives, the revolution created what was needed by many, an illusion of great utilitarian value. It is in this character, provided by the Champ Clarks of the Democratic party and the Howlands of the Republican party, that its basic motivation was not progressive and, therefore, disqualified it as a reform in the progressive spirit.