

TEXAS PROHIBITION POLITICS, 1887-1914

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Sean Collins Murray

August, 1968

454452

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ABSTRACT

Prohibition agitation represents a consistent theme in Texas history from the end of Reconstruction. Temperance advocates voiced support for local option as a means of drying up the state and the Texas legislature made provisions for local option election laws in 1876. Temperance organizations including the United Friends of Temperance, the National Prohibition Party, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and an indigenous Texas Prohibition Party sought to translate anti-liquor sentiment into temperance legislation but realized only limited success. The state's powerful Democratic Party showed slight interest in the liquor question and temperance supporters could generate little enthusiasm for a third party movement devoted to prohibition. Widespread evasion of local option statutes prompted temperance crusaders to seek a prohibition amendment to the state constitution in 1887, but Texas voters overwhelmingly turned down the proposal. Dispirited but not disillusioned, many prohibitionists returned to the Democracy where they managed to make the liquor question a dominant motif in state politics for the next quarter of a century.

The gubernatorial campaign of 1906, enabled prohibition Democrats to flex their muscles and they along with the progressive wing of the Party helped to elect Thomas Mitchell Campbell governor of Texas. Campbell, a reform minded prohibitionist governor, served two terms as chief executive and helped to bring about an increase in anti-liquor legislation but his tenure

ended in 1910 without the prohibitionists having achieved their goal of statewide prohibition. Factionalism, personal rivalries, and jealousy marred the efforts of prohibition Democrats in the 1910 gubernatorial campaign. Unable to close ranks in support of one candidate in the Democratic primary, they watched helplessly as Oscar Branch Colquitt, a staunch conservative anti-prohibitionist, captured the imagination of the voters. Colquitt served two terms as governor and during that time he not only expressed disdain for statewide prohibition and heaped abuse upon its advocates but he also worked to impede and frustrate anti-liquor legislation while contributing greatly to the defeat of another constitutional prohibitory liquor amendment in 1911.

Prospects for electing a prohibitionist governor looked brighter in 1914. Colquitt was retiring from office and progressive and prohibition Democrats formally united in support of prominent Houston attorney Thomas H. Ball. Support for Ball's candidacy came not only from progressive-prohibitionists but also from many of the state's influential conservative anti-prohibitionists. He also received what amounted to an endorsement from Woodrow Wilson and numerous members of the Wilson cabinet. His opponent, James E. Ferguson, an obscure banker from Temple, Texas, lacked strong organizational support and enjoyed little influential backing. Ferguson, through deft campaigning and political demagoguery, turned his liabilities into assets. He campaigned vigorously among the state's rural class promising relief from high tenantry rents and he denounced both the prohi-

bitionists and anti-prohibitionists. Ferguson made the plight of the farmer and the common people the central theme in his campaign and he offered rest from all liquor agitation. To the surprise of most and the chagrin of many, Ferguson defeated Ball, assumed the office of governor and exposed the bankruptcy of prohibition as the most dominant issue in Texas politics.

Ferguson's victory did not presage the end of anti-liquor sentiment nor did it totally eclipse prohibitionist influence. The prohibitionists remained strong and they ultimately succeeded in gaining statutory prohibition, but with the election of Farmer Jim Ferguson, prohibition as an issue in Texas politics would never again achieve the distinction or assume the role of being the time-honored pre-eminent force in Texas political life.

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CHAPTER I

THE ANATOMY OF A CRUSADE

The year 1887 contained little of the glamour, spectacle or sense of urgency which so often played an important role in fashioning the "American Experience." No enemy, foreign or domestic, threatened the country's peace and security. Sectional strife and hates no longer dominated the national consciousness. The laying of track and the driving of spikes replaced the sights and sounds of war. The nation's life was undergoing change and the mores and folkways of rural America were not immune to the tides of immigration and the clatter of industrialization.

Texas shared the general prosperity which enveloped the nation in the late 1880's. Texans were making great strides in an effort to render their vast virgin frontier more productive. The state's farm land increased from 21.6 percent in 1880 to 30.6 percent in 1890. The value of farm land and buildings increased from over \$170,000,000 in 1880 to almost \$400,000,000 in 1890. Great vitality in the banking and commercial life of the state was evidenced by a growth from 13 national banks, with a total capital of more than \$1,579,000 in 1880 to 189 banks with a capital of more than \$25,000,000 in 1890.¹ The boom in railroad building and expansion which swept the nation also

¹Eugene C. Barker (ed.), History of Texas (Dallas, 1929), 532-533.

changed the landscape of Texas. In 1887, Texas had 7,889 miles of track, an increase of over 900 miles in one year.²

In the years following the Civil War, Texans with the aid of Northern industrialists and the climate of peace, made a decided effort to improve not only the productive and commercial life on their state but the social life as well. Farmers, bankers, merchants and laborers could take very little comfort in the state's legacy of lawlessness. The frontier towns with their saloons, gambling houses, unabashed brutality, and immorality might be the stuff from which myths, legends and second-rate novels are fashioned but they could have no place in a new and invigorated society. Texas was becoming a land of farms, small towns and cities populated by elements which sought to plant their roots deep in its soil. They desired to build a constructive, not a transient and extractive, society.

As a consequence of this new climate in Texas, strong sentiment against liquor and the saloon grew. At the 1875 State Constitutional Convention at Austin, J. F. Johnson introduced a local option clause written by his friend Colonel E. L. Dohoney.³ Dohoney, who later became known as the "father of local option," sought the convention's approval of a resolution

²S. G. Reed, A History of the Texas Railroads and of Transportation Conditions under Spain and Mexico and The Republic and The State (Houston, 1941), 517. See also John F. Stover, The Railroads of the South 1865-1900: A Study in Finance and Control (Chapel Hill, 1955).

³H. A. Ivy, Rum on the Run in Texas: A Brief History of Prohibition in the Lone Star State (Dallas, 1910), 24-25.

requiring the state legislature to pass a law enabling the representatives of a given area to determine, by a majority vote, whether the sale of liquor would be prohibited in those areas. In a vote of forty-five to fifteen, the convention passed Dohoney's measure and the electorate subsequently gave it approval.⁴

Seven years later, Miss Frances E. Willard, president of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, wrote to a minister in Paris, Texas, expressing her desire to organize Texas women against the power of the state's liquor interests.⁵ The minister, wanting nothing to do with the woman, passed the letter on to Colonel Dohoney. Dohoney invited the female temperance advocate; she accepted and arrived on May 9, 1882. Miss Willard's visit did not elicit universal acclaim. Churches in Paris, Texas closed their doors to her and Dohoney found it necessary to rent an opera house in order that her word might be heard. Miss Willard's speeches generated sufficient interest, however, to cause organization of W.C.T.U. chapters in Texarkana, Denison, Sherman, Marshall, Austin, Waco, San Antonio, Galveston, and Houston. One year later, a group of Texas women formed a state W.C.T.U.,⁶ an organization which shared an anti-saloon platform with the ever growing evangelical

⁴Seth Shepard McKay, Making of the Texas Constitution of 1876 (Columbus, Ohio, 1924), 126.

⁵Ivy, Rum on the Run in Texas, 46.

⁶Ibid.

churches. These churches preached a rigid fundamentalism served up with heady doses of "fire and brimstone." Their Sunday schools, especially those maintained by the Baptists, became potent factories for the mass production of zealous young prohibitionists.

Cognizant of the increasing anti-liquor atmosphere in Texas, the National Prohibition Party sought and received the support of Colonel E. L. Dohoney who issued a call to his supporters to meet in convention at Fort Worth. On September 8, 1884, Prohibition Party delegates nominated a group of presidential electors.⁷ Although the new party lacked a state organization and a broad base of support, it nonetheless spurned the Greenback Party's offer of fusion⁸ and subsequently suffered a severe defeat at the polls, receiving only 3,500 votes in the state-wide tally.⁹

Texas courted many political parties in the late 1880's but countenanced only one -- the Democratic Party. The power of the Democrats rested upon their claim to the mantle of the Confederacy, their ability to organize the electorate, and deft evasion of major issues. At their state convention held at Galveston in August, 1886, the Party's platform recognized the growth of prohibition sympathy but took a less than positive

⁷Ibid, 53.

⁸Ernest William Winkler (ed.), Platforms of Political Parties in Texas (Austin, 1916), 231.

⁹Ivy, Rum on the Run in Texas, 53.

stand. "We do not believe," the Democratic leaders intoned, "that the views of any citizen upon the question of local option should interfere with his standing in the Democratic party. . . ." The matter was one "in which every Democrat may indulge his own views without affecting his Democracy."¹⁰ Thus, the Democratic Party sought to avoid any cleavage in its ranks over the issue of liquor.

The Prohibition Party, having recovered from its 1884 debacle, displayed no mood to temporize. Ignoring Democratic pleas for party unity made at Galveston, a reinvigorated and indigenous Texas Prohibition Party met at Dallas on September 7th and 8th, 1886.¹¹ The Prohibitionists, led by Dr. J. B. Cranfill, the former editor of the temperance publication the Gatesville Advance, came out strongly against liquor: "We recognize it as an immortal political axiom that what is morally wrong can never be politically right"; the traffic in liquor was "the prolific source of crime, pauperism, bribery, political corruption, and anarchy, and should be prohibited by law."¹² The platform went on to denounce the Democrats, called for the support of women against liquor and demanded a constitutional law prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage in Texas.¹³ The Prohibitionist platform became a

¹⁰Galveston Daily News, August 14, 1886.

¹¹Dallas Morning News, September 7, 1886.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

manifesto and battle cry for thousands of Texans who sought to stop the evils of "Nigger Gin" through political and constitutional means. Colonel E. L. Dohoney, the Prohibitionist gubernatorial candidate, received over 19,000 votes and the support of many Texas Greenbackers.¹⁴ Yet, defeat at the polls prompted many members of the Prohibition Party to seek new weapons with which to carry on the prohibition struggle.

Local optionists in Texas took little comfort from the fact that the law was on their side. They quickly realized that the writing and passing of laws is less difficult than their enforcement. Contraband liquor shipments made their way into local option territories with or without the knowledge of authorities. Grape-shaped rubber capsules designed by a Philadelphia physician and containing liquor or wine, proved to be one ingenious device for circumventing the law.¹⁵ Other gimmicks, including the use of sliding panels and hidden doors, taxed the imagination and resources of local law enforcement agencies.

Lax enforcement of local option laws coupled with the political failure of the Prohibition Party, compelled the opponents of liquor to change their tactics. A meeting of the State Executive Committee of the Prohibition Party convened at Waco, on January 19, 1887, therefore approved a resolution submitted by J. E. Boynton, calling for the legislature to submit a prohibitory constitutional liquor amendment to the people and

¹⁴Ivy, Rum on the Run in Texas, 54.

¹⁵Galveston Daily News, January 11, 1887.

requesting "the passage of necessary laws requiring scientific temperance instruction in the public schools."¹⁶ The resolution also demanded that "teachers be examined upon their ability to give such instructions."¹⁷ Another prohibition group, separate in organization but similar in outlook, met in Waco, on March 15, 1887. Calling themselves a Nonpolitical Prohibition Convention, they sought a constitutional amendment which would prohibit the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors. True to its nonpolitical character, the group welcomed the aid of all Texans without reference to race, religion or politics.¹⁸

Growing sentiment in favor of submission could not be ignored by the Democrats who controlled both houses of the legislature and the executive mansion. To the discomfort of its members, the Democratic Party became the target of prohibitionist invective and vituperation. For the Party's welfare and the peace of the state, many Democrats committed themselves to vote in favor of submission. The Texas House of Representatives on January 30, 1887, by a margin of eighty to twenty-one, voted in favor of submission.¹⁹ The Senate, by a vote of twenty-two to eight, approved of submission on February 25, 1887,²⁰ and Governor Lawrence Sullivan Ross signed the proposed amendment on

¹⁶Ibid., January 19, 1887.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Dallas Morning News, March 15, 16, 1887.

¹⁹Ivy, Rum on the Run in Texas, 31.

²⁰Ibid.

March 5, 1887.²¹ The amendment as proposed to the people contained all that the Prohibitionists sought. Passage of the amendment would mean that the manufacture, sale and exchange of intoxicating liquors, save for medicinal, sacramental and scientific purposes, was outlawed.²²

The backers of the anti-liquor amendment, ignoring the problems of enforcement, concentrated their energies on the submission campaign. They were organized, enthusiastic and had the powerful support of the fundamentalist churches. Reverend G. W. Briggs, editor of The Texas Christian Advocate and Reverend S. A. Hayden, editor of The Texas Baptist and Herald gave unstinting support to the amendment along with Reverends B. H. Carroll and W. K. Homan. They were joined by Congressmen David B. Culberson, William M. Poindexter, Joseph Weldon Bailey and United States Senators Sam Bell Maxey and John H. Reagan.²³ Reagan, the former Postmaster General of the Confederacy, had a large following in Texas and though he was not convinced that the amendment was the best solution to the liquor problem, he nevertheless supported it.²⁴ Former Speaker of the Texas House, Thomas R. Bonner added his name to the already impressive list of amendment supporters. Many of these luminaries travelled throughout the state speaking on behalf of the amendment. At a huge rally in Fort Worth on

²¹Dallas Morning News, March 6, 1887.

²²Ivy, Rum on the Run in Texas, 31.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Galveston Daily News, April 18, 1887.

June 30, 1887, the crowd of 15,000 feasted on barbecue and speeches as expert after expert attacked the evils of liquor and the saloon and marshalled legal, constitutional, moral and religious arguments in favor of the amendment.²⁵

The proposed amendment suffered from no lack of detractors and adversaries. At a meeting in Dallas on March 4, 1887, the opponents of submission called for its defeat. Victory for the amendment, they argued, would mean paternalism, acceptance of a law of doubtful constitutionality, violation of individual rights, and the loss of tax revenue.²⁶ The anti-prohibitionists, calling themselves the "True Blues," enlisted the support of many influential Texans including Texas Attorney General James S. Hogg, Cone Johnson and Congressman Roger Q. Mills, chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means. Mills warned Texas Negroes that passage of the amendment would deprive them of their right to drink -- a fringe benefit of emancipation.²⁷ Texas saloonkeepers, basing their opinion on a knowledge of human nature and past experience, proclaimed that no law would prevent a man from getting liquor if he so desired and contended that constitutional prohibition would destroy the prosperity of many Texas towns.²⁸

The closing days of the campaign brought the customary

²⁵Dallas Morning News, July 1, 1887.

²⁶See ibid., May 4, 5, 6, 1887 for a more complete view of the anti-prohibitionists and their platform.

²⁷Galveston Daily News, May 5, 1887.

²⁸Vincent W. Grubbs, Practical Prohibition (Austin, 1887), 25.

predictions of victory from both camps. Harry Haynes, grand scribe of the United Friends of Temperance was confident of success.²⁹ "True Blue" chairman George Clark visualized a ✓ 75,000 victory for his cause and Governor L. S. Ross estimated that the "antis" would carry the state by a plurality of over 60,000.³⁰ Propaganda and predictions finally gave way to the ballot as qualified voters decided the fate of the proposed amendment. On August 4, 1887, over 350,000 Texans exercised their right to vote. The amendment failed by a vote of 129,273 ✓ for and 221,934 against.³¹ Over 90,000 votes separated the victors from the losers. The magnitude of the stunning defeat went beyond the wildest speculations of the most ardent "antis." For the prohibitionists, the election became known as the "disaster of 1887."³²

The failure of the proposed constitutional amendment came not as a result of a lack of organization, enthusiasm or money but because it ran counter to ingrained habits of thought and action. One state senator proclaimed that prohibition was "as innocent of Democracy as the devil was of pure and unadulterated religion," and that it was "as impossible to run the Democratic

²⁹Ivy, Rum on the Run in Texas, 21.

³⁰Galveston Daily News, July 3, 1887.

³¹Ernest H. Cherrington, The Evolution of Prohibition in the United States (Westerville, Ohio, 1920), 231. See also Ivy, Rum on the Run in Texas, 31-35, for a brief but interesting analysis of the election.

³²Ernest H. Cherrington (ed.), Standard Encyclopedia of the Alcohol Problem (Westerville, Ohio, 1925), VI, 2635.

Party without whiskey as to run the Baptist Church without water."³³

The "disaster of 1887" left Texas prohibitionists divided and dispirited. The high tide of interest and emotion sparked by the amendment campaign quickly became a dry creek. Local option again became the means whereby Texas communities sought to solve the "liquor problem." Failure marked the efforts of Anti-Saloon League supporters to establish a Texas branch in 1902.³⁴ Proponents of local option enjoyed greater success. The Texas Local Option Association became a reality on November 25, 1903, in Dallas. The Texas-based organization hoped to associate all the state's local optionists, to educate the people as to the evils of liquor, to increase local option territory, and to prevent the evasion of prohibitory liquor laws.³⁵

Opponents of liquor and the saloon, though adamant, made little tangible progress. Carrie A. Nation, the pugnacious temperance crusader, climaxed a 1905 visit to Houston with a "hatchet attack" upon a saloon. The fact that the establishment bore the name of Miss Nation made little impression on her, but the owner's trade picked up significantly after Carrie's destructive visit.³⁶ The Dallas Morning News in a

³³Ivy, Rum on the Run in Texas, 35.

³⁴Ibid., 61.

³⁵Ibid., 56.

³⁶See Houston Post, January 7, 1967 for an excellent account of Miss Nation's sojourn to Houston.

perspicacious piece of editorializing, stated that "the liquor question, like other problems by which the human race has been confronted from the first, can never be settled in a final and thoroughly satisfactory manner." Modifications of the evils of the liquor traffic could be attained, the editorial continued, "but in efforts to accomplish even this much by drastic or radical legislation there are sometimes created new difficulties, which . . . are about as bad as the original troubles."³⁷ Such advice made little impression on some Texas law-makers.

The Texas House of Representatives witnessed a bitter fight between Rev. L. L. Tucker, a Baptist preacher and Methodist minister George C. Rankin for the post of House Chaplain. Though Tucker was a prohibitionist and Rankin an outspoken local optionist, Tucker won by five votes because Rankin's past performance had alienated many representatives.³⁸ The state senate had two liquor bills before it in January and February, 1905: the Terrell-Chambers bill providing stringent penalties for the consumption of liquor in cold storage places and club rooms in local option precincts, and the Love bill forcing sellers of malt or spiritous liquors to purchase a license for \$200.00. Senator S. P. Skinner of Waxahachie doubted the constitutionality of the cold storage bill and Joseph Proebstle, secretary of the United Brewery Workman of America, declared that the Love bill was special interest legislation on behalf

³⁷Dallas Morning News, January 7, 1905.

³⁸Ibid., January 12, 1905

of whiskey distillers as opposed to breweries. Texas local optionists generally favored the Love bill, but it failed to pass; the cold storage bill passed the senate and became law.³⁹

Governor S. W. T. Lanham's term of office did not expire until January, 1907, but the gubernatorial campaign began early in 1905 as several prominent Texans sought and were courted for the Democratic Party gubernatorial nomination. By the middle of 1905, the field of contenders narrowed to four: former state Attorney General Charles K. Bell, Judge M. M. Brooks of the Court of Criminal Appeals, Railroad Commissioner Oscar B. Colquitt and attorney, Thomas M. Campbell. Seeking to give the four announced candidates an opportunity to present their qualifications for governor, a group of Dallas citizens invited each man to appear at a "Legislative Day" banquet, to be held on the night of November 6, 1905, at the Oriental Hotel. Each candidate had thirty minutes in which to state his platform and to announce what he would do if elected governor. The four hopefuls paid the usual lip service to honesty and clean government, the need for improved educational facilities and the elimination of special interest legislation. Charles K. Bell complimented Governor Lanham's administration and promised to "perpetuate those policies under which the State of our pride has gone leaping on to greatness, until the whole earth reverberates with the pulsations of our glory. . . ." Judge Brooks

³⁹See ibid., January 27, 1905 and February 2, 9, 13, 1905 for an account of the cold storage and Love bills and the views of supporters and opponents of each.

vowed to suppress "the lobby at the Texas capitol," and called for economy in state government. Thomas Campbell pledged to overhaul the state's tax structure and to look for new fields of revenue. Commissioner Colquitt would abolish many public offices and exempt land and personal property from state taxation.⁴⁰

The vexing problem of liquor which so often plagued the state's political life, suddenly erupted with volcanic intensity. Oscar B. Colquitt, not unlike many other Texans, had voted for constitutional prohibition in 1887 but upon its defeat, converted to local option. Many Texans, however, doubted Colquitt's sincerity. He voted against local option in his own county in 1901 and publicly questioned the views of Dr. George C. Rankin, the state's foremost local optionist.⁴¹ Colquitt's friendship with Colonel J. F. "Jake" Wolters, attorney for the Wholesale Liquor Dealer's Association, did little to enhance his stature among the state's liquor opponents.⁴² Colquitt

⁴⁰See ibid., November 7, 1905 for a more complete account of each candidates views as expressed at the Oriental Hotel.

⁴¹T. W. Carlock to Oscar B. Colquitt, May 11, 1905, Oscar B. Colquitt Papers (Barker Library, University of Texas, Austin). Hereafter cited as Colquitt Papers. Colquitt to Carlock, May 13, 1905, ibid; Carlock to Colquitt, May 15, 1905, ibid; Colquitt to Carlock, May 17, 1905, ibid.

⁴²Wolters withdrew his support from Colquitt late in the campaign. He charged that Colquitt voted for submission in 1887 but had led him to believe the contrary. Colquitt denied the charge and retorted, "I cannot see how a real friend would take the course you have in this matter, although I must confess that I am not altogether surprised." J. F. Wolters to Oscar B. Colquitt, June 2, 1906, Colquitt Papers; Colquitt to Wolters, June 11, 1906, ibid.

made no secret of his opposition to prohibition and campaigned against it. His anti-prohibition stance won for him the support of the state's German newspapers.⁴³ He further enlarged his following when he received from the Internal Revenue Department a list of all licensed liquor dealers in the state,⁴⁴ many of whom subsequently pledged support for him.

Tom Campbell, nominally a prohibitionist, successfully avoided the issue throughout the long campaign, preferring instead to direct his energies to more meaningful areas. He vowed to make railroads pay their fair share of state taxes, declared war on the free pass and promised to reduce high passenger fares. Campbell called for prison reforms, the creation of a State Department of Agriculture and the construction of more state hospitals.⁴⁵ His program won formidable support. He received the blessing of former governor James S. Hogg who died before the campaign ended.⁴⁶ Campbell also obtained the endorsement of many Texas Populists including James H. "Cyclone" Davis and Harrison "Stump" Ashby. Ashby proclaimed that Campbell represented "the people against the cunning cupidity of the corporation claws."⁴⁷

⁴³T. Buehring to Oscar B. Colquitt, July 5, 1906, ibid.

⁴⁴J. Cavalier to Oscar B. Colquitt, April 12, 14, 1906, ibid.

⁴⁵Dallas Morning News, April 12, 1906.

⁴⁶James S. Hogg to W. F. Cameron, May 17, 1905, quoted ibid., July 4, 1905.

⁴⁷Dallas Morning News, February 28, 1906.

Attorney General Charles K. Bell attempted to straddle the prohibition issue while at the same time defending his record. Bell stressed his role in writing the state's 1903 anti-trust act and called for out-of-state insurance companies to invest more assets in Texas securities.⁴⁸ He received the support of Governor Lanham and Congressman Albert Sidney Burleson but his vacillating position on prohibition cost him dearly.

Judge Brooks centered the bulk of his campaign on the issue of prohibition. He strongly supported a prohibitory amendment and strong anti-gambling laws. He sought the elimination of nepotism in state hiring practices, denounced railroads and heaped abuse upon corporate lobbies. Brooks, not unlike Campbell, stressed the need for regulatory laws on behalf of the people. Judge Brooks had the powerful support of United States Senators, Charles A. Culberson and Joseph W. Bailey.

When the campaign came to an end during the last week of July, Texans turned out in great numbers to cast their votes. After a delay of almost two weeks the electorate discovered the winner and the breakdown of the popular vote. Campbell led the field of candidates with 90,345; Brooks was second, polling 70,064, with Colquitt and Bell receiving 68,529 and 65,168 respectively.⁴⁹ Campbell's victory, though great, did not automatically make him the next governor of Texas. The Democratic Party, bound by the Terrell Election Law of 1903, was required

⁴⁸Ibid., May 4, 1906.

⁴⁹Ibid., July 28 to August 13, 1906.

to hold a convention after the primary election, where the votes of each county cast in the popular election were to be prorated among the contenders. The law also required that the convention drop the low man after each ballot.⁵⁰

Democratic convention delegates assembled in Dallas on August 14, 1906. The four day convention's program called for the selection of the Democratic Party's gubernatorial nominee and the writing of a platform. As a result of the previous July election, Campbell entered the convention with 212 votes, Colquitt had 169, Bell collected 164 votes and Brooks trailed with 155. Judge Brooks who had managed to run second to Campbell in July, scored the lowest on the convention's first ballot and was disqualified. Brooks' support went to Campbell and Bell, with Colquitt receiving only three of the defeated candidate's votes. In the early moments of the second ballot Colquitt withdrew, leaving Campbell and Bell alone to do battle. As the second ballot's roll call droned on, Campbell continued to gain strength and at the end obtained victory with 418 votes.⁵¹

Disgruntled Colquitt supporters quickly attributed his defeat to everything but the obvious. They first accused Senators Culberson and Bailey of giving Judge Brooks' support to Campbell,⁵²

⁵⁰Seth Shepard McKay, Texas Politics, 1906-1944 With Special Reference to the German Counties (Lubbock, Texas, 1952), 25.

⁵¹Dallas Morning News, August 15, 16, 17, 1906.

⁵²Jeff McLemore to Oscar B. Colquitt, August 20, 1906, Colquitt Papers.

and later alleged a Bell-Campbell "corrupt bargain" in order to defeat Colquitt.⁵³ Unnoticed or at least ignored by Colquitt partisans was the fact that Campbell had demonstrated, both in the July primary and the August convention, great popular support and personal appeal.

Since Texas was a one party state Campbell's convention victory was tantamount to election but the Democrats nonetheless provided their popular standard-bearer with a reform platform. The platform promised to end free railroad passes, outlaw corporate campaign contributions, and to increase state support for eleemosynary institutions. It promised to eliminate nepotism from state hiring practices and to create a State Department of Agriculture. The Democrats thus succeeded in writing a document worthy of a reform-minded nominee.⁵⁴

The selection and subsequent election of Thomas Mitchell Campbell, marked not only a victory for a man but the triumph of a vision. The state would no longer exist to promote the interests of the strong to the detriment of the weak. Campbell believed that the state must be responsive to the needs of all the people and that government must be active and strong rather than passive and impotent.

Texans who opposed liquor and the saloon had travelled a long way since the "disaster of 1887." While they had failed

⁵³Sam Hanna Acheson, Joe Bailey, The Last Democrat (New York, 1932), 218-220.

⁵⁴Dallas Morning News, August 15, 16, 17, 1906.

to convert the state to constitutional prohibition, they nevertheless aided in 1906 in the triumph of a politician friendly to their cause. Local option continued, the liquor interests remained powerful and many saloons still beckoned, but prohibition sentiment was organized and growing stronger and "The Campbells had come."⁵⁵

⁵⁵A modification of the ancient Scottish war-hymn, "The Campbells are coming."

CHAPTER II

THE PROGRESSIVE ASCENDANCY

The election of 1906 clearly demonstrated Governor-elect Campbell's organizational skill and vote-getting ability, but the disciple of Jim Hogg lacked the experience of a seasoned political veteran. Campbell held no previous elective office before assuming the reins of government and possessed little background for the awesome and difficult task of leading an ever-growing and increasingly complex state.¹ No one questioned the Palestine lawyer's capacity to make promises but many doubted his ability to keep them.

Campbell, sure of his course and true to his word, wasted little time and spared no effort in fashioning an enviable if not brilliant record. His first year in office witnessed the passing of a pure food law, the prohibition of corporate campaign contributions, the outlawing of nepotism in state hiring practices, the abolition of the free railroad pass and a series of other no less significant pieces of legislation.² Texans had elected a governor who sympathized little with the maxim "the government governs best which governs least." Governor Campbell expected opposition and dissension but neither he nor

¹Norman G. Kittrell, Governors Who Have Been and Other Public Men of Texas (Houston, 1921), 127.

²General Laws of the State of Texas, Thirtieth Legislature, Regular Session (Austin, 1907), 62, 169, 12, 93.

his enemies could foresee the divisive forces which would soon engulf the political life of the state.

Texas, not unlike other Southern states, lacked a strong two-party system. Most Texans claimed membership in the Democratic Party but the Texas Democracy was a kaleidoscope of rival and antagonistic factions. Personal loyalties rather than structural allegiance predominated. Lacking cohesiveness, unity of purpose, and deep-seated commitment, the Party provided little more than a convenient label whereby candidates could identify with the lost but not forgotten cause of the Confederacy. This, coupled with the primary system and all too frequent elections, kept the political life of the state at a continually critical boiling-point.

In 1908 the Democratic Party in Texas divided over the questions of progressivism and prohibition. Texas progressivism was essentially a middle class response to the political and social evils caused by a rapidly expanding industrialized and urbanized society. Corporate monopolies, railroad abuses and the disintegration of moral values threatened to destroy the mores and folkways of a seemingly stable and pristine agrarian world. Progressive Democrats were not wild-eyed extremists or ideological adventurers who sought to revolutionize the state but middle income traditionalists who feared the rising industrial order.³ They did not oppose corporate growth,

³George Brown Tindall, The Emergence of the New South 1913-1945 (Baton Rouge, 1967), 6.

technological advances or the need for innovation but sought to purge these developments of their more destructive qualities. Not all Texas progressives were prohibitionists but the vast majority of them found both causes logically and emotionally compatible. Most of them believed that the demise of liquor would accomplish in the moral sphere what restrictive and reform legislation would achieve in the political and economic sphere.

The conservative wing of the Texas Democracy consisted primarily of individuals who welcomed the growth of a political-commercial-industrial complex. Their political ideology resembled the ante-bellum Whigs and the post-Civil War Republicans. Comprised mostly of the state's new rich and rising entrepreneurial class, conservatives successfully fashioned a beneficial partnership with each post-Civil War government. Increased capital and permissive legislation contributed to the wealth and status of Texas conservatives and they instinctively viewed all progressive statutes as restrictive and unproductive. State-wide prohibition appeared to them as another unwarranted interference and the majority of conservatives opposed and denounced it.

The wide chasm that separated Texas progressives and conservatives exacerbated over prohibition intensified as the result of the Bailey affair. In 1906, Texas' junior United States Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey, experienced at close range the muckraking barbs of David Graham Phillips. Phillips, in a series of Cosmopolitan Magazine articles entitled "The

Treason of the Senate," added Bailey's name to an already sizeable list of unworthy senators. Phillips accused Bailey of peddling influence on behalf of the Standard Oil Company and Houston lumber magnate John Henry Kirby.⁴ Unwittingly, it was Bailey's friend Kirby who provided much of the grist for the Phillips mill.⁵ Senator Bailey vehemently denied the charges, protested his innocence and proclaimed that Cosmopolitan owner, William Randolph Hearst, was out to destroy him.⁶ The Phillips article asserted much and proved little but Bailey's reputation suffered. Many Texans believed that Bailey violated his oath of office and that he, "by reason of his transcendent gifts and demagogic professions . . . is in Congress a most dangerous ally of the criminal interests. . . ." ⁷

Texas Attorney General Robert Vance Davidson implied that Bailey enabled a Standard Oil Company subsidiary to violate the state's anti-trust laws in return for a sizeable loan. Most Democratic progressives denounced Senator Bailey, but the vast majority of the Party's conservatives rallied to his support.

⁴David Graham Phillips, "The Treason of the Senate," Cosmopolitan Magazine, XLI (July, 1906), 268-274.

⁵Kirby granted an interview to Augustus Myers, a researcher for Cosmopolitan Magazine. At the time of the interview, Kirby waxed eloquently about his relationship with Bailey but did not know that Hearst owned the magazine. John Henry Kirby to Joseph Weldon Bailey, March 17, 1906, John Henry Kirby Papers (Texas Gulf Coast Historical Association, University of Houston Library, Houston). Hereafter cited as Kirby Papers.

⁶Bailey to Kirby, March 20, 1906, ibid.

⁷Victor E. Martin, "The Fight Against Baileyism in Texas," Arena, XL (July, 1908), 56.

The arrival of 1908 brought turmoil and confusion to the already faction-riddled political life of the state. The Dallas Morning News opined that "many of our ablest men are wholly interested in political scrambles in which no definite or valuable principle is involved, and these are followed," bemoaned the paper, "by thousands of ardent partisans moved largely by petty prejudices and preferences."⁸ Many Texans read the editorial but most chose to ignore it.

Texas anti-liquor crusaders had made great progress over the course of many years. Dr. Benjamin Franklin Riley of the Anti-Saloon League stated that out of 245 counties, 146 were totally dry, 72 partially dry and only 27 were totally wet. The dry or partially dry areas of the state comprised more than three-fourths of the population and two-thirds of the area.⁹ Undaunted by this success, prohibitionists continued their agitation for a prohibitory constitutional amendment. On January 9, 1908, the State Executive Committee of the Prohibition Party proceeded to formulate plans for a state-wide prohibition campaign. The committee instructed Party secretary P. F. Paige to establish a regular prohibition news service in conjunction with state newspapers favorable to the prohibition cause.¹⁰ In this way the Prohibition Party sought to establish a broader base of support among the state's electorate.

⁸Dallas Morning News, January 1, 1908.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., January 10, 1908.

Desiring to establish a solid phalanx of support, a number of powerful anti-liquor interests formed a Texas State Prohibition Federation. This non-partisan organization, composed of the Texas Local Option Association, the Anti-Saloon League of Texas, the state W.C.T.U. and the Prohibition Party, supported a resolution demanding that the state legislature submit a prohibition amendment to the people.¹¹ The new Federation drew heavily upon the collective talents of such powerful prohibitionists as J. B. Cranfill, H. A. Ivy, and former local optionist Dr. George C. Rankin.

Temporary Federation chairman, Arthur W. Jones, summoned the membership to battle by admonishing all to pay their poll tax and do their duty: "Let every patriot," cried Jones, "gird himself for the conflict and on with the battle."¹² The Federation's Executive Committee, realizing the necessity for Democratic Party support, called upon all Democrats favoring submission to request the Party leadership to place the question of submission on the Party's primary ballot.¹³ On February 29, 1908, a conference of Democrats friendly to state prohibition met at Fort Worth and agreed to petition their Party's Executive Committee to submit prohibition in the July primary.¹⁴

¹¹Ibid., January 17, 1908.

¹²Ibid., January 26, 1908.

¹³Ibid., February 2, 1908.

¹⁴Ibid., March 1, 1908.

The prohibitionist drive for submission did not come as a surprise to Texas liquor and brewery interests. The Texas Retail and Malt Dealers Association, the voice of the state's more than four thousand liquor and malt dealers, declared that it would meet this latest challenge by scrupulously obeying all liquor laws and abolishing all dives. The Association also hoped to educate the electorate and to unify all the state's liquor groups.¹⁵ At a joint conference of the United States Brewing Association and the Southern Brewers Association held at New Orleans, the members pledged themselves "to educate the South to oppose prohibition and to stem the moral wave."¹⁶ Prominent Texas brewers B. Adoue, R. L. Autrey, and Otto Wahrmond joined in a bitter denunciation of prohibition.¹⁷ In their struggle against prohibition, the Texas brewing industry not only resorted to strong words but spent over one-half million dollars to prevent prohibition and local option legislation.¹⁸

The progressive-conservative split over prohibition manifested itself in other separate but not unrelated issues. The Texas Commercial Secretaries' Association, the mouthpiece for the state's financial, industrial and commercial interests, intensified its attack on the Campbell administration. Homer

¹⁵Ibid., January 17, 1908.

¹⁶Ibid., March 2, 1908.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸B. Adoue to Otto Koehler, March 2, 1911, The Breweries and Texas Politics (San Antonio, 1916), I, 494.

D. Wade, the Association's first president, called for "fewer laws and better laws."¹⁹ Association leader J. A. Arnold, stated that "business legislation should be originated by men who are enlightened by actual contact with affairs."²⁰ The Texas Bankers' Association joined with the Commercial Secretaries' Association's call for a moratorium on restrictive legislation. Houston businessman John Henry Kirby went so far as to offer his advice to State Senator E. I. Kellie. Kirby stated, "I shall be very glad to counsel with you at any and all times,"²¹ and reiterated that he sought to promote "those measures which will redound to the advancement and glory of our commonwealth . . . and to see those measures killed which are conceived in spite and if enacted will annoy and retard."²²

Governor Campbell desirous of a second term, took to the stump to defend his record. The progressive Governor declared that he was "being vilified and misrepresented in all parts of the state by professional lobbyists . . . and the corporate interests who have not heretofore paid their just share of taxes."²³ Campbell continued to denounce special privilege, promised more progressive legislation and declared that the Standard

¹⁹Dallas Morning News, January 5, 1908.

²⁰Ibid., February 16, 1908.

²¹John Henry Kirby to E. I. Kellie, March 12, 1906, Kirby Papers.

²²Ibid.

²³Dallas Morning News, March 19, 1908.

Oil Company sought to defeat him.²⁴ The Governor's lack-luster primary opponent, R. R. Williams, ran on a prohibition platform but stood for little else.

The second term tradition, coupled with Campbell's widespread popular support, probably deterred conservatives from making a strong bid to unseat him but they experienced no such hesitancy when it came to Attorney General Davidson. Robert Vance Davidson, seeking his third term as state Attorney General, epitomized the contradictions found in Texas politics. He was a progressive and a strong foe of trusts, yet he opposed state-wide prohibition. Davidson incurred the wrath of conservative Democrats by his vigorous prosecution of the trusts and his active opposition to Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey. The Attorney General had the support of the Governor along with most other progressive prohibitionists. Cone Johnson, "Cyclone" Davis, Martin McNulty Crane and other Bailey opponents praised Davidson for his anti-Bailey stand. Davidson harbored few illusions about his enemies. He told the electorate that "the fearless enforcement of your laws, the impartiality of their administration and my refusal to knuckle to the mandates of the trusts, have aroused their intense hate and vengeance."²⁵ In a none too subtle allusion to Bailey, Davidson declared that "no ill-gotten or dishonest dollars ever struck the palm of my hand

²⁴Ibid., July 21, 1908.

²⁵Ibid., July 16, 1908.

and by the grace of God, never will."²⁶

Davidson's primary opponent, Colonel R. M. Wynne, drew to his banner many conservative Democrats. Judge M. M. Brooks referred to Attorney General Davidson as "the greatest imbecile that had ever been honored with office by the people of Texas."²⁷ Wynne also received the influential support of John Henry Kirby, Ben F. Looney and Colonel Louis J. Wortham.²⁸ Wynne made no effort in his campaign to mollify progressives. In a speech at Fort Worth, he verbally castigated Davidson, heaped abuse on Negroes, and praised Senator Bailey.²⁹

The political life of Texas, long poisoned by vituperative personalism and complex conspiracies, managed to produce one case of paranoid politics. Senator E. G. Senter, a Bailey foe and an opponent of prohibition, accused ardent liquor enemy Dr. George C. Rankin of using the prohibition issue as a "red herring" in order to distract the electorate's attention from the wrong-doing of Senator Bailey. Rankin admitted that he was a personal friend of Bailey's but denied Senter's baseless charge.³⁰ Dr. B. F. Riley came to Rankin's aid, denounced Senter and warned that "prohibitionists are not going to be diverted from their purpose by cheap clap-trap though it mas-

²⁶Ibid., March 29, 1908.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., June 21, 1908.

³⁰E. G. Senter to J. B. Cranfill, February 2, 1908, quoted ibid.; J. B. Cranfill to E. G. Senter, February 3, 1908, ibid.

querades in the role of statemanship."³¹

Dr. Riley's prediction more than adequately characterized the mood of Texas prohibitionists. They scored a significant victory when the Democratic Party's Executive Committee approved a resolution placing on the primary ballot the question of submission.³² Dr. B. F. Riley declared that Texans would approve a prohibition amendment and that liquor as an evil would perish "like the thumb-screw, the rack, the wheel of torture and all other relics of barbarism."³³ Prohibitionist polemicist H. A. Ivy proclaimed that "in the interest of righteous government in Texas, this inspiration of corruption, the liquor traffic, must die."³⁴

On July 25, 1908, Texas Democrats went to the polls and overwhelmingly elected Governor Campbell and Attorney General Davidson. Incomplete results indicated a progressive victory but the all important question of submission remained in doubt. For more than a week, jubilant anti-prohibitionists celebrated the defeat of submission but by the end of the first week of August more complete tallies showed that submission carried by less than five thousand votes.³⁵ Governor Campbell's 87,000

³¹J. B. Cranfill to E. G. Senter, February 7, 1908, ibid.

³²Ibid., June 9, 1908.

³³Ibid., June 23, 1908.

³⁴Leaflet entitled "Reasons Why Texas Should Go Dry," found in the Thomas Benton Love Papers (Dallas Historical Society, Dallas, Texas). Hereafter cited as Love Papers.

³⁵Dallas Morning News, August 8, 1908.

vote plurality undoubtedly accounted for the slim prohibitionist victory.

Less than three weeks after their primary contest, Democrats met in convention and heard their incumbent governor call for the question of submission to be put before the electorate in the November general election.³⁶ Anti-prohibition Democrats remained uncharacteristically silent on the convention floor but stated privately that they would bide their time and concentrate their resources on defeating prohibition when it came up before the legislature.³⁷

The Republicans, holding their state convention in Dallas, nominated John N. Simpson to run against Campbell in the November elections.³⁸ The Republican platform, conservative to the point of being reactionary, denounced progressivism and prohibition. Numerically weak, Texas Republicans provided little more than political "cannon fodder" for the Democrats. The Texas G.O.P. could do little to defeat Campbell but they hoped to play the role of spoiler in defeating submission. The arch-prohibitionist newspaper Home and State, described the Republicans as a party friendly to the state's liquor interests and seeking to attract disgruntled anti-prohibition Democrats.³⁹

The November general elections produced a progressive land-

³⁶Ibid., August 11, 1908.

³⁷Ibid., August 14, 1908.

³⁸Ibid., August 12-14, 1908.

³⁹Home and State, September 17, 1908.

slide. Governor Campbell gained a second term, Attorney General Davidson won handily, and the submission amendment obtained great popular support.⁴⁰ The coalition of conservative Democrats and Republicans failed to stop prohibition at the ballot box but the fortress-like walls of the state capitol might prove more impregnable. On January 17, 1909, Governor Campbell in his first message to the new legislature, called for the passage of a prohibition amendment. Campbell declared that "party integrity and party safety demands that Democratic members of this Legislature heed the party command, redeem the party pledge, and obey the will of the people of the state."⁴¹ Thus the people and their Governor demanded that the legislature approve constitutional prohibition.

Anti-prohibitionists, unsuccessful in their earlier efforts to defeat prohibition, now turned to their friends in the legislature to do their bidding. Representative J. C. Mason introduced the proposed amendment in the House of Representatives while Senator Charles L. Brachfield offered the resolution in the Senate. After much procrastination and debate, the amendment finally came up for a vote in both houses. The measure received a vote of eighty-five for to forty-five against in the House,⁴² and the Senate approved by a vote of

⁴⁰Supplemental Biennial Report of the Secretary of State (Austin, 1909), 11-22.

⁴¹Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, Thirty-First Legislature, Regular Session (Austin, 1909), 55.

⁴²Ibid., 298-299.

sixteen to twelve.⁴³

Although the amendment received a majority in both houses it failed to obtain the two-thirds vote necessary for submission. Thus a minority of the people's elected representatives succeeded not only in thwarting the wishes of the vast majority of the electorate and the Governor, but also betrayed their sacred trust. They managed to deal the cause of prohibition a crippling blow and in the process made a mockery of representative government.

⁴³Journal of the Senate of the State of Texas, Thirty-First Legislature, Regular Session (Austin, 1909), 1185.

CHAPTER III

LITTLE OSCAR TRIUMPHS

The re-election of Governor Campbell in 1908, while outwardly appearing to be a significant progressive victory, did in fact presage the decline of Texas progressivism as a viable, cohesive political force. Campbell's four years in office witnessed great strides in the state's economic, social and political development but these gains lacked the inspiration and continuity necessary for them to become deep-rooted and institutionalized. The Campbell years, despite their progress and reform, failed to provide either a self-perpetuating platform or a political heir apparent. This inability to promote and secure a long-term framework for short-term gains rendered even these progressive oriented victories highly dubious.

Texas political mores dictated that a governor should refrain from seeking a third consecutive term. This unwritten proscription had the inevitable effect of casting Governor Campbell in the role of a lame-duck administrator. Rumors circulated throughout Austin, however, that Campbell would challenge the third term tradition and that Senator Joseph W. Bailey would vie with him for the office. Both reports proved to be baseless.¹

With each passing day of Campbell's second term, the

¹Dallas Morning News, May 20, 1909.

Governor's authority diminished, faltering Party discipline grew weaker and opposition to Campbell mounted. At a meeting of the staunchly conservative Texas Commercial Secretaries' Association, J. V. Moore stated "instead of a Governor, East Texas has furnished you a platform. Has this platform given Texas a single smoke stack or has it simply platformed the whole state?"² Railroad Commissioner Oscar B. Colquitt, speaking before the same group, used the opportunity to send out feelers regarding his own gubernatorial ambitions. Colquitt demanded an end to political agitation and rest from restrictive legislation. He denounced the Campbell administration and declared that he was opposed to a centralization of power at Austin. "The power to press a button down at Austin," cried Colquitt, "and order the arrest of a citizen in Bexar County or in Dallas ought to be denied to the chief executive."³ Colonel Paul Waples' statement that "Texas was being legislated to death" reflected the general view of Texas conservatives in regard to the Campbell years.⁴

Governor Campbell's rise to power was predicated upon the strong support of Texas anti-liquor elements. The Governor, though unable to attain passage of a prohibitory constitutional amendment, did manage to obtain significant liquor control legislation. Liquor sales in local option areas became a felony,

²Ibid.

³Fort Worth Record, May 20, 1909.

⁴Dallas Morning News, ibid.

the state placed a \$4,000 occupation tax on firms engaged in soliciting liquor sales in dry areas, liquor consumption on trains became prohibited, and express companies paid a \$5,000 tax for the privilege of shipping liquor into local option jurisdictions.⁵ Since most Texans resided in dry areas, the legislation severely restricted the liquor trade.

Governor Campbell's refusal to seek a third term opened the door to many Democratic gubernatorial aspirants. The major contenders for the office were Texas Attorney General Robert Vance Davidson, Railroad Commissioner Oscar B. Colquitt, Tyler attorney Cone Johnson, William Poindexter of Cleburne, Judge M. M. Brooks, and N. A. "Gus" Shaw. The presence of so many formidable candidates in the field insured that the contest would be another exercise in political fratricide.

The issues which promised to dominate the ensuing campaign were not unlike those of 1906. Progressivism, prohibition and Baileyism were still capable of arousing strong sentiment within the Democratic Party and the candidates were either unwilling or unable to extricate themselves from past campaign rhetoric and emotional shibboleths. Unlike the 1906 primary, the controversial Terrell Election Law with its hybrid primary and convention system was no longer in force. The state legislature, recognizing the law's unpopularity, amended it in 1907

⁵General Laws of the State of Texas, Thirty-First Legislature, Regular Session (Austin, 1909), 53-54; ibid, First Called Session (Austin, 1909), 284-285; Galveston Daily News, January 12, 1911.

to provide that plurality results in state primaries would determine the outcome of primary elections.⁶

With each waning day of Campbell's administration, the prohibition question grew increasingly important. "Gus" Shaw, one of the six most prominently mentioned candidates, attributed his early withdrawal from the race to the inordinate attention given to prohibition. "I do not feel like entering a race," wrote Shaw, "where my fitness for the office to which I aspire is most likely to be determined solely by my views on that particular question."⁷ Shaw's reluctance to run, coupled with the disavowal of any gubernatorial ambitions of Judge Brooks, left only Colquitt, Davidson, Poindexter, and Johnson in the race.

Oscar Branch Colquitt, dubbed "Little Oscar" by his political enemies, was no stranger to the rough and tumble life of Texas politics. Colquitt's challenge to Tom Campbell for the governorship in 1906, his strong conservatism, and his persistent anti-prohibitionist stance, won him many supporters. His creditable tenure on the state railroad commission aided his reputation and kept his name before the public.

At a meeting of Texas lumbermen held at Galveston on April 14, 1909, Colquitt again lashed out against the restrictive legislation passed under Campbell. "I want to declare to you today," proclaimed Colquitt, that "we have all the restric-

⁶Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, Thirtieth Legislature, Regular Session (Austin, 1907), 73.

⁷N. A. "Gus" Shaw to T. J. O'Donnel, January 30, 1910, quoted in Dallas Morning News.

tive legislation that we need for the governing of the people of Texas."⁸ He demanded that present laws be toned down and he appealed to the legislature to "give us peace and give us rest."⁹ Colquitt rounded out his attack on Campbell by declaring that "no one man has a right to dictate what laws shall be enacted in this state."¹⁰

The following month brought increased activity in the Colquitt camp. Meeting the liquor issue squarely, Colquitt reiterated his well-known opposition to state-wide prohibition but called for better enforcement of local option laws.¹¹ In a ten point campaign platform the railroad commissioner demanded reform in the state's taxation policy, improvement in public schools, upgrading the University of Texas, more local self-government and a rest from restrictive and harsh legislation.¹²

Colquitt officially began his campaign on March 17, 1910, at Wichita Falls. He announced his opposition to the initiative and referendum, favored enforcement of anti-trust laws, called for the separation of the University of Texas and the Agricultural and Mechanical College, and opposed state ownership of railroads. Colquitt also branded as unconstitutional not only statutory prohibition but any legislation designed to prohibit

⁸Fort Worth Record, April 15, 1909.

⁹Dallas Morning News, ibid.

¹⁰Galveston Daily News, ibid.

¹¹Oscar B. Colquitt to Charles E. Graves, May 29, 1910, ibid.

¹²Colquitt campaign circular, May 29, 1910, Colquitt Papers.

liquor sales within three miles of a church or school.¹³ The Wichita Falls speech left no doubts about Colquitt's conservatism or his opposition to prohibition.

Cone Johnson's decision to seek the governorship came as no surprise to most Texans. The Tyler attorney was a Campbell progressive, a fervent "dry" and a Bailey foe.¹⁴ Johnson, described by the Dallas Morning News as the best orator among the four candidates,¹⁵ sought state-wide prohibition through a constitutional amendment but did not believe that statutory prohibition was unconstitutional. Speaking before an audience at Bruceville, Johnson called for party responsibility following the dictates of the party platform.¹⁶ He proclaimed that Texas was one state, one people with one destiny. Liquor was an evil in the body politic according to Johnson and "if the eye be evil the whole body shall be full of darkness."¹⁷ Johnson's campaign tactics continued to center around the liquor question and he seldom missed an opportunity to include references to it in his speeches. At a meeting in Greenville, Johnson asked rhetorically "will the people of this great State run their own

¹³Copy of Colquitt's speech, March 17, 1910, ibid.

¹⁴Johnson supported Campbell's bid for re-election in 1908 and challenged Bailey as a delegate-at-large candidate to the Democratic National Convention at Denver. Dallas Morning News, July 16, 1908; ibid., March 7, 1908.

¹⁵Ibid., April 23, 1910.

¹⁶Ibid., July 4, 1909.

¹⁷Ibid.

government or will the whiskey traffic run it for them?"¹⁸

William Poindexter, a conservative and long time friend of Joseph Weldon Bailey, publicly proclaimed his platform at Cleburne, on February 2, 1910. Poindexter, like Johnson, favored state-wide prohibition but unlike the latter believed that it could be accomplished only through a constitutional amendment. Poindexter recognized that many good Democrats opposed prohibition and he promised to support the Party nominee whoever he might be. "There is more in the Democratic party," claimed Poindexter, "than prohibition."¹⁹ He additionally called for a ceiling on campaign expenditures, sought the separation of the University of Texas and the Agricultural and Mechanical College, the creation of a state textbook selection committee, and the abolition of many state offices. "We have," said Poindexter, "too many offices, too many legislators, too many pie eaters."²⁰ Poindexter styled himself a prohibition Democrat not out of desire for office but from principle and warned that the liquor traffic was "the greatest public enemy this state has ever confronted."²¹ He also favored the selling of liquor by pints or quarts only and the closing of all liquor stores between 6 P.M. and 7 A.M., with no liquor to be sold

¹⁸Ibid., January 30, 1910.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Undated clipping from the San Antonio Light-Gazette, found in scrapbook, "Campaign of 1910," Colquitt Papers.

²¹Ibid.

within three miles of a church or school.²²

The remaining contender in the Democratic primary was former Attorney General Robert Vance Davidson. Unlike Colquitt, Davidson resigned from office in order to make his canvass. The Houston Daily Post, now one of Davidson's severest detractors, once said of him, "he has made a most enviable record as attorney general and is recognized throughout the state as one of the ablest and best equipped practitioners of the Texas bar."²³

Davidson's three terms as attorney general and his successful prosecution of the infamous Waters-Pierce case made him the darling of many progressives but his attacks on the trusts and his campaign against Senator Joseph Waldon Bailey won for him the contempt of many conservatives. Conservative opposition to Davidson's re-election in 1908 grew so strong that the Attorney General received anonymous letters threatening his life.²⁴

The former Attorney General making his platform public in November, 1909, called for strong penitentiary reforms, improvement in the state's public schools, reform of the state's tax laws and the separation of the Agricultural and Mechanical College from the University of Texas. Davidson reminded the electorate of his record as attorney general and the more than

²²Ibid.

²³Houston Daily Post, January 1, 1905.

²⁴Dallas Morning News, June 14, 1908.

two million dollars which filled the state treasury as a result of his enforcement of anti-trust laws. He condemned Colquitt for his refusal to resign as railroad commissioner and he came out strongly against state-wide prohibition. "I do not favor state-wide prohibition," stated Davidson, "I believe that the local option system . . . is a wiser policy."²⁵ Davidson's objection to prohibition did not preclude his support for the state legislature submitting a prohibitory constitutional amendment to the people. "By every sense of right and justice, the people are entitled at all times," maintained Davidson, "to have the will of the majority carried out."²⁶

The 1910 Democratic gubernatorial primary placed Texas liquor foes on the horns of a painful dilemma. Both Johnson and Poindexter were pronounced prohibitionists even though they disagreed as to the manner in which state-wide prohibition should be carried out. The two candidates based much of their campaign on the liquor question and both men appealed to prohibitionist Democrats for support. J. H. Gambrell, state superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League, and Dr. George C. Rankin recognized that if Johnson and Poindexter remained in the race the prohibition vote would be seriously split.

Fearful of the impending crisis, Gambrell and Rankin attempted to find an amicable solution to the problem. In letters

²⁵Unidentified newspaper clipping, November 16, 1909, Colquitt Papers.

²⁶Ibid.

to both Poindexter and Johnson, Gambrell and Rankin pointed out the seriousness of the issue and asked both candidates to place their fate in the collective hands of a prohibitionist conference which would decide which of the men should remain in the contest. The Rankin-Gambrell letter to Poindexter stated that "the opinion is fixed and well nigh universal that you and Cone Johnson will so divide the prohibition vote as to defeat each other, and we feel strongly that there must be some adjustment." Poindexter responded affirmatively to the request but Cone Johnson steadfastly refused to participate in a compromise settlement. "I cannot sacrifice, at the decision of a committee," answered Johnson, "the faith and support of thousands who have committed themselves to me and who believe that in my election lies the only hope for prohibition in this campaign."²⁷ Johnson's petulant, arrogant, and unreasonable attitude rendered the attempted compromise a failure.

The state's anti-prohibitionists, not unlike their opponents, also faced the unpleasant possibility of a divided vote. Candidates Colquitt and Davidson both laid claim to the Democratic "wet" vote and this could sap the strength of the anti-prohibitionist effort. Colquitt, sensing the mood of the "antis," made no concessions on liquor. The Railroad Commissioner's opposition to prohibition, whether it be through constitutional amendment or statute, never wavered. He voted against local

²⁷See Dallas Morning News, May 5, 1910 for the round-robin correspondence between Rankin, Gambrell, Poindexter, and Johnson.

option in his home county in 1901, fought submission in 1906, and re-doubled his attack on prohibition in 1910.

Davidson's anti-prohibitionist stance, while not of recent vintage, lacked Colquitt's myopic commitment. Davidson diluted his opposition with a healthy dose of concern for majority rule. He opposed state-wide prohibition but would not attempt to impose his own belief on fellow Texans if they expressed a desire at variance with his. Unfortunately many Texans were unable to see anything but unreasonable liquor jingoism in Davidson's enlightened sensitivity. The ardent prohibitionist and often times progressive newspaper Home and State branded Davidson's thinking "a dose of anti-prohibition nauseating in the extreme,"²⁸ while the anti-prohibitionist Texas Volksbote described his concession to majority rule on the liquor question as a political blunder.²⁹

The candidates, once their views on the issues became well-known, spent most of their time consolidating their support and slinging mud at the opposition. Colquitt drew to his side much of the state's leading financial interests. "Little Oscar" sought favor with the wealthy by branding Governor Campbell's tax collecting measures unfair and tyrannical. He promised Texas railroad interests that if elected he would encourage capital investments in railway expansion and would vigorously oppose

²⁸Home and State, April 30, 1910.

²⁹Texas Volksbote, July 1, 8, 1910, quoted in Seth Shepard McKay, Texas Politics, 1906-1944, With Special Reference to the German Counties. (Lubbock, Texas 1951), 30.

harassing new laws.³⁰ Colquitt's wooing of the railroads paid rich dividends. E. H. R. Green of the Texas Midland Railroad declared that Colquitt's election would be "the best thing that ever happened to Texas."³¹ Henry K. McHarg, president of the Texas Central Railroad believed that Colquitt would have a conservative administration which would protect the moneyed interest of the state.³² Texas lumber baron John Henry Kirby supported Colquitt's strong anti-prohibition stand and in a letter to a prohibitionist relative confided that, "my belief, my good uncle, is that the devil is working on you prohibitionists. . . ." If the prohibitionists succeeded, Kirby warned "you will convert your free county into sufficient unhappiness to make it the home of the devil himself."³³

Colquitt relentlessly hammered at Davidson and the prohibitionists. He accused the former Attorney General of being in league with Governor Campbell and Dr. George C. Rankin and charged that Davidson had not paid his taxes in twenty years.³⁴ Responding to Dr. Rankin's charge that Colquitt would rather be governor than go to heaven, he commented, "what does Dr. Rankin know about heaven, he's been doing nothing but raise hell on

³⁰Dallas Morning News, May 20, 1909.

³¹Ibid., November 1, 1910.

³²Henry K. McHarg to Oscar B. Colquitt, March 28, 1910, Colquitt Papers.

³³John Henry Kirby to Henry S. Kirby, May 23, 1910, Kirby Papers.

³⁴Dallas Morning News, April 17, 1910.

earth."³⁵

The Davidson and Johnson forces though outnumbered and outmanuevered struck back. A pro-Davidson circular predicted "if Mr. Colquitt is elected Governor it will inaugurate a reign of riot and outlawry,"³⁶ demanded the election of Davidson, and warned the voters that "the great mass of you have property and wives and children and . . . cannot afford to identify yourselves with the dives and law breakers who are following Colquitt."³⁷ Johnson drew to his standard J. H. "Cyclone" Davis who seized upon Colquitt's pledge to give the people of Texas a rest from restrictive legislation. The people would obtain rest, Davis expounded, if Colquitt would "get off their backs and quit riding them."³⁸ The Populist leader also charged that "Colquitt tears down the base of all Democracy, dethrones the majority, declares for the minority and the sovereignty of booze."³⁹ Davis, attempting to under-cut Poindexter, accused him of being a tool of Senator Bailey and questioned his dedication to the prohibition cause. "Poindexter joined the Prohibition church in 1887," reproached Davis, "but if he has ever attended that church since, I have never heard of it."⁴⁰ Johnson and Johnson

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Davidson campaign circular found in Colquitt Papers.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Dallas Morning News, July 14, 1910.

³⁹Ibid., April 18, 1910.

⁴⁰Ibid.

alone, was the true disciple of prohibition, Davis maintained, and "he stands for all we prohibitionists have worked for for years."⁴¹

Poindexter, unable to affect a compromise settlement with Johnson, remained in the race and attempted to avoid conflict with him. He repeatedly attacked the trusts and stated, "I had rather be in my grave than be elected by corporations."⁴² He also called for the passage of a state law making it a felony for any candidate to use campaign funds provided by trusts and corporations.⁴³ Poindexter condemned Colquitt's stand on the liquor issue and questioned his highly touted devotion to the principle of local self-government. "The breweries, the whiskey men, the white aprons tell you they are fighting for the principles of local self-government! Why, they don't want any government at all," declared Poindexter.⁴⁴ Aroused by Cone Johnson's barbs, Poindexter went on the attack. "The trouble with Cone," he admonished, "is that knowing the truth he can't tell it."⁴⁵

The long and bitterly contested campaign produced three surprises which Colquitt turned to his advantage. It was no

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., April 22, 1910.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Undated clipping from the San Antonio Light-Gazette, found in scrapbook, "Campaign of 1910," Colquitt Papers.

⁴⁵Dallas Morning News, July 31, 1910.

secret that William Poindexter was a close friend of Senator Bailey and that Bailey was actively working in Poindexter's behalf. Poindexter depended to a large extent upon Bailey's admirers and when Colquitt publicly charged that the Cleburne lawyer had been one of the attorneys responsible for the Bailey ' expose' in the Waters-Pierce case, Poindexter's campaign suffered a crippling blow.⁴⁶

The sincerity of Bailey's support for Poindexter became the subject of much speculation after a letter allegedly written by Bailey appeared in the Dallas Morning News. In the alleged letter Bailey supposedly wrote that, "Mr. Colquitt's platform, in so far as it relates to the leading issues . . . more clearly coincides with my views than does that of Judge Poindexter."⁴⁷ Bailey denied authorship and publicly stated "I have never made the slightest concealment from anybody that if the Anti-Saloon League should succeed in eliminating Judge Poindexter . . . I would take the stump for Colquitt. . . ."⁴⁸ The confusion over the "Bailey letter" detracted from Poindexter's campaign and aided the fortunes of Colquitt.

Colquitt's injection of the race issue into the campaign's closing days made important inroads into Attorney General Davidson's support. Colquitt claimed that Norris Wright Cuney, a Negro, once received Davidson's support for a federal position

⁴⁶Houston Daily Post, March 22, 1910.

⁴⁷Alleged letter written by Joseph Weldon Bailey to S. L. Russell, May 16, 1910, quoted in Dallas Morning News.

⁴⁸Ibid., May 25, 1910.

to the detriment of two white men. Davidson denied the allegation and explained that he had only signed a petition asking President Grover Cleveland to permit the man to serve out the remaining two years of a four year term.⁴⁹ The railroad commissioner's use of smear tactics in the Cuney episode undoubtedly cost Davidson some support.⁵⁰

The closing days of the campaign brought Oscar B. Colquitt closer to victory. He succeeded in maintaining his own strength while at the same time seriously undermining the support of the other candidates. Colquitt had come a long way since his humiliating defeat by Campbell in 1906 but only the Texas electorate could determine how far he really had come.

Democrats from all over Texas trooped to the polls in the closing days of July and cast 146,685 votes for "Little Oscar," Poindexter ran second polling 79,943 votes with Johnson placing third with 76,170. Davidson came in a poor fourth garnering only 53,296 votes.⁵¹ Since the combined vote of Johnson and Poindexter exceeded Colquitt's total, J. H. Gambrell of the Anti-Saloon League attributed Colquitt's victory to the division of the prohibition vote between Johnson and Poindexter.⁵²

The Democratic State Convention met at Galveston in early August to draw up a platform for the November general election.

⁴⁹Ibid., July 14, 1910.

⁵⁰John G. McKay to Oscar B. Colquitt, July 5, 1910, Colquitt Papers.

⁵¹Dallas Morning News, August 11, 1910.

⁵²Ibid., July 31, 1910.

Colquitt, due to the death of his son Walter, was not present but his supporters took control. Poindexter partisans threw their support to Colquitt making it impossible for Davidson or Johnson to accomplish anything for prohibition.⁵³

The platform which emerged from the Galveston conclave, not only reflected Colquitt's conservatism but also the deep divisions within the Texas Democracy. The platform, declaring that "the general welfare demands that the people shall not be annoyed by constant political agitation," concluded with a commendation of the laws passed under Governor Campbell.⁵⁴ The Democrats thus found themselves in the compromising position of praising both Colquitt and Campbell.

The Republicans, holding their convention at Dallas on August 9 and 10, selected the former Democrat J. O. Terrell to be their gubernatorial standard-bearer.⁵⁵ The Grand Old Party's platform denounced the Democrats, decried all efforts made in favor of achieving state-wide prohibition, and accused the Democrats of political misrule.⁵⁶

Members of the Prohibition Party gathered at convention in Dallas on August 9 and nominated Andrew Jackson Houston for governor of Texas. Their platform served as a prohibition manifesto and a striking example of progressive thought. It favored not

⁵³Austin Statesman, August 9, 1910.

⁵⁴See Galveston Daily News, August 10-11, 1910, for a detailed account of the convention's proceedings.

⁵⁵Dallas Morning News, August 11, 1910.

⁵⁶Ibid., August 10-11, 1910.

only state-wide prohibition but also supported the initiative, referendum and recall. It demanded the construction of better highways and the elimination of child labor.⁵⁷ The voice of Texas Prohibitionists could not be heard over the din created by Democrats and Republicans, but its presence served as a continuing example of Texas progressivism.

The days immediately preceding the general election brought forth an acrimonious exchange of letters between Andrew Jackson Houston and John Henry Kirby. Kirby was a congenital conservative, a strong anti-prohibitionist, a backer of Colquitt and an obsequious admirer of Joseph Weldon Bailey. Kirby's fondness for Bailey reached such a zenith that he referred to him as the "greatest living American citizen" and boomed Bailey for the presidency.⁵⁸ The Houston-Kirby feud started when Houston in a vitriolic letter to Colquitt, denounced Kirby for being the head of a lumber trust, accused him of having an interest in a saloon at Silsbee, and charged him with dismissing employees who voted against Colquitt.⁵⁹ Colquitt passed the letter on to Kirby who immediately replied to Houston's allegations. Kirby denied all charges, accused Houston of slander, and demanded a public retraction. Houston responded by reiterating his previous charges. Infuriated and impatient with the descendent of the state's greatest hero, Kirby described Houston as a mediocre, untruthful

⁵⁷Ibid., August 10, 1910.

⁵⁸Ibid., August 9, 1910.

⁵⁹Andrew Jackson Houston to Oscar B. Colquitt, October 27, 1910, Kirby Papers.

nondescript totally unworthy of the name he bore.⁶⁰ This war of words settled nothing, but since the correspondence between the two men appeared in many of the state's newspapers an element of excitement graced an otherwise dull election.

The November election resulted in a Colquitt landslide. \ Colquitt captured 174,596 votes to Terrell's 26,191 while Houston received a miniscule 6,052.⁶¹ Once again the opposition became political cannon fodder for the seemingly invincible Democratic hosts.

The victory of Oscar Branch Colquitt signified the end of the "era of reform" begun by Thomas Mitchell Campbell. Texas would have a new leader and a new administration, and the winds of change would waft more slowly across the state. Texas progressives and prohibitionists suffered a stunning defeat and victory would be a long time coming.

⁶⁰John Henry Kirby to Andrew Jackson Houston, October 31, 1910, ibid; Houston to Kirby, November 1, 1910, ibid; Kirby to Houston, November 5, 1910, ibid.

⁶¹Supplemental Biennial Report of the Secretary of State (Austin, 1910), 14.

CHAPTER IV

SUBMISSION AND BEYOND

Texas prohibitionists in 1910 not only sought to elect a governor favorable to their cause but also the successful passage, acceptance and implementation of a prohibitory constitutional liquor amendment. The defeat of such an amendment in 1887 at the hands of the electorate and the legislature's thwarting of a subsequent attempt in 1909, made the goal seem as elusive as the Holy Grail. Yet the frustrating lack of success which attended previous efforts only served to encourage the amendment's supporters.

The Texas Democracy, while handing Oscar B. Colquitt an impressive victory in the July primary, also approved the submission of a liquor amendment to the legislature by a vote of 155,224 to 126,212.¹ The primary results indicated that Colquitt polled more votes than those cast against submission and that a sizeable group of submission supporters voted for "Little Oscar."²

Relations between Colquitt and Governor Campbell, never very cordial, became acutely strained during the primary with both men characterizing each other in language "more expressive than elegant." This prompted one observer to speculate that Campbell would seek to push through new liquor legislation by

¹Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide (Dallas, 1911), 64.

²Dallas Morning News, July 24, 1910.

calling a special session of the legislature.³ Post-mortem election analyses coupled with political speculation and charges of wrong-doing were not long in coming. Martin McNulty Crane and defeated gubernatorial candidate Cone Johnson charged that some members of the Texas House and Senate were on the payroll of the breweries.⁴ Responding to these and other assertions the Texas House of Representatives, in a vote of eighty-three to twenty-three, passed a concurrent resolution calling for an investigation.⁵ The Senate, unfavorably disposed to the actions of the House, decided to place the matter for consideration before the Committee on Privileges and Elections in order to defer action on the lower chamber's resolution.⁶

Soon after his primary victory, Colquitt publicly stated his position on the question of submission. "I think that where a county has gone for submission," declared Colquitt, "the delegates to the county convention should respect this expression." Colquitt, in somewhat uncharacteristic concern for the wishes of the electorate, hedged and indicated that the county conventions were the proper places for submitting resolutions and that "where a county endorsed his candidacy, the delegates to the state convention should be chosen from among his friends and

³Ibid.

⁴Galveston Daily News, July 23, 1910.

⁵Dallas Morning News, July 28, 1910.

⁶Ibid., July 29, 1910.

supporters."⁷ The inescapable result of this studied piece of political sophistry would be the defeat of the submission amendment.

Jacob "Jake" Wolters, chairman of the Anti-Statewide Prohibition Organization, commenting on the favorable submission vote stated that his group "would no longer oppose the submission of a prohibition amendment to the legislature" but reiterated his position that the organization "will continue and will devote itself to the utmost in all legitimate efforts to defeat . . . such an amendment when the same is submitted." Wolters expressed confidence that the people would ultimately defeat constitutional prohibition at the polls.⁸

Delegates to the State Democratic Convention assembled at Galveston in early August to write a platform which, when judged according to tolerant standards, manifested an observable departure from reality. Acceding to the demands of Democratic prohibitionists, the platform called upon the Thirty-Second Legislature to "submit to the people for their rejection or approval a constitutional amendment prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors in this state."⁹

⁷Letter to Oscar B. Colquitt to an unnamed friend, ibid., July 29, 1910.

⁸Houston Chronicle, July 30, 1910.

⁹The Democratic Convention while holding it a duty of a representative to faithfully execute the will of his constituents and while declaring that the Party was free from all political scandal, approved a resolution nominating Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey for the presidency of the United States. The irony of the Convention's actions was not lost on all delegates for a minority report calling for a law prohibiting public officials from receiv-

The scattered refuse and debris left on the Convention's floor symbolized in microcosm the disarray of the Texas Democracy. The festering wounds and scars opened during the intense gubernatorial primary proved immune even to the salty, antiseptic air of Galveston. The Party, still unrecovered from its most recent convulsions, now faced another challenge to its strength and its endurance. An uneasy calm, like the August blanket of heat, covered the state but festering passions and forces soon dispelled any illusions of tranquility.

Recognizing the need for organizational strength and unity, a group of prominent temperance advocates including former United States Congressman Thomas H. Ball, William Poindexter, Cone Johnson, J. B. Gambrell, and Samuel Palmer Brooks met at Dallas in late October and formed the Statewide Prohibition Amendment Association.¹⁰ Vowing to achieve the successful passage of the liquor amendment in the legislature and at the ballot box, the organization appointed a prominent executive committee headed by Ball.¹¹

ing corporate fees was rejected. See Galveston Daily News, August 10-11, 1910, for a complete rendering of the Convention's activities.

¹⁰Ibid., October 21, 1910. Three months earlier, Dr. J. B. Gambrell, editor of the influential Baptist Standard and a leading member of the new prohibition association, charged that the prohibitionists had no effective organization to carry on the amendment fight or to educate the people. Ibid., July 31, 1910.

¹¹The other members of the Executive Committee were: George W. Brackenridge, Jesse Murrell, Andrew J. Houston, Horace Vaughn, Thomas N. Jones, Rice Maxey, Sterling P. Strong, Richard Mays, Thomas S. Henderson, and Richard Cofer. Letterhead of the Committee found in the Love Papers.

The new organization received its first indication of strong support when over seven hundred delegates, responding to its call, arrived at Fort Worth in early December to formulate plans for the successful prosecution of the constitutional amendment. Manifesting great enthusiasm and unity, the delegates selected Tom Ball as their chairman, along with a campaign committee composed of Governor Campbell, Cone Johnson, William Poindexter and five other influential liquor foes.¹² The Convention's delegates, joined by a score of Negro observers, bitterly denounced the liquor traffic and declared that their one common purpose was "to make Texas dry, without regards to personal, political, or party differences."¹³

The Fort Worth audience, many of whom were long familiar with the spellbinding oratory of the revival and chautauqua circuit, delighted in the table pounding, arm waving, clarion-like declamations of the various speakers. Exuding evangelistic fervor, Tom Ball declared that "we are here as brothers who honor God and love our fellow man, with no selfish interests to serve but only the highest good to our imperial state. . . ." Taking advantage of the audience's attention and the solemnity of the occasion, he moved toward the climax of his oration. "Looking into your faces," Ball observed, "I believe you are here for one purpose: to expedite the downfall of the liquor

¹²Fort Worth Record, December 9, 1910. Cone Johnson and William Poindexter were able to overcome their personal differences exacerbated during the 1910 gubernatorial primary and thus rendered the submission cause invaluable support.

¹³Ibid.

interests in the state of Texas."¹⁴ Judge William Poindexter, giving himself completely to emotionalism, attacked Governor-elect Colquitt and summoned the audience to a new crusade. "They talk about peace and political rest," sneered Poindexter. "I'll tell you when peace and political rest will come," he continued, "it will begin the hour we sweep from Texas the liquor traffic." Inveighing against anti-prohibitionist political despotism, Poindexter punctuated his address with an appeal for unity and a promise of victory: "Let us, with clean hands, honest hearts, and locked shields, go to the people of Texas . . . and victory will be ours."¹⁵ Long-time temperance advocate Dr. George C. Rankin spoke admiringly and approvingly of the role played by Texas women in the prohibition struggle but warned that the anti-prohibitionists would wage the submission fight "with all the cunning of the devil."¹⁶ Rice Maxey, recalling past prohibitionist factionalism, spoke out against disunity and declared that "any prohibitionists who dug up the hatchet during this campaign, should be brought before the convention and excommunicated."¹⁷ Many prohibitionists had journeyed to Fort Worth to find inspiration and a new sense of commitment which would carry them through the difficult days ahead. Few of them departed disappointed.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Dallas Morning News, December 9, 1910.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

The first day of the new year witnessed a bitter dispute between Oscar B. Colquitt and state Attorney General Jewel P. Lightfoot. Lightfoot, a staunch prohibitionist, had vigorously and diligently enforced local option laws and quashed the state's notorious social clubs, which in reality housed "blind tigers" and gaming devices. Lightfoot, with the approval and cooperation of Governor Campbell, received an appropriation of \$25,000 to carry on this work; but Colquitt, in a series of public letters to the Attorney General, stated his intentions of disapproving subsequent allotments for such activity. "I stated to you that unless you could show me," wrote Colquitt, "that this expenditure had resulted in good . . . payments would not be approved by the Governor after the 17th of January."¹⁸ Colquitt, ignoring the fact that Lightfoot had already obtained more than twenty judgments against the "social clubs," went on to charge that the Attorney General had been drawing funds without Governor Campbell's approval.¹⁹

Lightfoot, responding to these allegations, denied that he obtained funds without consulting Campbell and offered to present Colquitt an itemized list of expenditures. Sure of his position, Lightfoot replied to Colquitt, "I shall not be deterred thereby nor swerved from a discharge of those duties affecting most vitally the public welfare."²⁰ Rebuffed in his efforts to

¹⁸Ibid., January 1, 1911.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

intimidate Lightfoot, Colquitt responded more aggressively. "Your self-laudation and self-praise," the Governor-elect asserted, "to what has been accomplished is not sustained by the records." He then went on to verbally castigate the Attorney General for the lax manner in which his office kept records and ventured the opinion that Lightfoot's administration would "put an ordinary Justice of the Peace to shame."²¹ Colquitt's attacks and condescending language so angered the Attorney General that he launched into a virulent condemnation of him. "You have sung your lullabies of political peace and legislative rest from a hundred stumps," he wrote, "but I advise you now that there will be neither peace nor rest in Texas as long as the land grabbers clutch the throats of children, seeking to despoil them of a heritage bought and sealed in the blood of martyrs, or while special interests would bind the people Prometheus-like to the rocks and like vultures prey upon their vitals." Lightfoot declared that he was not surprised at Colquitt's ridicule of liquor law enforcement and in obvious reference to the Governor-elect's position on the Railroad Commission, apologized that the office of Justice of the Peace was not as an "exalted one as railroad commissioner." Concluding his letter to Colquitt, the Attorney General promised that "this department . . . will continue its efforts to uphold the law and will not be controlled by any one who assumes the role of czar or dictator."²²

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., January 3, 1911.

The Dallas Morning News, responding editorially to the unseemly war of words, predicted that the state of Texas, "would be disgraced and its citizens humiliated if it could be said . . . that it is too pernicious to provide for the enforcement of its laws." The paper labeled it a legislative blunder to make the attorney general's office dependent upon the governor.²³

The Colquitt-Lightfoot controversy was symptomatic of the tensions inherent in the prohibition struggle and it foreshadowed a deeper and more all embracing campaign to discredit Texas prohibitionists. Colquitt's immoderate speech and Lightfoot's truculent attitude served to propel the prohibition debate down the low road of vituperation, illogic, and personalism.

Members of both legislative houses gathered at Austin in the early days of January for the opening of the Thirty-Second Legislature. Governor Campbell, retiring after four years in office, sent his last message to the assembled delegates. The Governor, focusing his attention on the submission question, wrote that "the people have a right to demand legislation action upon any acts, upon any subject that concerns them or their government. They have made this demand and it should be respected."²⁴ The message dealt extensively with the liquor problem. "A strict regulation of the sale of liquor of all kinds," wrote Campbell, "and legislation minimizing as much as possible the evils trace-

²³Ibid., January 5, 1911.

²⁴Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, Thirty-Second Legislature, Regular Session (Austin, 1911), 66. See also Journal of the Senate of the State of Texas, Thirty-Second Legislature, Regular Session (Austin, 1911), 47-48.

able to and flowing out of the traffic should appeal to every good citizen."²⁵ The Governor acknowledged that a large percentage of the state's territory and more than three-fourths of its population prohibited the sale of liquor, but he reminded the legislators that the "wet" population, comprising only one-fourth of the total, accounted for more than two-thirds of the convicts received at the state penitentiary during the past four years. Campbell blamed this condition on the liquor traffic and the inadequacies of Texas liquor laws. Governor Campbell concluded his remarks on the liquor question with a plea for new and beneficial liquor control laws. He sought the closing of all saloons from 7:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M. and prohibitory statutes closing all liquor clubs and eliminating the sale of liquor within ten miles of any state educational institution supported in whole or in part through the general revenue fund.²⁶

Governor Campbell's eloquent request for new liquor legislation fell upon deaf ears and prohibitionists in the Texas House of Representatives quickly lost all hope of its passage.²⁷ They, along with their Senate colleagues, chose instead to concentrate their energies upon the passage of the prohibition amendment.

Meeting in joint session on the evening of January 12, members of the legislature received a report from representatives

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Dallas Morning News, January 15, 1911.

of the Statewide Prohibition Amendment Association.²⁸ Tom Ball, the Association's chairman and leader of the delegation, asked for legislative approval of the prohibition amendment along with adequate procedural safeguards to insure an honest and orderly submission election. Ball also expressed his organization's desire to have the election held on the fourth Saturday in July.²⁹

Prohibition supporters in the Texas House wasted little time in offering a submission resolution for the lower chamber's consideration. Representatives C. E. Gilmore, B. P. Maddox, W. A. Taver, S. S. Baker, Forest Gaither, and Marvin H. Brown wrote and proposed the prohibitory resolution. After little debate and few delays the lower chamber, in a vote of 101 to 19, approved for popular consideration a constitutional amendment prohibiting "the manufacture, sale, barter, and exchange of intoxicating liquors."³⁰

The state Senate in a vote of 89 to 22 approved an amended version of the House resolution.³¹ Unlike their 1909 effort, the prohibitionists received from both assemblies the necessary two-thirds vote for passage along with the legislature's approval of an amended version of the resolution. Governor Oscar B. Colquitt, unwilling to veto the resolution, gave it his approval

²⁸Judge William Poindexter and Cone Johnson accompanied Ball to the joint session.

²⁹Austin Statesman, January 13, 1911.

³⁰Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, Thirty-Second Legislature, Regular Session, 276-277.

³¹Journal of the Senate of the State of Texas, Thirty-Second Legislature, Regular Session, 276.

but not his blessing. "Local Option is still," said Colquitt, "the most rational form of prohibition."³² Anti-Statewide Prohibition leader Jacob F. Wolters decried the passage of the amendment in a letter to United States Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey and asked for his support in defeating the amendment in the July election.³³

Prohibition supporters began to work earnestly for unity and popular support. At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statewide Prohibition Amendment Association held in Austin, Chairman Bell reported that he had received so many offers of support that it would not be necessary for the Association to incur great expenses for the submission campaign.³⁴ He also noted in a press release that the Association was working closely with the Texas Anti-Saloon League, the Prohibition Party and other temperance advocates.³⁵

The Executive Committee of the Texas Anti-Saloon League met at Dallas on January 14, and agreed to propagandize the submission effort through the power of the word and the pen. The League planned to blanket the state with speakers and literature. League Superintendent Dr. J. H. Gambrell stated, "unless Christians by nonpartisan organizations keep alive a healthy moral

³²Austin Statesman, January 19, 1911.

³³Jacob F. Wolters to Joseph Weldon Bailey, February 14, 1911, Joseph Weldon Bailey Papers (Dallas Historical Society, Dallas, Texas). Hereafter cited as Bailey Papers.

³⁴Dallas Morning News, January 15, 1911.

³⁵Galveston Daily News, January 15, 1911.

and religious sentiment among the masses, the tides of evil will bring increasing disaster and death eternal to our people."³⁶

Late in February, the Anti-Saloon League sponsored a Field Day at Houston. The festive audience heard State Comptroller W. P. Lane speak out against liquor. "I affirm that there is no sound argument from either a financial, business, ethical, moral, economical, hygenic, social, political or religious standpoint," Lane declared, "in favor of the open saloon and the retail sale of liquor as a beverage."³⁷ The Comptroller denied the contention of many anti-prohibitionists that the saloon and the liquor traffic provided a fiscal boon to the state and portrayed the saloon as a "retreat for the incorrigible, a schoolroom for the highway man . . . a poison dispensary for the boy, and a putrid charnel house for the girls."³⁸

The official commencement of the prohibition campaign took place in Waco on April 21, 1911. More than fifteen thousand people jammed the Cotton Palace where a veritable galaxy of persuasive speakers enlivened the audience with a call to militancy.³⁹ Included in the impressive list of prohibition notables were W. P. Lane, William Poindexter, J. B. Gambrell, Andrew Jackson Houston, H. A. Ivy, Rev. Patrick J. Murphy and R. E. Cofer.

³⁶Dallas Morning News, January 15, 1911.

³⁷Houston Daily Post, February 20, 1911.

³⁸Dallas Morning News, April 22, 1911.

³⁹Ibid.

William Poindexter made a fervent appeal to all Texans to support the liquor amendment and to help wrest control of the state from the liquor interests. Thomas H. Ball denied that he would be the political beneficiary of the Statewide Prohibition Amendment Association and in stirring rhetoric compared the submission fight to the battle of San Jacinto. Professor H. A. Ivy, referring to the small Texas flag that he carried stated, "we are going to wipe the stain off of this in July."⁴⁰ Rev. Patrick J. Murphy, a locquacious and fiery priest from Dalhart, exhorted the delegates to take the battle for submission into the homes. "The issue," cried the priest, "is not prohibition, reputation, or moderation; it is the 4,000 saloons against 650,000 homes."⁴¹ State Senator R. E. Cofer, replying to United States Senator Charles A. Culberson's refusal to support prohibition, remarked, "from the immaturity of the Senator, I appeal to the maturity of his father." Cofer then quoted a statement attributed to Culberson's father, that "'if all the tears of the mother and wives and children caused by the liquor traffic were brought into a single lake it would float the navies of the world.'"⁴²

The anti-prohibitionists, recuperating slowly from their recent defeats, held a meeting in Houston on April 3, 1911. The "antis" in a series of eighteen resolutions branded prohibition un-American. According to them, prohibition violated local

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

self-government, destroyed meaningful local option laws, created large scale unemployment, lessened state revenue, and made it easier for minors to obtain liquor. Hoping to bolster their position, the "antis" laid claim to the mantle of Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Grover Cleveland, Sam Houston, Charles Allen Culberson, Joseph Weldon Bailey and others who expressed anti-prohibitionist sentiment at one time or another.⁴³

Prohibition foes from across the state met at Fort Worth on June 5. Over twenty-five thousand persons filled the Coliseum, in defiance of the oppressive June heat, to hear Governor Oscar B. Colquitt, Houston Daily Post editor Rienzi M. Johnston, Jacob Wolters, and General John A. Hulen.⁴⁴ Wolters roused the delegates with an impassioned, hard-hitting speech. Prohibition "makes a business of politics," he declared, and "its patriotism is measured by the dollars its hirelings may collect on commission from guileless people and the contributions made by predatory wealth to serve its selfish pursuits." Wolters, long-time attorney for the Texas Wholesale Liquor Dealers' Association and lobbyist for the Pullman Sleeping Car Company, stepped up his unrelenting diatribe with an attack against the Anti-Saloon League and multi-millionaire John D. Rockefeller. "It is admitted that John D. Rockefeller has contributed \$350,000 to its funds," declared Wolters, "this man who stands as the prototype of the class who has robbed the people of the world out of more millions

⁴³Houston Chronicle, April 4, 1911.

⁴⁴Dallas Morning News, June 6, 1911.

than he can do restitution for in a century of eternity, is one of its chief financial backers."⁴⁵ Wolters ended his speech with a declaration that the adoption of state-wide prohibition "had always been followed by the enactment of laws so drastic that the despotism of Russia becomes a burning symbol of liberty by comparison."

Following Wolters' address Governor Colquitt, in oratory laced with biblical allusions, bemoaned the legislature's approval of the submission amendment and mocked the efforts of the prohibitionists. "You won't find it easier to go to heaven under prohibition," said the Governor, "than under the present statute."⁴⁵ Jonathan Lane of Houston questioned the enforcement of prohibition. "Every capable and well informed person knows that prohibition," proclaimed Lane, "has never been and cannot be even substantially enforced upon a spirited, intelligent and high-grade people."⁴⁶ Lumberman John Henry Kirby, unable to attend the meeting, sent a telegram praising the convention's work and promising his support. Carlos Bee of San Antonio self-righteously declared that he "would rather be the author of a law bringing free education to the poor children of Texas than the author of a futile law to restrict individual rights."⁴⁷ W. H. Kittrell, unable to restrain himself, declared that "had Christ been a prohibitionist, the record would probably

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

have shown that he turned wine to water."⁴⁸ Past president of , the Texas Rice Millers' Association, George Armistead, stated that "it would seem to be inconceivable that farmers . . . if they knew the distressing conditions of the rice industry, would willingly give it a further push down the hill by voting for state-wide prohibition."⁴⁹

The Anti-Submission Convention drew to Fort Worth a group of three hundred Negroes. In the midst of their own segregated rally and barbecue, they heard prominent Negro banker R. E. Houston warn that the adoption of the prohibition amendment would "work a hardship on laboring men and jeopardize the interest of the man who has money to invest."⁵⁰

The closing days of the submission campaign brought an intensification of the struggle. Former Governor Campbell, Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives Sam T. Rayburn, J. "Cyclone" Davis, Dr. George C. Rankin and other "pros" crisscrossed the state to proclaim the prohibition message. The Fort Worth Methodist Pastors' Association responded to Governor Colquitt's outbursts and censured "Little Oscar,"⁵¹ his own minister joined the fray and dubbed him the "Plumed Knight of the Saloon."⁵² The prohibitionists even found a newspaper to insure that the people

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Fort Worth Record, June 5, 1911.

⁵²Austin Statesman, June 3, 1911.

read the unvarnished truth.⁵³

The anti-prohibitionists lacked no shortage of gifted orators. They, like their opponents, filled the air with speeches and vice versa. Governor Colquitt, ignoring pleas that he resign his membership in the Methodist Church,⁵⁴ addressed a crowd of over ten thousand people at Fort Worth.⁵⁵ The Anti-Statewide Prohibition Organization, never underestimating the power of the press, ran many full page advertisements purporting to show that prohibition was ineffectual.⁵⁶

The campaign almost over, the leaders of both factions made various calculated predictions of success. Prohibition leader Tom Ball estimated that the amendment would carry by 75,000 votes.⁵⁷ "Anti" leader Jacob Wolters, never given to understatement himself, maintained that prohibition would lose by an equally impressive 102,350 votes.⁵⁸

The July 22 special election saw almost one-half million Texans cast their vote. Early fragmented returns gave the prohibition amendment a comfortable lead. As the number of returns increased, the amendment's lead decreased but the small margin was still enough to reward the thousands of partisans who had

⁵³Galveston Daily News, June 7, 1911.

⁵⁴Oscar B. Colquitt to T. A. Hayes, May 27, 1911, Colquitt Papers.

⁵⁵Austin Statesman, July 20, 1911.

⁵⁶Galveston Daily News, July 18, 1911.

⁵⁷Ibid., July 19, 1911.

⁵⁸Ibid., July 15, 1911.

struggled and worked to make the prohibition dream a reality. More hours passed and returns from all across the state began to paint a more definitive election picture. The amendment was losing and it continued to trail until the final returns were counted and tabulated. Texans once again had turned down a prohibitory constitutional liquor amendment by a vote of 237,393 to 231,096.⁵⁹

Tom Ball, leader of the amendment's backers, attributed its defeat to a number of causes. According to Ball, the state's Negro and Mexican vote went heavily against the amendment and the "antis" also had an unlimited supply of funds. He summarized his analysis with the charge that a great number of illegal votes were cast by citizens who had their poll taxes paid by the liquor interests.⁶⁰ Judge M. M. Brooks echoed Ball's charges regarding illegal votes.⁶¹ The prohibition newspaper Home and State blamed Negroes and Mexicans for the defeat. The anti-prohibitionists "realize that they owe their insignificant tenure of position," excoriated the newspaper, "not to the intelligent votes of the state, but to the ignorant negroes and vicious Mexicans."⁶² Thomas B. Love in a less vitriolic and more balanced assessment of the vote stated, "there can be no doubt that the result of the prohibition election was the result of a pyrrhic victory for the

⁵⁹Supplemental Biennial Report of the Secretary of State (Austin, 1912), 141.

⁶⁰Dallas Morning News, July 25, 1911.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Home and State, July 28, 1911.

Antis."⁶³ Viewing the results differently, anti-prohibitionist spokesman Jonathan Lane saw in the results a repudiation of religious domination of state affairs, political proscription, and fanatical intolerance. Lane went on to speculate that if the prohibitionists had succeeded the terrible specter of women suffrage would realize success in Texas.⁶⁴

Many observers attributed the "antis" margin of victory to the campaigning of Governor Colquitt. "It was your personality who [sic] won the battle," wrote W. A. Chapa to Colquitt, "the Mexican vote all over Texas voted with the antis to a man not only for the principle but because their friend Governor Colquitt was supporting the cause."⁶⁵ R. S. Lazenby, president of the Waco-based Dr. Pepper Soft-drink Company, wrote to Colquitt that its chief competitor, the Coca Cola Company, supported prohibition "not because they had any interest in the moral condition of Texas . . . but to be entitled to sell more caffeine and cocaine which is ten thousand times more worse than alcoholic stimulants."⁶⁶ Defeated at the ballot box, the prohibitionists now sought moral vindication at the bench.

The circulating charges of election frauds made after the submission election began before the campaign closed. Late in

⁶³Thomas Benton Love to Henry D. Lindsley, August 19, 1911, Love Papers.

⁶⁴Dallas Morning News, July 25, 1911.

⁶⁵W. A. Chapa to Oscar B. Colquitt, July 24, 1911, Colquitt Papers. See also Coppini to Colquitt, July 25, 1911, ibid.

⁶⁶R. S. Lazenby to Oscar B. Colquitt, July 27, 1911, ibid.

July, Alexander Watkins Terrell wrote that "we are now going through an astonishing amount of fraud on the election laws. . . ." Terrell believed that more than ample evidence of political corruption existed and declared, "fraudulent poll-tax receipts have, I am sure been paid for and inspired by the Saloon Trust all over Texas."⁶⁷ The campaign's intense bitterness, coupled with its close outcome, magnified and gave credence to the reports of election irregularities. Responding to the urgent pleas of Thomas H. Ball, a group of prohibitionists met at Fort Worth to demand a legislative investigation of alleged fraud.⁶⁸ Ball also challenged Governor Colquitt to seek an appropriation of \$10,000 for an investigation. The Governor, seizing the initiative, demanded from Ball positive proof before seeking any funds for an investigation. Ball refused.⁶⁹

A committee of prominent prohibitionists including Thomas M. Campbell, William Poindexter, J. B. Gambrell and others, outlined in general terms their indictment of the submission election. The purchasing of poll-tax receipts, the illegal campaign contributions of the liquor interests, and the buying of votes ✓ were, according to the prohibitionists, the chief abuses found in the past election.⁷⁰

⁶⁷A. W. Terrell to George W. Brackenridge, July 19, 1911, Alexander Watkins Terrell Papers (Barker Library, University of Texas, Austin, Texas).

⁶⁸Fort Worth Record, July 30, 1911.

⁶⁹Austin Statesman, August 4, 1911.

⁷⁰Dallas Morning News, July 30, 1911.

Prohibition leaders met at Austin in early August to lay plans for a legislative investigation. Attorney General Jewel P. Lightfoot called for a thorough review of the charges and he promised the full cooperation of his office to the disgruntled liquor foes. The same Austin gathering brought forth, after a tedious recital of the same charges, an official demand for an investigation.⁷¹

The Senate, responding favorably to prohibitionist requests, appointed an investigation committee under the chairmanship of Senator Horace V. Vaughn.⁷² The House took similar action.⁷³ The Capitol's corridors were filled with the rumors of a joint Senate-House investigation but a dispute between the House and Senate over Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey prevented the joint session from taking place.⁷⁴

The Senate investigation moved slowly when it moved at all. Caught between unenthusiastic senators and uncommunicative witnesses, the investigation bogged down in a morass of procedural issues and minutiae. An unexpected breakthrough came when Judge Robert G. Street upheld the Senate committee's right to call witnesses. The decision compelled the shadowy brewery representative B. Adoue to appear before the committee. Jacob F. Wolters'

⁷¹Ibid., August 1, 1911.

⁷²Journal of the Senate of the State of Texas, Thirty-Second Legislature, First Called Session (Austin, 1911), 38-39.

⁷³Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, Thirty-Second Legislature, First Called Session (Austin, 1911), 64-65.

⁷⁴Galveston Daily News, August 20, 1911.

unwillingness to answer the committee's questions earned for him a contempt citation which was later dismissed.⁷⁵

The Senate and House reports clearly indicated that the prohibition election lacked some elementary and necessary aspects of honesty and they recognized the need for reforms in the election code but both reports manifested a basic disagreement over the "methodology of reform." After a month of uninspired activity, the Senate committee issued its report in September. It found the anti-prohibitionists guilty of violating laws regarding campaign contributions and expenditures, recommended the enactment of the initiative, referendum, and recall, the limiting and publishing of campaign contributions, the payment of poll taxes in person, adequate penalties for the violation of poll tax laws, and expressed the pious hope that the people would elect incorruptible legislators.⁷⁶ The House committee, composed mostly of Bailey partisans, made no mention of the initiative, recall and referendum and ignored all references to incorruptible legislators but did recommend a revision of voting procedure and poll tax payments.⁷⁷

The submission campaign of 1911 and its aftermath, failed to dispose of the abrasive and explosive prohibition question. Neither the prohibitionists nor the anti-prohibitionists were

⁷⁵Austin Statesman, August 5-6, 1911.

⁷⁶Journal of the Senate of the State of Texas, Thirty-Second Legislature, First Called Session, 601-609.

⁷⁷Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, Thirty-Second Legislature, First Called Session, 715-727.

wholly satisfied with the outcome and both sides pledged themselves to carry on the struggle. As in the past, Texas progressives tended to sympathize and support prohibition while a majority of the state's conservatives vigorously opposed it. Deviations in the pattern were not, however, uncommon. Unlike prohibition campaigns of the recent past, the predictably volatile Bailey issue remained abnormally quiescent but this was hardly a foretaste of Governor Colquitt's much touted peace and rest. The Texas Democracy had unwittingly become the captive of the prohibition question -- a question of increasingly doubtful productivity, validity, or relevancy.

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL "POTPOURRI"

Oscar B. Colquitt made his second bid for the governorship in 1910 from his unpretentious office of railroad commissioner. Exuding political conservatism, he crisscrossed the state denouncing prohibition, besmirching the record of the retiring Campbell administration, and promising legislative rest. Plucking away at the state's taut political strings like an accomplished harpist, Colquitt managed to coax from them the sound of victory.

The Governor-elect, not unmindful of the hostile legislators he soon must face, attempted to establish at least a tolerable relationship with them.¹ Speaking to the lawmakers in his inaugural address, Colquitt assured the legislators that he wanted them "to feel at home in the Governor's office."² His first legislative message, while reflecting his basic conservatism, indicated some grasp of the state's many problems. The Governor demanded adequate legislation to prohibit social clubs from obtaining liquor and gambling licenses. He recommended that the state's outmoded bookkeeping system be changed, called for a reform in court procedure, sought the erection of

¹In a letter to Jake Wolters, Colquitt indicated the hostile make-up of the Thirty-Second Legislature. Oscar B. Colquitt to Jake Wolters, December 16, 1910, Colquitt Papers.

²Journal of the Senate of the State of Texas, Thirty-Second Legislature, Regular Session (Austin, 1911), 96.

more rural high schools, and asked for new laws which would encourage irrigation within the state.³

The legislature indicated its willingness to cooperate with the Governor by providing money for the erection of a Confederate widow's home, passing a pure food law, limiting child labor, appropriating funds for the building of two tuberculosis sanitariums, and creating an employee's compensation commission.⁴ Colquitt's support of many significant pieces of legislation showed that legislative rest would be honored more in the breach than in the promise.⁵

The Governor's antipathy toward progressivism and radical liquor legislation, manifested in his campaign oratory, surfaced early during his first term. Colquitt vetoed a proposed charter for the city of Texarkana because it included provisions for the initiative, referendum, and recall. Branding the charter socialistic, he stated in his veto that "according to my conception of our system of government, the initiative, referendum and recall are repugnant to the principles underlying it."⁶ In his veto of a law which would require saloons to close

³Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, Thirty-Second Legislature, Regular Session (Austin, 1911), 153-167.

⁴General Laws of the State of Texas, Thirty-Second Legislature, Regular Session (Austin, 1911), 50-51, 75-76, 136-141.

⁵Texas Secretary of State, Charles C. McDonald, indicated that during Colquitt's first term 140 general laws were passed along with 130 special laws. C. C. McDonald to John Henry Kirby, May 20, 1912, Kirby Papers.

⁶Journal of the House of Representatives, Thirty-Second Legislature, Regular Session, 731.

at 7:00 P.M., Colquitt denounced the proposed statute as "the deliberate act of a partisan spirit" and went on to declare that "we already have good laws on the subject of liquor legislation -- the best perhaps of any of the States."⁷

Always disliking Colquitt and seldom trusting him, the state's progressives and prohibitionists seized upon his veto of the Texarkana charter and the Seven O'Clock Closing statute to once again reassure themselves of the Governor's perfidity. Colquitt had predictably run afoul of his opponents and they now prepared to pull the executive rug out from under him.

Prohibition Democrats, unable to reconcile their gubernatorial defeat at the hands of Colquitt in 1910, were not anxious to countenance another disaster in 1912. They attributed the Governor's first victory to the failure of prohibition Democrats to unite behind one candidate. Colquitt did not win the governorship, they maintained, prohibition Democrats lost it. The Governor's campaign against the prohibition amendment in 1911 and his steadfast opposition to radical liquor legislation in the wake of the state's rising "dry" sentiment, made prohibitionists see Colquitt's defeat in 1912 as a practical and urgent necessity.

Not all Texans shared the distaste harbored for Colquitt by Democratic progressives and prohibitionists. Colquitt enjoyed general popularity and few politicians desired to risk a political Götterdämmerung by running against him. After much

⁷Ibid., 963.

searching, the Governor's political enemies led by Thomas M. Campbell, Cone Johnson, and M. M. Brooks found in William Franklin Ramsey a suitable rival to Colquitt. Ramsey, an Associate Justice of the Texas Supreme Court, had also served with distinction on the state's Appellate Court and as Chairman of the Texas Prison Board.⁸ Justice Ramsey, a long-time friend and political ally of former Governor Campbell, was an ardent progressive and a confirmed prohibitionist. His service on the bench made him admirably suited to play the role of a man above the game of partisan politics, a pastime in which Colquitt had few equals.

The Associate Justice's decision to remain on the Court, while conducting his campaign, evoked strong criticism. When A. R. McCollum, editor of the Waco Tribune, asked him if he would resign, Ramsey replied that he would quit his office if the people of Texas were given the chance to select his successor.⁹ His refusal to resign embarrassed his friends and delighted his enemies. The Dallas Morning News, though supporting Ramsey's candidacy, upbraided him editorially for his decision. "He gives as his reason for waiting . . . his desire to allow the people to name his successor for the remainder of his term," wrote the News, but "it was not the people but Governor Campbell,

⁸Jewette Harbert Davenport, History of the Supreme Court of the State of Texas (Austin, 1917), 268.

⁹William F. Ramsey to A. R. McCollum, January 16, 1912, quoted in the Dallas Morning News, January 21, 1912.

who put him upon the Supreme Court bench. . . ."¹⁰ Dismayed at the furor created by his refusal to leave the judiciary, Ramsey agreed to resign at the end of March.¹¹

Formally opening his campaign on March 30 in Gonzales, Ramsey outlined his platform to a crowd of over 5,000 people who stood listening in the midst of driving winds and drizzling rain. Using as his slogan, "Let us do something worth while for Texas," Ramsey called for the reformation of court procedures, the passing of a corrupt practices act, the levying of an education tax, and the creation of an arbitration board for labor disputes.¹² Picturing himself as a man of progress, Ramsey stated that "we must never forget that the world nor the people do not stand still. We either go forward or we go backward. I am moving forward." He lashed out against Colquitt and the liquor interests and declared that he put the rights of man above the intrenched power of any mere class. "I prefer liberty to liquor," intoned Ramsey, "righteousness to rum and the safety of the commonwealth to the safety of the saloon." In an obvious reference to Colquitt, Ramsey declared his opposition "to a policy of partisan paralysis" and came out against "political inactivity and executive veto." Calling for unity and strength, the former Associate Justice warned his listeners that "insidious and concerted efforts will be made to divide us." He pro-

¹⁰Dallas Morning News, January 23, 1912.

¹¹Ibid., March 21, 1912.

¹²Houston Daily Post, March 31, 1912.

mised that they would not succeed but demanded that the prohibitionists "stand together on the proposition that the liquor interests must be driven from any control of the politics of the state." Ramsey promised that he would not "permit beer, Bourbonism and booze to still further distress and disturb the councils of the [Democratic] party." With the enthusiastic cheers of the audience ringing in his ears, Ramsey ended his speech with the pledge to "shut off the corruption fund that has supplied the fuel, that has fed the fires, that has furnished the power to run the machinery of the liquor interests in this state."¹³

Ramsey, while believing in the evil nature of the liquor business and desiring the passage of a prohibition amendment, did not intend to make prohibition a test of party loyalty. As a practical matter, Judge Ramsey realized that the governor could do very little to dry up the state completely but he hoped to remove the saloon from the residential areas of cities and towns, to permit the sale of packaged liquor only, and to double the occupation tax on liquor sellers.¹⁴

Few Texans doubted Governor Colquitt's determination to win a second term even if it meant an unusually long and bitter campaign. Early in February a group of two hundred friends and supporters of the Governor led by Rienzi M. Johnston, William Pettus Hobby, "Gus" Shaw and B. F. Bonner, gathered at the

¹³Dallas Morning News, March 31, 1912.

¹⁴Ibid.

Westbrook Hotel in Fort Worth to lay the groundwork for his campaign. The group issued an open letter to Texas Democrats which stated that "Governor Colquitt is clearly entitled to the enjoyment of a second term under the time-honored custom of our party." The letter went on to indicate that "aside from prohibition, which is not a pertinent issue, the masses are one in approval of Gov. Colquitt's administration, and we confidently rely upon their sense of justice and fair dealing to give him an opportunity to perfect the policies which he so wisely adopted and to bring Texas a short session of rest and political peace."¹⁵ Colquitt's supporters described him as a zealous and trustworthy public servant whose administration stressed economy and businesslike methods.¹⁶

Governor Colquitt officially opened his canvass on April 27 at Sherman. Addressing a gathering of more than 4,000 people, he defended his record and attacked his opponent. Colquitt denounced the initiative, referendum, and recall, upheld his veto of the Seven O'Clock Closing bill and the veto of a proposed statute calling for the arbitration of labor disputes, promised to secure a better system for financing cotton purchases, wanted to permit railroads to sell improvement bonds, defended his administrative appointments, called attention to his prison reforms, and generally praised his first two years in office.¹⁷

¹⁵Fort Worth Record, February 2, 1912.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Copy of Colquitt's Sherman speech, April 27, 1912, Colquitt Papers. See also Dallas Morning News, April 28, 1912.

The Governor, bowing to the wishes of his son Rawlins and Fort Worth newspaper owner Clarence Ousley, refrained from attacking his opponents by name in his opening speech but he managed to convey his true feelings for Ramsey, Campbell, Johnson and Crane along with his distaste for the prohibition question.¹⁸ Impugning the motives of Ramsey's most prominent backers, Colquitt angrily declared that "there are three or four gentlemen in Texas who had rather be tormenting me and trying to make my administration a failure than do anything else unless it is holding office themselves." He went on to accuse the prohibitionists of fomenting agitation rather than seeking meaningful liquor laws. Saving his most pointed barbs for Ramsey, he remarked, "I can indorse and applaud the honest prohibitionist, but I can't indorse and I won't applaud the hypocrite."¹⁹

The campaign did not lack meaningful issues but, as in past contests, the prohibition question soon dominated the governor's race. P. F. Paige, Chairman of the Texas Prohibition Party, announced that his organization was perfecting plans to contact over 200,000 voters a month.²⁰ Texas Anti-Saloon League spokesman, Dr. J. H. Gambrell pronounced that "it is the business of the Christian and moral citizen to dislodge the saloons. . . ."

¹⁸Rawlins Colquitt to Oscar B. Colquitt, January 31, 1912, Colquitt Papers; Clarence Ousley to Oscar B. Colquitt, April 21, 1912, ibid.

¹⁹Copy of Colquitt's Sherman speech, April 27, 1912, ibid. See also Dallas Morning News, April 28, 1912.

²⁰Dallas Morning News, February 2, 1912.

The war, he continued, "is on and will be on until the laws of Texas pronounce the death knoll of the liquor business."²¹ Gambrell admonished prohibitionists to support those candidates "who stand for their cause, and go to the very last limit of ability for their election to the end that Texas may be redeemed from the scourge of saloon politics."²² Viewing the question somewhat differently, the German-American Alliance of Dallas protested against "any further regulation of the liquor traffic as instigated by the prohibitionists and the anti-saloon leaguers." The Alliance went on to charge that such laws "attempt to further curtail the personal liberties of our citizenship."²³ The language of both the defenders and detractors of prohibition evidenced a paranoid approach to the liquor problem and a clear unwillingness to compromise. Unable to couch their debate in anything but dogmatic and myopic rhetoric, both sides failed to present reasonable alternatives and thus became imprisoned in an illogical world of their own making.

The Colquitt-Ramsey contest, long hovering over a sea of political mud and personal abuse, reached its nadir when the christening of the battleship Texas became a campaign issue. Recognizing that the national administration, dominated by Republicans, had been responsible for building the Texas, Colquitt chose Claudia Lyon, daughter of state Republican leader Cecil

²¹Ibid., February 21, 1912.

²²Ibid., May 4, 1912.

²³Ibid., March 24, 1912.

Lyon, to christen the ship. Judge Ramsey interpreted this move not as a polite, politic gesture but as a payoff to Cecil Lyon for his aid in obtaining the votes of 35,000 Negro Republicans, who helped defeat the prohibition amendment in 1911.²⁴ Ramsey's charge lacked taste and substance. Colquitt, as much as anyone, helped defeat the amendment and he could have chosen his own daughter for the honor of christening the ship. A wave of righteous indignation soon poured forth from the Governor's supporters. John Henry Kirby branded the accusation "unmanly, unworthy and cowardly" and declared that "this is the most horrible thing that ever emanated from the clouded heart of rancorous hate of one white man for another." Kirby went on to state that "to insinuate that the compliment to this child was induced as a reward to 35,000 buck negroes . . . is so abhorrent to my conception of decency that I now shrink from Judge Ramsey as I would from a moral leper."²⁵ United States Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey expressed surprise at Ramsey's allegation and stated that "if this 'progressive' tendency is not arrested, we shall soon see all our campaigns pitched upon questions of that kind, and the great principles of free government will be forgotten in the struggle over personal and immaterial issues."²⁶

The deep divisions present in the Texas Democracy and ex- ✓

²⁴Houston Daily Post, June 4, 1912.

²⁵John Henry Kirby to John H. Evans, June 6, 1912, Kirby Papers.

²⁶Joseph Weldon Bailey to John Henry Kirby, June 8, 1912, ibid.

acerbated during the gubernatorial primary, clearly emerged at the Party's state convention held in Houston at the end of May. Unlike the 1910 Democratic conclave held at Galveston, the progressives and prohibitionists led by United States Senator Charles Allen Culberson, Thomas M. Campbell, M. M. Crane, and Cone Johnson, completely dominated the proceedings as it went about the primary work of selecting delegates to the Democratic Party's National Convention in Baltimore. Cullen Thomas, the convention's keynote speaker, voiced the feelings of the vast majority of progressives and prohibition Democrats when he declared that it was a great year for the Democracy of Texas and the nation. "Our platform," intoned Thomas, "should be a call to arms to every citizen who wants to give battle to entrenched wrong." It is a year, he warned, "when we can not feed the hunger of the people for reform on the dry bare husks of bygone days." Thomas cautioned the delegates that the electorate would not follow an empty party name no matter how inspiring its past record. "The Democracy of today," he stated, "can not go about like an antiquary collecting and preserving and boasting of the relics of our past glory."²⁷

No longer an impotent minority, the progressives and prohibitionists heeded the words of Thomas and wrote an admirable and inspiring progressive manifesto. The platform attacked trusts and combinations, called for a revision of tariff laws, praised the work of organized labor, favored presidential pri-

²⁷Dallas Morning News, June 2, 1912.

maries and the direct election of United States Senators, approved of an income tax provision and demonstrated great support for presidential aspirant Woodrow Wilson.²⁸ In an ironic and anticlimactic repudiation of conservatism, the delegates also tabled a minority report submitted by Jonathan Lane, Clarence Ousley, and other old guard conservatives.²⁹

Tom Finty Jr., chief political analyst for the Dallas Morning News, wrote that the Convention "has been remarkable, as much for its steadfastness of purpose and solidarity of force, as for the revolution in . . . sentiment which it marked." Contrasting it to previous state Democratic Conventions, Finty observed that "the men who were in the saddle and at the helm in former years and overwhelmingly so at Galveston two years ago, upon this occasion took back seats, and at no time did they get so much as a look in."³⁰

The inability of conservative Democrats to overcome the combined strength of progressives and prohibitionists at Houston, left them bitter and disheartened. Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey vented his wrath by declaring privately that Cone Johnson, picked by the Convention to lead the state's delegation to the National

²⁸The Democrat's Houston gathering selected Cone Johnson, Thomas W. Gregory, C. A. Culberson, Thomas H. Ball, M. M. Crane, Thomas M. Campbell, Marshall Hicks, and Robert L. Henry as Delegates-at-large to the party's Baltimore National Convention. James William Madden, Charles A. Culberson, His Life, Character and Public Service (Austin, 1929), 148. See also Dallas Morning News, May 28, 1912.

²⁹See Galveston Daily News, May 29-30, 1912, for a more detailed account of the convention's proceedings.

³⁰Dallas Morning News, May 30, 1912.

Democratic conclave, was personally dishonest.³¹ When he commented publicly on the Houston gathering, Bailey petulantly remarked that "no man is expected to say much at his own funeral. . . ." ³²

Governor Colquitt could take little solace from the events at Houston. His friends and supporters found themselves gagged while his opponents' allies dominated the political scenario from beginning to end. The Governor could only hope that the progressive outpouring at Houston would recede before the July primary.

Texas Democrats, no longer distracted by convention hoopla, once again focused their attention on the governor's race. Governor Colquitt took to the stump seeking to erode Ramsey's growing support. The Governor accused Ramsey of being Tom Campbell's stalking horse. He fulminated against Campbell for dragging Ramsey from the Supreme Court "in an effort to elect his shadow."³³ John Henry Kirby, expressing concern over Colquitt's lethargic support, agreed to organize a Colquitt booster club.³⁴ While disappointed to learn that the Governor actually enjoyed only limited success at promoting legislative peace and political

³¹Joseph Weldon Bailey to John Henry Kirby, June 8, 1912, Kirby Papers.

³²Fort Worth Record, June 4, 1912.

³³Dallas Morning News, June 5, 1912.

³⁴John Henry Kirby to John H. Evans, May 14, 1912, Kirby Papers.

rest,³⁵ Kirby continued to praise his embattled friend. He argued that Colquitt suffered at the hands of "fanatical prohibitionists" and warned that "Governor Colquitt has a fight on his hands and it is a serious one."³⁶

With the passing of each day, Ramsey partisans excoriated Governor Colquitt in language scarcely destined to raise either the moral or intellectual level of the campaign. Emotionalism, extremism, and hatred redrew the boundaries of civility and truth. Few men attracted as much unmeasured criticism or boundless derogation as did Oscar Branch Colquitt. "Your 'line up' with the interests against labor and your 'line up' with the liquor interests against churches, schools and allied moral and educational influences and institutions," wrote one fanatic, "reveals your true character. . . ." The writer assured the Governor that he would receive the support of "gamblers, slums, dives and dens of vice. . . ."³⁷

Prodded by his friends and angered by his enemies, Colquitt picked up the tempo of his campaign and thrust more vigorously at Ramsey and the prohibition question. "If Judge Ramsey has any merits of his own," challenged Colquitt, "it is time he suggested them." He attacked Ramsey's backers and declared that "no sooner was I elected Governor than Tom Campbell, Rankin and . . . that crowd of politicians began holding caucuses and

³⁵C. C. McDonald to John Henry Kirby, May 20, 1912, ibid.

³⁶John Henry Kirby to J. B. Hooks, May 14, 1912, ibid.

³⁷J. M. Hornby to Oscar B. Colquitt, July 6, 1912, Colquitt Papers.

conferences for the purpose of defeating me for a second term." Posing as a fearless crusader, Colquitt suggested that perhaps their support would be his if he "bowed down and kissed their political toe," but he would rather go down to defeat, he declared, "than be the slave of any coterie of politicians."³⁸ Hoping to weaken Ramsey's prohibition strength, Colquitt accused Ramsey workers of appealing to the "antis" in South Texas, and to the prohibitionists in North Texas and "distorting the issue in each section."³⁹

Governor Colquitt's decision to carry the battle to Ramsey and to face the prohibition issue forthrightly, gained him increasing support. Appearing before a crowd of 1,800 people in Dallas, the Governor promised to resign if his political record was not as good as Ramsey's. He also challenged the accomplishments of Tom Campbell, Tom Ball, M. M. Crane, Cullen Thomas and Dr. George C. Rankin.⁴⁰ At the same meeting, Judge Barry Miller, a staunch Colquitt partisan, termed Judge Ramsey a "lip prohibitionist -- one of the kind who always says Amen, but misses the contribution box and goes fishing on election day." Ramsey did not want to become governor, stated Miller, but became a candidate "to gratify the spite and spleen of the most discredited man that ever held the Governor's office -- Thomas Mitchell Campbell."⁴¹

³⁸Austin Statesman, July 16, 1912.

³⁹Dallas Morning News, July 18, 1912.

⁴⁰Ibid., July 14, 1912.

⁴¹Ibid.

Rienzi M. Johnston's Houston Daily Post rushed to Colquitt's support, accusing Ramsey of "appealing to all the prejudice that the prohibition agitation may arouse in order to win votes." The paper also charged that Ramsey fomented race prejudice.⁴²

Judge Ramsey, not unaware of the Governor's increasing strength and popularity, re-doubled his own efforts. He advocated the building of cotton warehouses in order that farmers might store their crop until the market value became more favorable.⁴³ Ramsey declared that Texas made a great mistake in electing Colquitt the first time, but "we should not," he warned, "commit suicide by electing him again." The Judge charged that "under Colquitt, political peace would be political hell and legislative rest would be legislative rust,"⁴⁴ and warned that Negro voters planned to invade the primary. White men, he stated, found it necessary to form unions in Matagorda, Wharton, and Brazoria counties in order to prevent them from voting.⁴⁵ Speaking on Ramsey's behalf, Judge M. M. Brooks declared, "I'd rather be a kitten and cry 'mew,' I'd rather be a toad and live in the vapors of a cavern, than to run for Governor on a platform backed by the liquor interests."⁴⁶ Even Senator Bailey favored Ramsey over Colquitt but publicly supported the Governor because some of

⁴²Houston Daily Post, July 14, 1912.

⁴³Dallas Morning News, April 26, 1912.

⁴⁴Ibid., May 2, 1912.

⁴⁵Ibid., July 18, 1912.

⁴⁶Ibid., July 17, 1912.

his best friends opposed Ramsey.⁴⁷

Ramsey continued to lace his speeches with progressive-sounding rhetoric and prohibition declamations. He offered himself as the "clean" candidate, the true friend of court reform, the seeker of honest elections, and the enemy of the saloon.⁴⁸ Ramsey and Ramsey alone could change the destiny of the state, he and he alone could save Texas from Colquitt and his friends.

The waning days of the campaign saw the state's major newspapers bitterly divided over the two candidates. Not unexpectedly, the Dallas Morning News and its sister paper, the Galveston Daily News, declared for Ramsey while the Houston Daily Post, Fort Worth Record, and the Dallas Times-Herald backed Colquitt. The moulders of mass opinion performed their task dutifully, though not without an element of political ax grinding.

The campaign oratory once so bitter and often distracting suddenly ceased and thousands of Texas Democrats journeyed to the polls on July 27 and handed Colquitt another victory. The Governor received 219,808 votes to Ramsey's 179,850.⁴⁹ Thus Colquitt successfully turned back the Ramsey challenge but only in the wake of the largest vote ever to be polled against an incumbent governor.⁵⁰ Facing only token opposition in the Novem-

⁴⁷Joseph Weldon Bailey to Sam H. Hill, June 24, 1912, Bailey Papers.

⁴⁸William S. Ramsey to Charles S. Miller, May 16, 1912, Colquitt Papers.

⁴⁹Texas Almanac and Industrial Guide (Dallas, 1914), 48.

⁵⁰Houston Chronicle, July 28, 1912.

ber general election, Colquitt obtained 234,352 votes to his five opponents' combined vote of 66,895.⁵¹

Though disappointed in their bid to unseat Colquitt, Texas progressives and prohibitionists did manage to place one of their own in the United States Senate. The state's junior senator Joseph Weldon Bailey, dubbed the "black swan of Gainesville" by his political enemies, announced on September 5, 1911, that he would not seek another term.⁵² Bailey attributed his withdrawal to the turmoil created over prohibition. Writing to his friend William Poindexter, Bailey confided that "when I found my friends quarreling over the prohibition question and wounding me in their efforts to strike each other I was so unspeakably disgusted that I resolved to avoid such a contest."⁵³

Bailey's announcement soon brought forth the names of Jacob F. Wolters and Morris Sheppard as the two most promising contenders for the seat. Wolters, a long-time champion of the liquor interests, had the support of most conservative and anti-prohibition Democrats while Sheppard, a United States Congressman, received the backing of the progressive and prohibition wing of the Texas Democracy.

Unexpectedly, Sheppard withdrew from the race in February pleading ill health. His place was taken by Cone Johnson, a

⁵¹Supplemental Biennial Report of the Secretary of State (Austin, 1912), 49.

⁵²Sam Hanna Acheson, Joe Bailey The Last Democrat (New York, 1932), 297.

⁵³Joseph Weldon Bailey to William Poindexter, March 9, 1912, Bailey Papers.

stalwart progressive and prohibitionist. The race became further complicated when Johnson announced in early April that he was too ill to make the race and Sheppard re-announced his candidacy.⁵⁴ Soon Wolters and Sheppard were trekking across the state with the prohibition issue not far behind.

Sheppard centered his platform around prohibition and the evils of liquor. He charged that Wolters would never have been mentioned as a Senate candidate were it not for the services he rendered to the organized liquor traffic.⁵⁵ When Wolters belittled "Cyclone" Davis' support for Sheppard, the Congressman retorted, "I would rather have him than the Pullman Company or the whiskey ring as my sponsors."⁵⁶

Wolters, hoping to avoid the liquor question, devoted most of his efforts to attacking the initiative, referendum, and recall and Sheppard's record as an attorney and congressman. He charged that before Sheppard entered public services, he was an attorney without clients and he referred to the initiative, referendum, and recall reforms Sheppard supported, as "the children of socialism."⁵⁷ Assailing Sheppard's record as a public servant, Wolters alleged that he did nothing since he left school but draw funds from the public treasury and that Sheppard spent most

⁵⁴See Dallas Morning News, February 15-16 and April 11, 18, 1912 for a more complete account of the Sheppard-Johnson bid for Bailey's Senate seat.

⁵⁵Dallas Morning News, April 23, 1912.

⁵⁶Ibid., April 24, 1912.

⁵⁷Ibid.

of his congressional term in Washington sitting under electric fans.⁵⁸

The closing days of the Senate race brought increased ugliness. Sheppard continued to berate Wolters for his stand on prohibition and Wolters continued to hurl insults at Sheppard. Wolters challenged the prohibitionists to put up a fighting man if they wanted to defeat him instead of a "little politician."⁵⁹ Three days before the election, Wolters accused Sheppard and Cone Johnson of trying to permit Negroes to vote in the race. He exalted his own white supremacy record and warned, "let Cone Johnson . . . try to vote them [Negroes] and he will be hanged so high that the buzzards will fail to find him."⁶⁰

The campaign ended with Morris Sheppard defeating Wolters by a vote of 182,907 to 146,214.⁶¹ The Senate race failed to capture the imagination of many Democrats due to the gubernatorial contest but Sheppard had scored an impressive victory. The people voted for Sheppard but only the legislature could elect him.

Since the newly elected Thirty-Third Legislature would not meet until the middle of January, only the governor was empowered to fill Bailey's unexpired term. Ignoring the will of the people and taking advantage of the legislature's absence, Colquitt

⁵⁸Ibid., April 26, 1912.

⁵⁹Fort Worth Record, July 17, 1912.

⁶⁰Dallas Morning News, July 24, 1912.

⁶¹Texas Almanac and Industrial Guide, 49.

chose his old friend and political ally Rienzi M. Johnston to fill the vacancy.

Johnston's appointment received the support of the state's senior United States Senator Charles Allen Culberson, state representative John Henry Kirby and the recently defeated candidate Jacob Wolters but few of his supporters believed that he could overcome the strong Sheppard sentiment in the legislature.⁶²

State Senator L. H. Bailey placed Johnston's name for consideration before the state Senate and John Henry Kirby nominated him in the lower house. Both Bailey and Kirby made impassioned pleas on Johnston's behalf, stressing his many years of faithful party service. Both men chose to ignore that Sheppard and not Johnston was the choice of the people.⁶³ The legislature, ignoring Johnston's forceful supporters, elected Sheppard not only to Bailey's unexpired term but to a new term as well.⁶⁴

The prohibition issue clearly manifested its disruptive powers in both the 1912 gubernatorial primary and the United States Senate race. Conservative Democrats rejoiced at Colquitt's victory while the progressives and prohibitionists could take

⁶²Jake F. Wolters to Rienzi M. Johnston, January 23, 1913, Rienzi M. Johnston Papers (Fondren Library, Rice University, Houston). Hereafter cited as Johnston Papers.

⁶³Journal of the Senate of the State of Texas, Thirty-Third Legislature, Regular Session (Austin, 1913), 161; see also Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, Thirty-Third Legislature, Regular Session, (Austin, 1913), 229-231.

⁶⁴In the state Senate, Sheppard received 17 votes to Johnston's 12 for Bailey's unexpired term and was elected unanimously for the long term, ibid., 162. In the House, Sheppard received 87 votes to Johnston's 54 and was elected unanimously to a long term, ibid., 234-237.

comfort from Morris Sheppard's triumph. The success of both groups was not without its costs. The conservatives no longer possessed Joseph Weldon Bailey's leverage in Washington and the progressives and prohibitionists lost the services of William F. Ramsey on the state's high court. The Texas Democracy lay in disarray, unable to offer the state political leadership out of the maze created by prohibition, and the people lay vulnerable to the siren songs of incipient political demagoguery. Many Democratic conservatives, progressives, and prohibitionists would unite in 1914, but a party long divided over prohibition would prove to be a weak reed in the wake of a greater storm.

CHAPTER VI

A PAUSE FOR DEMAGOGUERY

The divided and hagridden Texas Democracy found itself facing a multitude of difficulties with the first days of 1914. The plight of Texas sharecroppers and tenant farmers, the decreasing value of Texas cotton, and the ever-present prohibition issue combined to make the gubernatorial campaign an instructive if not an altogether salutary lesson in political charlatanism.

Governor Oscar B. Colquitt, unwilling to challenge the unwritten proscription against a third term, stepped aside as many ambitious hopefuls, lured by the power and prestige of the governorship and undaunted by its burdens, announced for his office. Prohibition Democrats, once so fearful of Colquitt's political prowess, now manifested a renewed pugnacity. Lieutenant-Governor Will H. Mayes, Comptroller W. P. Lane, Attorney General Ben F. Looney, and Cullen F. Thomas each sought the nomination of prohibition Democrats. Unlike previous primary contests, anti-prohibition Democrats suffered from a lack of popular well-known aspirants. James E. Ferguson and William F. Robertson indicated a willingness to make the race but such contenders seemed unlikely to threaten the opposition.

Democratic progressives and prohibitionists, fearful of dividing their cause and undermining their strength, held a combined progressive-prohibition conference on October 25, 1913,

at Dallas. The conferees, including many notables, adopted a procedural resolution whereby progressive-prohibitionists would register their choice for a nominee at precinct conventions rather than in a preference primary.¹ Judge A. W. Walker, chairman of the conference, warned the delegates of the unpleasant consequences of disharmony and served notice on potential candidates that "any man who is not big enough to sacrifice his personal ambition for the cause for which we stand is not big enough to be elected Governor."² Cullen F. Thomas, taking advantage of the absence of his closest rivals, Will H. Mayes and W. P. Lane, spoke to the assembled delegates and offered to place his candidacy before the progressive-prohibitionists of Texas. "I lay this thing called 'ambition' at your feet," he solemnly declared, went on to express his satisfaction over the meeting, and promised to make war against "the intrenched liquor interests" whether it be "to head a charge or to fight in the trenches."³

The Dallas delegates not only devoted themselves to extolling the sundry virtues of prohibition but also unleashed a series of verbal broadsides at the Colquitt administration. They found the state's social welfare care highly inadequate, charged

¹The Dallas conclave brought together such distinguished leaders as William F. Ramsey, William Poindexter, Thomas H. Ball, Cullen F. Thomas, Horace W. Vaughn, Dr. George C. Rankin, Dr. Samuel Palmer Brooks, J. H. "Cyclone" Davis, Dr. J. B. Gambrell, Dr. J. H. Gambrell and H. A. Ivy. Dallas Morning News, October 26, 1914.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

that the tax rate was too high, attacked the financial plight of Texas schools, and accused the Governor of driving the penitentiary system into insolvency. Though soon to retire, Little Oscar was still capable of bringing out the best in his erstwhile opponents.

Summoning the combined strength of progressive and prohibitionist Democrats, the Dallas conclave made a significant departure from past prohibition efforts. For the first time in Texas politics, prominent members of both movements officially acknowledged their mutual affinity. The hyphen now joining the two groups symbolized the building of a new and hopefully sturdy bridge wide enough to comfortably accommodate many new and enthusiastic crusaders. The alignment of progressives and prohibitionists, while compelling and natural, was not without its dangers. Not every progressive or prohibitionist would welcome the new coalition and the united movement ran the risk of alienating a segment of the electorate.

Toward the end of 1913, the gubernatorial contest continued to be uncertain. The field of contenders remained open as the number of announced candidates varied from day to day. James E. Ferguson sought the endorsement of John Henry Kirby, a wealthy and influential member of the Texas House of Representatives⁴ but Kirby demurred, calling Ferguson's attention to his own gubernatorial

⁴James E. Ferguson to John Henry Kirby, November 19, 1913, Kirby Papers.

torial ambitions.⁵ The Houston businessman and legislator, gently dissuaded from making the race by his old friend Joseph Weldon Bailey, confined his efforts to the more modest goal of promoting the candidacy of Peter Radford and Judge Nelson Phillips of the State Supreme Court but both men declined to enter the contest.⁶ In the midst of Kirby's frantic search to find a suitable nominee, James E. Ferguson, a little-known banker from Temple officially declared himself a candidate.

Ferguson or "Farmer Jim" as he liked to be called, was a most unusual candidate. He compensated for his political inexperience and relative obscurity by combining awareness of people and their problems with Machiavellian shrewdness. Long days and nights spent in his Temple bank, adding and subtracting the debits and credits of people's lives, afforded him an insight into the nature of human motivations. Ferguson laid the foundation for his campaign with consummate skill. Believing that Texas needed a business administration, Ferguson wrote to his old friend Tom Henderson urging him to make the governor's race. Ferguson, aware that Henderson's advanced age would prevent him from entering the contest, sent copies of his letter to the press thereby drawing favorable attention to himself.⁷ His "efforts" on behalf of Henderson soon paid rich dividends for many of his friends

⁵John Henry Kirby to James E. Ferguson, December 2, 1913, ibid.

⁶John Henry Kirby to Peter Radford, November 28, 1913, ibid.

⁷Reinhard H. Luthin, American Demagogues (Boston, 1954), 155.

offered him encouragement and support for the governorship. Ferguson's daughter later labeled her father's letter to Henderson a "clever piece of political strategy."⁸

Ferguson formally announced his candidacy on November 15, 1913. Seeking to turn his want of political experience to his advantage, he proudly declared that he was not a politician. Portraying himself as the people's candidate, Ferguson proclaimed his independence of any political group. Extolling his record as a successful banker, rancher and farmer, he offered the people a new administration governed by sound business principles.⁹ Ferguson's six point platform was a model of political adroitness. He demanded fiscal responsibility for all state institutions, favored improvement of the state's educational system, opposed the reduction of railroad rates, supported the establishment of bonded warehouses, and promised to alleviate the plight of sharecroppers and tenant farmers.¹⁰

Ferguson's decision to extricate himself from the prohibition debate, while at the same time promoting the reduction of tenant farm rent rates, manifested no small degree of political acumen. For many years Texas politics danced to the two-step music of prohibition while ignoring other vital problems. Farmer Jim's promise to limit the amount of tenant rents to one-fourth of the value of cotton or one-third the value of grain crops, in-

⁸Ibid.

⁹Dallas Morning News, November 16, 1913.

¹⁰Ibid.

jected a new and refreshing issue into the state's political life. Ferguson believed his proposed rent scheme an essentially progressive measure and he maintained that it involved "not only the good of society, but the life of the government itself."¹¹

The Temple banker's candidacy exerted no noticeable effect on the opposition. The progressive-prohibition coalition continued to make little progress in the selection of a candidate. Former Governor Thomas M. Campbell did little to clear the political air when he publicly outlined the qualifications necessary for the next governor. Campbell, forgetting for a moment that the contest would be waged by men and not angels, declared that "Texas at this time is in need of a man for Governor with a strong arm, a clear brain, a courageous soul and a sure enough backbone. . . ." Lacing his homemade prescription for a better Texas with Messianic conceits, Campbell believed that the state needed a man "capable of bringing order out of chaos, and who can lead the people out of the political wilderness in which they find themselves at this time."¹² Campbell reminded people that the campaign would be a struggle for prohibition against "favor-seeking corporations" and other "seekers of special privilege." The former Governor climaxed his emotional monologue by appealing to all citizens "to reclaim Texas and restore good government in this State."¹³

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., October 27, 1913.

¹³Ibid.

If Campbell possessed a clear mind regarding the race, the major progressive-prohibitionist contenders did not. Cullen F. Thomas, Will H. Mayes, and W. P. Lane continued to attack each other with petulant ferocity. In early January, Thomas munificently suggested that each of them should either submit their candidacy to a gathering of prohibition Democrats or withdraw from the race in favor of Thomas M. Campbell, William F. Ramsey, or Dr. Samuel Palmer Brooks. Thomas warned both men that if they rejected his suggestions "then upon you, not upon me, shall rest the responsibility for whatever calamitous consequences may follow your refusal."¹⁴ Mayes testily replied that he would neither submit to an elimination committee nor withdraw and he questioned Thomas' right to issue such a challenge. He later responded that Thomas would be responsible for a prohibition defeat if he entered the race.¹⁵ Lane limited his remarks to the observation that Thomas could not win.¹⁶ Such ill tempered salvos did little to promote ideological harmony or instill political confidence. Reflecting the attitude of many prohibitionists, Dr. J. B. Gambrell warned a Fort Worth gathering of liquor foes that "in order to have success, zeal and common sense are necessary." Gambrell predicted that "if present conditions continue, not one of these men [Thomas, Mayes, Lane] will be Governor of this State." He went on to declare that "the man who announces

¹⁴Ibid., January 4, 1914.

¹⁵Ibid., January 5, 11, 1914.

¹⁶Ibid., January 18, 1914.

that he will run regardless of this organization [progressive-prohibitionist] disqualifies himself."¹⁷

Early in February, the Texas Anti-Saloon League called upon county meetings to select delegates to the February 21 prohibition convention to be held at Fort Worth.¹⁸ A few days later the Executive Committee of the Farmers' Union attacked the forthcoming convention and declared that politicians and moralists should not be elected to make state laws.¹⁹ The results of the Anti-Saloon League's county convention revealed that Thomas H. Ball of Houston owned their affection and their votes. Ball scored an impressive victory over the opposition including Mayes, Lane, and Thomas.²⁰

Buoyed up by his triumph, Ball along with more than 2,000 delegates arrived in Fort Worth for the all important Progressive-Prohibitionist nominating convention.²¹ The convention selected Ball as its candidate, endorsed state Senator Horace W. Vaughan's proposal to prohibit the granting of federal liquor licenses in dry areas, and urged the passing of a constitutional amendment providing for national prohibition. The delegates listened as speaker after speaker praised the nominee and called for victory. Judge A. W. Walker proclaimed that "we have demonstrated to the

¹⁷Ibid., January 25, 1914.

¹⁸Ibid., February 1, 1914.

¹⁹Ibid., February 6, 1914.

²⁰Ibid., February 15, 1914.

²¹Fort Worth Record, February 22, 1914.

world that we can eliminate, and we are going to have an opportunity to 'Play Ball' all summer. . . ."²² Tom Campbell opined that "Texas is in the hole but Tom Ball is big enough to pull her out."²³ Judge M. M. Brooks, obviously delighted with the prospect of victory and giving vent to this anti-Colquitt feelings, promised that the progressive-prohibitionists would brand a mule by the name of Little Oscar.²⁴

The victorious Ball began his two hour acceptance speech amidst a wildly enthusiastic throng of delegates and onlookers who were shouting "Play Ball" and singing Onward Christian Soldiers. In a series of colorless and stodgy phrases, Ball thanked the convention for its vote of confidence and praised his congressional record as a member of the Rivers and Harbors Committee. He acknowledged his membership in the Houston Country Club but hastened to add that he neither played golf nor drank. After establishing his credentials as a statesman and a less than active member of a country club, Ball went on to declare his faithfulness to the prohibition cause. He announced his support of submission, constitutional prohibition, and all proper measures designed to regulate the liquor business and "keep those engaged in the traffic from corrupting or controlling the policies of this State, or of any county in it." Turning his attention to other areas, Ball called for a longer

²²Dallas Morning News, February 22, 1914.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

school term, favored separating the state university and the Agricultural and Mining College, and demanded the improvement of state institutions including the penitentiary system. He also proposed to aid the farmer through the building of crop and produce warehouses.²⁵ Ball's acceptance speech, while correct and dignified, contained nothing new. He stood as the proud inheritor of the Hogg and Campbell tradition of reform but neither his manner nor words carried the vibrancy and immediacy of his popular predecessors.

Ferguson wasted little time in responding to Ball's selection by the progressive-prohibitionists. He condemned the Fort Worth convention and challenged Ball to a public debate in Waco.²⁶ Ball shrugged off Ferguson's criticism and politely declined to accept his offer.²⁷ Farmer Jim, showing no partiality, also rebuked anti-prohibitionists who planned a Dallas meeting for the purpose of calling a nominating convention.²⁸ In rejecting both the prohibitionists and anti-prohibitionists, Ferguson declared his independence from any entangling alliances.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., February 25, 1914.

²⁷Ball based his refusal to debate Ferguson on the grounds that if he accepted one offer, he would be obliged to accept all offers. Clearly he was in no mood to grant "equal time" to all. Ball also justified his selection by declaring that he was chosen by a "host of earnest, thoughtful men coming from all sections of Texas." Ibid., March 1, 1914.

²⁸In declining to participate in any anti-prohibition meeting, Ferguson declared in a letter to J. Sheb Williams that "a man running for Governor who has nothing to recommend him but his anti or prohibition affiliations is not big enough to be Governor." Ibid.

Ignoring Ferguson's protestations, many of the state's Democratic anti-prohibition element met at Dallas in early March. Calling themselves Constructive Democrats, they formulated plans for an April nominating convention. The group's keynote speaker, T. H. McGregor, charged that the "prohibitionists have sacrificed every principle of government in Texas for the past ten years in pursuit of a fallacy." McGregor accused the prohibitionists of forgetting democracy and pursuing an "ism" and he claimed that the prohibition platform was written by a group of Ohio Republicans controlled by Standard Oil.²⁹ The Constructive Democrats accomplished little but agreed to hold their April conclave in Fort Worth.

Meeting in Fort Worth on April 14, the Constructive Democrats found themselves torn by dissension and unable to agree upon a candidate. Both Sam Sparks and Clarence Ousley desired the nomination but neither expressed a willingness to accomodate the other. Ousley adamantly refused to make the race unless Sparks withdrew his name. Sparks, like Ferguson, was a resident of Temple and a political novice, but he hoped that Ferguson would quit the race thereby improving his own chances. Ferguson's decision to remain in the contest, his disavowal of the Constructive Democrats, and Ousley's uncompromising opposition combined to eliminate Sparks as a contender. The Constructive Democrats failed to achieve unity and managed to alienate each other. Embittered by Ferguson's decision, Sam Sparks wrote to Joseph Weldon

²⁹Ibid., March 8, 1914.

Bailey that "if it becomes necessary to choose between Tom Ball and Jim Ferguson, I shall not hesitate to do everything I can to elect Tom Ball."³⁰ Unable to submerge their differences, the Constructive Democrats departed from Fort Worth leaving Thomas H. Ball and James E. Ferguson alone on the field of battle.

Tom Ball, the progressive-prohibitionist standard-bearer brought to the primary contest a rich background of private and public service. As a corporation lawyer he defended and promoted the interests of many important clients including the Rock Island Railroad and the Kirby Lumber Company. He also served in the United States House of Representatives from 1896-1903 representing Houston's First Congressional District and he played an important role in the 1911 prohibition amendment fight as chairman of the Statewide Prohibition Amendment Association.³¹ Ball's adherence to progressivism, unlike his commitment to prohibition, was of recent vintage. He supported the initiative, referendum, and recall and he actively espoused the course of Woodrow Wilson's nomination of 1912 but his connections with corporate wealth and his long friendship with Joseph Weldon Bailey served to cast a long shadow over his new-found political orthodoxy. Past associations with businessmen, political conservatives, and affiliation with a country club were not calculated to inspire confidence in those possessing an undiluted progressive pedigree.

³⁰Sam Sparks to Joseph Weldon Bailey, April 6, 1914, Bailey Papers.

³¹Walter Prescott Webb, The Handbook of Texas (Austin, 1952), I, 103.

Unlike his opponent, Ferguson was a man of modest talents. His fleeting and unsuccessful excursions into politics on a local level, however, whetted his appetite for more and, though he lacked organizational support, his shunning of nominating conventions and his decision to wage a personal campaign made him a unique contender.³² A natural-born stump orator, Ferguson seized upon those issues which promised the highest reward for his investment.³³

Farmer Jim officially commenced his campaigning on March 21, 1914, at Blum, Texas. A crowd of almost 600 people composed largely of area farmers, stood for two hours in cold weather as their new self-proclaimed vindicator mesmerized them with honey-coated phrases and calculated promises. Possessed with unlimited self-confidence and the demagogic touch, he wasted little time warming up to his subject. He stressed that the next governor must be a businessman and "he must be able to show that he has made a success of his own business." He delighted his listeners by promising to "strike all liquor legislation where the chicken got the ax." Vowing to stop the "interminable wrangling over prohibition in the Legislature by agitators on both sides of the question," he promised Texans "a chance to vote directly on the question of business or buncombe!" Seized by emotion, Ferguson

³²Ferguson led the Bell County campaign against Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey in 1908 and he served as a campaign manager for Attorney General Robert Vance Davidson in the 1910 gubernatorial primary. Sam Hanna Acheson, Joe Bailey The Last Democrat (New York, 1932), 374.

³³Donald Day, Big Country: Texas (New York, 1947), 310.

painted a dismal picture of fathers and mothers weeping and mourning in poverty unheeded by a legislature "enveloped in the more important question of deciding whether Dr. Rankin or Jake Wolters was the greatest man that ever discovered America." A vote for Ferguson he shouted would stop the foolishness and silence the agitators and the "sane and conservative sentiment in the Legislature will find the time to pass such legislation as will better aid you to get something to eat and something to wear."³⁴ Continuing to belittle prohibition agitation, he summoned his audience "to scourge from the Democratic temple those who would destroy our grand old party by internal dissension over issues that have no place in our Democratic home."³⁵

The crowd, now oblivious to the weather, listened as Farmer Jim spoke out in favor of the initiative, referendum, and recall, opposed the fee system of paying peace officers and the reduction of railroad rates, demanded the establishment of bonded warehouses, and called for the improvement of rural education. Turning his attention to the state's prison farms, Ferguson recalled his own success as a farmer and promised to place the farms on a business basis. The next governor intoned Ferguson, "should be a man who can take one walk over the large prison farms and see if they are being properly cultivated, and a man who can take one look at the prison stock and tell if it is being properly cared for." He reiterated his intention of aiding the tenant farmers

³⁴Dallas Morning News, March 22, 1914.

³⁵Ibid.

and promised to regulate tenant rents and abolish cash bonuses where lands were rented on shares. Ferguson climaxed his speech by calling on the people to avoid political conventions, banish political bosses, and assert their rights. "You are not beggars and you are not slaves," he said, "you are free men."³⁶

The farmers with their coarse clothes and rough demeanor left for home convinced that in Farmer Jim they had found a man who understood them and would be responsible to their needs. They were unaccustomed to being told that they were men who carried on their backs and in their hands the destiny of the state. They and not the bosses or the fancy city folk would rule in Austin. Ferguson, with his earthy speech and bag of promises, discovered in the farmer a rich and largely ignored source of political strength.

Tom Ball's campaign, unlike that of his opponent, progressed slowly and deliberately. The Houston attorney did not make any political noises until late in April when he selected Cullen F. Thomas as his expert on land and farm problems. Thomas possessed a constitutional land platform, prepared for his own campaign, but now placed it along with his research and oratorical ability at Ball's disposal.³⁷ Judge A. W. Walker, Ball's campaign manager, issued a statement indicating that prohibition would be the biggest issue separating Ball and Ferguson.³⁸

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., April 20, 1914.

³⁸Ibid.

Ball unveiled his platform on April 21 at Greenville where a galaxy of political and prohibition leaders sat with him on the dias. Ball's candidacy and Ferguson's opposition brought a rapprochement between progressives and conservatives, prohibitionists and detractors of Joseph Weldon Bailey. The presence of Thomas M. Campbell, Cullen F. Thomas, William Poindexter, Morris Sheppard, Cone Johnson, William F. Ramsey, and W. P. Lane provided a backdrop for Ball's maiden speech. Clarence Ousley, the influential editor of the Fort Worth Record and a friend and supporter of both Bailey and Governor Colquitt, sent a telegram to Ball in which he pronounced their mutual differences of opinion "immaterial and secondary."³⁹

Ball began his opening speech by shocking his more dogmatic and vociferous prohibition supporters when, in opposition to the convention that nominated him, he spoke out against national prohibition.⁴⁰ Moving on quickly to state issues, he announced his support for statewide prohibition, separation of the Agricultural and Mining College from the University of Texas, and increased aid for educational and charitable institutions. Ball also called for compulsory education, promised much needed electoral reforms, and indicated his willingness to overhaul the penitentiary system. The candidate announced his opposition to statutory prohibition and branded Ferguson's tenant farmer rent plan unconstitutional. Recognizing that he could not ignore the farm issue, Ball offered

³⁹Ibid., April 22, 1914.

⁴⁰Ibid.

his own solution which would provide the farmer with loans, tax exemptions, and bonded warehouses. He also included the novel provision which provided that the state would purchase University land which would then be subdivided into small farms.⁴¹

The Ball platform drew almost immediate ridicule from Ferguson. He observed that Ball's opposition to national and statutory prohibition was inconsistent with the position taken by the Fort Worth convention and he chided Ball for his unwillingness to discuss his tenant farm rent proposal.⁴² Ferguson continued his appeal to the farmers and he exhorted one group to "let the sons and daughters of Texas come together and in one mighty struggle put Texas upon the topmost round of success in the way of business, in the way of schools, churches, and happy homes, and then will glory crown and reward us."⁴³

Hoping to counter Ferguson's florid rhetoric, Ball took to the stump attacking Ferguson and the evils of liquor. Speaking in Dallas, the Houston attorney confidently predicted his election, challenged the popularity of Ferguson's tenant plank, and charged his opponent with seeking to make the liquor dealers a privileged class.⁴⁴ At Fort Worth, Ball questioned Ferguson's devotion to farm life, declared that he could plow a furrow straighter than his opponent and labeled Ferguson a failure as an

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., April 26, 1914.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., June 1, 1914.

attorney.⁴⁵

The efforts of prohibitionists to advance the cause of statewide constitutional prohibition almost disappeared from notice in the frenzy created by the governor's race. Thomas B. Love, an influential prohibitionist and the new owner of the prohibition journal Home and State, overcame his initial opposition to proposing submission and helped to form the State Advisory Committee of the Prohibition Democrats of Texas.⁴⁶ The purpose of the committee was "to promote the cause of Prohibition in Texas, to advocate the submission of a Prohibition Amendment to the State Constitution, to elect a Democratic Prohibitionist Governor on Texas and a Legislature in harmony with his policies and to oppose in all proper ways the activities of the liquor traffic in Texas politics."⁴⁷ The new organization sought to advance the prohibition cause by making available literature and speakers paid for through soliciting contributions.⁴⁸

⁴⁵Ibid., June 3, 1914.

⁴⁶In February of 1913, Love wrote to Cullen F. Thomas that "after most careful consideration, I have reached the conclusion that it will not be advisable to submit the question of statewide Prohibition at this time. . . ." Love desired to keep the submission fight out of the 1914 governor's race. Thomas Benton Love to Cullen F. Thomas, February 21, 1913, Love Papers.

⁴⁷Letterhead of the State Advisory Committee found in Love Papers.

⁴⁸It appears that prohibitionists were not above using some subtle intimidation in deriving contributions. Attorney General Ben F. Looney spoke to members of his department about contributions to the prohibition coffers. Ben F. Looney to Thomas Benton Love, July 6, 1914, ibid.

Waning interest in submission fight, prompted Texas Anti-Saloon League Superintendent Dr. J. H. Gambrell to issue a statement in which he stated that "the saloon forces are making a determined effort to keep the people from passing a prohibition amendment to the Constitution of Texas." Gambrell went on to warn that "it is therefore vastly important that all prohibitionists be urged to sign the submission petitions and vote for submission in the primaries July 25 as a matter of Christian duty."⁴⁹ Pastor Joseph L. Gross of Houston's First Baptist Church, expressed the fear that the saloon fight was so intense that even if the prohibitionists succeeded in electing Ball, they would fail to carry submission. Gross pleaded with Dr. J. B. Gambrell to send a popular anti-liquor preacher into all of the state's "great cities" in order to fight "the most immoral campaign ever made."⁵⁰

The proponents of submission suffered no lack of opposition. Workingmen heard speakers predict that if prohibition succeeded they would lose their jobs.⁵¹ Some businessmen opposed submission because they feared an adverse effect upon their trade; others saw prohibition as an unwarranted infringement on personal liberty. L. J. Hart, a prominent San Antonio real estate broker, wrote to former Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey that "I do not think that you

⁴⁹Dallas Morning News, May 3, 1914.

⁵⁰Joseph L. Gross to J. B. Gambrell, June 24, 1914, Love Papers.

⁵¹Charles D. Puckett to Thomas Benton Love, June 4, 1914, ibid.

can quite realize the desperate sentiment of opposition, which exists here to Statewide Prohibition." Hart indicated that there is a "feeling of resentment against those who are trying to compel us to make sacrifices in order that we may conform to their [prohibitionist] prejudices" and he compared the spirit of those opposed to prohibition "to that which animated the people of the South on the slavery question."⁵²

The closer the gubernatorial candidates drew to the July primary, the more intense and bitter became the campaign. Ball continued to assail the constitutionality of Ferguson's tenantry plank and he associated Farmer Jim with the brewery and liquor interests. A Ball supporter described Ferguson as an "ignorant, cold-blooded representative of special interests."⁵³ Ferguson, not to be out done by his opponent, proved to be the master of invective and innuendo. Attacking Ball's membership in the Houston Country Club, Ferguson described it as a place containing pool and billiard tables, a bar where liquor was dispensed, along with "yellow niggers wearing white aprons."⁵⁴ A Ferguson partisan also accused Ball of losing \$525.00 in a card game held at the home of John Henry Kirby and another critic charged that Ball frequented the Houston Country Club almost everyday where he engaged in card

⁵²L. J. Hart to Joseph Weldon Bailey, June 6, 1914, Bailey Papers.

⁵³T. N. Jones to Joseph Weldon Bailey, July 6, 1914, ibid.

⁵⁴J. W. Sullivan to Thomas Benton Love, May 2, 1914, Love Papers.

playing for money.⁵⁵ Ferguson, never one to allow issues and facts to take precedence over emotions, personalities, and half-truths, reduced the campaign to an uncompromising war between the farm and the city, the blue collar against the white collar, and ignorance against knowledge. Ball became the epitomy of the city slicker -- smooth, cunning, and irreligious.

Ball attempted to neutralize Ferguson's unwarranted attacks by calling upon the powerful support of the state's more influential conservatives and anti-prohibitionists. Save for Governor Colquitt's endorsement of Ferguson, Ball succeeded in bringing together progressives, conservatives, prohibitionists, and anti-prohibitionists in an uneasy alliance against his opponent. Joseph Weldon Bailey remarked that if "I am compelled to chose between a paternalist like Ball who is honest and a socialist like Ferguson who is not honest, I will unhesitatingly take Ball."⁵⁶ John Henry Kirby uncharacteristically described the progressive-prohibitionist Ball as a "big-hearted, big-brained man of patriotic instincts and high purpose."⁵⁷ Rienzi M. Johnston, unaccustomed to supporting anti-liquor progressives, justified supporting Ball "because if Ferguson be elected it will mean the political destruction of all those who think as I do and have

⁵⁵J. M. Mathis to K. H. Cowthon, July 14, 1914, Kirby Papers; J. M. Mathis to T. S. Henderson, July 4, 1914, ibid.

⁵⁶Joseph Weldon Bailey to Rienzi M. Johnston, March 31, 1914, Bailey Papers.

⁵⁷John Henry Kirby to John M. Wagstaff, July 8, 1914, Kirby Papers.

joined in the effort to elect Mr. Ball for decency's sake.⁵⁸

The Houston attorney counted among his supporters not only influential Texas Democrats but members of the national Democratic administration. President Woodrow Wilson expressed to Ball his "deep appreciation of the splendid and unequivocal way in which you are now lending your support to the national administration."⁵⁹ Wilson's Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, added his name to Ball's impressive list of admirers and declared, "I regard Ball as a progressive Democrat, and think he would make a first-class Governor."⁶⁰ Ball also received the blessings of Secretary of Agriculture, David F. Houston, and Postmaster General Albert Sidney Burleson.

Ferguson, an admirer of Wilson, viewed with distaste the Administration's endorsement of Ball and charged that it violated the principle of state rights and local self-government.⁶¹ Ferguson continued to hammer away at "bread and butter" issues. He alleged that a "school book trust" supported by Ball partisans existed in Texas and he promised that as governor he would eliminate the endless buying of textbooks.⁶² The Texas Brewery Workers Union evidenced its support for Ferguson by publishing a pamphlet

⁵⁸Rienzi M. Johnston to Joseph Weldon Bailey, July 14, 1914, Bailey Papers.

⁵⁹Woodrow Wilson to Thomas H. Ball, July 10, 1914, quoted in Houston Post, July 14, 1914.

⁶⁰Dallas Morning News, July 15, 1914.

⁶¹Ibid., July 11, 15, 1914.

⁶²Ibid., July 10, 1914.

denouncing the Harriman Railroad interests, the Kirby Lumber Company, and preachers as demagogues and non-producers of wealth and accusing them of creating a political machine bent on destroying the brewing industry and organized labor.⁶³

The campaign continued unabated to election day with Ferguson pandering to the farmers and old time Populists while Ball contented himself with advocating prohibition to audiences already convinced of its value. Thousands of voters with poll tax in hand, went to the ballot box and gave Ferguson an impressive victory. Unofficial tabulations showed that Ferguson obtained 236,225 votes to Ball's 191,322 votes and statewide totals showed that submission trailed by more than 20,000 votes.⁶⁴ Ferguson, relishing his triumph, thanked the people for his victory and in characteristic fashion labled the results a "stinging rebuke to the attempted dictation of the political preachers, and corporation lawyers, and crooked politicians."⁶⁵ His opponent, while gracious in defeat, suggested that the liquor interests would be driven from the state.⁶⁶ John Henry Kirby hurried to lay Ball's defeat at the door-step of the Wilson administration. "The Administration is not popular in Texas," observed Kirby, "and the people resented such meddling in their affairs, so they just rose

⁶³Texas Brewery Workers' Union, "Pulpiters and Politicians Assault a Texas Industry," July 15, 1914, Kirby Papers.

⁶⁴Dallas Morning News, August 6, 1914.

⁶⁵Ibid., July 28, 1914.

⁶⁶Ibid., July 29, 1914.

on their hind legs."⁶⁷

The startling primary results indicated that not only had Ferguson carried the German and Mexican votes but that he won handily in areas once rife with Populism. Ferguson's strategy of ignoring prohibition while concentrating on the grievances of the farmer, proved devastatingly effective. Armed with his tenant plank, sharp tongue, and evangelistic fervor, Farmer Jim successfully roamed the state in search of votes. A powerful array of politicians and preachers opposed him but in spite of them or because of them, he rode home to victory. The Ferguson triumph exposed the bankruptcy of progressivism and prohibition as viable and relevant issues in Texas political life. Combining political demagoguery, vacuous promises and savage independence, Ferguson not only succeeded in defeating his party's professionals at their own game but also managed to change the rules as well. No Texan could foretell with any certainty the new course that politics would now take under Ferguson. But it was clear that, whatever the outcome, Texas politics would never be quite the same again.

⁶⁷Ibid., July 29, 1914.

CHAPTER VII

PROHIBITION RECONSIDERED

Texas prohibitionists finally realized their long sought goal with the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.¹ The new amendment, designed to banish from the nation "demon rum" and "nigger gin," went into effect on January 16, 1920, and Texas and the nation now became officially dry. Texas prohibitionists derived no small satisfaction from the new law for one of their own, Senator Morris Sheppard, loudly and effectively championed the cause from his Senate seat in Washington. Americans who recently marched off to war "to make the world safe for Democracy" now marched to a new drumbeat. Al Capone, Murder Incorporated, and the St. Valentine's Day Massacre had not yet entered into the nation's lexicon of brutality and mayhem and as far as anyone knew, goodness had triumphed over evil, justice had been done, truth had been vindicated, and America was now at peace with its conscience.

The prohibition movement in Texas began as a quest by religious zealots to purify the lives of sinful people and ended as a political and religious crusade to purge wickedness from an economic and political system which no longer, in the opinion of

¹The advent of national prohibition did little to change the drinking habits of most Texans. Before the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment, 199 of the state's 253 counties were totally dry under local option. James A. Clark, The Tactful Texan: A Biography of Governor Will Hobby (New York, 1958), 82.

prohibitionists, countenanced the eternal verities of thrift, industry, and sobriety. The rise of progressivism which sought to "realize familiar and traditional ideals under novel circumstances,"² found in prohibition a generous and willing ally. Progressives and prohibitionist adherents willingly cooperated not only to redress the wrongs created by new and irresponsible wealth but also to return the people to the older values of a less complex society. The crusade against liquor during the progressive era "absorbed the yearnings for reform and fulfillment of a people whose God had become Progress but whose ideas remained fundamentally conservative."³

Texas progressives and prohibitionists found themselves locked in combat with most of the state's conservative anti-prohibitionists, yet for all its antagonism, personalism, and bitterness, there remained something superficial about the struggle. More often than not the leaders on all sides of the issue worshiped in the same denominations, possessed similar educational backgrounds, and shared the same common values. Many of the leading participants were professional men who had acquired legal training, had good sized bank accounts, dabbled in business ventures, and enjoyed the same entertainment. There were, of course, conflicts which arose out of personality differences, individual

²Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York, 1955), 215.

³Dewey W. Grantham, Jr., The Democratic South (Athens, Georgia, 1963), 63.

ambition, and desire for elective office, but no clear-cut social or economic division existed distinguishing the state's progressive-prohibitionists from their opponents. The Texas Democracy with its monopoly on the state's political life demanded magnification of all differences of opinion in order that a semblance of healthy political dialogue might take place. The gubernatorial primary of 1914 quite clearly evidenced that those engaged in a phony political struggle could come together when threatened by the rising power of an underprivileged class so long removed from the decision making process of government. Ferguson's victory, despite opposition provided by the unnatural alliance of prohibitionists and anti-prohibitionists, critically damaged prohibition as a viable issue. The prohibitionists continued to be active after the 1914 election but the contest that had kept Texas politics in a state of chaos and highflown rhetoric for more than a decade receded into the background as the class antagonisms stirred by the programs of Farmer Jim rushed to the forefront. This is not to say that those caught up in the struggle of the day did not believe in the presence of serious conflicts and divisions which affected the Texas Democracy, but men so long united by so much can be deceived by so little. At the very moment when prohibition captured the imagination of the state, most Texans resided in areas already legally dry.

While couching their rhetoric in phrases worthy of the most eloquent Puritan divine, Texas prohibitionists proved to be children of the Enlightenment. The theories of Freud, the emptiness of war, and the vagaries of reason had not yet impinged

upon their consciousness and they believed that the minds and hearts of men could be transformed through legislative fiat. Laws and statutes held for them an almost mystical power for breaking the will of the most recalcitrant human specimen. Their's was a boundless optimism predicated on the ability to legislate morals effectively.

The prohibition struggle proved to be a tragedy for Texas not only because it carried political debate down dead end streets, aroused intense passions, and distracted attention from other vital areas of concern, but also because it over-simplified the issue, ignored the complexity of human nature, and ultimately failed to make men better. In their zeal to heal man from one disease, the prohibitionists left him exposed to far more deadly dangers.

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The existence and availability of many fine manuscript collections gives varied insight and greater meaning to the study of Texas prohibition politics from 1887 to 1914. The Oscar Branch Colquitt Papers housed in the Barker Library at the University of Texas contain a rich source of information pertaining to Colquitt's political career and his staunch conservative and anti-prohibition stance. The Texas Gulf Coast Historical Association's collection of John Henry Kirby Papers sheds light upon Kirby's political affiliations with Colquitt, Joseph Weldon Bailey and other prominent political scions. Unlike other collections, the Kirby Papers give no evidence of being culled and therefore provide the researcher with a more intimate and accurate view of Kirby's political feelings. To a lesser extent the Joseph Weldon Bailey Papers and the Thomas Benton Love Papers, both maintained by the Dallas Historical Society, have aided in the preparation of this study.

Progressive and prohibitionist legislation of the period was found in the General Laws of the State of Texas. The coverage from 1907 to 1920 was especially instructive. The Journals of the Texas House and Senate aided the writer's effort at assessing and evaluating the relative strength of prohibition and anti-prohibition sentiment in both chambers. This study could not have been conducted without a careful examina-

tion of newspapers. The Dallas Morning News and the Galveston Daily News evidenced the most careful and consistent coverage of the prohibition struggle. The Houston Daily Post was significant in that it usually mirrored the views of prominent Texas anti-prohibitionists. The prohibition weekly Home and State offered a less balanced account of prohibitionist efforts.

A number of significant contemporary periodical articles contributed, including David Graham Phillips' "Treason of the Senate," William Garrot Brown's "The South and the Saloon," and Victor E. Martin's "The Fight Against Baileyism in Texas." H. A. Ivy's Rum on the Run in Texas and The Breweries and Texas Politics enabled this writer to gauge the scope of prohibitionist activity in the state and the Proceedings of the Annual Conventions of the American Anti-Saloon League also documented the success of Texas anti-liquor foes. The researcher also profited from many unpublished Ph.D. dissertations and master's theses, including James A. Tinsley's "The Progressive Movement in Texas," Arthur Stanley Link's "The South and the Democratic Campaign of 1912," George Portal Huckaby's "Oscar Branch Colquitt -- A Political Biography," Sybal Hazel's "Prohibition Campaign in Texas," and Ralph Wright Steen's "The Political Career of James E. Ferguson." All of these sources helped to provide this study with a convenient frame of reference and a meaningful perspective.

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