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THE LONGS' LEGISLATIVE LIEUTENANTS

by

Edward Francis Renwick

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1967
I hereby recommend that this dissertation prepared under my direction by Edward Francis Renwick entitled THE LONGS' LEGISLATIVE LIEUTENANTS be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

After inspection of the dissertation, the following members of the Final Examination Committee concur in its approval and recommend its acceptance:

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PREFACE

The most common response I have received from people learning I am writing a study concerning Longism is "everything has already been said about the Longs. There's nothing left to write." True, enough irrational, superficial and violently anti-Long articles and books exist concerning Longism to fill a bookshelf. Repeatedly the Longs have been detailed as dictators and buffoons but there has been little research on the rise of the Longs in Louisiana. However, there have been a few very notable exceptions: V. O. Key, "Southern Politics"; Allen Sindler, "Huey Long's Louisiana"; and the work of T. Harry Williams, Perry Howard, both of Louisiana State University, and William Havard, now at the University of Massachusetts. The techniques of the Longs and the position of the legislature in a one party state dominated by a strong executive has also been omitted from the book-shelf of Longism. This study is an attempt to describe and interpret the last mentioned of these seldom treated subjects.

How did the Longs deal with the legislature? Were the Longs their own legislative leaders or did a viable structure of legislative leadership exist in Louisiana during the tenure of the Longs? These are the questions that this study, hopefully, will develop and try to answer. The interaction between the executive and the legislature will be the prime subject of concern over the following pages.
Though responsibility for what follows is mine, I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to the numerous persons and organizations who have assisted me in this study. A National Center of Education in Politics fellowship enabled me to join the staff of Governor John McKeithen of Louisiana for a semester. During this period, through the courtesy of the Governor and his assistants, I was able to view gubernatorial operations first hand and to gain insights into the complex structure of Pelican politics. Contacts made at the State Capitol were of invaluable assistance in helping to locate information and in obtaining interviews with various Louisiana political figures.

My thanks and appreciation go to Senator Michael H. O'Keefe of New Orleans who graciously asked me to serve as his assistant for both a fiscal and a regular session of the state legislature. This was an experience that widened my political understanding of executive-legislative relationships.

The competent staff of the Secretary of State's office rendered all possible assistance in their search for numerous political documents. Extensive library privileges were generously granted me at the University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette, the Louisiana State Library and the Louisiana State University Library in Baton Rouge and the Howard Tilton Memorial Library at Tulane University in New Orleans. The staffs of these libraries rendered unfailing assistance to the author.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to those Louisianians, representing a cross section of political factions, who openly and reflectively responded to my many requests for information and analysis. Those interviewed are not individually thanked or identified throughout the study in
keeping to a commitment I made with each interviewee. Their insights and reflections informed the author at every significant turn in the project.

Numerous other persons delivered necessary and important help to the author. Dr. Conrad Joyner, my dissertation director, has patiently prodded and assisted me throughout this trying experience. In addition the other members of my committee are owed a debt of thanks and appreciation for their assistance. Dr. Robert Crisler deserves an accolade for being an understanding boss grown accustomed to accepting further delays in the completion of this project.

Some special obligations are also in order. Winston Riddick offered his knowledgeable comments and analysis of highway politics, and generally helped the author in his efforts to understand this complicated aspect of Louisiana politics. To Elizabeth Thiels and Shirley Cox for attempting to make my prose readable goes my sincere thanks for their thankless task. Mrs. Gloria Murray for correcting my errors and typing the various editions of this dissertation also deserves a special thank you. James Chubbuck for his incisive comments, editing assistance, and calming of seared nerves deserves more than I can give him and more Scotch than I can buy him.

To my parents I also owe a special debt, financial and otherwise, for their faith in me.
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ABSTRACT

The Long brothers, Huey and Earl, were elected to political office not to administer laws but to make laws. Their legislative programs were the heart of their administrations. The prime topic of this study is the interaction between the executive and the legislature during the Long administrations as the brothers fought to implement their programs into law.

The Louisiana governor has many tools at his disposal to aid him in securing enactment of his legislative program. The Longs were experts in the use of the manipulative tools available to them. The formal powers of the governor were fully exercised by both brothers. They used the special session and the veto power to help attain their wants. The Longs averaged more than one special session per year during their terms as governor. At times both Longs overestimated their success with the legislature and made serious errors in calling special sessions.

Vetoes were viewed as personal weapons by the Longs. Both brothers used the veto power as a weapon against political and legislative opponents.

In addition to the formal powers available, both brothers refined and utilized informal methods of influence. Patronage, both state and local, was at their disposal. The public works and highway
construction projects of the Longs were affluent sources of patronage and contracts. The legislator and/or his constituents were given roads or pensions in return for their support of Longism. The Longs dealt individually with lawmakers and obtained their backing in return for a portion of the benefits.

The Longs pursued all of the various prerogatives available to them. Their efforts were intensely personal. The Longs were their own legislative lieutenants with those legislators who bore the titles of leadership actually being but vassals of the Longs.

The Longs were each one-man shows with no stand-ins or substitutes in the wings. Aides were not built up or successors groomed. Power flowed to and from them as individuals who headed organizations and not as organization heads.

The Longs simply overwhelmed the alliance that had ruled Louisiana for generations. Upon assuming power the Longs also took over the instruments of persuasion available to a constitutionally strong governor in a one-party state. Added to the formal and informal powers of the governorship the Longs possessed a broad popular base with an unusually strong allegiance to them. The combination was awesome and devastating to the opposition.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For nearly four decades, the name Long has been synonymous with Louisiana politics. The dynasty Huey Long headed and which his younger brother, Earl, inherited has been the dominating feature of politics in Louisiana over this period. Today Louisiana still reels from the impact of their policies and the name Long evokes violent emotions, both hates and loves.

On various fronts Longism opened new avenues of action. Programs were initiated or expanded to educate the illiterate, care for the sick and convert the state's archaic highway transportation system into a twentieth century network. Later, Earl expanded the tenets of Longism to include the old age pension. Before Huey, bridges did not cross the rivers or connect the bayous of south Louisiana, resulting in virtual prohibition of social and economic intercourse between the north Louisiana "Redneck" and the "Cajun" of the south.

Prior to Huey, promises of revolution had often come but fulfillment, never. The poor whites were disenchanted. The Negro was powerless. Only an establishment consisting of the planter-merchant alliance was satisfied.

With Longism came progress. However, the cost was not cheap. The Establishment had given little to the people and had taxed themselves little in return. Longism forever altered that way of life. Taxes, both
consumer and severance, skyrocketed. The Longs' taxing policies were one of the most controversial aspects of their rule. Vital victories and chilling defeats affected the policies and the careers of both brothers in their continuing and relentless taxing battles. Impeachment itself was a product of a tax fight.

In pre-Long Louisiana controversy and dispute did not engulf the legislature as it did from 1928 onward. Instead the protest movements of the restless lower classes died in infancy.

In order to understand the political machinations of the Longs, pre-Long Louisiana must be studied. Only when the poverty and despair of the masses is viewed in relation to the traditional ruling clique can the phenomenon of Longism be viewed in its proper perspective. This point was dramatically explained by a New Orleans lawyer with a detached interest in politics:

And what interested me greatly was the poverty, misery, degradation of the people in certain sections . . . , the lack of good food, the lack of ordinary comfort . . . I went into a little village called Monticello. Earl and Christenbery were with us, and there was an old man in his house, and on the mantel there were some old relics, a picture of Long and Every Man A King. This old man thought these relics were his gods. There is one of the first indications of the temper of the people. Long had given them hope, had given them free ambulances, free hospitals, hot lunches, and things of that sort and the benefits. And they figured that Long was the one man for the first time in their lives that was thinking about them . . . When I saw those old people--that is the thing I have never seen any writer get on to. The people that I met on those trips--poor. I never saw such poverty, the women with teeth so full of tartar that they looked like coral shells. They would come up to those meetings at night in the cold and the wet with babies wrapped up in
blankets and use a flashlight to find their way through the woods. They called them speakings.\(^1\)

The Longs promised to open up the game, to break down the barriers and let the masses have opportunity and hope. Understanding this, the careers of the Long brothers may be seen in a rational light. The Longs' political techniques flowed from their distinctive lives, and their lives were wedded to the spirit of economic dissidence. The two of them unified this spirit which now bears the name Longism. It was primarily an economic revolution not a movement based on a racial theme or on the projection of a "good government" image. The masses had never known "good government" and whether they hated Negroes or not they went to bed just as hungry and just as dissatisfied.

The Longs' cause, being primarily economic, hit squarely at the Establishment that had long ruled Louisiana. The Longs, by skirting the race issue, forced the opposition to attack their economic programs or villify their persons. The opposition concentrated on the second theme and it controlled the news media. Consequently, the Longs have never known a good press. The newspapers, and the books and articles written of them have been overwhelmingly anti-Long. The Establishment that had to pay the cost of Longism was infuriated.

The Longs did not have to choose between political style or programmatic substance--they possessed both. The two were inextricably combined. Because of this unity several chapters are devoted to an analysis of the brothers themselves. Armed with this background, the types of

success and failure the Longs encountered and their corresponding strategies can be better understood. As important as this understanding is it serves only as a prelude to the study of Louisiana political life during the time when the executive overwhelmingly dominated Bayou politics. In particular an examination of the legislative process in a one party state operating under a dominant executive is the theme of the study. This examination of executive-legislative relationships seeks to go beyond the personal factor to a meaningful analysis of the legislative process in a one-party political structure.

The Longs were elected to political office not to administer laws but to make laws. Their legislative programs were the heart of their administrations. This was not a Long innovation, for the Progressive Era twenty years earlier had witnessed the growth of this idea with such governors as Theodore Roosevelt, Robert LaFollette and Woodrow Wilson. People had become distressed with the legislature, and looked to the executive to provide the leadership to push through a legislative program.

The governor has many tools at his disposal to aid him in securing enactment of his legislative program. Initially the chief executive may center legislative attention on his proposals by delivering state of the state addresses. Other formal powers of the governor include his ability to veto legislation or to call the legislature into special session. Informally, the governor has the ability to grant favors to pro-administration legislators and to withhold political plums from his opponents. In addition the governor has the ability to appeal directly to the electorate--to go out on the "stump" in behalf of his program.
The formal and informal powers of the chief executive make it evident that both the executive and the legislature have a role to play in the legislative process. Nevertheless, a chasm separates the two institutions. This study intends to examine the various formal and informal devices that the Longs utilized, developed or refined to bridge the critical area or "no man's land" that must be circumvented if government is to operate efficiently and effectively.

A Louisiana governor has a great many methods of influence open to his use. Ranging from the designation of architects on state construction projects to the leasing of state lands, patronage is available to the chief executive to assist him in swaying legislators or persons who can swing legislators. The Longs were experts at understanding and utilizing the whole array of tools at their disposal in an effort to implement their programs.

The Longs' programs were similar, only the emphasis was different. Both based their appeal on bread and butter issues that caught the pulse of large segments of the populace. A man-on-the-street interview after Earl's death poignantly caught this appeal:

I was associated with Governor Huey Long when he first ran for office. I road a mule down a muddy road about fifteen miles to vote . . . you couldn't tell what color my clothes wuz when I got to the polls . . . I want to tell you that I've been with the Longs ever since they started . . . Huey Long broke the ice . . . in this state we didn't even know who the Governor of the state was . . . the government was in New Orleans . . . the people didn't know who the leader was . . . Huey Long was a wonderful man . . . He gave free school books to the needy children . . . and to people who was losing their homes by the millions he helped institute the mortatorium law to save the people's homes . . . And he went on and was elected Senator . . . and made us one of the wonderfulest Senators up until his life ended . . . than his brother Earl came to
power . . . and thru the administration of Earl he made additional exemptions for the people of the state for their homes . . . He also gave hot lunches to the school children . . . improved kids health . . . and from time to time the Long administration has never gone backward but has been steadily going forward up until the present time . . . . I can remember back before Huey was elected we had nothing but dirt roads to travel on and people had to pay the taxes with the few horses and cattle and little land that they had . . . These remarks I made and say truthfully that Earl K. Long and Huey Long were two of the greatest men that we have ever had in the state and the state has gone forward and not backward.²

²Transcript of tapes belonging to Brooks Read, former news director of WBRZ-TV. Interview took place in early September, 1959 in Alexandria, Louisiana.
CHAPTER II

THE ANATOMY OF A PELICAN

Politics is the blood of Louisianians. The intensity of their political emotions is as hot as Avery Island pepper condiments. Louisiana’s politics are as open as the caverns of her huge sulfur mines and salt domes.\(^1\) The state is uncluttered by sophistication, her manners untutored, her psychology zestful and emotional—ranging from the Holy Rollers of the north to the cock fighters of the south. This atmosphere is clearly evident when an attempt is made to comprehend Longism. Inevitably upon mention, the name Long becomes a word encrusted with all the prejudices, loves and hates of the speaker’s political inheritance. The questions of why a Long, why did he arise, how did he function, all beget droves of answers—-but seldom calm or rational analysis. Huey Long once declared that he was \textit{sui generis}. He may have been but that does not establish the \textit{raison d’etre} of the social, economic and political movement that is Longism.

The beginning, though nebulous, was definite. Desire for reform had threatened to usurp the status quo for almost a century. Louisiana was not unprepared for strong politics. The passion, fragrance and affection for the political game itself had long enthralled the Bayou state. People appreciated the use of politics as a power vehicle. The

\(^1\)Hot condiments, sulfur and salt are three of the state’s most famous exports.
two previous protest movements dying stillborn attest to that fact.²

The populace did not wish to alter the power apparatus, only to control it and make it responsive to their command.

Longism did not just happen. It was born in a heritage desirous of economic reform, used to corruption and wanting change. The ingredients for revolution were present, needing only a catalyst to jell the mixture. However, before turning to the catalyst let us examine some of the ingredients.

**Leadership: Its Development**

The concept of a strong leader had its genesis in the Constitution of 1812.³ The establishment of a healthy executive office attested to the unity and purpose of the ruling plantation aristocracy even at this early juncture.⁴ Infrequently, a governor emerged who understood the concept of power and also the potential of the governorship. One such man was Henry Clay Warmouth, a carpetbagger entering office in 1868.

²The first was the "mechanics constitution" of 1864 which was an indication of the desire of the lower social classes to break the planter-merchant alliance. The second was the Populist movement of the 1890's. See William Havard, Rudolf Heberle, Perry Howard, *The Louisiana Elections of 1960* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), pp. 21-22.


During Warmouth's administration a state police force was created and authority was given the governor to fill vacancies in local offices and to remove voting registrars. Warmouth engineered these coups by being a thoroughly dominating governor. He required undated resignations of his appointees, abused patronage and literally dominated the legislative floor with personal lobbying. His honesty was not suspect; he admitted he was crooked. The power for change was present. Warmouth demonstrated that.

If the poor obtained a candidate to carry out their mandate Louisiana's Bourbon politics would come to an end. Louisiana needed a genius of the lower class, a man who believed and who could transform that belief into reality. This was the dream of the tenant farmer. When he arrived the people reacted positively towards him and remained loyal to him and his family. Huey Long came out of north Louisiana and in his short career altered forever the landscape of Louisiana politics. Long, more than any other politician until that time, kept his promises.

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6Ibid., p. 398.

Louisiana: Its Makeup

In addition to the tradition of executive authority in Louisiana, the ingredient of diversity must be added. The state is diverse in almost any category examined. Although deeply imbedded in the American south, many of her moods are unique, almost contrary to the southern mind. The uniqueness is a product of Louisiana's varying geography, ethnic, social and economic conditions that necessitate exploration if the milieu of the Longs is to be properly understood.

The Pelican state may be divided into three principal goegraphical and social segments for explanatory purposes: (1) the Anglo-Saxon Protestant north as opposed to the French Catholic south; (2) the perennial problem of urban versus rural areas and their separate mores and institutions, and, (3) the three centuries old dilemma of the American nation, the bitter division existing between colored and white.

Geographic

In the rural parts of the state there are two plantation areas--the valleys of the Mississippi and Red Rivers. (See Figure 1.) These valleys constitute the agricultural regions of the state but large differences exist in them. The Mississippi Delta contains the majority of Louisiana plantations with a consequent conflict between landed aristocracy and poor Negroes. Two principal crops dominate the Delta region, the cotton belt in the north and the sugar bowl in the south. Plantations fill the interior but as one leaves this area and progresses toward the sea the farms become smaller and eventually disappear into the
1. Red River Delta Area
2. North Louisiana Uplands Area
3. Mississippi Delta Area
4. West Central Cut-Over Area
5. North Central Cut-Over Area
6. Southwest Rice Belt
7. South Central Mixed Farming Area
8. Sugar Bowl Area
9. Florida Parishes Area
10. New Orleans Truck and Fruit Area
Fig. 1.--Rural Social Areas of Louisiana

coastal fishing region. This area is thinly populated and the people generally poor. In recent decades, with the finding of oil near the shore and in the marshes, the economy has expanded and a few landowners have become wealthy. Absentee ownership of much of the marsh land lends an artificial air of prosperity to those areas.

The Red River Valley has a similar plantation area which mows a narrow path across several parishes. The large portions of the area not in the plantation belt and the remaining sections of north Louisiana outside of the Delta portion are given over to small scale family farming operations. Much of this area is poor. The economy was based on the area's large timber supply which was decimated in the early part of the twentieth century. The lumbering industry moved out prior to World War I and all that remained was poor soil, hills, anger and for the lucky, oil.

The southern portion of the state consists largely of prairies on which are raised sugar cane and rice. Cattle are found here and family farms predominate with some sugar or rice plantations sprinkled among the smaller farms. People of French extraction inhabit the area with an infiltration of Germans, especially in the rice producing section.

The state is no longer predominantly a rural agricultural region. Although New Orleans was the south's largest urban complex, Louisiana was still statistically rural as late as the 1940 census. The state moved slightly into the urban column by 1950.  

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Longism was built on the solid core support of the small farmer. (See Figure 2.) In 1920, 43.6 per cent of Louisianians were in this category but the situation has changed with each passing decade. On the other hand, cities, led by New Orleans, have gained in population. New Orleans now contains over 28 per cent of the state's voters. As the farmers decreased in numerical importance, organized labor grew slowly but constantly stronger in the cities. Up to the present the Longs have generally captured a healthy share of the labor votes which partially offsets their losses in the rural areas.

The Negro

The Negro has been of increasing importance in Louisiana since the initiation of Longism. The intense negrophobia of Mississippi and Alabama has never fully permeated Bayou society, especially in south Louisiana where a lithe social code has long existed. Throughout the twentieth century the Negro population has retained its fairly constant ratio approximating one-third of the population.

Negro voting registration from 1948 on has been of increasing importance in Louisiana politics. Prior to Huey Long only 968 Negroes were registered as voters in Louisiana. Fourteen years later this number

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11Ibid., p. 30.

12Ibid., p. 9.
1. Long (at least 6 of 8)
2. Long 5 of 8
3. Long 4 of 8
4. Anti-Long (at least 5 of 8)
Fig. 2.--Long, Anti-Long Tendencies in Eight Gubernatorial Elections, 1928-1956.

had decreased slightly but grew to exceed 28,000 by 1948. The jump to
the 1964 figure of over 162,000 demonstrates dramatically the increasing
potential power of Negroes in Bayou politics. (See Table I.)

TABLE I
Negro Voting Registration in Louisiana
(Selected Years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Negro Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>1,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>28,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>161,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>159,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>162,564</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Although Negroes have moved into the cities they have not fol­
lowed whites into suburbs. In the cities of southern Louisiana, especial­ly New Orleans, the Negro has developed into a countervailing force of
some magnitude and opposes the idea of white supremacy upon which southern
politics was built. Socially and economically the Negro is interested
in the retention and mushrooming of protest politics.
Religion

The color dichotomy is not the only cause of ethnic tension in the state. The French Catholic--Anglo-Saxon Protestant division has long plagued personal relations in Louisiana. The diversity has importance beyond the ordinary, due to a contrast of mores regarding various forms of social activity and the position of the Negro in society. The religious line of delineation is severe. The 1936 religious census "found that 54 of the 64 parishes (counties) were either more than two-thirds Roman Catholic or more than two-thirds Protestant."^14

Roman Catholicism is of major importance in Louisiana politics. However, it is not a highly clerical religion in this region as Catholicism in Quebec. The hierarchy remains fairly aloof from the profane world. Only within the past decade has the Church entered the political arena and the involvement is a moral one--segregation. Even here, the Church, in some areas has acted with trepidation and met with reverses. In north Louisiana Catholics are few and far between and the natives like it that way. A political candidate up north must be "right" on two issues, religion and race. A politician who is Catholic or "soft" on racial issues is a statesman not a politician. Due to the realities of political life combined with sophisticated talents of ticket balancers, the

^13Ibid., p. 10.
^14Sindler, op. cit., p. 31.
^15Havard, et. al., The Louisiana Elections of 1960, op. cit., p. 12.
^16Ibid.
religious issue is usually kept below the political surface in the interests of everybody.

Ticket balancing is based on religion and geography. If a candidate for governor is a north Louisiana Protestant, a Catholic from south Louisiana is usually selected for the office of lieutenant governor. Tickets generally have both Catholics and Protestants slated for office in an effort to ensure the religious issue existing only as a sub-rosa one absent from the campaign speech making.¹⁷

The Farmer and the Planter: A Conflict

Overshadowing the religious split has been the traditional antagonisms between the farmers and the planters in the country and in the urban areas laborers versus the financial-industrial interests. Tension is further aggravated by both customs of vertical and horizontal segregation. The employer is usually white but the employee may be either black or white. The Negro is frustrated in both directions. Above him exists the raw economic power of the "boss" and beside him a wall as real as it is invisible prevents social intercourse and ensures economic strangulation. This lack of affiliation between the races has not been

¹⁷Earl added a novel twist to the religious issue in the 1952 campaign for governor. Hale Boggs was a candidate for governor opposing Earl's candidate, Judge Carlos Spaht. During the campaign Boggs was challenged on the grounds "that he had been engaged in pro-Communist activity as an undergraduate at Tulane University in 1936-37." (Sindler, op. cit., p. 237.) Long on a stumping tour of north Louisiana "defended" Boggs stating he could not have ever had pro-Communist leanings because he went to Mass every day and was a "good Catholic boy." Interview with an Earl Long aide who accompanied Long on this tour, April 22, 1966.
without significant political consequences. Whenever politicians arose to attack economic deprivations which farmers labored under, the Establishment was always quick to remind the whites of their common bond and of their superiority over the Negro.\textsuperscript{18} The whites were led into political oblivion again and again by the fear of being equated with Negroes. The Negroes for their part were already in a political wasteland. Only in the 1950's did the previously minute power of the Negroes begin to be transformed into a movement of more than passing significance.

Traditionally power resided in the planter and financial interests. Voting records demonstrate that only about 40 per cent of the white male population above twenty-one participated in the electoral process prior to the Civil War.\textsuperscript{19} One historian of this period termed Louisiana politics as "rule by gentlemen."\textsuperscript{20} The question of how the system operated to effect this end is depressing but nonetheless of importance and warrants investigation.

Prior to the Civil War Louisiana was known for its large plantations although more than two-thirds of the farms were of less than one hundred acres in size. But plantations occupied seven times the land of all the small farms combined.\textsuperscript{21} These lords of the soil were loosely


\textsuperscript{19}Howard, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 48.

\textsuperscript{20}Shugg, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 121.

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 78.
connected to their upper class brethren in New Orleans and together they ruled the state.  

The poor whites, some one-third of the total white populace outside of the Crescent City, were restricted to second-rate land in the highlands and cut-over areas. These folks were non-slaveholders. With the addition of this group to urban and middle class non-slaveholding whites a solid majority of white Louisianians resulted. This majority was frustrated at every juncture and the issue of secession would be no exception even though they did not care to die for the continuance of an institution that aided in their economic entanglement. Their problem originated in the constitution of 1812 which established an apportionment formula that ensured the Black Belt a voice in government of far greater magnitude than their numbers ordinarily would allow. This formula lasted for several decades including the Whigish period of the 1830's, but the 1840's saw the influence of Jacksonian Democracy and the Whigs agreed to call a constitutional convention believing they would control the assemblage.

The document that emerged from the convention was decidedly more liberal than the original constitution. This constitution also became

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22Sindler, op. cit., p. 2.
23Ibid.
24Seventy-one per cent to be exact. Shugg, op. cit., p. 74.
25Ibid., p. 124.
26Howard, op. cit., p. 47.
the basis for several later ones. The new constitution abolished proper-
ty qualifications for voting, altered the apportionment structure with
the result that the planters retained control of the senate but lost
their definite hold on the house.\textsuperscript{27} The appointment of judges was retained
and a new post, that of superintendent of education, was created. This
constitution ended Whig control of the governor's chair and increased
voter participation by a third over the previous constitution but still
left the franchise available to only two-fifths of the white adult males.\textsuperscript{28}
"Probably half," according to Shugg, "were slaveholders, because this
class seldom failed to vote, and the total number of slaveholders in the
state was equal to over half the ballots cast in every contest before
1860. Louisiana, in other words, was controlled at the polls by a slave-
holding minority of its population."\textsuperscript{29}

The people wished more reforms than the 1845 constitution brought
them. In 1852, again bowing to political pressure, the governor summoned
another constitutional convention. A few sops were delivered to the
people such as having judges for the first time face election and cutting
the residence required for voting to one year. However, the convention
agreed to make the total population, not adult white males, the basis
for apportionment. This action had the immediate effect of placing the

\textsuperscript{27} Sindler, op. cit., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{28} Shugg, op. cit., p. 130.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
planter class back into unquestioned dominance.\textsuperscript{30} Truly, as Shugg stated, Louisiana was a perfect example of "government by gentlemen." Under this arrangement "nothing was ever done to promote agriculture, or to better the lot of farmers and laborers. Louisiana was a slave state policed by gentlemen; and the masses, having no real voice in the government, received from it no benefit."\textsuperscript{31} Within the decade following the adoption of this document, Louisiana and the nation became embroiled in the Civil War.

The Era of Discontent

The conflict had many effects on Louisiana and prompted many changes. It is from this conflict, according to some writers, that the roots of Longism were first germinated. One such author was Hamilton Basso. He argued that the War did not free the Negro but did free the southern middle class, albeit it was a long slow road for them to make it a meaningful freedom.\textsuperscript{32} The War may have freed the middle class but they were not very interested in having Louisiana enter the conflict. The poor whites viewed the War as protecting the interests of the planter class and this view was echoed by the planters. However, the convention was stacked by the secessionists due to the formula of electing representatives

\textsuperscript{30}Only in Louisiana was the Black Belt permitted to use this representation in both houses. See Sindler, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{31}Shugg, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 156.

on the basis of the entire population. The non-slaveholding "Cajun" and hill country parishes were a powerless minority. None was more vociferous in the hopeless cause than the residents of Winn Parish who instructed their delegates to vote to the end against secession. The old adage "if you have the votes, there is no need for discourse," was pursued by the convention majority. The Black Belt representatives quickly and quietly voted the state out of the union. The majority of delegates representing a minority of the people led the state to Montgomery "not by conspiracy but by the exercise of powers they had always possessed, in behalf of the slaveholding philosophy which had become the creed of the South."

The opponents of secession reacted to the turn of events by refusing to fight, in many instances, for the Confederacy. The "Cajuns" of south Louisiana, the immigrants of New Orleans and the inhabitants of the "Free State of Winn" were notably coerced into wearing the uniform. Winn Parish had as many sons fighting on the Union side, including some of Long's ancestors, as they did on the Confederate side.

As the hostilities grew in intensity the protests of the white farmers opposing the planters were blotted out but not destroyed.

33. Shugg, op. cit., p. 166.
35. Shugg, op. cit., p. 169.
36. Rorty, op. cit., p. 126. This may be the reason the Longs have never appealed to the traditional symbol of the Confederate flag or of the philosophy it represented in any of their political campaigns.
Reconstruction and some negrophobia permitted the subjugation of economic issues to last until the 1880's. The protests at this time were more bitter and more vocal than previous protests had been. Populism fired discontent in the last decade of the century.

The era following the Civil War and preceding the rise of Populism was not one of disbursement but aggrandizement of power by the planter class. Between 1860 and 1880 plantations increased three-fold in Louisiana while small farms continued to disappear from the assessor's rolls. Tenant farmers increased at an alarming rate. In 1880, tenant farms in the Bayou state constituted 35.2 per cent of the total number. Twenty years later the percentage had risen to 58 per cent. Louisiana at this time was dominated by an agrarian oligarchy and "its proportion of absentee ownership and overseer management was the largest in the South and except for Wyoming in the entire United States."  

Populism--The Second Revolution

The discontent of the eighties became the rebellion of the nineties. The 1890 congressional contests witnessed some third party activity in the cut-over parishes but little organized activity elsewhere in the

37 Shugg, op. cit., p. 241.

38 Howard, op. cit., p. 90.

Winn Parish was the scene of the most discontent. There in 1890, the Farmer's Union of Winn founded a newspaper and hired a young man named Hardy Brian to be the editor of the Comrade. Within a year Brian was off to the Populist convention in Cincinnati. His mandate was impressive; 1,200 males signed a petition authorizing Brian to be their proxy at the convention. This figure was only 131 less than the entire male population of the parish. The Winn editor told his Ohio listeners that Louisiana was ready for Populism and more importantly that racism would not destroy the movement in Louisiana. Negrophobia would not smudge economic issues.

The Ohio Convention adopted the "Ocala Platform" and adjourned, freeing Brian to return to Winn and promote the cause. Shortly thereafter Brian and the Farmer's Union severed ties with the Democratic Party and the People's Party in Louisiana was born.

The following year, 1892, the party held its first convention. The delegates chose one of Winn's own to carry their banner towards the

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40 The returns from Winn Parish merited special comment. There, in 1890, exactly 95% of the electorate agreed with the suggestions in the Winnfield Comrade and stayed away from the polls." Quoted from William I. Hair's The Agrarian Protest in Louisiana--1877-1900 (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1962), p. 299.

41 Brian maintained that the Comrade was the first Populist newspaper in the south. Ibid., p. 301. The Comrade was the first of some fifty Louisiana Populist papers to be founded during this period. By 1901, however, only one would remain. Ibid., pp. 362-63.

42 Ibid., p. 305.

43 Ibid., p. 306.

44 Delegates from both races were present and Negroes were elected to the Executive Committee.
statehouse. Robert L. Tannehill, former sheriff of Winn, was the first and last Populist candidate for governor. The nomination did not go unnoticed. The Bourbons were becoming acutely aware of the rebellious movement taking hold among the cut-over farmers. The planter class, however, effectively controlled the organization and, more meaningfully, counted the ballots. Tannehill trailed in the contest receiving 9,804 votes as opposed to Foster's, the victor, 79,388. Tannehill's votes were centered strongly in Winn and surrounding parishes. Populist victories were few including the election of Hardy Brian to the state house of representatives and his father, Benjamin, to the state Senate. Later in the Congressional elections, the Populist candidates lost in the districts they contested but polled 17,752 votes, an increase of over eight thousand in seven months.

Seeing this growth the Bourbons quickly made their decision to squelch this nascent revolution. A program was proposed by the Foster administration to disfranchise, as the Governor phrased it, "the mass of ignorance, vice, and venality without any proprietary interest in the state." Before the proposed constitutional amendments became

45 Journal of the Louisiana Senate, 1892, p. 21.

46 "One tenth of Tannehill's total state vote came from his home parish, where he received 1,001 against 304 for all four opponents." Hair, op. cit., p. 323.


effective the elections for governor were held in 1896. In this election "the Bourbons of Louisiana faced their most serious challenge in the half century between Reconstruction and Huey Long." 49

The Populists courted the Negro. He was urged and did try to register. At least one registrar "locked himself in jail to avoid the crowds of Negroes who clamored to be added to the rolls." 50 The Bourbons were equal to the task confronting them. Fraud was rampant in the 1896 election. Governor Foster according to the official returns defeated the fusion Republican-Populist candidate, Pharr, by a vote of 116,116 to 87,798. 51 Even a superficial analysis of the returns leaves grave doubts as to their validity. 52 In some areas the ruling clique refused to count Negro ballots and troops were called in to restore order from the resulting riots. 53

The 1896 elections effectively destroyed the People's Party and left it moribund to die a private death. One pyrrhic victory emerged from the election, the defeat of the restrictive suffrage amendments. The legislature compensated for this reversal by passing stricter registration laws. As a capstone to their achievements the Bourbon-controlled

49 Ibid., p. 336.


51 Hair, ibid., p. 375.

52 According to census statistics the total white adult male population of Bossier, Concordia, East Carroll, Madison, Tensas and West Feliciana parishes was 3,278. Foster's vote was an astounding 15,976 and Pharr's 139. For further information see Hair, ibid., p. 375.

53 Ibid., p. 378.
politicians called for a new constitutional convention which was approved by a narrowed electorate and in 1898 the voters cast their ballots for the delegates.  

**Pre-Longism**

The convention of 1898 wrote articles into the new constitution establishing agencies to regulate banks and railroads and to examine utility company assessments, and a department of agriculture to aid the farmer. After throwing these sops to the electorate the delegates got down to the important business—disfranchising the lower class. Registration laws and procedures were made so difficult that 95 per cent of the Negroes failed to meet the new standards and were stricken from the rolls along with 23.5 per cent of the white voters. The Negro who had constituted 44 per cent of the registered voters in 1897 was reduced to a negligible vote from 1898 onward. Politically the Negro was finished as a threat to the planter class. The whites who had the most to lose by a perpetuation of Bourbon politics were also disfranchised and politically mummified. In 1902 the efforts of the Bourbons bore fruit with the old line Democrats culling 78.3 per cent of the votes.  

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56. The ballot was four feet long containing 252 names. He was given but three minutes to vote.  

55. *Howard, op. cit.*, p. 103.  


The few remaining Populists still having the franchise voted the Republican ticket and suffered overwhelming defeat with only Winn Parish and a few other renegades holding out for the promised land.

Having defeated the protest politics of both the Negroes and the poor whites, the old line Democratic organization moved to consolidate and strengthen itself. The state-wide Democratic organization swiftly allied itself with the Choctaw Club, the conservative financially-oriented Democratic organization in New Orleans. The Choctaws were as successful in New Orleans as the Bourbons were in their bailiwick. A structured ward organization, patronage, paid up poll tax receipts, and a web of personal favors united to produce an efficient city organization. Because state politics interwound with Crescent City politics the Choctaws wished a link with the state organization and their desire did not remain long unattended. The Bourbons, in their desire to consolidate their activities, also wished to establish connections with the large urban complex. A bargain was struck between the two; the Choctaws delivered an extra 10,000 votes to the favored gubernatorial candidate and presented a united legislative front in favor of administration issues; New Orleans received 20% of the seats in the legislature and certain prerogatives in state politics. This combination ruled Louisiana quite regularly until the advent of Huey Long in the 1920's.

59 Also known as "the Ring" or the "Old Regulars."

60 Havard, op. cit., p. 25.

61 Ibid.
Popular unrest lay beneath the visible calm, surfacing infrequently to move a ripple across the brows of the turgid politicians. Spurts of protest out of the cut-over district did not erase the myopic vision the politicians enjoyed. Socialism replaced Populism as the hope of the future in the Winn area. A parish election, held in 1908, resulted in half the parish officials being defeated by the Socialist candidates.  

Four years later, one out of every fourteen Louisiana voters cast a Socialist ballot. Eugene Debs, the Socialist presidential candidate, received more votes than the President, William H. Taft, in Louisiana. Seventy per cent of the Socialist votes were centered in the hill country. Winn led the protest giving a 35.5% of its vote to Debs and the town of Winnfield elected an entire ticket of Socialists to local offices.

Following this outburst of protest the Pelican state returned to the status quo for the next eight years before venturing to place the first reformer of modern times in the governor's office. John M. Parker, a Bull Moose Progressive, ran as an independent Democrat on a "good government" platform and in doing so managed to defeat the Bourbon-Chocotaw alliance in 1920. Parker, being a wealthy half Republican aristocrat, had entree into the New Orleans elite and he exercised this opening to build his own organization.

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64 Ibid., p. 316.
After Parker's victory, as with so many other reformers, he allowed his organization to wither while at the same time the Choctaws breathed new life into their machine. Governor Parker's administration was a "respectable failure" to quote Howard. His program was well intentioned but moderate; he built gravel roads; he initiated a severance tax, too small his enemies stated; he aided education, ostensibly, however, at only the state university. Parker's moves were not dramatic, his efforts to destroy the "Ring" unsuccessful, and his appeal lay in the realm of an honest, upper class "do-gooder," not that of the revolutionary or the knight come to lead the common man.

Populism, Socialism and "good government" brought the fount of hope to Louisiana and to Winn but not much else. The poor whites had to wait until "the boy from Winn," Huey Long, brought them relief. Long, steeped in their rebellious tradition, steeled with an icy realism beneath his cowardly facade, expertly bent, molded, elasticized, and promoted the radical sermons of his forebears. He was the catalyst.

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65 Howard, op. cit., p. 122.

66 Ibid., pp. 121-23.
CHAPTER III

THE WINNFIELD REVOLUTIONARY

In the second decade of the twentieth century the third protest revolution in Louisiana since the Civil War was in the making. The poor white's feeling was poignantly detailed by Huey P. Long, Sr.

There wants to be a revolution, I tell you. I seen domination of capitol, seen it for seventy years. What do these rich folks care for the poor man? They care nothing—not for his pain, his sickness nor his death. And now they're talking about keeping the poor folks from voting—that same talk. I say there wants to be a revolution.¹

Similar feelings had long been evident in Louisiana but no charismatic leader had come forward to unify the dissidents and provide hardened leadership for their cause. This time it would be different. Huey P. Long, Jr. would provide the leadership and the hope for the people.

The Youth of a Legend

Befitting the tradition of Winn parish, the revolutionary was born there on August 30, 1893, the eighth of ten children. Luckily for Huey, considering his future life, he was born in a log cabin occupied

by the Longs on their 320 acre farm. Later in life, Huey was to get considerable political mileage out of his "Lincolnish" birthplace.

Although he was the guiding inspiration of millions of rural folks, Long never tilled the soil. He wrote: "From my earliest recollection I hated the farm work." To remove himself entirely from manual labor, Huey ran away from home when he was eleven, getting fifty miles before he was caught. When he returned home his sister greeted him with the words, "Come in, tramp." This greeting was indicative of the type of family relationship that existed between Huey and his brethren during most of his life.

In 1910, when Huey was sixteen, he was sent to Baton Rouge as the Winn high school representative in the state debating contest. Placing third in the contest, he received a scholarship to Louisiana State University. However, the scholarship did not include living expenses or books. Huey's family had already put six of his older brothers and sisters through college, but at this time there was no money to assist Huey. Consequently, he had to give up the scholarship.

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3Ibid., p. 6.

4Ibid.

Leaving home after this experience, Huey went on to become a "drummer," or salesman, selling Cottolene, a cottonseed oil substitute for lard—as shortening. He secured the job through the efforts of Harley Bozeman, a man he later attempted to destroy. Long was fired upon the discovery of his padded expense account. He drifted to Houston, and from there to Oklahoma where he obtained a job selling potatoes. Having attended the University of Oklahoma in his spare time, Long returned, after a year in the west, to vacation in Winn. Renewing a high school friendship, he soon married Rose McConnell.

Borrowing money from Long's brother, Julius, the newly married couple moved into a dingy apartment in New Orleans and Huey began to attend law school at Tulane. After a year he could no longer afford his tuition and petitioned Chief Justice Frank Monroe, of the Louisiana Supreme Court, for a private law examination. His request granted, Long became a lawyer at the age of 21, in 1915.

The Longs returned home and the young lawyer began a modest practice. His first cases were in the realm of workmen's compensation, an area of practice that was later to make him a wealthy man. One of his

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6Dudley J. LeBlanc, now a State Senator, recently recalled that when Huey began selling Cottolene he was too poor to rent his own surrey. LeBlanc states he was in the same position at the time so the two teamed up, renting a surrey with a driver, and each one selling his product off one side of the vehicle. Interview, May 10, 1965.

7Long was never formally admitted to Tulane. Instead he received permission to attend classes as a non-degree earning student, which he did for a year. The popular story that he completed the three year course in one is incorrect. This note based on an interview with and research done by Professor T. Harry Williams.
few cases not of this nature involved a woman who wished to sue the bank in Winnfield. To commence the suit, Long needed bond money. With characteristic boldness he went to bank director, state senator H. J. Harper, and borrowed the money. This transaction proved to be the least important part of their meeting.

Harper was a leading exponent of dissent in a parish full of dissidents.\(^8\) The Senator regarded most of the country's economic troubles as resulting from excessive domination of capital by the few. Long and Harper became good friends and political partners. Together they worked out amendments to the workmen's compensation law. In May 1916 they went to Baton Rouge to fight before the legislature for the amendments. Here for the first time Long saw politics in action and found it disgusting.\(^9\) Huey asked to speak before the committee having jurisdiction over the amendments. The members responded to his request by laughing in his face and asking him whom he represented. Long replied, "Several thousand common laborers."\(^{10}\) But the committee was not interested in hearing what laborers desired. Although the committee was hostile to the proposed changes in the law, the Senate was not, and accordingly adopted a measure removing the $300 maximum amount allowable in a settlement. This law benefited Long, who was currently profiting from compensation cases

\(^{8}\)Martin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 29.

\(^{9}\)Long, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 25.

\(^{10}\)Ibid., p. 26.
in which he charged a fee in excess of 20 per cent of the settlement.\(^\text{11}\)

Within a few years he was able to purchase a $40,000 dollar home in Shreveport.\(^\text{12}\)

Long's law practice continued to flourish and his friendship with Senator Harper deepened. In 1918 Harper was indicted for obstructing the war effort and Huey became his counsel.\(^\text{13}\) During the trial Long wrote a letter to the New Orleans Item which appeared under the heading, "Thinks Wealth Should Be More Evenly Distributed." It said:

> A conservative estimate is that about sixty-five or seventy per cent of the entire wealth of the United States is owned by two per cent of the people. Sixty-eight per cent of the whole people living in the United States own two per cent of the wealth. From the year 1890 to 1910, the wealth of this nation tripled, yet the masses owned less in 1910 than they did in 1890, and more lived in mortgaged or rented homes in 1910 than did in 1900. Reports from the Committee on Industrial Relations, appointed by the President, show that wealth is fast concentrating in the hands of the few.

> But the greatest cause for industrial unrest is that of education. Authorities on education tell us that eighty out of every one hundred people in the United States never enter high school; only fourteen out of every thousand get a college education; six hundred and ninety out of every thousand never finish the fourth grade in school. Does such a condition give the ordinary man his proper return of the nation's prosperity? What do you think of such a game of life, brutally and cruelly unfair, with the dice so loaded that the child of

\(^{11}\) John K. Fineran, _The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon_ (New Orleans: John K. Fineran, 1934), p. 9. Note: This is a violent anti-Long book as are most books and articles that have been written on the Longs. The historical record is very one-sided making it difficult to write an objective biography of Huey. The reader should be cognizant of the bias of most writers when reflecting on the quotations.

\(^{12}\) Long, _op. cit._, p. 87.

\(^{13}\) Long was able to defend Harper at this time because he had evaded the draft by getting himself exempted on the grounds that he was a public official--a notary public. Davis, _op. cit._, p. 70.
today must enter it with only fourteen chances out of a thou-
sand in his favor of getting a college education and with
nine hundred and eighty-six chances against his securing the
lucky draw? How can this nation prosper with the ordinary
child having only twenty chances in a hundred of securing the
first part of the game?

This is the condition, north, east, south, and west; with
wealth concentrating, classes becoming defined, there is no
opportunity for Christian life and education and cannot be
until there is more economic reform. This is the problem that
the good people of this country must consider.\textsuperscript{14}

Although the letter was not pertinent to the trial, the Judge berated
Long for writing it, thereby giving him the publicity he wanted. This
letter was the first public utterance on two subjects that would help
to make him a legend--education and share the wealth. While his educa-
tion program remained on a state level, his share the wealth scheme
developed into his major bid for national power.

**Prelude to Power**

The twenty-four year old attorney relished the spotlight and
wished to become a candidate for political office. The Railroad Com-
mission was the only office having no age requirements, and he announced
his candidacy from North Louisiana. His younger brother, Earl, put up
the $125 entry fee and Huey's political career was launched. The Long
family for the first and last time aided Huey in his quest for political
office. Earl campaigned from town-to-town and house-to-house. Julius,
Huey's older brother, wrote the campaign material. Huey tacked up cir-
culars on every available vertical elevation--a device he used to great

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 72.
advantage throughout his political career. The campaign was a great success.\textsuperscript{15} He was elected by a 635 vote margin.\textsuperscript{16}

Long became intoxicated with his position, proposing that the railroad commissioners wear gold badges as evidence of their importance.\textsuperscript{17} Though he lost that skirmish he went on to win more important ones against large corporations operating in the Pelican state. This resulted in fame so widespread that no gold badge was needed in order for people to take cognizance of his power. Huey, prior to his election, had become an embittered enemy of the Standard Oil Company. He gives the following reasons for his animosity towards the company:

As a country yap I put $1,050 in oil stock. The company made a strike, and I was advised to hold on, and I did hold on. Then the big companies, led by the Standard Oil (which owned the pipeline monopoly) issued notices that they would take no more oil from the independent producers and my stock wasn't worth forty cents, while oil went to waste. Do you think I can forget that? Do you blame me for fighting the Standard Oil?\textsuperscript{18}

Up until March 25, 1919 the oil companies paid little attention to Huey's screams. Little did they realize that this bone in Huey's

\textsuperscript{15} Long, at one point in the campaign, ran short of money and borrowed $500 from a store keeper in Winn. The man was O. K. Allen, one of Long's first law clients. This act and others would later be rewarded when the Kingfish would make Allen Governor of Louisiana. Long, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 40.


throat would someday lead to riots, an impeachment, higher taxes, and a virtual civil war in Baton Rouge. On March 25 he made his first major move. He convinced his two fellow commissioners, Francis Williams and Chairman Shelby Taylor, to declare pipelines common carriers subject to the commission's regulation. However, Governor Sanders would not call a special session to implement the plans Long had for regulating the oil industry. But another gubernatorial election was on the horizon. Long supported John M. Parker, claiming Parker promised him he would support measures to curb the "Octopus." Parker won the election but his oil policies did not sit well with Long. The two broke, becoming bitter political enemies. The Commissioner began to call the Governor a stooge of Standard Oil, and worse. Parker sued Long for libel and won. The court awarded Parker damages of one dollar.  

In the fall of 1921, the commission chairman died and Huey was elected to the post. He at once launched an attack on Standard Oil, ordering the company to produce their records. Based on them, Long reduced the rates the pipelines could charge. The commission's work was done; now it was up to the courts. The case dragged on for the next three years but Long never pushed for a decision. In 1926, Dudley J. LeBlanc was elected to the commission and voted with Francis Williams, who by now had split with Long, to remove him from the chair. The

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19 Long, in his autobiography, maintains that he refused to pay the fine and the judge paid it for him. However, a reading of the newspaper accounts, at the time, make no mention of this. Instead the Associated Press of November 9, 1921 stated "Long was ordered to pay a fine of $1.00, which he paid, and then left for Shreveport." The Shreveport Times headline on the article read: "Long Free After He Pays One Dollar Fine," Shreveport Times, November 9, 1921.
commission then tripled the rates and abolished Huey's other reforms. In this, as in most of his other fights with the oil industry, Long obtained the initiative, then vacillated and finally lost. He was great at winning the battle and losing the war. Opponents of Long have ascribed dubious motives to him for the frequent repetition of this pattern.

Long had similar problems with the phone companies. In 1922 he fought a phone rate increase (Huey argued the case before the U.S. Supreme Court and won) and succeeded in having the increase rescinded and refund checks totaling $467,000 mailed to phone company customers. Francis Williams, another member of the commission, later said that Huey "tried frantically to cut the amount to be refunded to the phone users in half." 20

Shortly thereafter, the Commission, with Huey concurring, quietly raised the phone rates some $500,000 a year--thus eliminating the rebates. In the same vein, the Commission slightly lowered electric light bills in areas served by the Southwestern Gas and Electric Company ($135,000 per year) and raised the gas rate considerably. 21 This concern later made sizable contributions to Long's campaign for Governor. 22 Long's law practice also flourished. Numerous large corporations had become his clients including a gravel company that benefited from a Commission

20 Beals, op. cit., p. 50.
21 Ibid., p. 51.
22 Ibid., p. 51.
ruling. For the rest of his life, "he was to receive large fees, while in office from some of the same firms he attacked. He had a defense; 'Why not? I admit I'm the best lawyer in Louisiana.'"

As was mentioned earlier, some opponents claimed that certain "fees" and "contributions" were bribes. A number of these attacks cannot be entirely discounted, due to the positions and personages involved. Three sources of attack which probably have some credit were his brothers, Earl and Julius; Francis Williams, a fellow Commissioner with Huey, and one time political ally; and Elmer Irey, special agent of the Internal Revenue in charge of investigating the Long empire. The above four, at the time of their public statements, were all fanatically anti-Huey, and all had been hurt deeply by the Kingfish. Earl Long testified under oath that his brother had taken a $10,000 bribe in 1927 from a utilities executive. Writing in Real America in 1933, brother Julius stated that Huey admitted to him the fact that his 1924 campaign

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24 Ibid.

25 Earl wanted to be lieutenant governor in 1932 but Huey refused to support him. Earl ran anyway and was defeated. Julius was a former law partner of Huey's until they had a disagreement and broke up the partnership. Francis Williams voted with Huey on the commission but broke with Huey in 1926. Irey had his investigation of Huey halted by political pressure and resented this action. See Julius Long, "Julius Long Unmasks His Brother Senator Huey P. Long," Real America (October, 1933), and Elmer Irey, The Tax Dodgers (New York: Greenburg Publishing Co., 1948).

26 United States Senate Hearings of the Special Committee on the Investigation of Campaign Expenditures, 72nd Congress, 2nd Session (1932), pp. 817-818.
was financed largely by certain special interests. "To this day," he declared, "he is going in with every special interest he can connect with, at the same time howling loudly how he will 'stomp them out.'"\(^{27}\) Francis Williams charged that Long had blocked development of a huge sulfur deposit in order to "curry favor with the gigantic sulfur trust of the country and to get more Wall street money for his candidates for governor and other state offices."\(^{28}\)

Long always vehemently denied any wrongdoing on his part saying "only stupid politicians take bribes. I'm my own boss. If I take a bribe, I accept a boss. There's no one living who can tell me to do this or that because some time in the past I put myself under obligation to him."\(^{29}\) Regardless of whether he indulged in illicit practices his income from legal sources was immense. In the last six months of his life he received $350,000 from two state commissions for services rendered to them.\(^{30}\) His total wealth will probably never be known. His

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\(^{27}\) Julius Long, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 55.  
\(^{28}\) Beals, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 334.  
\(^{29}\) Sindler, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 106.  
\(^{30}\) Records show Long was paid $225,000 by the Tax Commission . . . . and $125,000 by the Public Service Commission. His contract with the Tax Commission gave him one-third of all taxes collected by his efforts on unassessed property. The Public Service Commission fixed his fee in each utility case, compelling the investigated company to pay it, under an act passed by the Legislature at Long's behest." St. Louis Post Dispatch, September 11, 1935. Article is part of the Louisiana Room collection of Long materials of Louisiana State University.
will only confused matters. It listed assets of $116,000, less than
two months earnings for him.\footnote{Sindler, op. cit., p. 106. With regard to the whereabouts of the supposed fortune, Herman B. Deutsch in his The Huey Long Murder Case (New York: Doubleday, 1963), relates the final minutes of Long on earth. Deutsch quotes Weiss as saying, "Huey, Huey, can you hear me?"
There was a faint stir of response.
'Huey, you are seriously hurt. Everything that can be done to you is being done, but no one can ever say how such things will turn out. Now is the time to tell me where you put the papers and things that you took out of the bank vault. Where did you put them? Tell me where they are, Huey. Please don't wait any longer.'
Thus the final thoughts he carried with him out of his life concerned a political campaign. Hardly audible was the faint breath that whispered:
'Later--I'll tell you later . . . .'\footnote{Sindler, op. cit., p. 49.}
}

Luckily for Huey, his financial practices were not an issue in
1924 nor would they become so until he was so entrenched that the attacks
would not injure him. Long had now been on the political scene for only
three years but he had gained wide fame. On his thirtieth birthday he
announced for governor, He ran a hard campaign, ranting against the "lying
newspapers," promising to "stump out the interests, declaring he would
provide free textbooks, get the farmers out of the dust by paving roads
and build bridges to unite the state."\footnote{Curtis Hodges, "The Politics of Huey P. Long" (unpublished Master's thesis, Graduate School, Louisiana State University, 1940), p. 33.}

The opposition in his 1924 race tended to ignore him. The New
Orleans Times-Picayune rarely referred to him, and then, only to attack
him.\footnote{Curtis Hodges, "The Politics of Huey P. Long" (unpublished Master's thesis, Graduate School, Louisiana State University, 1940), p. 33.} The traditional establishment considered him a radical--dangerous and unsound. No matter how the professionals ignored or rejected
him, the people, the country folk in particular, came out to listen and went away disciples. As the campaign wore on the press saw him falling further behind as crowds increased at his speeches. Long's platform was all heresy but the people wanted heresy. The state had on its books practically none of the reform legislation that came out of the Populist movement. It is not hard, then, to realize why "they stood, hundreds deep, in the dim light of his meetings, shouting, 'You tell 'em, Huey; 'pour it on, Huey'; and 'give 'em hell, big boy.'" However, the bread and butter issues of the campaign were eclipsed by the Klan issue. The powerful Klan was a controversial group at this time and Huey had the misfortune to get caught in the middle. One of his opponents, Hewitt Bouanchaud, was a Catholic and very anti-Klan. Henry Fuqua, the third candidate, had some feeling for the Klan. Long tried to straddle the issue and ended up third best.

Primary day came and with it rain. Long had previously stated that if it rained and kept the country folks home, he would lose. He did lose but not for the reason he had imagined. His margin in the rural parishes of north and central Louisiana did not appreciably grow in his following victories but his percentage increased considerably in south

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34 Alice Lee Grosjean, Scrapbook of Huey Long Materials, volumes 1-5, Louisiana State University Library, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

35 Davis, op. cit., p. 94.
Louisiana. The final tally showed Bouanchaud with 84,162; Fuqua, 81,382; and Long, 75,985. Huey was out of the runoff which Fuqua won.

Later that year Huey was re-elected to the Public Service Commission. He was elected in a landslide receiving 83.9 per cent of the vote. In the same election Long supported U.S. Senator Joseph Ransdell for re-election against L. E. Thomas, the Mayor of Shreveport.

The campaign was an offensive one with Long hurling invective at Thomas: "Ladies and gentlemen, at birth the 'sugar tit' of the state of Louisiana landed in L. E. Thomas's mouth. It's been there ever since." Huey also attacked Thomas for seeking Negro support. The people ate up these antics and returned Joseph Ransdell to the Senate.

Nineteen twenty-six marked another senatorial contest, this one between former Governor J. Y. Sanders and Senator Edwin S. Broussard. Long stumped the state for the "Cajun" Senator, meanwhile building up support for himself with the French Catholic south. Broussard won by

36Long had majorities in 21 parishes in 1924, mainly those in north Louisiana. In 1928 Long had majorities in 38 parishes. While still losing Orleans Long increased his percentage there five points. Source: Compiled Primary Election Returns of the Democratic Party, State of Louisiana, 1924 and 1928.

37Sindler, op. cit., p. 49.

38The Constitution of 1921 changed the name from Railroad to Public Service.

39Sindler, op. cit., p. 50.

40Beals, op. cit., p. 67.

41This was unusual since Long was not a Negro baiter, and Thomas was referred to by some as "the Klan Mayor of Shreveport." See Beals, ibid., p. 50.
4,000 votes and Long claimed credit for the victory. However, there is no evidence of the veracity of his claim. \(^{42}\)

In the 1928 gubernatorial campaign, Long was much better prepared for battle than in 1924. His opponents in this campaign were Governor O. H. Simpson, who became governor in 1926 upon the death of Governor Fuqua; and Congressman Riley Wilson, a seven term congressman known for his work on flood control.

Long opened his campaign in St. Martinville, the heart of the Cajun country, under the famous Evangeline Oak and delivered his most famous speech, in which he said:

And it is here under this oak where Evangeline waited for her lover, Gabriel, who never came. This oak is an immortal spot, made so by Longfellow's poem but Evangeline is not the only one who has waited here in disappointment. Where are the schools that you have waited for your children to have, that have never come? Where are the roads and the highways that you send your money to build, that are no nearer now than ever before? Where are the institutions to care for the sick and disabled? Evangeline wept bitter tears in her disappointment, but it lasted through only one lifetime. Your tears in this country, around this oak, have lasted for generations. Give me the chance to dry the eyes of those who still weep here. \(^{43}\)

Using hate, fear, humor, ridicule and the promise of a better life, Huey pulled out all the stops in this campaign. In his native Winn Parish, where the problem of tick eradication was a volatile one, Huey declared: "Friends, if I am elected, I will inspect every cow, male and female, for ticks. Them that's got 'em will get rid of them and

\[^{42}\text{Sindler, op. cit., p. 50.}\]

\[^{43}\text{Long, op. cit., p. 99.}\]
them that ain't got none won't get any."44 He was a master at the use of ridicule—not only with regard to ticks—but also his opponents. Wilson drew Long's ire for his flood control record: "Wilson has been in Congress for fourteen years, and this year the water went 14 feet higher than ever before, giving him a flood record of one foot of high water a year."45

The press vilified rather than ignored Long in this campaign. One Shreveport paper indicated displeasure by consistently placing his name in small letters.46 Another paper disclosed that it did not even read his speeches saying, "We did not care to waste the time listening to all his bull." Although the press did not find him agreeable, the people enjoyed the prospects of his platform which, as in 1924, included free textbooks, free bridges, natural gas for New Orleans, repeal of the tobacco tax, more paved roads, better schools, an occupational tax on the "Octopus," and better prisons and mental health facilities.48 On January 17, 1928 he reversed his 1924 performance by coming in first in the field of three. He received 128,842 votes, compared to 81,747 for Wilson and 80,326 for Simpson.49 Simpson withdrew declaring his support

44Grosjean, IV, op. cit., p. 54.
45Kane, op. cit., p. 56.
46Grosjean, II, op. cit., p. 77.
47Ibid., p. 82.
48Sindler, op. cit., p. 54.
49Ibid., p. 55.
for Long. Wilson faced reality and quit the race. In the general elec-
tion, Huey easily defeated Etienne J. Claire, the Republican candidate.

The Governorship

Huey Long now had the prize that had evaded him four years before.
He intended his inauguration to do justice to the transfer of power from
the old to the new. The thirty-four year old governor-elect on May 21,
1928 rode through the streets of Baton Rouge lined with cheering thou-
sands but he did not respond. Instead he stared ahead, his face lined
with deep seriousness, while outgoing Governor Simpson waved and yelled
to the populace. The new Governor took the oath of office as the
forty-fourth governor of the state before 15,000 people, and a seventeen
gun salute. That night a huge reception was held. Nevertheless, the
next morning the new Governor was at his office with his small staff. 50
Long announced he needed only a two person staff--"I intend to do the
work myself." 52 He intended it to be a one man show and it was. The
Governor, in the first weeks of his administration, demonstrated one
slogan of his office would be, "to the victor belongs the spoils."

A month after taking office, the highway department announced
that Long had authorized the dismissal of 53 of the 71 highway

50 Baton Rouge Advocate, May 22, 1928.

51 To the post of Executive Secretary he named his secretary, Alice
Lee Grosjean, a very attractive twenty-four year old girl who became his
secretary several years before when he opened his law office in Shreveport.
To assist her, Long retained the services of Mrs. Anna Fetter, career
employee having served under several governors. Baton Rouge Advocate,
May 9, 1928.

52 Ibid.
patrolmen. Three weeks later the governor denied that he used patronage to build a machine and stated that the patrol numbered only 112. Apparently, he had forgotten the announcement from Mr. Atkins, head of the highway patrol, on May 23rd.

The Kingfish, as he now called himself, learned how to flatter, threaten and bully legislators. He was hardly seated behind his desk before he announced: "We're not going to entertain our friends for jobs until our legislative program is put over. We cannot discuss jobs now." Although many of the smaller jobs were filled rapidly the desirable ones were generally occupied only after the session adjourned.

A new mode of action was expected by the populace; they were not disappointed. There was no tradition he did not violate. He ran the state for days from his bed in the Heidelberg Hotel in downtown Baton Rouge. He met the German Ambassador in green silk pajamas. He even ripped down the Mansion, built a miniature White House to replace it and constructed a new thirty-four story Capitol. He was a buffoon on the surface but a hardened political leader underneath. His accomplishments

53Ibid., May 23, 1928.
54Ibid., June 6, 1928.
55The title comes from the "Amos and Andy Show." Long states in his autobiography that one day at a meeting he referred to himself as the "Kingfish" and the name stuck. Long, op. cit., pp. 277-278.
56Baton Rouge Advocate, May 9, 1928.
58Ibid.
were memorable. His enemies, however, emphasized his clowning and vili-
ified his accomplishments.

After a year of his tornado-like action his opponents drew up a
list of nineteen charges and moved to impeach him. Long was impeached
by the house. Huey prevented a trial in the senate by securing the signa-
tures of fifteen senators on a "Round Robin" in which they declared
they would not vote to convict no matter what the evidence showed. 59

The impeachment proceedings sobered Long for about a year. On
July 17, 1930, Long through his own newspaper, The Progress, 60 declared
his candidacy for the U.S. Senate seat held by Joseph Ransdell, whom
Huey had helped to re-elect in Ransdell's previous election. The
Governor's term did not expire until 1932 but Long maintained that even
if he did not take his seat until then the state would not lose because
"with Ransdell as Senator the seat was vacant anyway." 61 The people evi-
dently agreed for Huey in 1930 was elected over "Old Feather Duster" 62
Ransdell with ease. 63

59See Chapter IX for details.

60Long's personal newspaper was founded on March 27, 1930, and
was distributed as a weekly, although its publication was erratic. It
was published across the line in Mississippi to avoid the libel laws.
The paper paid high salaries drawing good reporters to its staff includ-
ing Trist Wood, the noted cartoonist.

61Stan Opotowsky, The Longs of Louisiana (New York: E. P. Dut-

62This was the nickname given him by Long because of his age,
seventy, and his long white goatee.

63Long received 57.3 per cent of the vote. Source: Sindler,
op. cit., p. 71.
Senator-elect Long's victory brought problems. How was he going to be a Senator in Washington, a Governor in Louisiana, and retain tight control of his machine at home while building one nationally? His problems were further complicated because of a split between him and his lieutenant governor earlier in the term. 64 If Dr. Paul Cyr, a country dentist, were to become governor, Long's tight state machine would be broken up. However, if Huey waited until 1932 his seniority and more importantly his ambitions would have to be delayed for two years. The problem was solved for Huey by Dr. Cyr in October of 1930. While Huey was at a football game in Mississippi, Cyr went to a notary in Shreveport and took the oath as governor. Long hearing of this ordered Alvin King, the President Pro Tem of the Senate to take the governor's oath—which he did. Huey then ordered the national guardsmen to bar Cyr from the capitol. Cyr upon returning to the capitol was barred from entering and was told that taking the oath was illegal but because he had assumed the governorship he obviously was no longer the lieutenant governor so the president pro tem who had also taken the oath was now the legal governor. Cyr sued for relief in the courts but after a two year delay the Louisiana Supreme Court said it had no jurisdiction over the issue. King served out the remainder of the Kingfish's term in peaceful obedience to his boss.

64 The break came over the sentencing to death for murder of a woman neighbor of Cyr's in the Le Boeuf murder case. Cyr begged Huey to commute the sentence but Long would not. Ibid., p. 60.
The Last Phase

Huey Long entered the Senate and proceeded to be all that a fresh-
man senator should not be: "He slandered his Senate colleagues. He lec-
tured them on food and taxes. He kept his hat on during a visit with
President Roosevelt as a token of his contempt." These feats of
notoriety were small compared to the publicity that rained down upon him
when he announced his "Share Our Wealth" program, which would make every
man a king but no man would ever wear a crown. Local S-O-W clubs


66 The program as set forth in a pamphlet entitled "Share Our Wealth," compiled by Huey P. Long, United States Senator, Washington, D.C., was this: 1. To limit poverty by providing that every deserving family shall share in the wealth of America for not less than one third of the average wealth, thereby to possess not less than $5000 free of debt. 2. To limit fortunes to such a few million dollars as will allow the balance of the American people to share in the wealth and profits of the land. 3. Old age pensions of $30 per month to persons over sixty years of age who do not earn as much as $1000 per year or who possess less than $10,000 in cash or property thereby to remove from the field of labor in times of unemployment those who have contributed their share to the public service. 4. To limit the hours of work to such an extent as to prevent over-production and to give the workers of America some share in the recreations, conveniences, and luxuries of life. 5. To balance agricultural production with what can be sold and consumed according to the laws of God, which have never failed. 6. To care for veterans of our wars. 7. Taxation to run the government to be supported first by reducing big fortunes from the top, thereby to improve the country and provide employment in public works whenever agricultural surplus is such as to render unnecessary, in whole or part, any particular crop. Source: Raymond Graham Swing, Fore-

67 This phrase was taken from Bryan's Cross of Gold speech and incorporated by Long into the wealth program. Source: Sindler, op. cit., p. 83.
sprung up all over the country. By February 1935 Long claimed a membership in these clubs of over 7,500,000 persons. The Kingfish was riding high and his national fame and power were growing monthly. In fact, "The Kingfish had swallowed the Pelican state. L'etat, c'est Huey."^70

Long's success was his failure for by gradually neutralizing or closing most of the legitimate avenues of expression, Long made extra legal attacks on him almost inevitable. Long had always refused advice and now in 1935 he rejected prediction. Mason Spencer, an anti-Long state representative declared: "I am not gifted with second sight. Nor did I see a spot of blood on the moon last night. But I can see blood on the polished floor of the Capitol. For if you ride this thing through, you will travel with the white horse of death. White men have ever made poor slaves."^72 Five months later blood splattered the marble floor of the capitol. On the evening of September 8th, 1935, as Huey walked from the House chamber to the governor's office he encountered a frail young man in a white linen suit. Seconds later Dr. Carl Austin Weiss, Jr. lay dead on the floor with sixty-one bullets in him. Huey

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^68 Ibid., p. 85.


^70 Sindler, op. cit., p. 95.

^71 Ibid., p. 95.

^72 Opotowsky, op. cit., p. 244.
was on his way to Our Lady of the Lake Hospital with a single bullet lodged in his abdomen. Two days later Senator Long was dead. Whether Weiss killed Long or a stray or purposeful bullet from the gun of one of his bodyguards did remains a mystery.

The Kingfish was dead but the Long dynasty had only begun. A few days after the Senator's burial, a group of his lieutenants including his younger brother Earl were discussing the leaderless morass that was quickly developing due to the absence of the Kingfish. After a long silence Earl stood up and said: "Huey was the only smart one from Winnfield. No matter of doubt about it. But I'm still here."

73Deutsch, op. cit., p. 174.
CHAPTER IV

AND ALONG CAME EARL

The previous chapter depicted the rise of Huey Long's power through its zenith and his assassination. This chapter attempts to describe the nature of Earl Kemp Long's operations, and the deeply complex and brilliant politician that he was.

Earl brought the dynasty both to heights that were beyond Huey's grasp and to the lowest depths of its forty year history. At its high point, however, no shot rang out. Instead Earl was forced to undergo a crucifixion engineered by one of the most unlikely combinations ever to disrupt a ruling power. Ironically, the more debilitating end came to the less ruthless and more moderate brother. The cast of Long's detractors, judges, and executioners included: the "good government" groups; the Eastern "Liberal" press; the communications media in Louisiana; the "loyal" white southerner attempting to maintain his economic and racial superiority; and his own family. On his side Earl had only his own genius, the hard core of the poor white Populist tradition, and the largely disfranchised Negro.

It was a long hard journey to the top for Earl Long. To be governor of the "Gret Stet" of Louisiana was his most cherished ambition.1 He loved the fame, the power, and the "free stuff" as he phrased

1Baton Rouge Advocate, Magazine Section, May 7, 1948.
"You live in the best house I ever lived in. You have servants and you don't even have to buy even your food. Every time you open the door someone hands you a turkey or a blanket or all that free stuff. Well I like that free stuff."^2

Earl's Early Life

Earl was born August 26, 1895 at the family farm outside of Winnfield, the youngest of eight children. It was there he spent his childhood and graduated from high school. Earl later reminisced about his childhood with his brother Huey:

Well we never saw a train until we were six years old . . . Huey and I saw a train the same day, he was eight and I was six. I remember Huey crawled up under it and they had to wait and get him out before they could start it up. Huey and I were very close . . . closer than any other members of the family to each other . . . since we were both the same age more or less.^3

Whether playing marbles or baseball, the two brothers were constant companions. They also shared a magazine and paper route. As they grew up, their interests drew apart: "Huey was more inclined in a literary way than I was. I liked cattle and hogs and horses a lot more than he did."^5

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^2Ibid. Sometimes his idea of what "free stuff" was took an unusual turn. During both his 1948-52 and 1956-60 terms as governor he used paroled convicts on his farm. Prison officials explained that "It's a way to rehabilitate them." Baton Rouge Advocate, January 19, 1957.

^3Transcript of tapes owned by Brooks Read, former news director of WBRZ-TV in Baton Rouge. The tapes are undated but were recorded in the latter portion of the 1950's. Reel Two.

^4Ibid.

^5Ibid.
also revealed that he never dreamed of becoming governor when a child, only hoping to meet a governor some day. His ambition in life at that time was to be a livestock dealer, a love he never gave up.

After graduating from high school he entered Louisiana Polytechnic Institute but soon quit and followed his brother Huey into a career as a traveling salesman. For ten years Earl sold groceries, drugs, and hardware throughout the south. He worked out of Fort Worth part of the time selling a variety of products including Calumet Baking Powder, Nature's Remedy tablets, Never Fail Oil Cans and Black Draught. As with Huey, Earl's selling experience made him many contacts, and gave him valuable experience in dealing with people in the various sections of the state. He had a fascination about groceries that continued until his death. He was an avid reader of supermarket ads and a frequent buyer at their sales. During his career as a salesman Long also obtained a legal education as a special student at LSU, Tulane, and Loyola.

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6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
9 Baton Rouge Advocate, May 9, 1956.
11 Baton Rouge Advocate, May 9, 1948, Magazine Section. "No I didn't get a degree. I've never had one in my life. But I learned enough law to pass the bar exam in 1926. I did most of the work at Loyola." Ibid.
The Beginning of Earl's Political Career

After passing the bar examination Earl increasingly turned his attention to politics. His first foray into politics came in 1918 when he campaigned vigorously for Huey in his bid for Railroad Commissioner. Earl later commented: "I did more talking for Huey than I did for my company and I sold him a lot better than the baking powder I was supposed to be selling . . . He'd never been elected if it hadn't been for me. He said so himself." Earl always lived with an inferiority complex to his brother and as he grew older he liked to compare his feats favorably to his brother's.

In Huey's next two campaigns, his unsuccessful 1924 campaign for governor and his successful one in 1928, Earl was a tireless campaigner. Huey appointed his brother inheritance tax collector in Orleans Parish from which Earl made about $60,000 in four years. It was a very controversial appointment since Huey had made a campaign promise to abolish the position and use the money to aid in the construction of a proposed tuberculosis hospital in New Orleans. The appointment prompted a newspaper to publish a picture of Earl with the caption: "New Lakefront TB Hospital."

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12 In later life he listed his previous occupations as stock raiser, timber grower and salesman. Campaign literature for the 1956 campaign included in Earl Long file of the New Orleans Public Library.

13 Baton Rouge Advocate, Magazine Section, May 9, 1948.

14 Ibid.

15 Read's Tapes, Reel Two, op. cit.

During the impeachment proceedings against his brother in 1929, Earl labored vigorously for Huey and is generally credited with being his savior. Huey reportedly wished to resign and sobbed in his hotel room but Earl insisted on fighting and is believed to have been responsible for the "round robin." Earl later said: "I went broke keeping him out of trouble when the legislature was full of people trying to impeach him." And, "I really clinched that business. Huey was pretty worried. But we got those signatures. In fact we could have got more if we needed them."  

Earl on several occasions literally took up the fight for Huey. During the impeachment proceedings Earl fought with Harney J. Bogan, a Caddo Parish Representative. In the fight, according to Bogan, Earl "bit me on the face and neck and scratched me. He also stuck a finger in my mouth and attempted to tear my cheek." (Earl's escapades did not just occur in the late fifties.) Within a year after this episode the two brothers broke with each other for unknown reasons. Earl ran for lieutenant governor on the Anti-Long ticket in 1932. He finished last in a field of three.

Taking time out between attacks on his brother, Earl married the former Miss Blanche Revere, whom he called "Miz Blanche." He met her at

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17Baton Rouge Advocate, Magazine Section, May 9, 1948.
18Ibid.
19Associated Press Preparedness Article, op. cit.
the cigar counter in the Monteleone Hotel in New Orleans,\textsuperscript{20} courted her for a year and then married her in 1932.

A Huey Long lieutenant, Oscar K. Allen, was elected governor in 1932. Shortly after assuming office he removed Earl from his position as inheritance tax collector for Orleans Parish. The reasons were easy to find, for Earl had not only campaigned against his brother's candidate but had also testified against Huey in a Congressional Hearing.\textsuperscript{21} The investigation centered on Senator John Overton's 1931 campaign for the Senate. Widespread election irregularities were charged by the Anti-Longs. Earl and Huey confronted each other in the hearing room. Earl testified for hours calling Huey a "big bellied coward."\textsuperscript{22} Further Earl stated that Huey had informed him that a man named Abell (H. C. Abell, New York representative of Electric Bond and Share Co.) had "given him $10,000 and Huey was sort of afraid to use it for fear it was marked."\textsuperscript{23} Huey denied the allegation and called Earl a "liar." Earl retorted by saying "You can't make a liar out of me. I stood with you as long as I could, but you run wild."\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{20}Opotowsky, op. cit., p. 138.

\textsuperscript{21}U. S. Senate, Hearings of the Special Committee on the Investigation of Campaign Expenditures, 72nd Congress, 2nd Session (1932).


\textsuperscript{23}Hearings, op. cit., pp. 817-818.

\textsuperscript{24}Time, op. cit., p. 18.
Earl was not out of a job for long. The national administration gave him an appointment as assistant state counsel for the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), a position he held until 1934.  

Earl on His Own

The break with Huey prevented the mantle of leadership from falling on Earl after the Kingfish was assassinated in the fall of 1935. The two, however, had patched up their differences somewhat and were on speaking terms. In fact Earl had tried to get Huey to postpone the session at which he was shot. During his later campaigns Earl publicly claimed repentence. In 1936 Earl ran once again for lieutenant governor under the banner of Richard Leche on the "Organization" backed slate. The ticket was swept into office with Leche leading the ticket, getting 67.1% of the primary vote, greater than Huey ever received.  

Governor Leche and Long did not agree on many things and were never close. Leche was clearly not as liberal as Huey, which probably chaffed Earl. As a result Earl was never high in the councils of the

25 Many of Huey's opponents were given federal positions during this hectic period in Louisiana politics.

26 Read's Tapes, Reel Two, op. cit.

27 "God knows I'm sorry I fell out with Huey. What more can I say." Baton Rouge State-Times, January 10, 1940.


29 Baton Rouge Advocate, Magazine Section, May 9, 1948.

30 Sindler, op. cit., p. 122.
administration—a fact evidenced by the 1939 "Louisiana Scandals" where Earl's name was conspicuously absent from the indictment lists. Earl, however, himself received some "honest graft." Records show that he received $10,000 for his legal services in a one day hearing before the Public Service Commission involving a telephone rate reduction proposal. Long also utilized the patronage at his disposal, sometimes in a unique manner. He reportedly had one political associate placed on the state payroll as a bridge watcher. The appointee was charged with filing reports to the state at regular intervals stating whether the bridge was still in its place (down the road from his house) or if it had been stolen or destroyed. The lieutenant governor also delivered innocuous speeches during his tenure as a way of keeping his name before the public. His style of rambling speeches sprinkled with risque jokes was clearly evident at this time.

31 Harnett Kane thoroughly investigated the "Scandals" which broke upon the realization that James Monroe Smith, the President of Louisiana State University, had embezzled over $500,000 from the State. Harnett Kane, Louisiana Hayride (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1941).

32 Baton Rouge Advocate, January 5, 1938.

33 Story based on interviews with members of the prominent south Louisiana family whose member was the bridge watcher. Interview, February 25, 1965.

34 I believe it was at the Police Jury Convention in New Orleans a few years ago, (I understand you are going to have a banquet and floor show here tonight) there was a fellow from Winnfield down at New Orleans and he took in a show. He took his wife along and while there he was killed. His little son was always asking his mother to tell him what happened to his father. She told him he was not old enough and when he was 17 years old he was still asking his mother what happened to his father. She says I don't know whether you are old enough to appreciate it, but I'll tell you. Your father was in New Orleans taking in a show and while seeing the show and all the pretty girls, a girl came out in
The First Administration

On June 26, 1939 in the midst of the "Scandals," "Dick" Leche resigned and Earl Long took the oath of office in a hastily assembled swearing-in ceremony at the Mansion. After Governor Leche finished his statement of resignation he shouted: "If anybody in the crowd wants a job, let him see the governor." And they did, by the thousands throughout the years. Earl thus became the second member of his family to become governor (no other Louisiana family has that distinction), the fourth lieutenant governor ever to succeed to the office, and would become only the second man ever to serve as the chief executive of Louisiana three times. One of the first steps the new governor took was to exhibit the strain of puritanism that ran through him. He

tights, and the announcement was made to the crowd: 'Would some kind gentleman come help pin her tights on, and your father went to help her and was killed in the rush.' Long's Address to the Louisiana Police Jury Convention as quoted in Louisiana Police Jury Review, April, 1939, p. 56. Twenty years later for giving similar speeches opponents would brand him as insane.

The classic statement on this hectic period was expressed by one Baton Rouge social leader: "It's hard to know what to do," referring to the giving of dinner parties, "You might invite six people and find four of them indicted by the time the dinner engagement arrived." Baton Rouge State-Times, July 24, 1939.

Baton Rouge Advocate, June 26, 1939.

Baton Rouge State-Times, May 4, 1956. Jean Baptiste LeMoyne, Sieur de Bienville, one of nine men to govern Louisiana when it was under French rule served three times as governor for a total of twenty-five years but he was never elected, being appointed by the King of France.

Earl also was a candidate for either lieutenant governor or Governor in every election between 1932 and his death in 1960 except for 1952 when he supported his hand-picked candidate, Judge Carlos Spaht.
abolished the serving of hard liquor at the Mansion.  

Earl continued this prohibition even during the hectic days of the fifties.

Long quickly moved to disassociate himself from the Leche administration, announcing that he would govern in the footsteps of his brother not those of his predecessor. He called a special session of the legislature to propose issues that he could develop as campaign assets in his drive to secure the governorship on his own in 1940. During the six-day session twenty Long measures were passed by the docile legislature. They were but a downpayment on the reforms he pledged.

The campaign Earl ran was a difficult one. He had to remove himself from the mantle of Leche but not from the efficient machine that was his only hope for victory. Even Huey’s confidante, Alice Lee Grosjean was brought out of the twilight and into the Mansion as an aide to Earl during the campaign. Long’s every day as governor was a campaign day. His campaign was similar to his later ones as were the opposition’s

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38Baton Rouge State-Times, July 24, 1939. A veteran Capitol correspondent claims that Long also prohibited smoking in the Mansion. Interview with Capitol correspondent, December 1, 1965.

39Liebling, op. cit., p. 103.

40Two letters contained in the Wisdom Collection of Long materials reveal their efficiency. One letter to Long campaign leaders from Congressman J. O. Fernandez states the number of firemen and policemen living in the ninth ward of New Orleans and reveals that all have Long posters in their windows except two (2) who refused to accept them. Their names and addresses are listed. The second letter from the Congressman lists the license numbers of all cars parked at a Sam Jones rally in the ninth ward. The William B. Wisdom Collection of Huey Long Materials, Tulane University, New Orleans.

41Ibid.
tactics. During the campaign Long attacked the teachers' demand for an increase in salary—a mistake he would never make again. In other areas Earl appealed to the same groups to whom Huey appealed: the poor whites, the country folk, the laboring man and the Negro. His style was as uniquely Earl then as it was two decades later. He accused his major opponent, Sam Jones of being "an educated fool" and named him "High Hat Sam, the High Society Kid . . . who pumps perfume under his arms." Long was a master at the use of ridicule—as most legislators and politicians who opposed him learned. One diversionary tactic Long used to blunt the Leche "scandals" was to make light of them, comparing them to "the doll and toy fund" of the Times-Picayune. Long shouted:

I think I'll have the doll and toy fund audited. Do you know how much money the Times-Picayune made in profit last year? $490,000. A year ago I gave the doll and toy fund $100. This year I was too broke to give anything.

You know how much the Times-Picayune gave the toy fund? A hundred and fifty dollars. There's no telling how much they got away with. I think I'll have the doll and toy fund audited. I'm having everything else audited, so I might as well do that.

In Protestant north Louisiana Earl reminded the crowds that even Christ had Judas as he had his Smith. In the Bayou country Earl asked: "You

42 A Sam Jones campaign brochure read in part as follows: "But nothing that you (Long) have ever done is quite as low as this. That you should use the power of your office and the tax payer's money to print and distribute Negro newspapers and use these newspapers to tell lies about your white opponent, and to foster and urge and demand, on behalf of the Negro, the right to vote." Ibid.

43 Sindler, op. cit., p. 149.

44 Baton Rouge Advocate, January 15, 1940.

45 Interview with Sam Jones, December 14, 1965.

46 Baton Rouge Advocate, January 15, 1940.
wouldn't turn your back on the Catholic Church if one man in the Church went wrong, would you?" For the clincher Earl became humble and asked the voters for their prayers and swore before God that he would be a good governor.

Long in 1940 received 40.9% of the vote in the first primary. Jones, his major rival pulled 28.0%. The positions were reversed in the second primary with Jones receiving 51.8% and Earl 48.2%. Jones' main additional support came from Longite James Noe who turned on Earl and supported Jones.

Long was a miserable loser. He attempted to get the Democratic nomination for secretary of state after E. A. Conway, the candidate, passed away. Jones was able to defeat this maneuver. In addition the governor called a special session of the legislature but only forty-eight House members and thirteen Senators answered the call. For lack of a quorum the session could not open.

\[47\] Ibid.  
\[48\] Ibid.  
\[49\] Sindler, op. cit., p. 141.  
\[50\] Baton Rouge Advocate, Magazine Section, May 9, 1948.  
\[51\] Long later said: "I didn't really want the job but I was persuaded to make a fight for it anyway. My better judgement told me not to but some of my friends thought we'd have the nucleus of an organization." Ibid.  
\[52\] New Orleans Times-Picayune, March 23, 1940.
The Long Wait

The Longs in 1940 were out of power for the first time in twelve years. During the next eight years the "reformers" and the "peace and harmony folks" followed policies that likened "reform" government to conservative economic policies. The Anti-Longs did not develop the thesis that "we can do it better" than the Longs but instead rejected liberalism both in racial and economic matters. The result would be two more terms for "Uncle Earl."

Long announced his candidacy for governor on May 27, 1943. His platform advocated reduction of the voting age, repeal of the state ad valorem tax, old age pensions and increased teachers' salaries. However, Earl was not able to secure the backing of "Bob" Maestri, a leading "Regular" in New Orleans. Maestri believed that Earl's temperament was the major factor in his loss of the 1940 contest. The "Regulars" nominated Lewis Morgan, a minor Long functionary, for governor, and Long accepted the second spot again on the ticket against his better judgment. The major anti-Long candidate was Jimmie Davis, a cowboy star and gospel singer who sang songs and preached hellfire from the platform. Governor Jones gave undercover support to Davis but no open

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53 Baton Rouge Advocate, May 28, 1943.

54 Sindler, op. cit., p. 185.

55 Baton Rouge Advocate, Magazine Section, May 9, 1948.

56 Sindler, op. cit., p. 182.
support because the governor's policies were not popular in some areas. Jones, however, was elated at Davis' victory calling it a "victory for clean government."  

Long reached the second primary in his bid for lieutenant governor. However, he lost to Emile Verret, the Davis backed candidate in the second primary. Earl later declared that he tried to get Morgan out of the race because under the law then in effect the top man in the other races, all Long men, would have gone into office foregoing the second primary. Long also felt that he could have then defeated Davis for the top spot on the ticket. Earl vowed to run for governor the next time. He would not accept second spot on any ticket.

57 A former representative said: "In 1940 I was elected by forty-nine votes over my opponent. Jones got elected governor. I didn't go to the legislature ten times during those four years. In 1944 I ran again, had hardly ever been to the legislature, just ran on an anti-Jones platform and I won. All you had to do was be anti-Jones in that election. I won by 2500 votes that time--even without being there." Interview with Angelle, February 25, 1965.

58 Baton Rouge Advocate, March 2, 1944. Later a high official of the Jones administration in an interview stated that Davis was his hand picked and backed candidate. He also declared that "He was the only man in Louisiana ever to pick his successor and get him elected governor." Interview, October 3, 1965.

59 In the first primary Long received 41.9 per cent of the vote compared to 27.5 per cent for Morgan. Long received 48.8 per cent compared to Morgan's 46.4 per cent in the second primary. Verret received 27.6 per cent of the vote in the first primary and 51.2 per cent in the second primary. Most of the eliminated candidates for governor and lieutenant governor united behind Davis and Verret, leaving Long and Morgan little additional support to be gained. Sindler, op. cit., pp. 186-189.

60 Baton Rouge Advocate, Magazine Section, May 9, 1948.
The 1948 campaign began in 1946 when Earl again announced for governor. His campaign, however, did not accelerate until early 1948 when Earl stumped the state promoting a platform that had "something in it for everybody." Sam Jones was again his main antagonist and for Jones it was the 1940 campaign all over again. Not for Earl. Long's platform included a pledge of fifty dollar a month old age pensions; pensions for people over the age of sixty; the widening of the Airline Highway, which his brother built between Baton Rouge and New Orleans; fenced highways; and increased expenditures for hospitals. 61 Jones stuck to his old standbys of endorsing clean living, attacking self interest, and promoting the concept that Jones was an honest man--the same man that was governor in 1940. 62 He might have been the same man but the times were not. This the Jones people never understood. 63

Besides his catholic taste for promises, Earl attacked Davis as a movie actor (true) and as having a considerable absentee record while governor (true). 64 The opposition enlivened the campaign by charging, through Congressman James Domengeaux (D-La.), that Earl had been assessed a federal tax claim of more than $100,000 on "an income of ill gotten

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61Baton Rouge Advocate, January 3, 14, and March 1, 1948.
63Sindler, op. cit., p. 199.
64In fiscal 1944-45, Davis was absent 44 days; in 1945-46, 68 days and in 1946-47, 108 days. Sindler, op. cit., p. 190. Earl utilized Jones' earlier endorsement of Davis to campaign against Jones through Davis.
gain and graft." Long vigorously denied the charges but after the primary admitted that the federal government had asked him to pay a penalty on his tax of fifteen hundred dollars.

The anti-Longs charged that Earl had received $150,000 from Frank Costello and his associates. Long denied having received "one red cent" from anybody named Costello. These rumored scandals did not deter the voters from electing Earl to the governorship. He received

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65 Baton Rouge Advocate, January 16, 1948. Later the Advocate carried the following: "It was disclosed Thursday the Internal Revenue Commissioner, George Schoenan, told Domengeaux in advance that the charge was not true. This Domengeaux later denied." Ibid., March 12, 1948.

66 Ibid., January 26, 1948. On February 18, 1948 newspapers disclosed that Long had been involved in a dispute with the "state department of conservation" over the amount of state tax claimed by the department on Long's income for 1936-37, which still as of 1948 had not been settled. Files show "that the revenue department attempted to collect taxes on alleged additional income and disallowed deductions computed at $39,760.61 for 1936 and $66,205.44 for 1937 . . . . The files of the board of tax appeals show that Long and Mrs. Long reported $5,438.75 income each for 1936 and paid taxes on this amount . . . . The then collector of revenue contended that their community income should have included also $991 additional rents, $34,150.72 'unidentified and other income' and $2,068.39 for cattle sales . . . .

. . . . A schedule of claims in the board files includes the notation 'taxpayer' received money from Mr. Clem Sehrt and Mr. Shirley Wimberly. He was the beneficiary of a so-called gift fund. He made numerous deposits of cash and receipts that he refused to identify or explain. He received a monthly allowance from the Louisiana Democratic Association commonly known as the 'deduct fund.'

For 1937, the records show, the Department of Revenue claimed that the Longs' community income reported should have included $12,500 additional professional income, $1,491 additional rents, $35,761.20 'other income' and $12,738.74 from cattle sales . . . ." Ibid., February 19, 1948.


68 On New Years Day (1948) Long and Costello had been seen conversing in the Hotel Roosevelt in New Orleans and had occupied adjoining barber chairs in the hotel barber shop. Ibid.
41.5% and Jones 22.9% of the first primary vote. Long then won a resounding victory in the second primary and the election, receiving 65.9% of the votes, as opposed to Jones' 34.1%. However, "the centers of Long and anti-Long strength, defined in relative terms, remained constant in Earl's defeat in 1940 and his smashing victory in 1948." The principal reason for Jones' demise is explainable by his failure to come to terms with political reality. His opponent was named Long who was supported by the Kingfish's son, a considerable asset. Earl did not miss a political trick and Jones missed several of them.

Longism--Second Phase

Earl immediately grasped the significance of his victory and declared: "We'll improve on everything Huey did." The principal issues (i.e. conservatism vs. liberalism) had not changed much in the two decades since his brother swept into office with a liberal economic program. Earl did not let the importance of Huey's son Russell escape him either. He quickly named him his Executive Counsel.

69Sindler, op. cit., p. 203.
70Ibid., p. 205.
71Ibid.
72"It is ... questionable whether Earl K. Long would have won the election had it not been for the support lent to him by his nephew, Russell Long, the late Huey's son." Rudolf Heberle and Alvin L. Bertrand, "Factors Motivating Voting Behavior in a One Party State," Social Forces, XXVII (May, 1949), p. 349.
74Ibid.
Inauguration Day was spectacular, outdoing even Huey's. It was a fun filled day in Baton Rouge marking the return to power of the most famous family in Louisiana. After the swearing in ceremony Earl delivered his inaugural address in which he said:

If I could end my term of office with the satisfaction of knowing that no child in this state was attending school hungry or undernourished, and that no needy deserving person was living without medical attention, and that I had built roads, bridges, and hospitals, provided better services to the most humble homes, this and this alone would be the greatest reward in life for me.75

After the formal ceremonies the crowd moved to the LSU stadium for the party. Before the day was over the partisans had consumed 1,000 gallons of buttermilk, 10,000 cases of soft drinks, 20,000 pounds of weiners and 200,000 buns.76 Bands played, people danced in the carnival atmosphere which surrounded the stadium. Perhaps the most symbolic act of the new administration occurred the night before when Earl in his first official act ordered the spotlight at the top of the Capitol aimed at Huey's grave turned on once again. It was extinguished in 1942 by Governor Jones who gave as his reason that the need for wartime blackouts demanded it.77 It had remained darkened until that day, but the light once again shone down on the Longs.

75 Ibid., May 12, 1948.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid., May 11, 1948.
The new Governor settled down to running the state, distributing patronage,\(^78\) and pursuing his legislative program. The treasury had a surplus when Earl assumed office but he quickly ascertained that this was woefully short of the money needed to furnish his projected programs. However, Earl's tax program was largely accepted by the legislature. Armed with the new tax revenue Earl pursued an ambitious social welfare program. Chapter X details this legislative program.

The Governor was not content with only getting his tax program through the legislature or distributing the revenues resulting from it or filling the more than 3500 jobs at his disposal.\(^79\) Instead he decided to reorganize various departments in the state government and curtail the effectiveness of state civil service.

Earl in effect decentralized the state government and achieved this end with such speed and little fanfare that most people were not even aware.\(^80\)

\(^{78}\) Earl stated he had $1 people and $50,000 people and jobs to match them up. Ibid., February 27, 1948.

\(^{79}\) Ibid., February 27, 1948.

\(^{80}\) Under the Madden amendment the act was changed: "The Civil Service Commission was named by the governor, without restriction on his choice but subject to Senate confirmation. Present law requires that he choose among persons nominated by the heads of five universities and colleges. The state director of personnel rather than the Commission would hear and pass on appeals of employees who claimed that their rights were violated. Reinstatement of employees would be discretionary with the director. Specific provisions for reinstatement with back pay of employees dismissed for political or religious reasons would be dropped. The director of personnel himself would be appointed by the Commission and would not be under civil service. Under present law the position is filled by competitive examination and the director has the same protection against dismissal as other civil service employees." Ibid., June 23, 1948.
aware of what was happening. The department of institutions was abolished, the department of hospitals was greatly expanded, the highway department was reorganized, the finance department abolished and a division of administration created, all in one month.  

The administration was a bundle of activity; everyone was wondering how the electorate would react. The first test came in the special senatorial election called to fill the vacancy created when veteran Longite Senator Overton died. Earl appointed his wealthy backer William Feazel to the post for the interim before the special election was held. This was a move to keep the seat open in effect to allow Russell Long who would reach the minimum age of thirty before the date of the election.

Russell Long's only affiliation with politics was serving as Earl's Executive Counsel. Russell chose to run on Earl's record as governor during the past eight months. His opponent Robert Kennon, a Minden judge who later was to succeed Earl as governor, was only too happy to accept this technique. Unfortunately for Russell this was not the time to campaign on his uncle's record for the increased sales and consumer taxes had taken effect but the people were not used to paying them as yet. Russell squeaked through by 11,000 votes, receiving 51.07% of the

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82 Sindler, op. cit., p. 214.

83 Russell resigned as Executive Counsel when he became a candidate for the Senate.

84 The roads and schools were not yet evident but the higher taxes were a reality.
The cities, even the smaller ones voted against Russell. He lost New Orleans by more than 25,000 votes. The country people elected Russell, a fact he quickly acknowledged:

I want to thank all my friends and supporters especially those good old boys who laid down their cotton sacks, plows and hoes and went to the polls to elect Russell Long, U.S. Senator. I never would have made it without a heavy country vote. But I am most thankful also for my faithful city workers who kept me from being so badly snowed under in the cities that the country vote wouldn't have elected me.

Earl's election battles were far from over. The Presidential campaign loomed over the political scene. In September the State Central Committee under conservative States' Rights leader Leander Perez removed Truman's name from the ballot by withdrawing the Democratic endorsement from him. The Governor was not in attendance at the meeting but later said: "They did it. I had nothing to do with it." As a result of this action the Governor was obviously placed under great pressure and he called a special session of the legislature to put Truman's name back on

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87 Ibid., September 2, 1948.
88 Sindler, op. cit., p. 220.
89 New Orleans Times-Picayune, September 21, 1948.
90 Sindler, op. cit., p. 221.
the ballot but not as a Democrat. Earl later denied published reports that his often investigated income tax returns played any part in his call for a special session.

During the campaign racial anxieties were aroused by the "Dixiecrats." The Long forces, having enough troubles of their own, did not wage an all-out campaign for the President. They were a contrast to the well financed, aggressive and victorious anti-Truman coalition.

The remainder of Earl's term was non-controversial. On February 14, 1950 the Governor suffered a serious heart attack which resulted in a cessation of his activity for several months and a general slowdown for some time.

The Governor's moderation probably aided Russell in gaining a full Senate term in 1950. With a quiet electorate Russell was elected.

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91 Truman was not allowed the use of the "Rooster" which is the traditional symbol of Louisiana Democrats. Baton Rouge Advocate, September 22, 23, 26, 27, 1948.

92 Earl said: "They said the reason I called the extra session was because I was in trouble with income tax authorities and they would get after me if I didn't. That was an insult and I don't see why the federal government doesn't take issue with them." Ibid., October 4, 1948.

93 Sindler, op. cit., p. 222.

94 In 1949 Long attempted a defense of his tax program: "No public official likes to advocate higher taxes. I certainly have not made myself popular, in certain quarters, by raising the severance tax, the sales tax, the beer tax and the cigarette tax. But if a public official wants to make improvements and bring benefits to the people, which they need and are entitled to in order to make his state and community a better place to live, he has to have the courage to do things that are unpopular at times. In the long run, the people will eventually realize the good that has been done." Louisiana Police Jury Review, "Address Delivered by Governor Long Before the Annual Convention of the Louisiana Municipal Association," XIII (May-June, 1949), p. 66.
with 68.5 per cent of the vote. Unfortunately Earl regarded Russell's victory as an unqualified endorsement of himself and attempted to call a constitutional convention which would have extended his term in office. Earl loved being governor and was constantly scheming to get in the office or remain in it. The Governor's call for a constitutional convention was passed in the regular 1950 legislative session, amended in a later special session, and suspended in a one day special session called for that purpose in the fall of the year. Public sentiment was against a convention at that time as were many of his leaders, including Russell.

Not taking no for an answer, Earl announced for lieutenant governor hoping to have a hand-picked candidate on the top of his ticket. The incumbent lieutenant governor, William "Bill" Dodd, wanted to be Earl's successor. According to Dodd, who ran on his own and lost, Long offered him the position of governor on his ticket provided he would give Earl a signed and undated resignation. Dodd refused, he stated. Following the publication of this story Earl branded it a lie and announced he was not a candidate for any office. Instead he supported Baton Rouge's Carlos Spaht, a state district judge and a political unknown, for governor. Spaht's running mate was one of Long's floor leaders in the

95 Sindler, op. cit., p. 230.
96 Earl in a speech announced: "I am going to stay in politics until I am taken from this earth"--a pledge he amply fulfilled. Baton Rouge Advocate, March 16, 1951.
98 Baton Rouge Advocate, July 11, 1951.
99 Ibid.
House, John J. McKeithen of Grayson, Louisiana. The campaign was waged on a Long/Anti-Long plane. Spaht became known as "Earl's boy," becoming the second billed attraction on the stump behind Earl. Spaht led in the first primary receiving 22.8% of the vote as opposed to Robert Kennon's 21.5%. In the second primary Kennon was elected in a landslide (61.4%) against Spaht. Earl's "buccaneering liberalism," a fragmentation of Long candidates, "the need for a rest" as natives say, and Spaht's smooth city bred image, atypical of the core strength of Longism, combined to defeat Spaht. One group of Longologists maintain that Earl methodically worked to see that when he went out all his supporters went out. This would prevent one group of supporters from getting the upper hand and it would make sure that all were "hungry" the next time Earl ran for office. One veteran Capitol correspondent put it this

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100 McKeithen was defeated in his bid for election. Later on he ran for governor, won, and is the incumbent. One of his first acts as governor was to appoint Spaht his Executive Counsel.

101 Sindler, op. cit., p. 238.

102 Ibid., p. 239. "Nonetheless, the centers of Long and anti-Long strength remained fairly constant." Ibid., p. 240.

way: "Earl saw to it that they all got their asses whipped."  

At the completion of his term Earl returned to his "pea patch" farm "to raise peas and corn and goats and billy goats." He did not even attend his successor's inauguration; he was at his farm "looking at his barn." Long loved his farm home, a frame four-room dwelling with a tin roof, linoleum floors and calendars on the walls. "Miz Blanche" disliked the farm and refused to live there for long periods, preferring to live in Baton Rouge. Earl liked to relate the story of how he happened to move into the house: "You know who lived in that house before I moved in there? Colored people. I ran a colored family out of there to move in . . . good old friend of mine named Woodson Johnson."

Return to Power

After four years out of power Earl made a dramatic comeback in 1956. The campaign was a typical multi-candidate affair except this

104 Interview with Capitol correspondent, February 5, 1965. He amplified his remarks by saying: "Earl by getting them all out at once, kept one group of his organization from getting ahead of the others and splintering off. They could both cohesively work together to regain office because they were all hungry and knew each needed the other to win. Earl had his organization and knew how to handle it. . . ."

105 Baton Rouge Advocate, September 21, 1951.

106 Ibid., May 14, 1952.

107 Read, Tapes, Reel 1, op. cit.

108 Ibid.

109 In 1952 Long even lost his seat representing Winn Parish on the State Democratic Committee. The vote was 2626 to 2358 against Earl. Baton Rouge Advocate, January 17, 1952.
time the Anti-Longs were fragmented and the Longs were remarkably unified. Besides being a great campaigner, he was a superb strategist. To further confuse the political picture he set up dummy candidates. These appeared as opposition candidates resulting in a smaller percentage for the genuine Anti-Longs.

Earl stumped the state for months, delivering off the cuff speeches, giving away free bags of groceries at his meetings and rallies, and cautiously avoiding live television appearances claiming "TV made him look like a monkey on a stick." He was the only candidate not to appear live on the media.

Segregation, long dormant, was a major issue in this Louisiana gubernatorial contest. Earl's position was that he was for segregation but also "I have done more for the underprivileged citizens of our state than any other governor of Louisiana and they have a right to expect and will receive a square deal while I am governor. I have always treated

110 Huey also used this device especially in the 1932 Overton Senatorial campaign. Long justified his actions by stating that they were used by the Parker forces in the 1920 election. Sindler, op. cit., p. 81.

111 In 1956 one candidate, McLemore, ran against Earl in the first primary only to be appointed to a high job by Earl after he took office. Reporters also stated that hundreds of creased dirty postcards from rural areas were sent to Morrison urging him to enter the race. After he did, Morrison found his support in those areas non-existent. William Rivers, "The Long Long Trail Awinding," The Reporter, XI (July 23, 1959), p. 32.

112 Long gave away 159 bags of groceries at one rally alone. Baton Rouge Advocate, January 1, 1956.

113 Ibid., May 14, 1956.

114 Ibid.

115 Ibid., January 15, 1956.
them fairly as human beings, and always will." In this statement the seeds of disaster were already evident. To say Negroes would receive a "square deal" or be treated as "human beings" was preaching heresy of a type that would lead him on a journey through three mental institutions. The segregationists were aghast at the rising Negro registration and Negro courting by Long. Negro registration was up fifty per cent over 1952 figures. State Senator William "Willie" Rainach, chairman of the Legislative Segregation Committee said of this trend: "Our group and its followers are considering the problem." This was a huge understatement as the next four years illustrated. However, Earl still held the upper hand with the majority of voters defeating his major opponents, Kennon-backed Fred Preaus, who was head of the highway department, and DeLesseps Morrison, the Mayor of New Orleans, receiving 51.4% of the first primary vote, eliminating the necessity for a second primary, a


117 Baton Rouge Advocate, January 20, 1956. In one parish, St. Landry, 13,042 Negroes were now registered compared with one in 1952, ibid.

118 Ibid.

119 Morrison was Earl's favorite whipping boy. Long called him "Dellasoups" and said "I'd rather beat Morrison than eat any blackberry, huckleberry pie my mama ever made. Oh! How I'm praying for that stump-wormer to get in there. I want him to roll up them cuffs, and get out that little old tuppy, and pull down them shades, and make himself up. He's the easiest man to make a nut out of I've ever seen in my life." Liebling, op. cit., p. 22.

120 Baton Rouge Advocate, January 22, 1956.
feat that had not been accomplished in twenty years. The new governor said his victory was a victory "for all the people of all walks of life and the fine colored people." It was the colored people's last victory for years to come. Negro registration stood at thirty per cent of the Negro voting age population in 1956. This was the high mark in Louisiana history. That percentage has not been reached again.

"Uncle Earl" it appeared was firmly back in control of Louisiana government once more. The Anti-Longs had once again shown their ineffectual understanding of Louisiana politics with one exception, the race issue, which they would exploit to its fullest proportions in the years to come. The principal reasons for Earl's victory were: the Longs being united and the Anti-Longs divided; and the fact that Governor Kennon generated among the people "a feeling that he had catered to big business" which was coupled to his conservative financial policies and personified by his support of the Republican Party.

121 Ibid., January 19, 1956.
122 Ibid., January 18, 1956.
123 Earl later said of his victory: "I was elected because I was the best of a sorry lot of candidates." Memphis Commercial Appeal, June 14, 1959.
124 John Fenton and Kenneth Vines, "Negro Registration in Louisiana," The American Political Science Review, LI (September, 1957), 704. In spot checks of urban precincts that were predominantly Negro, Long received a consistent high percentage of the vote, amounting to more than 80 per cent in many cases. W. Havard, R. Heberle and P. Howard, The Louisiana Election of 1960 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), p. 30.
The Last Administration

In 1956 the new governor pursued three principal techniques during his administration, techniques that became clearly evident before his inauguration and continued in the coming years. They were: racial moderation; scathing witty remarks and master ridiculing of his opponents; and a preoccupation with being on the move, being in constant motion, working long and hard hours and taking frequent trips whether it be to his "pea patch" farm or to Arizona. He traveled frequently before his inauguration.\textsuperscript{126} He interrupted his travels to give press conferences at which he declared among other things that Governor Allan Shivers (D-Texas) was "spoiled," and that he did not understand what the word "interposition" meant, stating Louisiana would be "foolish" to resist federal force in integrating schools. He was not going to fight the Supreme Court, Long declared. He told a bachelor reporter to find a rich girl, marry her and "save yourself ninety years of hard work." To top it all off he purchased nineteen heifers in Texas without even seeing them.\textsuperscript{127}

Upon assuming office in May Long announced his program and began fighting for its passage. The program included a sixty-five dollar monthly old age pension, an expanded hot lunch program, increased

\textsuperscript{126}Because of Long's 1948 Inauguration a law was passed limiting a governor's expenditures for his Inauguration to five thousand dollars. Earl in sort of a backhand compliment to his foes kept the 1956 inauguration very simple.

\textsuperscript{127}Baton Rouge Advocate, March 9, 1956.
teachers' salaries and additional mental health facilities. 128 Ironically he stressed mental health and completely ignored racial matters in his program. Shortly after taking office he responded to a question about the race problem by stating that: "I flatter myself--and I might have to eat my words--that I can handle the race situation in a way to suit everybody." 129 Unfortunately for Long and the state he was forced to eat his words.

The Governor's problems were not confined to the area of race relations. Earl involved himself heavily in two congressional races, losing in both contests. In 1956 Long opposed the renomination of seventh district congressman, T. A. Thompson. The Governor campaigned vigorously against Thompson, enlivening a feud with an unknown beginning. 130 Long's efforts were to no avail with Thompson being renominated for his seat in Congress. Thompson won handily but this did not deter Earl from taking the stump again in 1958, this time in the eighth congressional district which includes Winnfield. The seat had been held until his death by George Long, the Governor's brother. Camille Gravel, the Democratic National Committeeman for Louisiana, supported Harold McSween against Earl's candidate, Lloyd Teekell, for the seat. 131 This was the beginning of a bitter feud between Long and McSween and Gravel that would not end

129 Ibid., May 11, 1956.
130 Ibid., July 29, 1956.
131 Ibid., September 4, 1956.
until Earl's death. Long diligently campaigned in behalf of Teekell making uproarious speeches in the style he made famous. Earl again was forced to accept defeat as McSween was victorious.

The last two years of Long's governorship were dominated by the segregation crisis. The segregation forces led by State Senator "Willie" Rainach and Leander Perez battled continually with Earl. The Governor wanted to relax voting registration procedures while the radical segregationists hoped to tighten them. The Governor clearly was in a tough position and was driving himself hard--too hard--to extricate himself from the increasing southern dilemma centered around race relations. For reasons unknown but to itself, the Eisenhower administration chose this time to have another investigation of Long's income tax returns. Long was the only Southern governor openly combatting the racists and the emotional mania that had overtaken the good sense of millions of white southerners. Long, in addition to the racists, had an unruly legislature, was in poor health, being a man in his sixties with heart trouble, and was involved in a political campaign. His schedule became so crowded and hectic that on one of the days when he was addressing the legislature, federal agents were in his office examining his records.

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132 Fourteen Winnfield residents addressed an open letter to Earl during the campaign stating that "Lots of people did not approve of all the cursing you did over the loudspeaker" at a rally there. *Ibid.*, September 20, 1958.


134 One long time Long supporter announced: "We don't believe we can go along with Earl this time." *Ibid.*, May 25, 1959.

The mounting group of pressures, any one of which would have toppled an ordinary mortal, served to make the Governor's position an untenable one.

Long commenced having daily press conferences—he had to answer his segregationist critics in the legislature, press his own legislative program and gather his ticket around him. The beleaguered Governor, criticized from all sides, struck back—refusing to take his own advice: "Don't write anything you can phone, don't phone anything you can talk face to face, don't talk anything you can smile, don't smile anything you can wink, and don't wink anything you can nod."  

Subjects which had circulated sub rosa Long brought into the open. Stories that his wife was the power behind the throne and jokes about "petticoat government" had long rankled Earl but only now did he denounce them. "They say that my wife runs the show," shouted Earl. "That's not true, I'm not about to let her run it."  


137 Reporters were industriously attempting to locate someone who would break the story concerning the federal investigation of Earl's income taxes. No one would do it. Then Earl declared that he did not care who investigated him or for how long. He had not done anything wrong. The result was that Long himself broke the story. Interview, January 12, 1966 with a then Capitol correspondent.

138 In April of 1959 Long publicly blamed his wife for a campaign error in 1956. He stated that "his wife and a lot of other people" wanted a no tax pledge in his platform and he agreed to it. He now said "it was a mistake." Baton Rouge Advocate, April 22, 1959.

conference the Governor even sipped a highball as he announced his candidate for secretary of state. Day after day Long drove himself. He called legislators at midnight and then again at five in the morning, all to no avail. On May 27, 1959 the Judiciary Committee unanimously rejected his proposed amendments to the voter registration law. Long, exhausted and defeated, appeared before the legislature and in a volcanic off the cuff speech delivered a stinging rebuke to his opponents. The speech was carried on television and nuns were present in the gallery--ingredients that had never before been present at one of his performances. The next day Long asked to address a joint session of the legislature to "apologize" for his speech the day before. Instead of apologizing Long once again attacked the legislature for refusing to amend the registration laws, attacked Rainach's parentage (he was an adopted child) and called one

140 Long was not known for his drinking before the crisis period of 1959.

141 At this press conference Long showed up with the "candidate" who Earl said was going to run for the office. The prospective "candidate" stated he would formally announce later. It was obvious to all concerned including Earl that the man did not want to run at all. Interview with veteran Capitol correspondent, December 1, 1965.

142 Long announced that doctors had prescribed some medicine for him but added, "I threw them in the river." Baton Rouge Advocate, May 23, 1959.

143 Interview with a Capitol reporter, March 2, 1966. In Earl's 1948-52 term he was also an early riser, "having appointments at 6:30 A.M." but he was ten years older now, had had a heart attack, and was under greater pressures. See Baton Rouge Advocate, Magazine Section, May 9, 1948 for account of Earl's schedule at that time.

144 Baton Rouge Advocate, May 27, 1959.
legislator a "Dago" reducing him to tears. During the speech, legislators were on their feet attacking Long and he responded in kind. The Louisiana legislature was not used to hearing a civil rights address.

Long ridiculed Rainach in the style of a master: "After this is all over, he'll (Rainach) probably go up to Summerfield, get up on his front porch, take off his shoes, wash his feet and get close to God." Long shifted emphasis, looked at Rainach and said: "And when you do, you got to recognize that niggers is human beings."

The next day his legislative leaders and numerous political associates moved to have the governor enter a hospital to recover from "extreme physical exhaustion." Long resisted these efforts. Two days later, on May 30, 1959, the Governor was strapped to a stretcher in the Mansion, taken in a white state police station wagon to the airport and flown with several associates in a National Guard plane to Galveston, Texas where he entered the John Sealy Clinic under as unusual conditions as those of his departure from Louisiana. A member of the small coterie of people that accompanied the Governor to Texas relates the experience:

We decided to put Earl in a hospital. The problem was to find a hospital. Every hospital in the country we tried

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147 Liebling, op. cit., p. 25.
148 Ibid.
turned him down. We had to get him in somewhere. One of us got the idea to commit himself to a hospital. He called Sealy Hospital and told them he wanted to commit himself. They agreed and told him to come the next day. Then General Huff, myself, and a few others flew over to Texas with Governor Long. We took him into the hospital and two doctors greeted us and said 'Hello Mr. 'X.' Earl understood what was going on and said in his gravel voice, "I'm not 'X'! That . . . over there is 'X!' I'm Governor Long.' The doctors then attempted to convince Earl that he was not Governor Long but was 'X' but we said the Governor was correct that he was 'X.' The doctors proceeded to tell us that they would not take Long as a patient. We said you have no choice. He's in your hospital and we are leaving him. You have facilities to care for people in the Governor's condition. If he walks out of the hospital and does any damage then you people will be responsible. An argument followed, lawyers arrived and the argument continued. Finally they agreed to take him under protest.150

The Governor's stay in Galveston was hectic. He held news conferences by yelling out his window to Margaret Dixon, Managing Editor of the Baton Rouge Advocate and a close friend and confidante, standing below. "I'm no more crazy than you are," he bellowed at her.151 He added: "it's the same as jail . . . (there are) screens here and if you tried to go through them you'd leave your brains hanging on them."152

Before two weeks were up, Long had gained his freedom. Negotiations between Long and his family and Texas legal authorities resulted in Long signing a document whereby he agreed to enter Oschner's Clinic in New Orleans as a voluntary patient which he did. Upon Long's return to

150 Interview, April 28, 1965.


152 Ibid.
Louisiana the ailing, dying, Lt. Governor Lether Frazer, the acting governor, announced, "I'm happy to be lieutenant governor again."  

Earl was also happy to be governor again. On June 19th he checked out of Oschner's and headed for Baton Rouge to assume active control of the government. His wife thwarted his plans by signing commitment papers and by 8:40 that evening Long was a patient in a state mental hospital at Mandeville. He remained in this institution a week--on June 26th--twenty years to the day he first assumed the office of governor, Long was released and again gained control of the state administration. He secured his release by succeeding in having the State Hospital Board meet and dismiss the Director of Hospitals and the Director of the hospital. The Board appointed a seventy-two year old general practitioner and friend of Long as Director of the hospital who in turn certified Long sane and ordered him released.

Shortly after his release Earl suffered heart failure but recovered sufficiently to take a much publicized trip. Before leaving on the trip he filed a separation suit against his wife claiming "she was the most jealous woman in Louisiana" and Mrs. Long in turn filed a suit for divorce charging Earl with attempted murder.  

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153 Ibid., June 18, 1959.

154 Ibid., June 19, 1959.

155 Ibid., June 26, 1959. According to reliable but unofficial sources a patient who also was a psychiatrist actually ran the institution for the next several months.

156 Ibid., July 1, 1959.
dismissed some officials that he believed "railroaded" him to Texas, and left for his trip. By the time Earl
had returned he had: attempted to adopt a boy who was a mental patient in the same Galveston hospital with him; publicly dated a "stripper" named Blaze Star; purchased and shipped twenty crates of cantalopes to political associates "collect;" and visited former President Truman in Kansas City, telling him "a lot of dirty jokes" and discussing Symington's chances for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Upon his return to Louisiana he called a special session of the legislature in an attempt to take punitive action against a variety of political opponents. The session was the shortest in the state's history--lasting 105 seconds. The legislature simply rebelled and went home without even voting themselves a day's pay.

During the remaining seven months of his term Earl spent much of his time in Winnfield or at the Mansion quietly running his administration. The end came quietly but on a typical Long note. On his last

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157 Ibid., July 2, 1959.
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid., September 3, 1959.
161 Ibid., July 30, 1959.
162 Ibid., July 26, 1959.
163 Ibid., September 13, 1959. For additional information see Chapter VIII.
164 Ibid.
day in office he received a committee of legislators who informed him that the legislature was now back in session. The Governor looked up from his desk and said: "You bastards didn't have to notify me. I know you are in session." 165

His days as governor over, Long that night sat in his small one bedroom Pentagon apartment and "munched contentedly on a cold roast beef sandwich, and drank buttermilk. And if he missed the formal elegance of the Executive Mansion, there was no indication of it." 166

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166 Ibid., May 11, 1960. Four months later Earl made a political comeback, defeating the incumbent 8th district congressman for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. He suffered a heart attack on election eve but remained in his hotel room until after he had won the election. Two days later at 7:10 A.M. Earl died quietly. His death came only days before the 25th anniversary of his brother's assassination. Ibid., August 28, September 1, 1960.
CHAPTER V

THE GOVERNOR: POWER AND INFLUENCE

A dominant trend in twentieth century American politics has been the increasing growth of executive prerogatives and an absorption of powers by the executive branch, both at the national and state levels of government. Louisiana has not been found at the bottom of this indice as she has been in many other areas of national concern. Certainly the governor has been the actual head of state in Louisiana for a long period, as pointed out in Chapter II. The governor is a full-time official elected state-wide, clothed in the mantle of chief executive. He symbolizes the State in the flesh. He possesses the resources to dominate the government, make news, create committees, bestow honors and in general overshadow the legislative branch of government in Louisiana. The numerous agencies and divisions of the government are responsive to his call for ideas, programs and detailed information on a multitude of issues. By the use of press conferences, "off the record" briefings, agency reports, and "non-political" speeches delivered before selected groups and at times beamed over television, the governor can saturate the state with his views.

The legislator, on the other hand, might be asked for his comments on the speech, and his comments are buried in the papers. The legislator will not achieve equal coverage because the panoply of
power that surrounds the chief executive is missing from the legislator's coterie of assets. The legislator is simply overwhelmed by the grandeur and power of the Louisiana chief executive. The legislator cannot compete on the governor's terms. The balance is one sided, whether it be in terms of constitutional, legal or status.

The Constitutional Position of the Governor

The Constitution recognizes the peculiar position of the governor by stating that "the supreme executive power of the state shall be vested in a chief magistrate, styled the Governor of Louisiana." Legal qualifications for the office include: he must be at least thirty years old; be a citizen of both the United States and Louisiana for ten years. He is elected for a four year term and may not succeed himself. He is now paid a salary of $20,000 per year, almost a threefold increase over Huey's salary of $7,500 per year.

The governor is removable from office only by impeachment. Grounds for impeachment are "high crimes and misdemeanors in office, incompetency, corruption, favoritism, extortion, or oppression in office, or for gross misconduct or habitual drunkenness." Huey Long

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1 Article V, Section II.
3 Article IX, Section I.
4 Ibid.
was impeached by the House in 1929 but the Senate by the "Round Robin" failed to convict him.

The constitutional functions of the governor are of significant importance in his relations with the legislature. He is required to submit messages to the legislature, and is given the veto power along with the item veto. The summoning of special sessions and control of their agenda are also given to the governor by the Constitution. These aspects of the governor's position will be discussed in Chapters VII and VIII.

Aspects of Gubernatorial Power

The governor has an array of powers at his disposal to influence the legislature. How well he performs his positions of chief executive and "chief legislator" depends on his active, viable leadership. Leadership does not come to the governor, he must actively seek it. "Leadership is not a matter of passive status, or of the mere possession of some combination of traits." Instead it seems to be "a working relationship among members of a group, in which the leader acquires status through active participation and demonstration of his capacity for carrying

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5Article V, Section XIII.

6Article V, Section XV.

7Article V, Section XIV.

cooperative tasks through to completion." This "working relationship" does not exist in a vacuum instead it is a process—a process of inter­relationship. The process requires acceptance. A leader can only lead provided the followers accept the relationship and accept entrance into the existing situational context. 

Each of the governor's functions requires this interaction if he is to be successful. In addition his various functions are inter­related and cannot be cleanly divided. Consequently a successful governor is one who manages to weave his diverse tasks into a harmonious operation. In this study we are interested in the governor as a legis­lative leader, but this does not mean that his other functions are of an inferior nature or can be divorced from his function as "chief legis­lator."

The governor is the chief of a large bureaucracy, numerous commissions and agencies, and propelled by the exigencies of the times to provide active leadership in the state on a wide variety of fronts. The politics of social welfare, fathered in Louisiana by Huey Long, and exemplified by strong leadership, of which both Long brothers are prime examples, logically overshadow the legislature. Modern government has reversed the earlier pattern of traditional executive-legislative relationships. A century ago, the United States was deeply rooted to this theory. James Bryce wrote of the legislature that it was "so much

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9Ibid.

the strongest force in the several states that we may almost call it, the Government and ignore all other authorities."11 The latter part of the nineteenth century was the high point of legislative dominance. By the second decade of this century popular opinion had become disillusioned with the inability of the legislatures to come to terms with the modern problems of industrialization and urbanization. This change on the emphasis of government would become, as one observer noted, "one of the most important developments in the history of state government."12 The governor changed from a figure restraining a legislature by the use of his veto to a promoter of detailed programs for which the legislature waited and to which they reacted. This change was firmly established by the end of the twenties. Professor Holcombe first called the governor "chief legislator" in 1926.13 This is a title he still receives and deserves.

Today the populace looks to the governor to solve the problems that confront the state or to initiate new programs. The prestige of the legislature has definitely been reduced, with the governor picking up the reins of leadership. The public thinks of the governor primarily as a policy leader. Further he has become so "important as a policy leader that the legislature's role in many, perhaps most, states, has


become one essentially negative in character. The legislature vetoes, modifies, or perhaps enlarges upon gubernatorial recommendations, but it is not likely to provide real policy leadership.  

The governor has elevated his position by the astute use of several vehicles of power. He is the "manager in chief" of the complex administrative arm of state government. Administrative authority including appointments, patronage, and budgeting are within the purview of the governor's legal capacities. Constitutional functions are assigned him, including the presentation of legislative messages, the prerogative of veto, and the calling and control of special sessions. The governor is a full-time elected official as opposed to the part-time concept of the legislature. The chief executive is elected statewide, having a constituency of the widest possible vision in the state as opposed to the parochialism of the individual legislator.

As chief executive of Louisiana the governor is required under the Constitution to "... take care that the laws be faithfully executed ..." To accomplish this task the governor is given several substantive tools. However, as powerful as he is, the means are not equal to the task in every sphere of endeavor.

The staff and office space of Louisiana governors traditionally have been limited. Huey Long had an office staff of three including one


16 Article 5, Section 4.
man, George Wallace, as his Executive Counsel. Earl also had a small staff consisting of only eight employees. He also had only one male employee, his Executive Counsel. George Wallace also filled this position. Russell Long served briefly as Executive Counsel and Dupre Litton filled the office for several years. (For a period late in his last term Earl had A. A. Fredericks as his Executive Secretary.)

The governor does not have direct or personal control over all executive departments. Louisiana has the "long ballot," resulting in ten officials being elected besides the governor. In recent years Louisiana has moved against the national trend by adding elected officials to the list. In 1956 the legislature, at the urging of Governor Long, removed the positions of Custodian of Voting Machines and Insurance Commissioner from the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State and established them as independent elective offices. As a result decentralized administration has advanced not receded in the Bayou state.

The Burgeoning Bureaucracy

Twentieth century state government has witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of employees required to serve and to regulate an expanded population that is beset by the many problems of this modern age. The last Louisiana governor of the nineteenth century, Murphy J. Foster (1892-1900), visited all the departments of the government each

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17See Chapter III, p. 47. Huey began his administration without an Executive Counsel but later added Wallace to the staff in that position.
day and on many days greeted every capitol employee. Today with some forty-one thousand employees a governor never meets most of the workers during his entire term. The task is too large and his time too precious for him to devote his energies in that direction.

The bureaucracy is no longer directly controlled by the governor. This follows a nationwide trend. A strong Civil Service system exists and appears to operate effectively regulating the jobs of over 38,000 employees. However, during Huey's term as governor Louisiana operated entirely on the spoils system. During the administration of Governor Sam Jones (1940-44) a civil service system was enacted into law. Upon being elected governor in 1948 Earl Long moved to wreck and leave moribund civil service. Long's successor, Governor Robert Kennon reconstituted the civil service system, which still remains in effect. Long in his last administration accepted the system as a permanent institution.

The bureaucracy has almost quintupled since the early days of Huey Long's administration. In 1929, Louisiana had 8,200 full-time employees as compared to over forty-one thousand employees today. The state bureaucracy grew rapidly under Huey Long, reaching 11,400 by 1931 when he departed the state to assume his duties as senator in Washington. By 1939 the figure had climbed to 17,200 employees and by the beginning

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19See Chapter IX.

20See Chapter IV.
of Earl Long's administration in 1948 to over 22,300. With the advent of civil service a central pooling of classified employees was begun. Classified employees totaled 26,032 in 1956 and had climbed to over 30,000 by the time Earl left office. These latter figures do not include the additional non-civil service employees. No figures are obtainable on these people since central accounting of non-civil service employees was not required until 1965 in Louisiana. (See Table II for complete breakdown of employment.)

### TABLE II

Full time Employees of the State of Louisiana for the Years Huey and Earl Long Served as the State's Governor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Employees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>8.2 thousand*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>9.2 thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>11.4 thousand</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>10.0 thousand</td>
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<td>1939</td>
<td>17.2 thousand</td>
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<td>1948</td>
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<td>1951</td>
<td>27.6 thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>26.5 thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>26.0 thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>27.7 thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>28.6 thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>29.2 thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>30.5 thousand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures unavailable for 1928.*

The governor's role concerning the other elected officials and the civil service bureaucracy is mainly a supervisory one. Certainly he lacks the most powerful weapon of supervision, the right to appoint and remove at will but he does possess "an indispensable supervisory device,"\(^{21}\) in that he can require information from the various officials and agencies. The Louisiana constitution provides that the governor "may require information in writing from the officers in the executive departments upon any subject relating to the duties of their respective offices."\(^{22}\) In practice this results in a multitude of officials, departments and agencies submitting annual reports to the governor's office.

**Appointive Power**

The Louisiana governor's appointive power is vast and awesome. He has broad authority to fill many policy making positions. Due to the extensive nature of his appointive powers they must be divided into two sections. The first concerns his state authority, and the latter his jurisdiction over local appointments.

In the history of Louisiana four major studies have been completed on the numbers and methods of appointments available to the governor. The last study is contemporary, representing 1964 totals.


\(^{22}\)Article 5, Section 13.
The first three examined the question during the periods Earl Long served as governor. Today there are 231 state agencies compared to 112 in 1939. Total executive branch appointments now reaches 1448 as compared to 850 in 1951 at the end of Earl's first full length term as governor. Of these the governor named 600 in 1952 and today appoints 1103 of them. (See Table III.)

TABLE III

Comparative Analysis of Appointive Power of Louisiana Governors
(State)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1939</th>
<th>1952</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1964</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of separate state agencies</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Branch Positions</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>1329</td>
<td>1448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointed by the Governor</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>1103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent of Senate</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Lists</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>221</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Civil Service has drastically limited the number of overall state appointments available to the governor, but the number of policy making and high salaried positions has mushroomed to more than double those available to Long during his first full term. The majority of these appointments are made directly by the governor. Table III illustrates this point and
also shows the relatively small number of appointments that require senate confirmation. It is the trend not to require senate confirmation. In 1952 almost one-fourth met this requirement but at the present time only approximately one-sixth are subject to approval. Perhaps in some states this stipulation would be a detriment to governmental authority, but not in Louisiana. The Senate always meets in Executive Session when it considers appointments, but records indicate no appointments are ever rejected. The governor is allowed to, and does make, interim appointments. A reading of the Journals of the Long legislative sessions reveals no notice or removal of any appointee due to Senatorial rejection. Interviews with legislators confirm that it is rare for the Senate to reject a nominee.  

The terms of the appointees vary from the "pleasure of the governor" to fourteen years. Approximately three quarters of the appointees serve at the "pleasure of the governor" and are subject to his whims. Some board members resign when the governor assumes office. If they do not comply the method of "addressing out of office" may be used. Even where the constitution specifically sets the boards' terms and prohibits the governor from dismissing them, the members are liable to "addressing out of office." Usually governors exert definite command by using only the threat of requesting the legislature to utilize 

23 Interview with Senators, May 15, 1965, and Journals during this era.


25 Ibid.
this tool. However, in 1956 several board members resisted Long's threat, causing him to ask the legislature for their removal. The legislature promptly complied by overwhelming vote.  

Three principal reasons exist to make these appointments desired and sought after by the political community. They are prestigious, with the Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University being the pre-eminent example. Many a politician has gained the title of statesman by being named to this coveted board. Members serve for fourteen years and draw per diem that they themselves establish. Public opinion dictates that this board be free from political harassment. Board members serve their terms even though they overlap the governor's. In 1959 Long attempted to have the legislature remove Theo Cangelosi from his position as Chairman of the Board but the special session adjourned immediately taking no action. The second reason is the opportunity of regulating one's own industry. Traditionally governors appoint oil men to the Mineral Board and Conservation Board which regulate the oil industry in Louisiana. Many of the industry regulating boards' members are drawn from lists submitted by the concerned industry. Self regulation backed by the power of the State is an appealing one to many

26 Baton Rouge Advocate, May 23, 1956. The vote was 29 to 8 in the Senate and 77 to 21 in the House.

27 See Chapter IV.

men. The third reason these positions are coveted is the financial renumeration that is available. Rewards range from expenses up to per diem, and at the top salaries, per diem and expenses. Per diem ranges as high as fifty dollars a day for one board. The number of meetings is usually not specified resulting in some boards meeting only a few times a year and others meeting almost every working day of the year.

Local Appointive Power

The governor's appointive power also extends to the filling of various local vacancies due to a variety of "vacancy in office" laws. These include policy-making positions such as school boards and police juries. This power is used frequently. Earl Long during his 1956-60 term filled 702 local vacancies including vacancies in every parish except Orleans which fills its own vacancies. Records reveal Long appointed 71 members of school boards and 49 police jury members. (See Table IV.) In addition to the parish officials the governor appointed over 300 people to municipal vacancies. By parishes, outside of New Orleans, vacancies filled varied from a low of one in three parishes to a high of 38 in St. Helena parish.

29Board of Voting Machines. Ibid., p. 26.

30Highway board members have "in actual practice collected $25 per day for most working days in the year . . . ." PAR, State Agencies Handbook, 1960, op. cit., p. xvii.


32Ibid., p. 5.
### TABLE IV
Local Vacancies Filled by Governor Long 1956-60

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish Total:</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Boards</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Juries</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justices of Peace</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constables</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coroners</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PAR, Local Appointments by Governor (Baton Rouge: PAR, September, 1961), pp. 6 and 7.

Having local appointive authority is an important tool in the governor's bargaining with the legislature. The governor receives recommendations from concerned legislators who are in sympathy with his program. Anti-administration members are not solicited, however, or consulted about such appointments. Due to the large number of local vacancies occurring in a governor's term, being on the administration "team" is a valuable asset to the legislator. Southern governors who possess this power have been quick to utilize it. Robert Highsaw found:

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33 Interview, April 7, 1966 with veteran legislator who was a member of the anti-Long bloc during the 1956-60 term.
It is fairly standard practice now for executive leaders to make a careful tabulation of legislative votes on gubernatorial programs and to tell dissenting legislators, if attitudes and votes are not changed, they will get no more jobs for constituents, no more state aid for rural roads, no more of the favors that are the lifeblood of state legislators.\textsuperscript{34}

In effect the legislature is placed in the position of procuring many appointments that the executive is charged with filling. In practice the governor consults the concerned area legislator about the vacancy and the vacancy is usually filled on his recommendation.\textsuperscript{35} If he is a bitter opponent of the governor, of course, his recommendations may be ignored.

The governor does not have to wait for vacancies to occur at the local level before gaining leverage over legislators through his local appointive authority. Depending on the parish, the governor has from four to thirty appointments available.\textsuperscript{36} Certainly the governor is in a position to utilize this opportunity to gain support for his aims from the individual legislators.\textsuperscript{37} The governor has a total of 803 appointments open to him of which 625 are directly named by him. (See Table V.) They range from the lucrative positions of inheritance tax attorneys for each parish and levee board members to city athletic commission members.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{35}Interviews with four legislators and a former Executive Counsel, November 15, 1965.
\item \textsuperscript{36}\textit{PAR, Local Appointments by Governor}, op. cit., p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{37}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 1.
\end{itemize}
Pro-administration legislators are consulted on the local appointments available to the governor including area boards and commissions. This is another advantageous instance of being on the "team." Opposition legislators have no voice in these appointments.

### TABLE V

**Gubernatorial Appointive Positions in Local Government**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>No. of Dist.</th>
<th>Total*</th>
<th>Appointed by the Governor</th>
<th>With Consent of Senate</th>
<th>From Lists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parish Officials</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levee Boards</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>114</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port, Harbor, Navig. Bds.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation &amp; Water Conserv. Bds.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge &amp; Ferry Auth.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game &amp; Fish Comms.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Comms.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Works Dist. Bds.</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>106</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravity Drainage Dist. Bds.</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>138</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>246</strong></td>
<td><strong>803</strong></td>
<td><strong>625</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
<td><strong>114</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes members of Boards of Supervisors of Elections, Civil Defense Directors, Inheritance Tax Attorneys, and one Registrar of Voters.


38 Interview, April 7, 1966 with member of the anti-administration bloc during Long's 1956-60 term.
The Techniques of Influence

The previous pages have shown the numerous appointing powers of the governor—literally thousands of positions at his disposal to influence recalcitrant legislators, cement relations with others, and dominate the organizational machinery. The governor's material incentives combined with the other prerogatives of his office mesh to make an opponent's position an unattractive political stance. The appointments at the governor's disposal and other factors of persuasion open to him include: the selection and approval of architects and engineers for all state construction projects; the appointment of all inheritance tax attorneys; control of levee boards including their employees and control of their expenditures through his appointment and removal powers regarding board members; "unclassified" state positions; the paving of roads; the purchase of surety bonds; state insurance contracts; state purchasing of supplies; the placement of "idle funds," and the leasing of state lands. All of these practices can be and usually are exercised in a legal manner. Friends may be rewarded, foes seduced and organizational control increased by the governor if he shrewdly utilizes these manipulative instruments. However, much of these rewards are, in the words of George Washington Plunkitt, "honest graft."\(^{39}\) In addition the opportunities for dishonesty are enough to tempt the most naive of men. Obviously a compilation of records relating to "honest graft" is difficult and the documentation of ill gotten gain even more

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difficult. A brief analysis, however, of these persuasive tools based on available information will assist in illuminating the over-powering position of the chief executive as compared to the legislature in Louisiana. 40

No state laws govern the selection of architects and engineers on state contracts. Architects' fees average six per cent of the bid. Consequently this amounts to a significant sum of money over the period of a year which is made available solely on the personal choice of the governor or his representative. Information relative to political practices in this area is shrouded in secrecy.

Inheritance tax attorneyships are patronage plums in the wealthier parishes. The attorney receives four per cent of the monthly inheritance tax up to $150,000 and two per cent of the collection thereafter. For 1960 these fees reached a high of $138,292 in one parish. 41 Traditionally the Orleans position is the most valuable. Earl held this one during the administration of his brother. 42 Attorneys eagerly seek these appointments from the governor.

Levee board appointments have long been a source of patronage in Louisiana with area legislators who are on favorable terms with the governor being consulted on such appointments. 43 Of the total of

40 See Chapter VIII and IX for additional examples relating to the legislature.

41 PAR, Local Appointments, op. cit., p. 2.

42 See Chapter IV.

43 Interview, April 7, 1966 with a legislator who was a member of the anti-administration bloc between 1956-1960.
twenty-two boards, thirteen originated prior to Huey, four were established during the era of Huey's organization and two each were created during Earl's two full terms as chief executive. From 1960 to the present an additional two have been established. Rewards of membership on these boards are largely material. One of the oldest and largest boards is the nine member La Fourche Levee Board. The members are paid twenty-five dollars per diem, plus mileage and travel expenses. In 1963 this amounted to a sum of $119,231.81, almost $13,250.00 per member for a total of $53,000.00 for their four year term.

Besides the board members, other sources of patronage include the naming of levee and marsh "inspectors."

Ibid., p. 54.

45Interview, April 7, 1966, op. cit.


47Louisiana Legislative Council, Organizations and Operations of Levee Districts and Levee Boards in Louisiana, op. cit., p. 54.
discretion. They are not under civil service and prior to 1964 no central listing of these employees was required, making this category an ideal instrument to quietly reward political friends. The classification is a creature of the civil service system. Prior to civil service, governors had no trouble in appointing their friends to state jobs. However, the installation of tests made this practice difficult except in the area of "unclassified" employees. Specific data is not available on the number of nonclassified employees during Earl's last term, the only Long term operating under civil service. However, "the proportion of employees who are classified varies widely among individual agencies."48 The department of public welfare had only one employee, the commissioner, who was not classified out of the total of 2,368 civil servants. On the other hand, the state board for voting machines had 97 employees of which only two were classified.49

Road construction has been a favorite instrument of political control. Huey paved roads in almost a direct ratio to his political wants in any area.50 Long, when questioned about reported favoritism in his road program, stated: "We got the roads in Louisiana, haven't we? In some states they only have the graft."51 One major contractor was exposed as having cheated the state and the federal government out of

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49 Ibid.
50 See Chapter IX.
of materials, diverted labor, having falsified his income tax returns and of receiving "kickbacks" on various contracts. He was one of many Long organization men to go to jail in the early 1940's as a result of excesses beyond even those permitted by Louisiana law.

Every state official and construction contract must have a surety bond. Traditionally this aspect of state business has not been publicized. However, during a legislative investigation of Huey's highway department a breakdown of highway contract bonds was inserted in the Journal. The results were startling. Out of a total of $23.8 million in bonds purchased during Huey's first two years in office over $21.7 million were purchased from one company. Eighteen other companies split the remaining two million dollars in bond sales.

Premiums on state insurance contracts are another source of material rewards available to political supporters of the governor. In the Bayou state "primary responsibility" is vested in the Insurance Section of the Division of Administration, a portion of the governor's office. Published statistics reveal that in 1960 the Division of Administration administered $265 million dollars of insurance and the LSU Board carried another $85 million for a total of $351 million.

52 Baton Rouge Advocate, March 12, 1966.
Premiums for the year totaled $2.9 million. The state purchases the insurance in about ten contracts but the governor designates as many agents as he wishes to divide the lush commissions. Out of this particular insurance, favored agents received as much as $5,000 commission on the policy. Commissions are based on at least a six per cent return. In "the older days, commissions ran as high as thirty per cent." Using six per cent as a base, the total available for distribution amounted to $174,000 for the year.

Besides designating the agents who received this windfall, Earl also used the commission money to recompense friends who performed services for him. One Long adviser, who several times turned down this form of payment from Earl, related that upon each refusal Earl bellowed: "He (the agent) didn't do anything for the money . . . . You at least worked for it." Doing nothing for the commission, however, does not deter most of the favored agents. The agents "many of whom are or have been members of the legislature" perform no insurance function whatsoever. They simply cash the checks.

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55 Ibid., p. 25.
57 Ibid.
58 Interview, March 28, 1966 with an insurance agent who has dealt extensively in state insurance business.
59 Interview, March 10, 1966.
60 PAR, Powers of the Governor, op. cit., p. 6.
61 Ibid.
The purchasing of state supplies is another possible source of favoritism. If public bidding is required, bids can be written resulting in only one possible bid being submitted. This procedure is easily accomplished. A bid may specify a certain brand of a product which automatically eliminates all other competition or a certain type of product may be required that is produced by only one firm in the freight area. In addition, many state laws, especially those concerning levee boards, specify that "negotiated" contracts are permissible on items required by the state but not generally available. In other instances if the label "emergency" is applied the bidding requirement is waived. The air of favored bidding is usually clouded. However, in 1948 an intra-administration squabble broke out and it took more than casting bread on the waters to cover the spat.  

The Commissioner of Administration was suddenly dismissed by the Acting Governor, William Dodd. The Commissioner stated he was dismissed because a bread contract was not awarded to a bakery in Alexandria, near Dodd's home but to a concern in Natchitoches where the bread was to be eaten. According to the Commissioner, although the bread in Natchitoches was two cents a loaf cheaper, Dodd was upset about the award and exclaimed "It seems as though nobody but Sam Jones'  

62 See Chapter IX for discussion of reported favoritism during Huey's administration.

people can get any state business . . . "64 With the state a purchaser of everything from bread to Cadillacs the thirst for favoritism is an ever constant one.

The investment of "idle funds" in various banks gives the governor significant patronage with that important industry. Until 1965, Louisiana had no "idle funds" legislation requiring state money to receive interest when deposited in a bank. Up until last year the "state was paid little or no interest on most of its idle funds."65 One twenty-year veteran of the legislature who is in the banking business stated: "This is where the money is. I should have gotten into this years ago. This is real money."66 Undoubtedly state money deposited in "pet" banks is a very persuasive element in converting large contributors to one's cause.

During Earl's 1948-1952 term highway department reports detailed the amount and distribution of one major department's "idle funds." Approximately $18 million was deposited in eighteen banks on December 31, 1949.67 This figure rose to over $21 million by the termination of 1951.68 The same bank received the major share of the funds in both instances. One Baton Rouge bank had $6.4 million of highway funds on

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64 Ibid.


66 Interview, February 21, 1965.


deposit in 1949. This figure rose to over $10 million in 1951. On the basis of the lower figure the state would have received $192,000 per year at an interest rate of 3 per cent. Over the four years this would have amounted to $768,000. On the basis of a 3 per cent interest rate on the entire $18 million in highway department money the state could have obtained over $2.1 million in interest. 69

Finally, state land leases have been a very effective method of rewarding political allies in Louisiana. By virtue of being the second oil producing state in the nation, leases of state land are of great import. Most of this story lies buried in parish recorder's files. On occasion, however, a spectacular state land deal surfaces to startle the taxpayer. In addition to state lands there are levee district lands. Levee boards have also the absolute power of eminent domain--a prime reason why large landowners have always maintained representatives on levee boards in the area of their holdings. Not only do the boards possess expropriating ability but the boards are only required to pay the landowner the assessed tax value of the property. In Louisiana, where tax assessments are extremely low in comparison to actual value, this power is an important instrument of political potency.

69 The highway department reports during Earl's last term did not detail the distribution of highway funds.
Over the years, Louisiana has transferred 3,062,922 acres to the levee boards, which they in turn are free to sell or lease. An example of a levee board selling state land occurred in 1901 but the effects are still felt. At that time the Atchafalaya Basin Levee District entered into a contract with a prominent New Orleans law firm, to sell for $120,000 "all lands donated, ceded and transferred by Act of the Legislature to the said district . . . with the exception of lands adjudicated to the state at tax sale . . . ." Because of this contract, "the district has received and transferred to Wisner and Dresser and their successors in title some 935,415 acres of land." The district holds only 30,000 acres of tax adjudicated lands. Ironically the Atchafalaya district has received the largest grant of state land of all the levee districts.

In the 1930's lush state land leases were obtained by numerous allies of the Long organization. A Senate floor leader for Huey, and the sheriff of a south Louisiana parish, obtained state leases on

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72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.

over "500,000 acres of state owned oil land . . . ."\textsuperscript{75} This lease turned out to be a very profitable arrangement for the two of them.\textsuperscript{76}

In 1931, three prominent Longites "were buying and selling mineral rights with each other."\textsuperscript{77} Newspapers uncovered complicated leases and sales between these and others during the Long era. One 1932 state lease for which the state received $500 plus its one-eighth royalty returned over $350,000 to a senator and his associates.\textsuperscript{77}

The Long family also prospered from state leases. In 1963, Mrs. Huey Long sold a portion of her oil properties for $300,000. Of special interest was an exhibit of 18 pages attached to the conveyance to describe her interests in Bossier, Plaquemines, Iberia, St. Bernard, Vermillion, Cameron, St. Mary, Terrebonne, Madison, Union and Ouachita parishes. Much of her property results from state leases obtained in the 1930's.\textsuperscript{78}

Politics and oil are finely intermeshed in Louisiana. Oil reaches into every aspect of Bayou politics from campaign contributions to the conservation commissioner's discretion regarding the drilling and capping of oil wells.

It is evident the governor has significant opportunities to build and retain a viable organization in the legislature and

\textsuperscript{75}The New Orleans \textit{Times-Picayune}, November 12, 1939.

\textsuperscript{76}\textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{77}\textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{78}\textit{Ibid}., January 9, 1963.
throughout the state. Used intelligently these tools can provide overwhelming force for the governor's legislative program.

The Politics of Money

The governor is ex officio Budget Director. In this position he exerts control over the tautness of the state's finances. Until Huey Long's administration the state had been dominated by people in the upper economic classes. The Longs, by viewing patronage in its widest possible sense, broke open the restraints of government with the state becoming a vast patronage machine. They gave books to the illiterate, welfare checks to the poor of both races, thousands of jobs to the small time politicos, black top roads to the farmers and highways and educational facilities to the middle class. The budget became an instrument of distributing "goodies" not one of restraining expenditures. Indeed it was the opposite. In his first two years in office Huey Long almost doubled the budget, from 28 million to almost 52 million dollars. Entire segments of the economy were made part of the organization. It might have been a hayride but at least it was a very populated one--filled with the sick, the poor and the uneducated.

The budget proposed by the Louisiana Tax Commission and enacted into law by the legislature for the year preceding Huey Long's entry

79 See Chapter II.

80 Under Section 8 of Act 140 of 1916 the Louisiana Tax Commission was designated as the budget preparation agency. This arrangement continued until 1940 when Governor Sam Jones sponsored legislation (Acts 1940, No. 48 and Acts 1942, No. 111) which provided for an executive budget, central purchasing and property control for all state agencies.
into the governor's chair was approximately $25.9 million dollars.
(See Table VI for a complete listing of the Huey Long budgets.)

TABLE VI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of Louisiana Budgets, 1926-1927 to 1932-1933</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1926-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,839,175.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,981,290.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$27,193,088.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$27,846,592.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$47,527,625.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$37,029,700.50**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$86,599,888.97***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes state bond receipts of $15,557,961.11 for highways
**Includes state bond receipts of $4,499,100.00 for highways
***Includes state bond receipts of $45,500,000.00 for highways

(The year 1932-33 is included even though Huey Long was no longer governor because the bond issues receipts of this year were the result of the issue of 1930.)


Later, Earl Long during his administrations sponsored additional legislation regarding the preparation of the budget. In 1948 legislation (Acts 1948, No. 133) designated the Division of Administration as the agency charged with the preparation of the budget. In 1956 additional legislation (Acts 1956, No. 42) again designated the Division of Administration as the budgetary agency and placed it within the Office of the Governor where it has since remained. This law further requires an executive budget presenting a complete financial plan for the fiscal year.
By 1930 Long had increased the budget to over $47.5 million. Two years later the budget soared to over $86.5 million. This represented an increase of three and a half times the budget's size of 1927-28.

The greatest increases in Long's budgets were in the sphere of highway construction. Huge highway bond issues were floated by the state to assist in defraying the expenses of the new highways. Two special session acts authorized bond issues of over ninety million dollars in Huey's first two years in office, \(^81\) which went for the construction of roads and bridges. Bond money receipts totaled $15.5 million in 1930 and increased to over $45 million by 1933. These figures clearly indicate that Huey did fulfill his promise to build roads.

Table VII illustrates the huge increases in the size of the budgets during Earl's years in office. Earl doubled the size of the budget in his first year of the 1948-52 term, increasing spending from $170.7 million to an astounding $344.4 million! During his last term in office increases in expenditures were spectacular but not as great as those of his previous term.

Earl's forte was the welfare issue as Huey's had been highway construction. (See Table VIII.) Welfare expenditures quadrupled during his 1948-52 term from $26 million to over a $102 million. In his later term, increases were dramatic but not of the caliber of the 1948-52 term.

\(^81\) Special Session, Act 1, 1928. Special Session, Act 3, 1930.
### TABLE VII


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>$170,760,922.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-49</td>
<td>$344,335,831.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-50</td>
<td>$327,170,595.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>$336,417,406.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>$359,283,286.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>$496,325,624.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-57</td>
<td>$576,966,961.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>$623,832,149.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-59</td>
<td>$688,383,844.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>$785,044,981.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE VIII

State of Louisiana Welfare Department Expenditures (Selected Years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>$26,150,065.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>$102,574,024.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>$116,391,428.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>$164,372,691.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: State of Louisiana, Financial Reports (Selected Years), Division of Administration.

During the interval when Earl was out of office welfare costs increased only fourteen million dollars but mushroomed another forty-eight million dollars during his last term for a threefold increase over his predecessor.
Under the Longs, the budget went from an abstract document to one of immediate concern to Louisianians. Concurrent with this phenomenon, the budget increasingly became an important tool of political persuasion.

Conclusion

The discussion of this partial list of the governor's powers has attempted to elucidate the significance of the modern twentieth century Louisian governor, and in particular the facets of his position related to the legislative process. Between his constitutional-legal authority and his extra-legal methods of influence, the governor is both in theory and in fact the state's most important personage. The number of patronage positions both at the state and local level open to the governor are an important asset in his ability to construct and maintain a powerful political organization. When the various plums of construction contracts, insurance purchases, "idle funds," state purchasing, levee boards and land leases are added to the patronage available to the governor, the awesome significance of being governor of Louisiana becomes clear. In addition the political control the governor maintains over the budget serves to consolidate his political organization, making the system responsive to his whims on penalty of financial starvation to the dissidents.

The legislator, possessing none of the prerogatives of the chief executive, having only anxieties and frustration, is a weak challenger to the state's first citizen. The dichotomy between the
governor and the legislature is sharp and one-sided. However, the legislator is not impotent. No matter how powerful the governor, the legislator is a potential threat to him. Hidden in a dusty corner is the fact that the legislature could exert itself in an attempt to stop the domination of Louisiana by the executive branch of the government.
CHAPTER VI

THE LEGISLATURE: MYTHS AND REALITIES

In Louisiana, the governor rightfully merits the title "chief legislator." Twenty men, a majority of the Senate, could destroy the governor's legislative program. One third of the upper house can refuse acquiescence in proposed constitutional amendments and bar any increase in taxation. These obstacles could mean legislative dominance and executive subordination, but in fact few would deny that the governor is the "chief legislator." The tenor of reality has been one of overwhelming executive domination and legislative subservience.

The legislative and executive branches operate in separate milieus. Different environments exist for the two institutions. Each branch of government has become acclimated to a different process of decision making. The governor is conditioned towards individual decision-making, whereas the legislature is motivated in its actions by the process of collective decision making. Varying environments and differing realities posit their individual courses of action.

The executive has the initiative, the aura of grandeur and the available tools to subordinate the legislative branch. The myth of co-equal branches of government is destroyed by the reality of executive

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power. The governor permeates the legislative halls. His leadership is expected, even sought. In theory he cannot vote, his presence on the floor is forbidden and his ultimate survival dependent upon the legislators. In reality the governor votes several hundred times a day. The governor gives and he taketh away. A legislator's votes are indicative of how the patronage is to be distributed, whether it be money or judgeships. Votes reflect this notwithstanding the theoretical co-equalness of the legislature. The reason for this is not difficult to ascertain. Governors stride the legislative halls in defiance of the rules. Instead of the governor being threatened with expulsion, the legislator is threatened with retaliation if he does not push the "right" button on the voting machine. It was not unknown for both Longs to direct roll call voting. To even the most naive of observers their exhibition of power was evident. This chapter describes the reality of legislative politics, not the theory of the Louisiana constitution. An understanding of the aspects of the formal and informal legislative process is necessary if the successes and reverses of the Long brothers are to be understood.

Constitutional and Legal Requirements

The Constitution provides for a House consisting of 105 members and a Senate of 39 members. All are elected at the same time for a term of four years served concurrently with the governor. To qualify for the

2In 1963 the Constitution was amended raising the number from 101.

3Article III, Sections II and V.
position of legislator, a person must be a citizen of the state for at least five years, be a resident of his parish or district for at least two years prior to his election and be a registered voter.\textsuperscript{4} The Senate has the additional requirement that the candidate be at least 25 years old.\textsuperscript{5}

The legislature meets in regular sixty day sessions in even numbered years. Beginning in 1955, a fiscal session was added, meeting for thirty days in odd numbered years. The purpose of the fiscal session is to enact the yearly budget. However, upon a two-thirds vote of the legislature "non-fiscal" measures may be introduced.

Legislators are paid fifty dollars per day for the session plus $250 per month expense money during the year. This is a considerable increase over the ten dollars per day during Huey's tenure in office. Legislators drew twenty dollars per day during Earl's first full length term and were raised to fifty dollars per day in 1956. At that time approval was also given to $150 per month expense money.

As there is no diversity of pay among legislators there is also no diversity of party allegiance. Louisiana, at least until recently, has been a one-party state. No Republican has sat in the governor's chair in the twentieth century nor did any Republican grace the legislature during the era of the Longs. However, in 1966 there were three Republican House members. Despite the one party nature of the

\textsuperscript{4}Article III, Section LX.

\textsuperscript{5}Article III, Section XIV.
legislature political differences are not unknown in the legislature, nor is diversity lacking in their appearance, actions, philosophies or politics.

The Legislative Environment

A viewing of the assembly reveals men yet in their twenties conferring with others fully looking their seven decades of life. The difference between the "city" and the "country" boys is overworked. Country legislators have appeared in shiny silk suits and urban ones in cowboy boots. The legislators are as varied as the clothes that suit them. The legislature has had its persistent, consistent conservatives like New Orleans' George Tessier, a continual critic of Earl Long but who had his respect. Another type, the racists, captained by "Willie" Rainach, vigorously combatted Earl Long for control of the legislature on that theme. Political wizards, of whom B. B. "Sixty" Rayburn is an example, have raised the tone of the assembly. Rayburn has chaired the Finance Committee under several governors including Earl Long. The legislature has had no shortage of fun lovers and practical jokers. Representative E. J. Grizzaffi was known for shooting firecrackers in the chamber, and an unnamed legislator broke up the decorum of the legislature in 1958 by spotting a pair of "red panties" on a fellow

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7 See Chapter IV.

8 *Baton Rouge Advocate*, July 5, 1956.
legislator's desk and announcing his find to the body.⁹

The Louisiana legislature has seen everything under the Longs' tutelage from assassination to impeachment, from witnessing the collapse of a governor (1959) to the collapse of an administration (1939). Louisianians and their legislature accept the antics in the vein of the unsuspecting legislative reporter who had a firecracker go off under his chair during a debate and did not even move a muscle. An equally unswayed reporter looked up at the culprit and declared: "Nothing the House can do can shock us any more."¹⁰

The Legislative Work Load

The modern twentieth century legislator is filled with anxiety by the challenge of performing his function well. He is distraught by the prodigious amount of legislative activity he is expected to perform. He frequently "votes on measures on which he has not formed his own judgment or which has not been authoritatively and reassuringly formed for him by the party organization."¹¹ The abundance of work and the paucity of knowledge, combined with the limited time available, produces frustrated and disrupted legislators. Frequently, legislators exclaim in maddening tones: "What the hell is this all about?" At times bills are brought up for a vote and confused lawmakers often

⁹Ibid., July 13, 1958.

¹⁰Ibid., July 5, 1956.

shout or whisper to ask leaders how to vote on the issue. At other
times it is even more frank: "How should I vote? Is it a good bill?
Will it help you? Do you need it?" At times in the confusion of
legislative business leaders are asking each other about the pros and
cons of the proposed legislation, leaving the legislators the option
of asking each other or visitors for information on the substantive
issues before them. At times the hectic confusion causes the legis­
lator to feel that matters have slipped beyond his grasp. He is no
longer the master of his own domain. The legislator, in practice,
has only one instrument of control during times of distress: the
motion for a recess. Frustrated and maddened legislators, either pro
or anti-administration, find salvation in this parliamentary "Lifesaver."
Many a chaotic and explosive situation has died stillborn, caught in
the swirling calm of a short recess.

The legislator is scorned as a neophyte, criticized because he
is not an expert on severance taxes, workman's compensation, teacher
tenure acts, highway construction problems and the "proper" size of
holes allowed in fishing nets. The scope of his task is impossible.

12Comments heard by the author during the 1965 Regular Session
of the Louisiana Legislature.

13Observations by the author obtained during the 1965 Regular
Session of the Louisiana Legislature.

14Shils, op. cit., p. 572.

15Observations, op. cit.

16A perennial problem facing Louisiana legislators.
The variety of problems confronting him requires a vast amount of research and study, both of which are in short supply but in constant demand due to the nature of the legislator's position.

Although technically a part-time job, the legislator is actually on call twenty-four hours a day every day of the year, whether to receive a request for a job, or write a letter of recommendation. Besides these mundane duties, the legislator is charged with legitimatizing policy on almost all aspects of governmental concern either through the approval of programs or by passing judgment on the budget. The legislator is expected to perform competently a full-time position regarded by the public as a part-time job; be knowledgeable on a syndrome of issues while furnished only the barest of necessary research tools; and be acutely aware of the public's pulse. He must attend a multitude of functions and perform an infinitude of chores in the "public interest." While doing this he is paid the salary of a lackey and regarded by the public as "just a politician."

The legislator's future is not bright. His task is becoming more complex, but his resources are not increasing correspondingly. In 1922, the first session under the present Constitution, 573 bills were introduced. By 1928 1,068 bills were deposited in the hopper. The total increased to 1,204 by 1948 and surged upward during the 1956

\[\text{Louisiana Legislative Council, The Legislative Process in Louisiana (Baton Rouge: Louisiana Legislative Council, 1953), p. 53.}\]
\[\text{Ibid.}\]
session totaling 1,990,19 but decreased to 1,536 during Earl's last sixty day session in 1958.20

Accompanying the increase in the legislative workload has been the increase in the cost of running the legislature. Table IX indicates the cost of the regular sixty day sessions are not bargains.

**TABLE IX**

Costs of the Louisiana Legislature (Selected Years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th>House</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>104,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>490,000</td>
<td>186,000</td>
<td>340,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>543,000</td>
<td>199,000</td>
<td>344,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1,045,000</td>
<td>290,300</td>
<td>754,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>1,358,000</td>
<td>498,000</td>
<td>860,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1,285,208</td>
<td>500,088</td>
<td>785,120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Total legislative expenses in the 1928 regular session were $160,000. Expenditures had more than tripled by Earl Long's first regular session in 1948. Between the 1948 session and his last sixty day session in 1958 the appropriation soared from $490,000 to $1,358,000. Legislative


20 Ibid.
expenses have decreased slightly from the 1958 figure, totaling $1,285,208 today.

The increase of expenditures has not resulted in the strengthening of the legislature vis a vis the governor, however. The governor has long had "undisputed leadership."\(^{21}\) Indeed, the legislature did not even create a Legislative Council to assist it until 1953. The Council's growth has been slow and reticent, marked by a restraint against possibly antagonizing the administration in office.\(^{22}\) However, analysis by the Council of all bills has, from the beginning, caused administration proposals to be drawn with greater care and defended more judiciously.\(^{23}\)

After decades of a legislature possessing ineffectual tools, combined with its remarkable lack of available information, it is not surprising to find that a man desiring to be a strong governor finds his way paved by the docility of the legislature. One prominent Louisiana political figure and former governor maintains that a governor automatically controls over one-third of the legislature. At his lowest ebb, this governor stated he had no trouble retaining more than a third and he has never viewed a Louisiana governor who could not do likewise.\(^{24}\)


\(^{22}\)Interview with ex-staffer of the Council, March 24, 1966.

\(^{23}\)William C. Havard, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 131.

\(^{24}\)Interview, November 13, 1965.
The Leadership Structure

The governor's men in southern states are the vehicles by which his domination is effectuated. The Speaker of the House, the President Pro Tem of the Senate, the floor leaders, and the chairman and majority memberships of important legislative committees form the nucleus of this group. Louisiana is no exception to this rule. Earl Long once remarked at a press conference that he would be unavailable for the next few weeks because "I'm so busy with my legislative program and working up committees." A prominent legislator confirmed a governor's influence in the naming of legislative officials, declaring: "If we were really serious about reform we would elect our own President Pro Tem and appoint our own committees." 

No committee on committees exists in Louisiana to assist in the filling of committee rosters. No caucuses are held by legislators to determine party leadership. Instead the incoming governor, through the enormous patronage and material incentives available for his bargaining with legislators, dictates the election of the Speaker. The Speaker in turn appoints the committee members of the House according to administration wishes. In effect the Speaker's control over House procedures is the governor's control. The governor dominates the legislative process through his control of the Speaker and legislative committees.

27 Interview, May 27, 1966.
From the recognizing of a legislator to the bringing up of a bill in committee it is under the governor's domain.

In the Senate the lieutenant governor selects the committee members. However, with few exceptions he was elected as part of the governor's team, or with the governor's support. Because of this, and the impotence of a lieutenant governor's power, the chief executive's wishes become the makeup of the committees. The "heart" of the legislative process is dictated by the chief executive, leaving the opposition shackled even before the gavel calls the first legislative meeting to order.

The legislature accepts this situation in a docile fashion. An example of the legislature's dependence on the administration occurred in 1950, when the first few days of the session were especially disorderly and pro-administration senators were described as being in a "quandary." The reason was simple: "They didn't know whose lead to follow since the floor leader had not been announced." A veteran lobbyist of Louisiana legislative sessions remarked of the leadership structure: "The leadership is always confused. Every session is that way. At times the governor is even confused (although Earl was the least confused of all governors). The pace is hectic. It's confusing."


29 Ibid.

30 Interview, April 28, 1965.
He added: "Before you have watched an entire session you will have lost any faith you ever had in the democratic system of government." The confusion in procedure that is evident at the top filters down and engulfs at times the committee system. Rules are flagrantly circumvented. Informal rules have developed that overshadow the written ones.

In addition too many committees exist in the legislature. The number of legislative committees remained fairly constant from Huey Long's day until 1954. In 1928 there were 37 House committees and 26 Senate committees. By 1954 the number of House committees remained the same but the number of Senate committees had increased by three. At that time a new committee structure was instituted and the House committees reduced to 16 and the Senate to 15. At the beginning of Earl's last term two additional Senate committees were created.

31Ibid.

32In 1956 House members had defeated a measure to raise their salary and everybody thought the issue was dead. But supporters of the raise took a bill proposing that pawn brokers take a thumb print of all persons pawning articles and changed it to the pay raise which then passed the House.

Several days earlier the constitutional period for the introduction of new legislation had passed but the completely new "pawnbrokers" bill passed. Baton Rouge Advocate, May 23, 1959, and June 16, 1956.


34Louisiana Legislative Council, The Legislative Process in Louisiana, op. cit.


36Ibid.
Surveys of various sessions show that, whether under the old committee system or the new, the load of business is distributed disproportionately to the few top administration "loaded" or controlled committees. This procedure is pursued notwithstanding the rules of both Houses which clearly indicate that all bills on the same subject should go to the same committee. The majority of bills, according to these surveys, are assigned to only two or three committees in each House. This procedure allows bills to be assigned to a heavily dominated administration committee. The administration then can control the bringing up of the bill for a hearing, or can allow the measure to simply linger in limbo.

The committees chosen for the depositing of administration bills or of bills that the administration desires killed has little to do with the subject matter of the committee. Traditionally one of the Judiciary Committees is utilized by the administration. A weak case can be made in a multitude of cases for a bill to be sent to a judiciary committee because the effect of the bill would be statewide or because it is not exactly suited to any of the subject categorized committees such as labor or agriculture. In other words the widest latitude is

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38 Senate, Rule no. 49 and House, Rule no. 35.


40 Interview with Senate Legislative leader, May 16, 1965.
reserved for the judiciary. Because of this feeling and administrations' tendency to deposit bills in this committee, another judiciary committee was established years ago entitled Judiciary B. There is no subject matter differential between the two. In 1964 another judiciary committee was established in the Senate titled Judiciary C which is the most pro-administration committee of the present legislature. During Huey's reign, the favored committees in the House were Appropriations and Judiciary A. The Judiciary Committee plus Finance in the Senate bore the brunt of the legislation. One student of the period wrote: "These two committees alone (in both Houses) handle more general legislation than all the other standing committees combined." Earl followed the same procedure except that the judiciary workload had been broken up into two judiciary committees, "A" and "B."

The committee system is "probably . . . the one area of legislative technique that most needs study and reform." An abundance of committees exist. A few of them are overwhelmed with legislation, possess overlapping membership, lack adequate staffing and give laconic attention to place and meeting. Some committee members do not take their work seriously, and give only superficial examination to the bills. This type of behavior reflects discredit on the Louisiana legislative


42Ibid.

43Unpublished Louisiana Legislative Council Records.

process and makes it more easily dominated by the chief executive. This is unfortunate because the committee system is the heart of the legislative process. Here a bill dies stillborn or has life breathed into it by lobbyists and legislators. Committee votes are vital, for only rarely does the legislature repudiate the findings of one of its committees. Administration committees are known as either "railroad or graveyard" committees. Bills desired by the governor are railroaded through but opposed measures are given but cheap funerals. Legislative rules are lacking in some cases and are contradictory in others but most important existing rules are disregarded with impunity.

The Legislature and Its Shortcomings

Many of the legislature's problems are ones nurtured and retained by their own carelessness. Instead of pursuing active, positive methods to eradicate at least the superficial signs of their lowly estate, legislators are the victims of their own inertia. Legislators, by insisting on proper decorum, committee rooms, office space, competent staffing, and obedience to their regulations would dramatically increase their image and reputations throughout the state.

The legislature's ability to perform positively is further limited by the legal and constitutional restraints it has largely imposed on itself. The legislature over the years has voted to remove increasing portions of the budget from its purview and limit its ability to influence the course of state government. The legislature has simply moved to weaken and partially destroy itself. It is but a shadow of the institution it could be if it were to exercise its potential.
Eighty-seven per cent of Louisiana tax revenue is dedicated to specific programs. This fact leaves the legislature with little more than a bookkeeper's function for more than four-fifths of the state's revenue. Pressure groups have successfully encased their projects in the dedicated funds column, especially in such sensitive areas as teachers' salaries, school and university support and highway construction. Most of the dedicated funds are designated by legislative act which the legislature could alter at will, but the will is lacking.

One aspect of legislative activity that has not been lacking over the years is its propensity to add employees to the legislative payroll. Both Houses have more employees, than legislators, and more doorkeepers than doors. (See Tables X and XI.) Competent staffing is a crying need of the legislature but "staffers" abound on the payroll. Senate decorum is a misnomer, yet nine men draw hefty salaries as sergeants at arms. Each committee has a secretary, yet no more than 4 working secretaries are on the Senate floor. Each legislator is allowed a clerk, yet only a handful ever appear. The enrolling room is a busy place, but the number of employees on the enrolling room payroll could not even fit in the allotted space let alone perform services. Girls are frequently hired by their measurements, not their IQ's to perform services not listed in the budget. Recently one married senator was convicted of payroll padding on the basis of sensational

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45 Committee on Governor's Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities, "Conflicts with the Legislature" (unpublished, Proposal no. 2, 1965), p. 17B.
testimony by his "girl friend." Friends and relatives clutter up the payroll while the legislature suffers from inefficient information and little or no assistance.

According to the Constitution, audits of legislative expenses must be made and the results published in one New Orleans newspaper. However, this provision has been ignored. It took "repeated requests" by newsmen to obtain the 1958 session information cited in this chapter.

The Senate employed 155 persons in 1958. Table X indicates the division of labor but not the money because the Senate did not release these figures.

House employees during the 1958 session totaled 258 plus pages. In other words it took two and a half employees per legislator to conduct the House's business. Some categories were staffed so heavily that they had to work in shifts. The total sum expended on the 258 employees was $121,310. Table XI gives a breakdown of the money spent as issued by the House.

Pages and their total salaries were released by the House, but not the Senate for 1958. House pages totaled 276 with varying periods

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46 See Baton Rouge Advocate, March 22 to March 27, 1966 for details.
47 Article III, Section XXVIII.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
### TABLE X

**Employees Division of Labor, 1958 Regular Session (Senate)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate Desk</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doorkeepers</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeants at Arms</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Bureau</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolling Room No. 1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolling Room No. 2</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE XI

**Employees Division of Labor, 1958 Regular Session (House)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Total Sum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desk Clerks</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$ 11,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doorkeepers and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeants at Arms</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$ 6,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Bureau</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$ 2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolling Room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Workers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>$ 15,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typists</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>$ 13,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof Readers</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>$ 9,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>$ 48,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Clerks</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>$ 9,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$ 4,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>258</td>
<td>$121,310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Baton Rouge *State-Times*, July 31, 1958.*
of employment, averaging out to 116 pages on the payroll each day of the session.\(^{51}\) This was far in excess of the number that was ever seen on the floor, however.\(^{52}\) The salary total for them was $40,210.50.\(^{53}\)

Administration forces control the hiring of legislative employees and the "in" group receives the clerkships and other positions. House Speaker Robert Angelle declared: "In the 24 years I have been here it has been the custom that, when a representative was unfriendly with the administration, his recommendations for employees were not given consideration . . . ."\(^{54}\) Obviously the legislature hires its employees not on the basis of need nor competence but for political expediency and patronage purposes.

### Legislative Procedure

Confusion is augmented in the Louisiana legislature by the diverse and/or inadequate procedures followed by the legislature. Legislators unassisted by competent staffing are further disjointed and hampered by procedures favoring inattention to detail. A conscientious legislator is burdened by a series of procedures designed to depress and alleviate his interest in good government. Senate rules require the printing of all introduced bills,\(^{55}\) but House rules require printing

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\(^{51}\)Ibid., August 14, 1958.

\(^{52}\)Ibid.

\(^{53}\)Ibid.

\(^{54}\)Ibid.

\(^{55}\)Senate Rule 31, House Rule 51.
of only those that are reported "favorably, favorably with amendment or by substitute."\textsuperscript{56} Regarding House rules, this leaves the legislator or any observer in a quandary. As one lobbyist points out: "In the House the bills are not even printed until they come out of committee. The opposition does not even know what is in the bills so any adequate hearing on them is impossible."\textsuperscript{57}

Knowing the contents of bills is not the only major problem facing a legislator attempting to do his job in a competent manner. He must also find out the time of the hearing and locate it. In theory the time and place is provided for in detail. The roster of each House contains a listing of the committees, their members, and time and day at which they are supposed to meet.\textsuperscript{58} Senate rules stipulate committee hearings must be posted twelve hours before the meeting.\textsuperscript{59} However, the President of the Senate upon the request of a committee chairman may set "an earlier hour,"\textsuperscript{60} allowing meetings to be changed and held on a minute's notice. A technique that prevents opponents of a measure from attending the meeting. "If you want to be present for a specific hearing," one lobbyist informed the author, "the only way to do it would be to be present at all meetings of the committee provided you could

\textsuperscript{56}House Rule 51.

\textsuperscript{57}Interview with lobbyist, April 28, 1965.

\textsuperscript{58}Louisiana Legislative Council, The Legislative Process, op. cit., p. 57.

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{60}Ibid.
find the time and place of the meetings." To further confuse matters, there is no calendar of committee business nor is any record kept of committee votes.

Neither House has rules requiring a public hearing on any bills. Consequently no person has legal recourse to take against these slight of hand tactics. Committee hearings are a "farce." At times hearings consist of a group of legislators standing around a microphone with the chairman bringing up bills by their numbers only, members voting on the numbers by voice votes with the result of killing the measure or reporting it out of committee. The reported bill may not bear any resemblance to the subject matter contained in the committee's jurisdiction.

The Constitution and legislative rules do not require every bill to be reported on by committee. But the Constitution does state that no bill can be considered for final passage until it has been reported by a committee. Only rarely does either House pass a measure which has

61Interview with lobbyist, April 28, 1965.
62Author's observations, op. cit.
64Interview with lobbyist, April 28, 1965.
65Ibid., and author's observations, op. cit.
66Ibid.
67Article III, Section XXIV.
received an "unfavorable" or "without action" report. This is the most common method of killing bills, one out of two suffer this fate.  

There are numerous reasons for bills never reaching the governor's desk. Among the reasons is simply that bills are at times basically impossible or "bad" legislation. Examples include a measure that proposed to outlaw television shows appearing on screens in Louisiana having bi-racial casts, or the solon's proposal, based on a constituent's complaint, prohibiting men from embalming female corpses.  

Of course, many "bad" or ridiculous measures are passed by the legislature. One was passed in 1958 requiring all blood plasma to be marked Negro or white. Bills are also introduced by request with the author having no real desire to see them become law. Measures are introduced as "trading bait," others are "mutilated" on the floor. Finally every session has its "shakedown bills which would foul up the liquor industry, mess up the oil fields, require labeling of bread, or hike the candle-power of lights in barrooms." "Shakedown" bills bring the lobbyists out in full force and most all the interested parties have a good time.

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70 Baton Rouge Advocate, June 4, 1956.
Lobbying is big business in Louisiana but no regulations exist to contain possible abuses. Lobbying is so much a part of the legislative process that one journalist stated it would be easier to do away with the legislature than the lobbyists. Obviously all lobbying is not illicit nor undesirable. At times lobbyists perform necessary functions and undoubtedly cause the legislative process to perform in a smoother fashion. One senator reflected lobbyists "are absolutely essential," for "How else can we hope to be informed on issues; how else can opposing views be presented, if not by lobbyists in their fields whose job is to convey to us the viewpoint of their groups, association or industry?"

Lobbyists have long held commanding positions in the Louisiana legislative process. It is not rare to witness lobbyists buttonholing legislators on the floor during debate in flagrant violation of the rules. More common is the procedure of beckoning to legislators from the aisles for them to come off the floor for discussions of proposed legislation. A request legislators rarely flout.

At times the work of lobbyists is easy since committees dealing with special interest groups are stacked in favor of the concerned group. Examples include the insurance committees of the legislature which are both chaired and dominated by insurance brokers and agents.

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75 Baton Rouge Advocate, July 24, 1958.

76 Ibid., October 13, 1965.
The conservation committees are the province of oil men with the senate committee chairman generally being a wealthy oil man. Industrial relations is a committee chaired by a pro labor legislator. Agricultural committees are filled with rural legislators representing varying farming interests.

The rules of committee jurisdiction are not strictly enforced allowing a legislator to designate the committee for his bill. This request is allowed unless it is a major anti-administration measure or antagonizes one of the major pressure groups. In these cases a floor fight takes place with the administration exercising its power to have the measure placed in the most heavily dominated administration committee or in the case of the pressure group to have the bill assigned to its proper committee, the one technically concerned with the measure but also the one dominated by representatives of the aggrieved group.

The governor is the major legislative influencer or lobbyist. His appearances on the floor are commonplace complete with buttonholing of selected legislators. It was a Sunday night ritual with Earl, resplendent in his white linen suit, to greet returning legislators at their desks and lobby for the measures he desired during the upcoming week.77

Besides his personal appeals the governor utilizes the services of lobbyists amenable to bills the governor wishes passed. It is common for the governor to confer with allied lobbyists requesting them to win over the votes they influence for certain measures. In this way the

77Interview, May 16, 1966 with an Earl Long era senator.
governor is able to bring outside influence on legislators, assisting him in his efforts to secure approval of controversial legislation. In fact it is accepted procedure for favored lobbyists to work out of the governor's office closeting themselves with the aura of the governor's approval. Traditionally, depending on a governor's political bent, certain lobbyists are very close to the chief executive. One lobbyist who was a close friend of Earl's was chosen to accompany Earl on his trip to Galveston.

Access to the governor is a prime method of obtaining favored committee assignments for legislators partial to the lobbyists wishes. Due to the governor's influence over the legislature he is generally able to designate committee assignments to the advantage of the favored pressure group. This in turn accures to the governor's advantage when dealing with the lobbyists concerned.

Lobbyists are not required to register making it difficult to ascertain the number frequenting the sessions. Obviously depending on the type of legislation being considered the number and type differ. Lobbyists, however, are numerous at all times. One has only to observe the commotion around the central legislative telephone switchboard to validate this assumption.

The Capitol is not the only scene of a lobbyist's actions. "Sponsors," the name given lobbyists by legislators, give parties, pick up hotel bills, provide steaks and deliver whiskey among other services for legislators. Several years ago a delegation of senators went over to the House and asked the leaders to please report out a tax bill so
they could start eating steaks and stop eating in the cafeteria. In 1958 "the oil and gas lobby wined and dined the representatives with many steaks and drinks," especially the opposition ones but after the tax passed, the lobbyists defeated, withdrew. One victorious legislator took the floor and announced to the opposition, known as the "34 Club," that he knew where "the 34 Club can get a darn good 99 cent plate lunch."  

A seldom seen and spectacular aspect of high pressure lobbying was revealed in the trial of Captain William Heuer former President of the Crescent River Pilots Association (1958-1962). The legislature sets the fees for the pilots. A legislative power that makes for active lobbying on both the part of the pilots and the owners.

The Heuer trial concerned the disposal of $273,000 in Association funds during the years he was the pilots' president. His testimony detailed their lobbying during the Jimmie Davis administration. A witness, Richard McKneely, the incumbent head of the pilots, testified concerning lobbying activities he participated in during his tenure as secretary which coincided with Earl's last term.

In 1956, McKneely testified, "the pilots' board of directors was authorized to spend any amount of money necessary in connection with

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78 Interview with legislator, March 3, 1966.
80 Ibid.
its legislative program." A total of $38,641 was spent during the 1956 session in the pilots unsuccessful attempt to have their fees raised. The bill passed the legislature but was vetoed by Governor Long. The pilot stated, Rufus Hayes, Baton Rouge attorney who later served as Earl's insurance commissioner, was paid $21,500 in cash for his services in getting the bill passed. McKneely's superior at the time, Paul Delesderier, the then president, testified that another $20,000 in cash was kept in a "hotel safe to be paid Hayes once the bill was signed into law." Earl vetoed the legislation, according to McKneely, because "young Perez," Leander Perez's son, was the pilot's attorney.

Delesderier further testified that he had $60,000 at his disposal for the 1956 session but returned $22,000 unused after the session. "All but a few hundred dollars" was distributed in cash payments, he stated. Entertainment expenses cost from "$100 to $300 to $500 a day" while the legislature was in session.

Two years later, a compromise was reached between the pilots and the New Orleans Steamship Association which was ratified in the

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81 Ibid., September 30, 1965.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid., October 1, 1965.
85 Ibid., September 30, 1965.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., October 1, 1965.
legislative session. However, the pilots retained attorney Claude Duke of New Orleans paying him a fee of $12,500 to represent them during the session. In addition two attorneys who were also legislators were on the pilots' payroll at the time.

The legislative process in Louisiana cannot be understood unless the importance and at times dominating figure of the lobbyist is remembered in any discussion of legislators and their actions.

Conclusion

The legislature is not the master of its own house. This is the prime weakness of the institution. Constitutionally and legally the legislature is sufficiently empowered to exist as a powerful independent entity. In practice, however, the executive dominates the legislature to such an extent that the mere mention of the phrase "independent legislature" brings guffaws from legislators. The legislature accepts with docility its second rate status exerting little initiative to transform itself in practice to what it is in theory. By paying attention to decorum, obeying house rules and ensuring competent and adequate staffing, the legislature would be in a position to debate the merits of the many complex issues facing Louisiana today. However, inertia and inattention mark the mood of the legislature.

89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
The legislature's dependence on the governor or lobbyists for information and guidance ensures the subordination of the legislature. By default the legislature forfeits its independence and strengthens its reputation as the stepchild of Louisiana government. Public and legislative interest centers on the governor's utterances and addresses to the legislature with little or no programmatic innovation emerging from legislators.
CHAPTER VII

THE LONGS DOMINATE: THE VETO POWER

One of the most powerful devices at a chief executive's disposal, whether it be in the Bayou state or elsewhere, is the veto power. This power has been heralded as the most potent of constitutional devices given the governor of a state by its constitution.¹

The veto is not a southern nor even an American invention but originated in ancient Rome.² The word, veto, meaning "I forbid," has traditionally been one of the executive's prerogatives in America, dating from the arrival of the English royal governors.³ In the royal colonies the Crown's representative possessed an absolute veto over the colonists' acts. The authority to disallow colonial acts was exercised by the governor. This was an irritating aspect of colonial English rule and was a reason for pushing the colonies towards the issuance of the Declaration of Independence.⁴ Because of the colonists' resentment against the veto early state constitutions did not generally grant such

³Ibid., p. 474.
⁴Ibid.
authority to the governor. Of the original thirteen states only three
granted the chief executive veto power.\textsuperscript{5} The national trend was
reversed in 1812 when Louisiana entered the Union with its constitution
enumerating a veto provision. Since that time all states entering the
Union, except West Virginia, have had veto provisions in their funda-
mental document.\textsuperscript{6} Today only the state of North Carolina lacks a veto
 provision.\textsuperscript{7}

The vote necessary to override a governor's veto varies from
state-to-state, ranging from a simple majority to two-thirds of the
entire elected membership. The average situation calls for a two-
thirds vote by the members present. A quarter of the states provide for
a "pocket veto." Under this provision a measure does not become law if
the governor has not signed it during a specified period following legis­
lative adjournment. The veto began as an executive safeguard against
legislative dominance. Twentieth century history has seen the tool
refined and developed by the executive so that he can achieve positive
ends in his dealings with the legislature.\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., p. 475.

\textsuperscript{6}Frank W. Prescott, "The Executive Veto in Southern States,"

\textsuperscript{7}Fred Gantt, Jr., The Chief Executive in Texas (Austin: Uni-

\textsuperscript{8}Roy D. Morey, Politics and Legislation: The Office of
Governor in Arizona (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965),
p. 31.
The Long Veto

Louisiana is classified as a state having a strong veto power.\(^9\) Louisiana's veto provision is one of the most difficult to override, more difficult than the national provision. Two-thirds of the entire elected legislative membership is needed in Louisiana to overturn the governor's action.\(^10\) According to the Louisiana constitution "every bill which shall have been passed by both houses shall be presented to the governor."\(^11\) However, votes on parliamentary questions and removal from office are not considered as being included.\(^12\) If the governor vetoes a bill the constitution requires him to return the measure to its house of origin and state his reasons for disapproval. The constitution further provides that the originating house shall proceed at once to reconsider the bill.\(^13\) Whether during or after the session the governor has "ten calendar days" to sign or reject the bill. Dated receipts are required by the constitution showing the time the measure was presented to the governor.\(^14\) The time is written on all the bills and signed by the governor's secretary upon receipt of the measure.


\(^10\)Article V, Section XV.

\(^11\)Ibid.

\(^12\)John A. Fairlie, *op. cit.*, p. 482.

\(^13\)Article V, Section XV.

\(^14\)Ibid.
A bill, if it be signed or not, becomes law at the end of the ten day period whether before or after adjournment. Louisiana under three constitutions had a "pocket veto" but under the present 1921 constitution the section was omitted. In the rush of activity following the 1956 session two of Long's vetoed bills became law. He had vetoed them and affixed veto messages to them but had failed to sign the bills. Consequently both bills became law but carry their veto messages in the published official acts.

The veto power has not been a dead letter in Louisiana. Between 1937 and 1947 inclusive Louisiana led the southern states in number of bills vetoed by the governor. During this period the southern average was 3.5% far below the 11.6% of Louisiana. Of course neither of the Longs served as governor during this period. Huey's veto rate was slightly lower, 10% of the bills met this fate under the Kingfish. Earl easily outscored Huey averaging 15.29% during his tenure. The 1957 session was void of any vetoes which lowered his overall average. Tables XII and XIII illustrate the veto patterns of the Longs. Special sessions are almost entirely devoid of vetoes--Huey and Earl having vetoed one bill each. The regular sixty day sessions bore the brunt of the governor's hand.

15The constitutions of 1864, 1868 and 1879 had the provisions.


18Ibid.
TABLE XII

Volume of Legislation and Vetoes During Regular and Special Sessions, 1928-1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Bills Passed by Legislature</th>
<th>Total Vetoes</th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Per Cent Vetoed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>319</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>1930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Huey vetoed 46 bills after the sessions but only once while a legislature was in session. Earl, on the other hand, exercised the veto more frequently during the session, rather than after the legislators had returned home. However, most of his vetoes came during the last ten days of the session. If he believed there was a serious threat of
his veto being overridden he could easily have waited until adjournment
to veto the bill.

**TABLE XIII**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Bills Passed by Legislature</th>
<th>Total Vetoes</th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Per Cent Vetoes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940 Special</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948 Regular</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<td>Special</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950 Regular</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
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<td>Special</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951 Special</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956 Regular</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957 Regular</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958 Regular</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959 Regular</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3273</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>15.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Tables XIV and XV illustrate this and other differences between the brothers' veto actions. The pace of the Louisiana legislature is slow until the final two weeks. Consequently most of the legislation can be vetoed after the legislative session. In effect the after session veto is a "pocket veto."

TABLE XIV
Veto Patterns of Huey Long 1928-1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Total Vetoes</th>
<th>Vetoes During Session</th>
<th>Vetoes After Session</th>
<th>Attempts to Override</th>
<th>Per Cent Attempted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
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<td>1929</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Regular and Special Session Vetoed Bills of the Louisiana Legislature, 1928-1931.
### TABLE XV


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Total Vetoes</th>
<th>Vetoes During Session</th>
<th>Vetoes After Session</th>
<th>Attempts to Override</th>
<th>Per Cent Attempted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
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<td>September</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Attempts to override vetoes have been fairly infrequent. None of Huey’s vetoes were forced to meet the test and only a fraction of Earl’s came up for a vote again. Even though a bill passed both houses
with wide margins this was no indication that it would stand in an over­
riding test. One bill vetoed by Governor Long during the 1956 session
had passed the Senate 36 to 0 and the House 74 to 0. After the veto an
attempt was made to override resulting in a Senate vote of 28 to 5 in
favor of upholding the governor. 19 This situation is not unique to
Louisiana. Studies made of various states follow a like pattern; an
Arizona study found only 12% of the vetoes have been overridden; 20 in
New York between 1872-1951 no veto was overturned 21 and in Illinois only
three have ever been overridden up to 1960. 22 Louisiana follows this
pattern. No veto has been overridden under the constitution of 1921.
The governor's veto has been a final decision. Due to the powers of the
governor it would be a rarity if the governor could not control at least
one-third of the legislature. 24 Both in theory and practice the consti­
tution gives the last vote to the governor and Louisiana governors have
not been afraid to use it. The absolute veto power of the governor is
so ingrained in the Bayou state that legislators vote "irresponsibly
knowing that the governor will veto their excesses leaving them little

20 Roy D. Morey, op. cit., p. 33.
21 Samuel R. Solomon, "The Governor as Legislator," National
22 Gilbert Y. Steiner and Samuel K. Gove, Legislative Politics
23 William C. Havard, The Government of Louisiana (Baton Rouge:
Louisiana State University Press, 1958), p. 112. A check of records
reveal no veto has been overridden since 1958.
24 See Chapter VI.
responsibility." One veteran legislator referring to the Earl Long era summed the problem up in these words: "If you wanted a special appropriation act passed all you had to do was introduce it. It would go right through. The governor then had to go through them all and pick and choose which ones to veto or sign." A check of the 1956 regular session reveals that Long vetoed over 52 million dollars in special appropriations. Long stated that most of his vetoes involved special money bills.

### Reasons for Disapproval

Until the end of the nineteenth century American governors exercised their veto power for constitutional reasons—protecting themselves from legislative encroachment or rejecting bills that the governors felt were probably unconstitutional. Twentieth century governors have increasingly utilized the veto as a weapon to aid in controlling policy. If a measure contrary to the governor's program receives legislative passage, it is likely that it will be vetoed compared to a measure on which the governor is neutral.

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25 Interviews, April 14, 1966.

26 Ibid.

27 Compilation of figures from veto messages, Regular Session Vetoed Bills, Louisiana Legislature, 1956.

28 Ibid., 168 bills were vetoed by Long in this category.

29 Roy D. Morey, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
Frank Prescott found the most common reason for vetoing legislation in the southern states to be that the bills were considered unsound public policy by the governor. Other leading reasons for disapproval, according to Prescott, are that the bill was unconstitutional, it was defectively drafted or no necessity existed for the proposal.  

Huey's veto pattern followed Prescott's findings to a considerable extent. Unsound public policy was his primary reason for veto. He also vetoed bills because he felt that measures were unnecessary. Long vetoed a number of bills for numerous miscellaneous causes befitting his mercurial temperament.

Table XVI details the reasons for Huey's vetoes and also serves to compare his reasons with Earl's messages. The younger brother's reasons were in some instances unique. (See Table XVII.) His style of politics is evident throughout the messages. The most common reason for disapproval was a terse "No Money." Other reasons frequently used were unsound public policy and a duplication or conflict with existing law. Earl on a number of occasions did not obey the constitutional requirement to furnish a reason for his action whereas Huey only did this three times. Many times Earl wrote: "I veto this bill."

Huey's messages were generally mundane, short and to the point, carrying no particular impact. Phrases like "too sweeping," "too much power," "duplicates existing law" or "it is unnecessary" accounted for...
### TABLE XVI*

#### Huey Long's Reasons for Vetoing Bills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE XVII*

#### Earl Long's Reasons for Vetoing Bills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>K</th>
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<td>35</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Unconstitutional  
B. Defective Drafting  
C. Economically Unfair; Tax Burden  
D. Unsound Public Policy  
E. Unnecessary  
F. Duplicates or Conflicts with Existing Law  
G. Confusing  
H. Incomplete  
I. No Money  
J. Suits Against the State  
K. Against Amendment on Bill  
L. No Reason Given  
M. Miscellaneous

*Only includes sessions having vetoed bills.

most of them. Only one bore his slashing imprint. The message dealt with a senate bill which had the effect of lowering the salary of the 11th Judicial District's District Attorney. Long's message said: "It is a petty piece of legislation. It is unbecoming of the Senator who should regard his senatorial position as above any petty spite of feeling . . . ." In general, it is somewhat incongruous that as colorful a personality as Huey Long could have left such a mundane group of veto messages.

The Kingfish, however, was not hesitant to exercise his veto power in a manner benefiting his political power. In 1930 Long vetoed a ten thousand dollar appropriation to finance an investigation of the highway department. A $100,000 appropriation to pay for the 1929 impeachment proceedings also was struck out. The attorney general of Louisiana was a political opponent of Long. Huey showed his displeasure in 1930 by vetoing a fund which would allow the attorney general to make investigations into various departments of the state. The sheriffs paid for opposing part of Huey's roadbuilding program. Huey had a sheriffs' pay raise bill introduced in the 1930 session with which he hoped to gain the sheriffs' support for his highway bond issue. Many

31 Senate Bill 37, 1928 Regular Session, Vetoes of the Legislature.

32 Baton Rouge Advocate, July 12, 1930.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.
of the sheriffs, it is reported, refused to use their influence in support of the road bond scheme" causing Long to veto the pay raise.  

Earl's messages were of a different type. The flavor of his style filled the pages of the veto books. One, a proposed bill calling for an extended program of alcoholic treatment, was vetoed because "The state doesn't have the money or facilities to take care of all the drunks." Because of the State's unhealthy fiscal condition Earl vetoed a bill providing legal counsel to indigent criminals, he wrote: "We can hardly keep the penitentiary open now." A bill establishing regulations for treatment of property belonging to unincorporated associations brought this statement: "Looks like someone might be given a skinning." In 1956 Earl vetoed a bill tightening regulations for obtaining a marriage license stating: "This makes it too hard to get married, will go elsewhere." And a $50,000 appropriation to develop a new state park, Long wrote: "Don't have the money. Some people think it grows on trees and refuse to put in any."  

Some of Earl's messages carried personal overtones. Earl had the peculiar habit of vetoing individuals as well as bills. An

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35Ibid.
36Senate Bill 39, 1950 Regular Session, Vetoes of the Legislature, op. cit.
37Senate Bill 70, Ibid.
38Senate Bill 55, 1950, Ibid.
40House Bill 529, Ibid.
anti-Long leader declared: "Earl vetoed persons not bills. Some legislators he just vetoed." A Long legislative liaison aid and close confidante tended to confirm this pointing out Earl's personal opinion of a number of heavily vetoed legislators. The aide declared Long referred to one as that "bastard," "had no use" for another and "detested" another "because he was always around when Earl didn't need him but he could never be found when Earl needed a vote."

A number of Earl's 1956 veto messages were thinly veiled attacks on specific legislators. A favorite trick of his was writing: "This is a worthy bill, but we don't have the money" on bills authored by legislators who successfully fought Earl's tax program. The Caddo Parish delegation formed the nucleus of his opposition on the tax package. Long vetoed a $750,000 appropriation for a parish trade school declaring: "It's strange to ask so much and back so little."

The Governor reminded one representative of his opposition with this veto message: "The author of this worked so hard to provide funds from racetracks that I know he expected this."

Tables XVIII and XIX illustrate the number of vetoes compared to the members of the legislature.

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41 Interview, April 12, 1966.
42 Interview, April 15, 1966.
44 House Bill 588, Ibid.
45 House Bill 678, Ibid.
TABLE XVIII
Proportion of Vetoes Per Individual Legislator
1928-1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three or More Vetoes</th>
<th>Two Vetoes</th>
<th>One Veto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Regular Session Vetoed Bills of the Louisiana Legislature, 1928-1931.

TABLE XIX
Proportion of Vetoes Per Individual Legislator
1948-1952, 1956-1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Seven or More Vetoes</th>
<th>Five or More Vetoes</th>
<th>Three or More Vetoes</th>
<th>Two Vetoes</th>
<th>One Veto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948-1952</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-1960</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Huey vetoed only three legislators' bills three or more times during his tenure in the governor's chair. Earl, however, was far more active. During his 1948-1952 term thirty-nine legislators received three or more vetoes of their bills. In his 1956-1960 term sixty-two legislators were vetoed three or more times. Earl actively utilized this tool as a positive means to gain policy control over as many legislators as he possibly could. Of course, there is no way to determine
how many bills were never introduced by legislators because they felt he
would veto their bill or how many bills bore names not because of
authorship but for strategy reasons in an effort to get the bill through
and signed.

The Item Veto

The item veto is a southern contribution to American law. The
Confederacy adopted the device as part of its constitution and by doing
so ushered it into the annals of American government. Following the
Civil War the idea was adopted by numerous states beginning with Georgia
in 1865. Although forty-two states have adopted the item veto, includ­
ing Louisiana, the national government has never adopted it giving most
governors a power the President does not possess. The item veto was
originally intended to prohibit unconstitutional appropriations by the
legislature and was used as such in the nineteenth century. The item
veto in the twentieth century has become "subordinated to a demand that
the governor extensively use his veto authority as a means of compelling
the state to live within its means." Today it is primarily used as a
tool to increase the governor's control of fiscal policy.

In Louisiana the grant of authority to the governor is clear:
"The Governor shall have the power to disapprove of any item or items


of any bill making appropriations for money, embracing distinct
items."^48 It has not been a dead letter in the constitution. According
to Professor Prescott, Louisiana led the southern states between 1937
and 1947 in item vetoes for a total of 99.49 During the period of Pres­
cott's survey the Longs were out of power. The iron hand with which
they ruled Louisiana slackened under the anti-Longs especially during
the Sam Jones administration. When the item veto is frequently used
most likely "legislators have evaded their responsibilities and placed
the burden of cutting appropriations upon the governor."50 The Longs were
not adverse to allowing legislators to act irresponsibly on fiscal matters.
However, the Longs concentrated on pushing the administration's prepared
budget through the legislature unchanged. Earl, especially by his
floor action and ready acceptance of special appropriation bills
"blocked efforts to change the big money bill contending it would upset
the budget to do so."51 Long's strategy was similar to Thomas Dewey's
in New York and was as successful.52 Consequently the item veto was
rarely used and special appropriation measures obtained easy passage.
In 1959 when Governor Long was removed to the Galveston hospital "the
Senate Finance Committee reversed a twelve year practice and began

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^48 Article V, Section XVI.

^49 Frank W. Prescott, "The Executive Veto in Southern States,"
op. cit., p. 672.

^50 Fred Gantt, Jr., op. cit., p. 184.

^51 Baton Rouge Advocate, June 1, 1957.

^52 Samuel Solomon, op. cit., p. 519.
turning down scores of special appropriation bills instead of depending on the governor's veto to trim spending to budget size.\textsuperscript{53}

The strategy of allowing special appropriation measures to pass allowed Long to "go through them all and pick and choose which ones to sign or veto."\textsuperscript{54} Governor Long possessed an additional bargaining tool with the individual legislator. During the session he had the option of bargaining with legislators over their special bills in return for support of his program.

Table XX shows the minimum use of the item veto by the Long brothers. Only 16 were vetoed by Huey. Earl vetoed 14 items during his years as governor. No item vetoes were exercised during their special sessions.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{ll}
\hline
Year & Number of Items Vetoed \\
\hline
1928 & 5 \\
1930 & 11 \\
1948 & 1 \\
1950 & 8 \\
1956 & 3 \\
1957 & 0 \\
1958 & 1 \\
1959 & 1 \\
\textbf{Total} & \textbf{30} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Item Vetoes During the Long Years}
\end{table}


\textsuperscript{53}Baton Rouge Advocate, June 1, 1959.

\textsuperscript{54}Interview with anti-Long legislator, April 12, 1966.
The Threat of Veto

The difficulty of assessing the effect of the threat of veto is obvious. It is far more difficult to determine its effect than that of the item veto which is a confusing enough problem. No method is available to determine how many bills never reached the governor's desk due to threats. The problem is complicated because the legislator may believe a veto will result even though the governor has actually made no such threat.

Leslie Lipson has written the "indirect influence of the veto is incalculable. Both legislators and administrative agencies must come to terms with the governor because of the threat which he holds over them."55 This is generally true. However, instances can be found showing the opposite effect. In 1958, Long appeared before the Senate Finance Committee testifying against proposed bills to raise policemen's pay and increasing the number of trade schools. Long threatened to veto the policemen's pay raise proposal and stated he would veto the trade school saying: "If you leave the trade schools in the way they are now, I'm going to have to close every trade school in the state. I don't want to do that."56 Following his threat the Senate cut out the trade school increase but allowed the police pay boost to stand and the


legislature passed it. True to his word Long vetoed the pay raise measure.

The Senate realized that Long could not "amend" the trade school bill having the option of vetoing it in its entirety or signing it. The policemen's pay raise bill if vetoed would not injure the existing pay of the policemen and would allow the legislators to look good to their interested constituents. The threat worked where an implemented program would be disrupted by a veto but failed in the case where legislators could appear to be "good guys" at no cost to themselves or to an existing program.

Interviews with both pro and anti-administration leaders confirm that a threat was a two-edged sword. One administration leader declared: "Earl was usually very direct about it. He would announce if the bill passed he would veto it and he did. Usually the threat killed the bill. However, sometimes the legislators would go right ahead and vote their convictions, knowing he would veto it." 57 An anti-Long leader confirmed this except in special appropriation measures which were easily passed. He added a novel twist relating Earl at times used the threat in reverse. As an example the legislator pointed out on one occasion he and an administration leader from his parish went to Earl to ask beforehand if a bill providing a special appropriation of $150,000 for a project within their parish passed would he sign

57Interview, April 12, 1966.

58
it. "Earl replied he would veto it--unless they raised the amount to $250,000" which the authors did. The bill passed and the governor signed it.

The Longs were never patternable. Even on a veto threat a unique angle was likely to develop. Turning a negative tool into a positive weapon showed the political astuteness of the Longs.

^Interview, April 12, 1966.

59 Interview, April 12, 1966.
Along with the veto power, which is regarded as a negative tool of the chief executive, the Constitution furnishes the Louisiana governor with two other tools, both positive in nature, to influence legislators. These tools are the power to recommend and the power to issue calls for special sessions. Both these devices are important assets to a governor although neither has received much attention in studies of gubernatorial powers.

**Promises and Platforms**

A governor's campaign platform is the prime basis of his legislative program. During the campaign the candidate and his advisers work to develop a combination of issues and promises that will appeal to a majority of the electorate. Various pressure groups attempt to elicit support for favored measures in return for their endorsement of the candidate. Eventually a platform is hammered out and molded to fit the reality of the political situation. It is generally expressed in as vague terms as possible in order to secure the favored groups' approval without alienating the opposing viewpoint.

The candidate is then faced with the task of informing the public of its contents. A variety of techniques are available to accomplish this goal. Speeches by the candidate are the most common method of
promoting his platform. The tiresome, repetitious stump speaking by a
candidate as he addresses small gatherings from dawn to dusk has been
for decades the central core of a political campaign in Louisiana.
Both Longs were masters of this technique.

Huey Long took his case directly to the people. He spoke to
the masses not just to the political leaders. "For the first time," an
authority on Longism has written, "a candidate for governor systemati-
cally stumped the whole state, and for the first time the masses, the
people at the forks of the creeks, heard a candidate appeal to them for
support."¹ Both Huey and Earl were at their best on the stump. They
needed no bathing beauties or bands to put on a show; they were the
show.

Radio is another effective means of influencing vast audiences
in a manner much quicker and less tiring than making stumping tours.
Huey was also an early pioneer of this technique, using statewide radio
hookups to promote his platform. Earl also took to the airwaves,
unfortunately continuing this practice to his last year, which had his
most intemperate speeches to be broadcast statewide at his own expense.

Newspaper advertisements, billboards and circulars are also
commonly used to illustrate specific planks of the candidate's platform.
In recent years, however, television to some extent has replaced this type
of advertising although affluent politicians do attempt to saturate the
market by utilizing both the old and the new methods of persuasion.

¹T. Harry Williams, "The Politics of the Longs," The Georgia
Review, V (Spring, 1961), 23.
Traditionally a governor formally communicates his legislative program in his annual message to a joint session of the legislature. By addressing the legislature the chief executive can focus both the legislator's and the people's attention on his program. This address is regarded as the governor's principal means of communicating his intentions to the people. Most Louisiana governors have followed this procedure of addressing the legislature. However, the Longs did not particularly like this technique. The Journals contain only two regular session messages during both Longs' terms in office. The first is Huey's 1928 message to his initial legislative session. The other is Earl's 1950 message. Formal, written addresses were not Long-style politics. Instead both Longs pursued a more personal approach in dealing with the legislature--being present on the floor, testifying before legislative committees, buttonholing lawmakers and heckling their opposition. Through these techniques the Longs made their legislative ambitions known and garnered support for passage. Both Long brothers were adroit at the personal style and each seemed to revel in his own unorthodox political mannerisms.

The public was kept informed of the Longs' desires by frequent, formal and informal press conferences. When in power the Longs were news. Their colorful personalities dominated state political news.

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2 See Chapters IX and X.

3 See Baton Rouge Advocate, June 22, 1930; May 31, 1956; and June 5, 1956, and Baton Rouge State Times, June 6, 1956, for a sampling of these techniques.
The press found both brothers good copy and was eager to chronicle their actions and statements.

Huey and Earl each developed his program with little help. One Long adviser reflected, "Earl thought about his program for weeks or months before advocating it. He was concerned about the value of the programs, their effect on administrations following his own and their value for the future of Louisiana." The two longs were also confident of their ability, and indeed right, to be governor of the Bayou state, although Earl's folksy, affable style is sharply contrasted to Huey's regal arrogance. For example, Huey once stated in a stump speech "There may be smarter people than me but they ain't in Louisiana." While Earl once said: "I have the experience to be governor. I know how to play craps. I know how to get in and out of the Baptist Church and bet on horses. I know the oil and gas business. I know how it is to be in and how to be out." Both Longs campaigned on platforms dedicated to assisting the masses by utilizing the powers of the government on behalf of the people. From Huey's time through Earl's administrations the Longs campaigned on a similar syndrome of issues--better


5 New Orleans Item, September 10, 1935.

6 Quotation by Earl from file of Long quotes kept by Douglas Fowler, State Custodian of Voting Machines, a position he was appointed to by Earl and since has been elected to in 1960 and 1964. Fowler developed the habit of writing down Long quotes he heard Earl deliver in speeches, press conferences and to various groups.
highways, charity hospitals, free textbooks, a square deal for Negroes, adequate welfare programs and a hot lunch program for school children. The latter three items were particular favorites of Earl's efforts.

The Longs made known their general programs long before election day. No formal explanation really was needed for the legislature to understand the desires and hates of the brothers. In the south, as Coleman Ransone has written, each candidate for governor usually enters the primary election with his own defined platform. After the election the winning candidate's platform becomes the party's and administration's platform. Because of this a southern governor enters office with his platform prepared. In addition many of the legislators who supported the victorious candidate are committed to his cause. Seventy-five per cent of the candidates in the 1948 election to the legislature were supported by Earl and he by them. An Earl Long aide commented: "Earl was always involved in a campaign. He was in every one. . . . He always supported two candidates, one loser and the winner." Huez's

7 The Negro often benefited from the policies of Huey because of their pitiful economic condition but Huey perfunctorally advocated the traditional southern philosophy: "I am a Democrat for reasons of principle . . . I am standing with the grand old party to which we all owe White supremacy in the south." Baton Rouge Advocate, September 15, 1928. See Chapter X for Earl's handling of the subject.

8 See Chapters III and IV for further information on their platforms.

9 Coleman B. Ransone, Jr., The Office of Governor in the South (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1951), p. 68.


11 Interview, April 15, 1966.
interest was as involved as Earl's. The Kingfish summoned, decided and backed candidates favorable to his cause. 12  

The legislative sessions in which specific items were clearly enunciated and promoted were the special sessions. By constitutional requirement the items are enumerated and presented to the legislature by the chief executive. These sessions are explained in the latter portion of this chapter.

**Huey's Presentation**

Huey's program was well known throughout the state before he took the oath of office. His unorthodox campaign style of taking his case directly to the people made not only his name but his aims household words. Besides stumping and his use of radio, Huey extensively utilized the medium of circulars to propogate his ideas. Following his election to the governorship, he expanded his use of circulars. Huey used state employees to distribute and deliver circulars expounding his program and philosophy. These were distributed by the millions across Louisiana. The circular was a direct and efficient method of ensuring

12A veteran Long legislator described Huey's interest in his initial election: "The representative in my district died. His son wanted the job. He was too young, only twenty-two.  "Huey summoned me, my father and a Long leader from the district to New Orleans. There we found Huey had also invited the Representative's son. We were all shocked. Huey came in and said: 'Are you the fellows that have been causing me all the trouble?' I replied, 'I wasn't causing you any trouble.'  "Huey said he had decided to have me run for the House and he was going to appoint the son to a job. That was it and we left. I ran without opposition." Interview, February 25, 1965.
his viewpoint reaching every household in the state. In addition, Long founded a newspaper, The Louisiana Progress in 1930, which consistently promoted the Long line on a multitude of issues.

Huey's 1928 regular session message, his first formal one, was a call for a social revolution. It was a short, pointed address advocating reform and advancement for Louisiana. Something for everybody was included in the message. New Orleans was to obtain natural gas; the judiciary was to be reformed; the tobacco tax was to be repealed but severance taxes increased; school support heightened; the working man protected; and governmental economy increased. Taxes and highway expenditures were the principal issues of the session.

Huey was a subdued governor during the next regular session in 1930, following his impeachment a year before. His program centered on an expansion of the 1928 highway program stillborn in a session in which the chief executive could not obtain the necessary two-thirds majority for a proposed bond issue.

These were Huey's only two formal messages to regular sessions during his term as governor. Instead he went directly to the people with his circulars and radio appeals, by-passing the legislature in the process.

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14See Chapter IX for a discussion of Huey's tax and highway programs.

15Baton Rouge Advocate, September 19, 1930.
Earl's Presentation

Earl fully utilized the methods Huey had used to put his program across to the public. They included—stumping, billboards, newspaper advertisements, circulars, and radio addresses. However, Earl, unlike Huey, did not have his own newspaper. By the time of Earl's last administration television had come of age but he did not embrace the new medium and grew to avoid it like the plague. He did not project well on television and soon realized it.

The first full use of television was during the 1956 campaign. Earl's advisers, realizing that Earl did not project well on television, built a television campaign around his platform with Earl rarely appearing on the screen. Instead advertisements, film clips, and addresses by Earl's followers whose techniques were beneficial to television coverage were utilized to promote his candidacy. However, Earl's advisers were not always successful in keeping him off the screen.

Earl's advisers had scheduled an election eve telecast from New Orleans with a Long follower from each of the state's eight congressional districts slated to deliver a short final appeal for Earl's election. An aide relates the experience:

Earl was not supposed to speak because, as you know, he was horrible on TV . . . .

Shortly before the program was to begin, Earl came in and insisted that he was going on at the end of the show. We tried to talk him out of it but it was no use.

The program was already on when Earl remembered he didn't have his glasses with him. He told me to run across the street to his room at the Roosevelt and get his glasses. I ran all the way to the room, but the door was locked and I couldn't get in. I ran back to Earl and told him the door was locked. Earl then reached over and took the glasses off
Mr....'s head and put them on his own. By this time Earl had to go on the air, so he sat down with some notes and this fellow's glasses on. He couldn't read the notes, got mixed up, stopped and started—ruined everything.\footnote{16}{Interview, May 28, 1966.}

Television's technical formality made Earl uncomfortable and an ill at ease posture was projected on the screen. He also did not read well which served to hinder his speechmaking on television. Earl only rarely went before the television camera during his last administration.

Because of his inability to read aloud well, Earl, especially during his final term, tended to read only a portion of his prepared address to the legislature before leaving the rostrum, having the lieutenant governor finish reading the speech.

The Journals contain no message by Earl in 1948. However, the governor successfully pushed a wide-ranging program through the legislature.\footnote{17}{See Chapter IV for his general program and Chapter X for a detailed examination of portions of it.} Earl's 1950 message was largely a rehash of the previous legislative meeting's achievements. His new proposals advocated a $140 million highway bond issue,\footnote{18}{Although the legislature approved the bond issue it was defeated at the polls in November.} a return to civil service, the calling of a constitutional convention and an enlargement of municipalities' legal powers. A sluggish legislature approved these items with the exception of the civil service bill.\footnote{19}{Baton Rouge Advocate, July 6, 1950.} The dean of the legislature summed up the session as "pretty harmonious . . . . The administration..."
didn't have any trouble getting through whatever it recommended, except
civil service." 20

Earl Long made many appearances on the floor of the legislature
during the 1956 session, appearances which featured numerous off the
cuff statements. Two weeks into the session, Long strode to the podium
to speak "studiously avoiding any categorical rundown of the legisla-
tion that would be officially recognized as 'administration measures.'" 21
In addition to remarks before the legislature he attended committee
hearings, testified before them, peppered opposition witnesses and
"cajoled, threatened, chided, admonished and derided opponents." 22

Earl reversed tactics for the 1957 session. The Governor
delivered a short prepared financial report to the legislature on open-
ing day. That was his only appearance before the body. 23 The session
was uneventful unlike the controversy of the prior session. The law-
makers addressed themselves to the budget and little else.

The 1958 session heard a speech by the Governor--at least the
words were his own. Lieutenant Governor Lether Frazer read more than
two-thirds of the speech after Earl sat down part way through the
speech. 24 The speech was a plea for additional revenues. Due to a

20 Ibid.
21 Ibid., May 22, 1956.
22 Ibid., June 5, 1956.
23 Ibid., June 10, 1957.
24 Ibid., May 14, 1958.
revenue shortage expenditures were being decreased in various areas, including education.

The legislature in 1958 met in a rare secret joint session at the Governor's request to hear Earl detail the State's faltering financial status. His pleading did not convince the lawmakers to raise taxes. Earl then reverted to his 1956 tactics, appearing before legislative committees. He appealed for an increased wine tax to discourage the "wineheads." However, the legislature was not swayed. Only one major tax bill was passed, a measure increasing the gas gathering tax by one cent.

Earl Long's last regular session took place in 1959. This session became the most famous of his governorship but ended in tragedy. The drama of this session has been touched upon in Chapter IV. The major issue of the meeting was civil rights, which will be analyzed in Chapter X.

**The Special Session**

The power to call a special session of the legislature is another influence the governor has on public policy. Most state constitutions give this authority exclusively to the governor. In a majority of states the governor alone specifies the subjects to be considered at the session. In addition a few states allow the governor to issue supplemental calls.

In Louisiana the governor may convene the legislature on his own initiative. The governor is "required in his proclamation to fix the date of the commencement of said extraordinary session and shall have given five days notice in writing to each member of the legislature."26 Before this 1954 amendment was adopted the governor was free to call a session without the five day notice. The power to pass laws "shall be limited to the objects enumerated in the proclamation by the Governor, or petition and notice, covering such extraordinary sessions."27 However, on occasion the call has been added to by the governor to cover additional subjects.28 The length of the session is limited to 30 days with the governor determining in his call the specific number of days for the session.

Louisiana's governor shares the power to summon special sessions with the legislature. Whenever the legislature by a two-thirds petition requests the governor to issue a call he is obligated to do so.29 The legislature has never exercised this prerogative. In practice the special session remains "the governor's session." A number of reasons exist for the calling of special sessions but the significant ones are: to complete passage of a program that the regular session failed to accomplish; to deal with emergencies; to break the gap between regular

26Article V, Section XIV.

27Ibid.


29Article V, Section XIV.
sessions; and to remedy errors of the regular session.  

A special session is a potent tool for executive initiative. The issues are clear and distinct because only a few matters are generally considered. The governor has control of the agenda which he feels has substantial support for enactment. An aggressive governor can organize his support and focus attention on his recommendations. A regular session has many items to discuss which serves to confuse and distract the public but a special session narrows and intensifies public attention.

The special session is not a panacea for the governor's problems, however. The chief executive places himself and his program under careful scrutiny. He has maneuvered the sphere of action in a certain direction but in doing so has reduced the scene to one of acceptance or rejection. Legislative inaction on an item is the same as rejection. The governor has the option of calling special sessions but if he exercises the tool in a non-judicious manner he skirts resentment. Opponents may brand him as power hungry or even wasteful of public funds. If the legislature rejects his proposals the governor loses prestige. In addition it presents the problem of what to do next. Defeat tarnishes

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32 Earl on one occasion met this criticism saying "All over $150,000 I'll pay out of my account." Baton Rouge *Advocate*, July 30, 1959.
his image but persistence may well develop bitter antagonisms between the legislature and the administration. Each Long learned before his demise that a special session was a mixed blessing. A governor's political talents are tested every time he issues a call.

The Longs' Use of Special Sessions

Special sessions were intended to be used for emergencies. However, the Longs rarely called sessions for this reason. Instead the brothers used this instrument as a vehicle to implement their programs. Huey called five special sessions during his administration. They varied from two days to over thirty days. The longest session saw Huey impeached with the legislature holding impeachment was not proscribed by the maximum thirty day requirement. Earl called nine sessions during his years as chief executive. The final one of his first and last administrations were memorable, with the legislature refusing to show up for either call.

Huey's Special Sessions

Huey's planned first session was cancelled because he realized he did not have enough votes for his projected highway program. Huey's first call was issued in December, 1928. He called the session to

33"There are not enough votes pledged to insure the passage of the constitutional amendment which the Old Regulars said they wanted but which they now say they do not want. "Therefore, there will be no extra session as matters now stand." Ibid., September 21, 1928.
further his highway program by increasing the gasoline tax to four cents a gallon and authorizing another bond issue for highways and bridges. A malt tax of two cents per pound was also advocated with proceeds to be placed in the school fund. In addition the Governor asked for an error in a 1928 act to be corrected and for another "loan shark" bill to replace a 1928 act declared unconstitutional by the courts. 34

Huey utilized another error to exercise his political acumen regarding inclusion of items in the call. The Governor demanded concessions from his political enemies in return for inclusion of their desired item. An error in a 1928 regular session law invalidated a measure which affected Caddo Parish. Caddo legislators wished Long to include a corrected bill in his session call so that Caddo could obtain an airport. At first, according to Caddo Parish Officials, Long "positively refused to make the correction." 35 Later on Long sent a telegram along with twenty-five Senators asking the Caddo School Board to distribute the free school books as provided by the action of the regular 1928 session. 36 The telegram ended: "Respect this request of the Senate and airport will be included by midnight." 37 The school board acceded to the request and the issue was included in the call and passed at the session.

34 Ibid., December 11, 1928.


36 Ibid., 657.

37 Ibid.
The Governor's complete program was passed during the six day session. Flushed with victory Long declared "I do not intend to call another session of the legislature during my term of office." A pledge he did not keep and a fact that cost him heavily.

In 1929 Long called a special session to impose an occupational tax on Standard Oil. The legislature revolted, rejected the request and impeached Huey. Chapter IX includes a discussion of this explosive aspect of Long's career. A year later the Governor's program was stymied during the regular session because Long could not command the necessary two-thirds majority to initiate constitutional amendments necessary to float bond issues. The Governor announced for the U.S. Senate, making his defeated program the issue. Long handily won the senate seat. He then called a special session shortly after his victory, which passed his entire 1930 regular session program, proving that legislators could read election results.

In the session the governor asked for a $68 million highway bond issue and an additional $7 million one for bridges. He also requested a new $5 million Capitol plus a raise in the gasoline tax. Finally Long wished impeachment charges dropped. Along with these requests Long sounded a peace and harmony theme. Long said "the people of the state

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38Baton Rouge Advocate, December 13, 1928.

39See Chapter III.

40Baton Rouge Advocate, September 19, 1930.
have had enough political upheaval and dispute."\textsuperscript{41} A statement the legislature agreed with by promptly acquiescing to his requests.

A year later Huey's final special session was called to pass one bill. Meeting for one day the legislature adopted a bill regulating the growing of cotton in Louisiana.

\textbf{Earl's Special Sessions}

Earl's special sessions followed a uniform schedule with no meeting as dramatic as Huey's impeachment session. In January, 1940, Earl summoned a special session which passed a number of measures designed to aid him in his election campaign for governor which was taking place at the time. Long called another special session for March 23, 1940, after his election defeat, but a majority of legislators failed to show up, with the Governor conceding "it's all over."\textsuperscript{42} Earl announced he would investigate some of his "so called friends" but stated "my head is bloody, but unbowed."\textsuperscript{43} The Governor had intended to hamstring the incoming Jones administration.\textsuperscript{44}

In 1948, the chief executive called a September special session for the purpose of putting President Truman's name on the ballot in Louisiana. Two weeks earlier the Democratic State Central Committee, while Long was absent, removed Truman's name from the ballot by denying

\textsuperscript{41}\textit{Ibid.}, September 17, 1930.

\textsuperscript{42}\textit{Baton Rouge State-Times}, March 24, 1940.

\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Ibid.}, August 6, 1959.
him the Democratic party nomination in Louisiana. Instead the "rooster," which is the emblem of the Louisiana Democratic party went to Senator J. Strom Thurmond. The special session voted to allow Truman's name placed on the ballot but as an independent Democrat with the "rooster" remaining with Senator Thurmond.

Long intended to call a special session during February of 1950 but suffered a heart attack causing him to postpone the call until March. At this session the Governor was primarily concerned with passing appropriation bills totaling $8 million dollars. The money was budgeted largely to the highway and hot lunch programs. Both issues were popular with the people, helping legislators no matter where their districts lie. The legislature approved his program.

Regular session legislation of 1950 proposing a constitutional convention was modified in a special August session. As the law stood the convention could extend the term of the governor and had the option of having its labors voted upon by the public but was not required to submit it to an election. A fount of protest arose over these items and the Governor called a special session to modify the regular session proposal. The compromise adopted provided "the new constitution would

45Baton Rouge Advocate, September 11, 1948.
46Ibid., September 27, 1948.
49Baton Rouge Advocate, August 8, 1950.
be adjudged ratified, regardless of the division of the vote, unless a minimum of 500,000 votes were cast in the referendum on the Constitution." The issue continued to boil following the legislative adjournment. On August 29th the Governor capitulated announcing he would call another session for the purpose of cancelling the proposed election for the proposed constitutional convention. In a one day session the legislature revoked the call. Long was forced to retreat because his supporters revolted, especially his labor and New Orleans support. Thus, Earl's attempt to perpetuate himself in office completely failed.

Thwarted in his attempt to alter the constitution Earl considered seeking the lieutenant governorship in 1952. To bolster his chances Long called a special session in June of 1951 "to distribute some vote-bait funds for highways and state institutions." The legislators accepted the funds but no groundswell arose for Earl to continue in political office.

Four years later Earl was once again elected governor. Less than two months after the regular session adjourned, Long brought the legislature back to Baton Rouge. The remediying of errors during the

50 Sindler, op. cit., p. 232.
51 Baton Rouge Advocate, August 30, 1950.
52 Ibid., September 13, 1950.
53 Ibid., September 3, 1950.
54 See Chapter IV.
A regular session was the prime reason for the hurried call. A spokesman for the attorney general said more than half of the items in the call were for this purpose. 56

A special session was summoned in 1958 to alter the severance tax on natural gas because the previously amended tax bill was in danger of being declared unconstitutional by the courts. An emergency existed because numerous programs were dependent on this source of revenue. Thus, the Governor had to seek passage of a new tax utilizing another base for the taxation of natural gas. 57 The legislature complied with the Governor's plea before adjourning.

On August 5, 1959, the Governor issued his last call. Several controversial items were included in his agenda. Theo Cangelosi and "Willie" Rainach were to be removed from their positions, Cangelosi from the Chairmanship of the Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University and Rainach from his chairmanship of the Joint Legislative Committee on Segregation. 58 Earl also proposed legislation to revamp the state's mental health laws and a law forbidding airlines to dismiss hostesses who got married. 59


57Ibid., November 12, 1958.

58Ibid.

59The week before he called the session Long "squired" an attractive divorcee on a tour of the countryside around Hot Springs, Arkansas, where he was vacationing. He revealed she requested him to push legislation forcing airlines to retain married stewardesses. Ibid., August 6, 1959.
The biggest surprise in the special session call was the last item which opened the session to any and all legislation, evading the five day notice and specific listing of legislation to be considered. Huey had thought of this tactic but had actually never carried it out. In September, 1930, Huey had announced he was planning a special session and "the call which I have in mind is of an unlimited nature." But he never called the session.

Rumors were rampant that the legislature would not answer Earl's call but cynics pointed out legislators would not pass up their fifty dollar per diem. A poll taken in July revealed that 104 out of the 132 lawmakers contacted opposed any special session being called but that did not deter Long. After the call legislators grumbled but arrived in Baton Rouge for the session. Seconds after the legislature convened, however, the Governor's majority leader moved for the adoption of a resolution declaring the legislature adjourned sine die. It was adopted and 105 seconds after convening the session was history.

Adjournment was so sudden that no paybill was even adopted.

Governor Long arrived at the Capitol immediately following adjournment declaring "I knew nothing about it. I don't practice

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60 Ibid., September 18, 1930.
61 Ibid., August 7, 1959.
He took defeat calmly, assuring aides "I'm upset-proof." 65

The Longs' Success with the Special Sessions

The special sessions were a mixed blessing for both Longs. Huey and Earl both reached the lowest points of their political careers in circumstances surrounding special sessions. Huey was impeached in a special session less than a year after he took his oath of office. Long had called the session to gain enactment of an increased tax program the burden of which would have fallen on the oil industry in general and Standard Oil in particular. Huey's defeat was stunning and ignominious.

Then, in 1935 Huey induced the Governor, O. K. Allen, to summon the legislature into special session. Long returned from Washington to assist in piloting his favored measures through the legislative mill. One evening during the session, after the legislature had adjourned for the day, Huey was shot as he walked from the House of Representatives to Allen's office. Huey is remembered as the absolute political master of the legislature but his greatest political defeat and his death both occurred at special sessions. Earl's greatest political embarrassments also were the results of special session calls he issued. In the spring of 1940, Earl summoned the legislature but the call went unheeded by the legislators. Almost twenty years later Earl was again snubbed by a legislature. This

64 Baton Rouge Advocate, August 11, 1959.
65 Ibid.
time the legislators answered the call but convened and adjourned almost simultaneously.

The Longs, however, did have special sessions which were successful ventures. The determination of a session's success is difficult. The Longs' legislative abilities cannot be completely measured in quantitative terms. The failure of an important measure can be offset in quantitative terms by the passage of a number of minor issues. Tables XXI and XXII demonstrate the relative success of the Longs' special sessions. Their success was high.

TABLE XXI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Number Covered</th>
<th>Per Cent Covered</th>
<th>Number Enacted</th>
<th>Per Cent Enacted</th>
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<tr>
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<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 18, 1929</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 20, 1929</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 1930</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>August, 1931</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>62</td>
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Source: Journals of the Louisiana House of Representatives and Senate, 1928-1931.
TABLE XXII

Legislative Action on Specific Recommendations Made in Governor Earl Long's Messages, Special Sessions, 1948-1952, 1956-1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Number Covered</th>
<th>Per Cent Covered</th>
<th>Number Enacted</th>
<th>Per Cent Enacted</th>
</tr>
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<td>26</td>
<td>92</td>
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<td>82</td>
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<td>March, 1950</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August, 1950</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>September, 1950</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 1951</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August, 1956</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November, 1958</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August, 1959</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>158</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>130</td>
<td>82</td>
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</table>


Huey managed to obtain approval of 62 per cent of his requests. His percentage would have been much higher except for the pre-impeachment session which failed to enact any of the proposed legislation. Sixty-two per cent is a respectable percentage for a democrat but a poor showing for a supposed "dictator."

Earl fared much better than Huey percentage-wise in his special session results. Earl saw 82 per cent of his requests over a series of eight special sessions enacted into law. (No journal was printed for the March, 1940 session making analysis of it impossible.) Earl's
accomplishments, like Huey, ranged from a low of zero to a high of a hundred per cent. If Earl's abortive 1959 session were not included his success would be almost total.

Thus, the Longs' success with the special session ranged across the spectrum. Their greatest defeats and major accomplishments both came through this medium.
CHAPTER IX

"I BOUGHT HIM LIKE A SACK OF POTATOES."

Huey Long's program as governor though moderate was received with alarm by the planter-commercial class that had traditionally dominated Pelican politics. His Program was ambitious yet possible. The swiftness of his rise combined with his fascination of power for power's sake caused friction and controversy when none was necessary. Long's lust for personal power and some of his aides' passion for money united to cast an unsavory pall over aspects of Longism which has forever made defense of the basic programs difficult. Huey's crass actions revolted the finer senses of many people and the corruption of his associates drove some into militant opposition. In truth, if weaknesses had not existed in Longism his opponents would have had to create weaknesses.

Long did much to satisfy that wanting. His efforts polarized Louisiana politics from that time onward. His effort was colossal; his time short. Long served only one year and sixteen days before he was impeached, twenty-seven months before he was elected to the Senate and thirty months before he vacated the governor's chair. In his short career as chief executive Long pursued two objectives--the building of a political machine by gaining control of the boards, agencies and departments of the state government, and the enactment of his campaign promises into law.
Long was not only ambitious but egotistical. He wished his impact on history to be great. He had no desire to be just another governor of Louisiana mired in the morass of political bickering that had plagued the state for decades. Long had observed first hand how nebulous and fleeting the power of a Louisiana governor could be. On his inauguration day Long stood by the window of his new office looking out on the Mississippi, saying to an aide, "See that man going down the hill lugging two suit cases. That's Governor Simpson. He is going to catch the evening train to New Orleans." 1 After Simpson disappeared Huey continued to stare out the window "thinking how cold and cruel the fortunes of politics can be." 2

The Assumption of Power

The building of a political organization at first looked like an impossible task for the new governor. Long had been elected governor while only two state officials favorable to his cause gained election. 3 In the legislature only eighteen House members and nine Senators were elected on the Long ticket. 4 From shortly after his January primary victory until the convening of the legislature in May Huey diligently built up a working majority. O. K. Allen and H. B.

1H. B. Bozeman, "Winn Parish As I Have Known It," Winn Parish Enterprise, June 4, 1959.
2Ibid.
3Ibid., April 23, 1959.
4Ibid.
Bozeman, newly elected Senator and Representative from Winn parish, assisted Huey in gaining a majority. "If I could recall all the interesting and amusing incidents, deals and swaps," Bozeman later wrote, "made in coralling a working majority of the members of the 1928 legislature, it would fill a book bigger than a mail order catalog."\(^5\)

During this period, Bozeman learned of the advantages of being chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. The chairman possessed a "pocket veto." House rules did not require the chairman to bring up a proposed bill but rules did require all appropriation bills to originate in the House and to be reported out of the Appropriations Committee. The Winn representative felt that "if I were Chairman of the Appropriations Committee with my 'pocket veto' power, and he [Huey] with his Governor's veto power, we would have the whole state legislature in a 'squeeze.'"\(^6\) Long approved of this strategy telling Bozeman: "Hardy, you are chairman of the Appropriations Committee if we elect our man Speaker."\(^7\)

Long gave his trusted aides, including Bozeman, Allen and his brother Earl, the task of visiting all the newly elected legislators, getting acquainted with them and finding out what they wanted.\(^8\) Besides legislators the aides visited a number of political leaders on a list

\(^5\)Ibid.

\(^6\)Ibid., April 30, 1959.

\(^7\)Ibid.

\(^8\)Ibid.
furnished by Huey. Two weeks before the legislature convened, Huey established the "Little Capitol" on the fourth floor of the Heidelberg Hotel in Baton Rouge. Besides Long and his aides, twenty other political allies of Long lobbied the legislators lining up a working majority.

The campaign was successful. The Long forces easily elected their candidates for Speaker and president pro tempore. As Huey had promised, Bozman was named Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and "from then on until the General Appropriations Bill cleared the House 50 days later there was not a minute day or night that someone was not trying to see me about a pet scheme or project, he or she, was promoting that involved a slice of state money." "

During the months between Huey's election and his inauguration, Long patiently and continually listened to every caller wanting to see him. The newly elected governor meticulously laid the groundwork for his program. His labors were a dramatic success. Several weeks after his inauguration Long proclaimed in a heated exchange before a Senate committee "I'm the constitution just now." Long had learned the ropes of politics rapidly but his ego had grown even faster, gnawing at his inordinate lust for power. A weakness that before the year was over would almost wreck his career.

9Ibid.
10Ibid., May 7, 1959.
11Ibid.
12"I'm the Constitution," The Nation, CXXVIII (April 10, 1929), p. 419.
The tactics Huey employed after he gained the reins of power were in contrast with the polite methods he effectively displayed before his inauguration. His change to less political and more indiscreet methods served as a rallying cry for the conservative opposition who were "perhaps alarmed more by the direction than the actual content of Longite policy." Other governors had won over legislators by finding jobs for them or their relatives. However Long boasted of it. Only Huey thundered "I bought him like a sack of potatoes." Long declared he "dealt the legislature like a pack of cards." Huey's tactics were open, definat, gross and effective. He strode the legislative halls as if he owned them. The governor "whispered to legislators, walked into committee meetings, buttonholed committee members, told his men how to vote, descended to the floors of the legislature where he moved from representative to representative, talking, persuading, instructing." On occasion Long himself "shouted a lusty 'aye' or 'nay' when a viva voce was taken." When some of Huey's followers mentioned the


14Journal of the House of Representatives, Fifth Extra Session of the Louisiana Legislature, April 3, 1929, p. 120.


16Fifth Extra Session, op. cit., p. 450.


openness Huey exhibited in having legislators do his bidding, Long answered: "I'd rather violate every one of the damn conventions and see my bills passed, than sit back in my office all nice and proper, and watch 'em die." 19

The situation Huey faced was the same one that had confronted other liberal southern governors. Long not only needed a legislative majority but also a two-thirds vote to gain passage of constitutional amendments, and many of his programs had to be included in the constitution. Other southern governors faced with battle came to terms with the opposition, becoming impotent in the process. 20

The Kingfish certainly met his defeats, but defeat, instead of destroying his lust for success or of moving him towards accommodation with the opposition, hardened his goals. It also pushed him towards radical procedures to insure success of his program. The techniques of the opposition, cresting in the impeachment proceedings, "sometimes included the crassest kinds of material pressures, and the violence of the reactions against him, which often took the form of fighting a bill because he proposed it, had the effect of making him more fiercely implacable and of driving him to greater excesses in the use of power than otherwise would have been the case." 21

19 Ibid.

Huey built a legislative majority in 1928 which stood by him as he filled numerous planks in his platform. However, "the majority did not stand by him at all times and occasionally threats of desertion caused him to avoid battles on bills he was known to favor." Impeachment and the deadlocked 1930 session caused him to continue this strategy until the 1931 special session at which time his program was swiftly enacted into law. The price of obtaining and retaining his legislative majority was high. One associate said: "They all didn't come for free." 

Long fully realized that by being able to distribute jobs and contracts he could insure the votes of legislators who wanted material benefits. Patronage is the lifeblood of politics and Long was determined to create a bloodbank. He pushed bill after bill through the legislature creating boards and commissions whose rosters he filled with administration supporters. By extending his control over patronage he increased the number of jobs at his command which he used to increase the number of legislative votes in his behalf. By steadily increasing the number of agencies and boards the patronage game could continually be played. The supply never ran out. The demand could always be met.

Long quickly asserted control over the patronage initially available to him. His first official act was to appoint new members of
the Highway Commission. He named his hometown friend and supporter, Oscar K. Allen as chairman. Allen resigned from the Senate to take the job. Long also "demanded resignations from the public officers answerable to him and launched schemes to oust others."\(^{25}\) The press yelled "spoilmen" but Long continued on his way.

The governor successfully backed legislation that reorganized the Orleans Levee Board and the State Board of Health. Long appointed a new five man board to run the Orleans Levee Board with his strong supporter Abraham "Abe" Shushan named as chairman. The president of the Board of Health, Dr. Oscar Dowling, refused to resign. As a result Long pushed through a measure terminating Dowling's term. A court fight ensued in which Long was victorious.

The Conservation Department temporarily eluded Long's domination. The governor appointed his wealthy New Orleans supporter Robert "Bob" Maestri as commissioner but his predecessor refused to resign. After a long court fight Maestri gained his office in December of 1929.

Long instituted these suits without the attorney general participating in them. The attorney general, a Long foe, upheld the incumbent's position and refused to enter into suit. The administration succeeded in having a bill passed making it possible for the governor to appear in person if he desired to institute ouster suits.\(^{26}\)


\(^{26}\) Baton Rouge Advocate, February 7, 1929.
The governor was defeated in his attempts to reorganize the New Orleans Charity Hospital. He also failed in his plan to replace the elected assessors in Orleans Parish with a single one appointed by the governor.\(^{27}\) He fared better in creating entirely new boards, such as the Livestock Sanitary Board and the Barber's Board. No matter what their legal purpose the aim of patronage was universal.

The chief executive replaced the Tax Commission members, and appointed a new State Supervisor of Public Accounts. Although the legislature had denied Long's plan to reorganize the Orleans Charity Hospital Board he rapidly took the upper hand. Four members' terms ended which when added to Long's _ex officio_ vote assured him control of the nine member board.

The chief executive centered his patronage structure around several key men and agencies. Abe Shushan, chairman of the Orleans Levee Board, Bob Maestri of the Conservation Commission,\(^ {28}\) O. K. Allen of the Highway Commission, and Seymour Weiss of the Orleans Dock Board.\(^ {29}\) This quartet of men virtually controlled all of the important state jobs.

The thousands of jobs were food for the labors of the faithful. Employment fluctuated around election time with employment rising during

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\(^{27}\)Sindler, _op. cit._, p. 60.

\(^{28}\)Maestri testified that he had over 400 employees under his jurisdiction. U.S. Senate, _Hearings of the Special Committee on the Investigation of Campaign Expenditures_, 72nd Congress, 2nd Session (1932), p. 338.

\(^{29}\)Weiss testified that Dock Board employment sometimes totaled 3,000. _Ibid._, p. 313.
the campaign. In 1932 Earl Long testified: "I believe . . . you will find in practically every campaign that the dock board is supposed to get busy; the highway department is supposed to get busy, and the board of health." Continued loyalty was a must for continued employment. Allen Ellender, a legislative lieutenant of Huey's and now U.S. Senator, in response to a question asking if he would fire employees displaying a "little disloyalty," answered: "Why of course; certainly. Why not?"

Huey did not take any chances with his supporters. He insisted upon undated resignations, insuring the loyalty of the job-holder. The Kingfish was a thorough political leader. Besides rewarding his supporters and assuring their loyalty, he assessed a portion of their salaries for his campaign fund. He had a "deduct system" according to John Fournet, at one time Huey's Speaker, and now Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court. The state employees donated 10% of their wages to Long's political fund. The system was very efficient. One Highway Commission employee testified the collector had a typewritten list of the employees and "as each of them came in and gave their 10% he checked off those

30 Ibid., p. 808.
31 Ibid., p. 285.
employees." Long maintained that he was always campaigning: "every day, every night, never stopped." The problem of money was a constant one. "You can get them all to spend it, but they can't raise it," Huey declared. He needed the money and the state employees were the easiest and most logical place to raise it. "It sounds raw," John Fournet related, "but he had to take the money where he could; the other side had all the money of Standard Oil . . . ."

Longism was built on a material base. It needed money to nurture and sustain itself. Voters, allies and workers did not come for free. Welfare functions had to be performed and there were no federal programs, at least in the beginning, to which Long could turn. The Kingfish's organization did not ask for money, it simply demanded and took money. Various groups were assigned their segment of the organization's support. Vast public works were undertaken during the Long administration notably in roads, highways and levee construction.

Contractors, suppliers of highway equipment, insurance agencies and companies supplying surety bonds were all assessed contributions by the

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34 Hearings, op. cit., p. 1507.
36 Ibid.
37 Liebling, op. cit., p. 10.
38 Williams, op. cit., p. 25.
organization. State employment was purposefully retained at a high level. This served several purposes--enlarging the organization, filling its coffers through "deducts," and combatting the depression by helping to ease the unemployment rate. The Long organization, according to one authority, "exacted money openly and was accountable only to itself and to the voter."\(^{41}\)

The Impeachment

Long over-estimated his hold on the legislature and neglected to ascertain the competence of his opponents. The day of reckoning arrived shortly after he convened a special session of the legislature on March 18, 1929. The purpose of the session was to place an additional tax on the oil industry. The governor proposed to enact an occupational tax of five cents a barrel on refined crude oil.\(^{42}\) In other words he intended to tax the oil industry in general and Standard Oil in particular, the largest industrial employer in Baton Rouge. The resulting panic caused Long to be impeached by the House. The tax bill was withdrawn.

\(^{40}\)Williams, op. cit., p. 25.

\(^{41}\)Ibid.

\(^{42}\)A signer of the impeachment articles stated: "I have been a member of five legislatures under five different administrations, and in nearly all of those administrations there has been a whisper of something of that kind [occupational tax] being brought up but they never got so far as to introduce a bill on that subject. I don't think you could get a bill on that subject through this House . . . ." Fifth Extra Session, op. cit., p. 290.
Long erroneously believed that he possessed a two-thirds majority which was necessary to suspend the rules allowing immediate voting on the tax item. Realizing his error the governor managed to have the session adjourn sine die after two days of inaction. Long called another session immediately which was scheduled to last eighteen days. It was this session that impeached Long.

The actual reason for his impeachment was not included in the Articles of Impeachment; the move was a politically motivated scheme. Long intended his power base to be the loyalty of the masses. He intended to weld himself to the people as opposed to the upper strata economic groups. If Long was allowed to accomplish this goal there would be "a restructuring of politics disadvantageous to the interests of the upper classes. The anti-Longs resorted to impeachment, then, in order to prevent a distasteful present from becoming an unbearable future."

The business interests, led by Standard Oil, comprised the major element in the anti-Long forces. The fight started on March 20 with Long ousted from the House floor for lobbying. A day later Lieutenant

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43 Baton Rouge Advocate, March 20, 1929.

44 Sindler, op. cit., p. 65.


46 D. R. Weller, president of Standard Oil of Louisiana, took a suite at the Hotel Heidelberg in Baton Rouge for the length of the session. When he died several years later, the obituary columns of the New York press described him as "a prime force in the campaign to oust Long." Ibid., pp. 61-62.
Governor Paul Cyr attacked Huey in a Senate speech. In addition the Manship affair hit the headlines that day. The Manship family owned the two Baton Rouge newspapers. According to C. P. Liter, managing editor of the Baton Rouge *State-Times*, Long said that he would reveal that Douglas Manship, the publisher's brother, was a patient in a state mental hospital. 47 Charles Manship, the publisher, picked up the challenge breaking the story in an editorial entitled "This, Gentlemen, Is How Your Governor Fights." 48

Three days later, the House unanimously adopted a resolution requesting information on reported offers of vote trading for support of Long's oil tax. 49 That afternoon the Governor beseeched the legislature to solve the State's financial woes in any manner they saw fit, pleading "It is the cancerous, the tubercular, the halt and the crippled, the blind and the deaf who are in need--they and the little school children." 50

The following night's legislative session reached chaotic proportions. Representative Morgan, a Caddo Parish opponent of the governor's and Cleveland Fruge, an administration supporter, both beckoned to be recognized. Speaker John Fournet gave the nod to Fruge. An uproar ensued preventing Fruge from speaking. Fournet proceeded to

47 Fifth Extra Session, op. cit., p. 129.
48 Baton Rouge *State-Times*, March 21, 1929.
49 Baton Rouge *Advocate*, March 24, 1929.
50 Ibid.
order the voting machine opened amidst the confusion for a vote on adjourning sine die but the Speaker's voice was drowned out in the chamber. The electric tally board recorded votes on Fournet's motion every which way. The Speaker declared the House adjourned sine die by a vote of 68 to 13. Pandemonium ensued with Representative Clinton Sayes, an anti-Long, being hit on the head with brass knuckles. After order was restored it was determined "the machine had not cleared since the roll call resulting in two votes being recorded on the same board." The vote was declared illegal and the House adjourned for the night.

The next day the House passed a resolution opposing an occupational tax in any form. Morgan obtained the floor introducing an affidavit by Harry A. "Battling" Bozeman in which Bozeman swore Long asked him to kill anti-Long Representative J. Y. Sanders, Jr. A day later anti-administration representatives introduced a resolution requesting the governor's impeachment, listing nineteen articles for

51 Ibid., March 26, 1929.

52 Sindler, op. cit., p. 63.

53 Baton Rouge Advocate, March 26, 1929.

54 Ibid. Later Lee Laycock, the clerk of the House, explained "The machine was not fixed, it wasn't operating properly." Laycock "agreed with observations at the time that Long had the votes to adjourn had it not been for the fluke in the operation of the machine." Ibid., June 21, 1956.

55 Fifth Extra Session, op. cit., p. 31.
the action. The House resolved itself into a jury of indictment and heard evidence on the resolution.

Hearing of testimony proceeded slowly. Testimony illustrated the unsavory portions of Long's administration and chronicled various nefarious schemes Long pursued to obtain favorable votes. By the April 6 deadline completing the specified session call the House had voted on only one Article, the Manship affair which was favorably reported in a 58 to 40 vote. The legislature voted to extend the session and continued gathering evidence.

Testimony against Long ran the spectrum from matters of small import to issues of concern. The governor was accused of purchasing a

56 Sindler in his work has summarized the charges: "use of his appointive power to influence the judiciary, and boasting of that use of power; misuse, misapplication, and misappropriation of state funds; bribery and attempted bribery of state legislators; securing of undated resignations from appointees to the Orleans Levee Board; contracting illegal loans for the state; removal of public school officials for political purposes; unlawful use of the militia to subdue the civil authority, with reference to early 1929 raids on New Orleans gambling; attempting to force parish officials to follow his dictation in political litigation as the price of permitting passage of legislation affecting such parishes; habitually carrying concealed weapons; violent abuse of public officials and citizens visiting him on public business; gross misconduct in public places; publicly flouting the state and federal constitutions, and usurping the power of the legislature; purchasing a $20,000 ice machine for Angola Penitentiary without advertising for bids; intimidating the press in the Manship Affair; demolishing the Executive Mansion without express legislative authority and spending $150,000 for a new mansion; disposing of and destroying furniture in the Executive Mansion without authorization or accounting; unlawfully paroling a convict from the penitentiary; repeatedly appearing within the bar of the House of Representatives in violation of the state Constitution; suborning murder in attempting to hire "Battling" Bozeman to assassinate J. Y. Sanders, Jr." Sindler, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

57 Fifth Extra Session, op. cit., p. 294.
new Buick with state funds not specifically assigned to that purpose. A discrepancy of several hundred dollars was found after an accounting of the $6,000 spent by Long entertaining the nation's governors after their New Orleans conference had been completed. An ex-telephone operator at the Highway Department testified Long swore at associates over the telephone. The witness was aware of this because she listened in on his conversations. Long was accused of carrying a gun and of attending a party where a girl in a grass skirt danced a hulu.

On a more serious level, legislators testified of job offers for themselves or their friends if they voted "right." Representative Adolph Gueymard stated Long told him "not to worry a damn bit" about the money he owed banks saying "I control the Bank Examiner and these banks are all violating the law and I can see that they won't interfere with anybody or bother you or anybody else." The governor offered Gueymard, he testified, the position of prison manager at the St. Gabriel penitentiary, or a position in the accounting office or a job at the highway department. Representative Davis Richarme swore he was present

58 Ibid., pp. 172, 180-181.
59 Ibid., pp. 193, 190-195.
60 Ibid., p. 215.
61 Ibid., p. 385.
62 Ibid., pp. 789-791
63 Ibid., p. 96.
64 Ibid.
in the governor's office with Representatives Cassagne and Delaune when the following exchange took place. Delaune informed Long that he would like a state job. Long replied: "All right, $150 a month and expenses. You get straight and you start on the 24th of the month." Richarme also testified Cassagne recommended four people for jobs with the highway department and asked to name the Voter Registrar in St. John's Parish. Long accepted Cassagne's recommendations and directed his secretary, according to Richarme, to remove the incumbent registrar in St. John's Parish.

New Orleans State Senator J. O. Fernandez testified Long offered him the position of Voter Registrar for Orleans Parish or a position on the Highway Commission in return for a "square deal" in the impeachment trial. However, Fernandez did not sign the "Round Robin." These representatives were hounded by the opposition because of their association with the governor. No examination of the motives of pro-impeachment legislators was included in the hearings.

The hearing of evidence droned on day after day. Eventually the House voted on ten of the nineteen articles rejecting three and sending seven over to the Senate for trial.

Huey lost the battle in the House but victory was to come in the upper chamber. The three brothers, Huey, Earl, and Julius, combined

65 Ibid., p. 104.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., pp. 688-689.
their talents to defeat the anti-Longs, a task accomplished by a device known as the "Round Robin." A Long associate states Earl thought of the "Round Robin," discussed it with Huey who agreed to let Earl attempt it. Earl told Huey how much it would cost and "as it turned out he was only $5,000 off." The key to success was to obtain signatures of more than one-third of the Senate on a document affirming the Senators' refusal to vote for conviction. Because of a constitutional requirement necessitating an absolute two-thirds majority vote to convict, the Long forces had to obtain fourteen signatures on the "Round Robin." One by one the Longs obtained signatures by which the signers affirmed "the undersigned, constituting more than one-third of the membership of the Senate, sitting as a court of impeachment, do now officially announce that by reason of the unconstitutionality and invalidity of all impeachment charges against Huey P. Long, Governor, they will not vote to convict thereon . . . ." The brothers utilized their energies to obtain the signatures with Earl being the leading figure in the gaining of the necessary number.

69 Interview with an Earl Long aide April 15, 1966.
70 Ibid.
71 Article IX, Section I.
72 Sindler, op. cit., p. 65.
73 In an interview concerning the impeachment Earl stated the following:
Q: How about when they were going to impeach him . . . ?
Long: You want me to tell you the truth?
Q: Yes sir.
Long: He would have been impeached if it hadn't been for me.
The first requirement was to acquire money. Huey contacted a prominent New Orleans supporter who furnished $150,000 to the cause. Almost $100,000 of the total was never needed, because "at least ten signed voluntarily, asking and receiving no money." The remaining senators received a total of $54,000. One senator received $23,000. The remaining three divided $31,000.

One of the vital votes, secured after a number of senators had agreed to sign the "Round Robin," was obtained in an unusual manner even for this episode. Earl and an aide went to the Istrouma Hotel with the intention of asking a senator to sign the "Round Robin." Repeated knocking on the door brought no response. The room had an open transom. "I hoisted Earl up and he crawled through, jumping into the room. He unlocked the door, letting me in. The senator was asleep on the floor. We got him up, took him into the shower and woke him up. Then we took him down to the Capitol and he signed." This senator "didn't

Q: How is that, sir?
Long: Well, I wouldn't want to tell you all of it.
Q: You stood by his side all through the impeachment proceedings?
Long: If he was living he would tell you that I played the major part . . . that I helped him to gain more senators than anyone . . . any other one there."

Author's copy of transcript of Brooks Read's, then news director of WBRZ-TV, Baton Rouge, interview with Long in Alexandria, Louisiana during the summer of 1960.

74 Interview, April 15, 1966.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
receive a quarter for signing."  The whole affair was bizarre. The Longs obtained the necessary signatures.

After the "Round Robin" was filed in the senate the impeachment trial came to an immediate close. Anti-Longs were thwarted in their efforts to "get" Huey. This was not surprising for the "items were selected indiscriminately, the hearings were rambling, and effort was diffused."  

The failure of the Anti-Longs was complete. Never again would Huey's opponents gain a strong upper hand. The opposition was confused but Huey strode ahead, his aims strengthened, his vanity increased, and his tactics hardened. "I used to try to get things done by saying 'please,'" declared Huey. "That didn't work and now I am a dynamiter. I dynamite 'em out of my path."

**Louisiana Crowns Their King**

The voters responded by electing Long to the U.S. Senate in 1930, repudiating the impeachment forces and serving notice that they liked the changes Longism had brought to the Pelican state. Voters reflected their approving sentiment of Longism by voting approval of every amendment submitted to them during Long's administration and

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78 Ibid.

79 Sindler, op. cit., p. 67.

that of his hand-picked successor O. K. Allen. During Huey's term 26 amendments were overwhelmingly approved by the electorate. Table XXIII indicates 85% of the voters who went to the polls ratified Long's program when given the chance to be recorded. Long built a popularly-based machine. He revolutionized the type of politics practiced in Louisiana. Long made substantial deliveries to the masses and they responded by returning him and his supporters to office.

**TABLE XXIII**

Voter's Approval of Amendments, 1928-1932

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of Proposed Amendments</th>
<th>Number of Approved Amendments</th>
<th>Per Cent of Voters' Voting Approval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November, 1928</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November, 1930</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Depression

Huey's term as governor coincided with the period of the Great Depression which began in 1929. However, "hard times" began much earlier for the nation's farmers, and especially in Louisiana, a predominantly rural state. In 1920 more than half of the farmers in Louisiana were tenant farmers; by 1930 the number had increased by almost 10%. (See Table XXIV.)
TABLE XXIV
Per Cent of U.S. and Louisiana Farms Operated by Tenants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1910-1931

In the business world commercial failures increased during Long's administration from 101 businesses in 1928 to 179 by 1932. (See Table XXV.) In the remaining depression years the number of business failures sharply declined.

TABLE XXV
Commercial Failures in Louisiana, 1928-1933

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The effect of the national depression in Louisiana was lessened by Long's massive public works projects, especially in highway expenditures. Governor Long's program surpassed the highway program of the other southern states during the period of his rule. In Louisiana
highway construction increased from a total of 288 miles in 1928 to 1426 miles in 1932. Arkansas, the leading highway builder in the south during the late 1920's dropped drastically in the early 1930's. Louisiana expanded her roadbuilding program as other states cutback their road projects. (See Table XXVI.)

**TABLE XXVI**

Southern State Highway Construction, 1928-1932 (Selected)
(in miles)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1929</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1932</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>1411</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>1673</td>
<td>1499</td>
<td>1782</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>894</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As Long assumed the duties of governor, the people of Louisiana were beset by many problems ranging from despair to an inadequate transportation system. Long brought hope and an expression of care to the people of Louisiana as Franklin Roosevelt later carried this message to the nation. In addition, Long's construction of public buildings and the development of the highway construction program brought tangible results to the populace.
Huey Long's Legislative Program

Governor Long's legislative endeavors in some areas were not as significant as Long maintained. No important labor legislation was enacted during his administration. Long told one labor delegation: "The prevailing wage is as low as we can get men to take it."\(^{81}\) The Kingfish opposed old age pensions and scuttled appropriations for mothers' pensions, previously provided to widowed women having minor children.\(^{82}\)

State hospitals did not fare well under Long's direction. The budget of the state charity and mental hospitals during his administration reveal only one large increase. (See Table XXVII.) Governor Long promoted the New Orleans Charity Hospital both in his speeches and in his budgets. The Shreveport hospital, however, was located in the headquarters of anti-Long territory; Long reflected his displeasure by reducing the flow of state funds to the institution.

The percentage of state funds spent on education decreased during Long's administration. From 1924-1927 the educational budget was 14.4% of the entire budget; it declined to 9.7% during Huey's administration.\(^{83}\) However, Long instituted a concerted drive on adult illiteracy that

\(^{81}\) Sindler, op. cit., p. 105.

\(^{82}\) Ibid.

\(^{83}\) Ibid., p. 104.
TABLE XXVII

State of Louisiana Hospital Budgets, 1927-1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1927</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1929</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1931</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charity, New Orleans</td>
<td>767,384</td>
<td>926,293</td>
<td>938,500</td>
<td>1,096,000</td>
<td>1,181,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity, Shreveport</td>
<td>365,000</td>
<td>361,800</td>
<td>301,800</td>
<td>265,880</td>
<td>265,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Louisiana State</td>
<td>718,550</td>
<td>726,455</td>
<td>754,000</td>
<td>725,000</td>
<td>675,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Louisiana State</td>
<td>321,500</td>
<td>371,500</td>
<td>356,000</td>
<td>457,260</td>
<td>435,425</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


helped educate 175,000 persons. Long also introduced the free school book program in Louisiana. Initially the purchase of books resulted in over a million dollar increase in the Department of Education budget but it quickly tapered off as Table XXVIII indicates.

TABLE XXVIII

Louisiana State Department of Education Budgets, 1927-1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1927</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1931</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>$4,125,000</td>
<td>5,683,505</td>
<td>4,342,254</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Huey Long and His Roads

Highways constituted Huey's most prodigious monument. His name became synonymous with the concept "good roads" in Louisiana. The state was in dire need of every type of road in 1928, and Huey largely constructed his political machine upon the laying of paved roads and the concurrent patronage resulting from the huge public works program.

The motor vehicle revolution came rapidly in Louisiana. In 1910 only 3,650 autos were registered in the state. By 1920 the figure had jumped twenty times (73,000) and it quadrupled in the twenties to 281,000.85 Roads did not keep pace with auto registration. In 1920 only 14 miles of paved roads existed in the Pelican state. When Long assumed the governorship there were 296 miles of concrete roads, 35 miles of asphalt roads, and 5,728 miles of gravel roads, and three major bridges in the state highway system.

The highway system was authorized in 1910 to consist of 5,000 miles of roads; however, construction responsibilities belonged to the local government. In 1921 the new Constitution reorganized the highway commission and established a system of state routes totaling 7,000 miles. By 1927 traffic demands for new roads had made road construction a campaign issue. Huey Long committed himself to a program "to take Louisiana out of the mud."86 By October, 1930, 670 miles of new


pavement was under construction or completed. The legislature in 1930 enlarged the highway system to include 1,325 enumerated roads totaling more than 17,000 miles. At the time of Huey's death 2,446 miles of concrete roads, 1,308 miles of asphalt roads, 9,629 miles of gravel roads and more than forty bridges including fourteen major ones, were included in the highway system.

In addition to state highway construction the administration undertook a large scale farm to market road program on which some $17,900,000 was expended between April, 1928 and April, 1934.

Many farm to market roads were added to the state maintenance system. Most were added as a result of political pressure on the administration. As no restrictions were observed as to location, utility, or accessibility, the state highway department was saddled with hundreds of miles of short isolated sections of roads. In 1932 these roads were formally designated state roads. However, revenues were not increased to the extent that obligations were undertaken. This resulted in poor maintenance on many state roads--roads that were palmed off on the state by local governments in return for political cooperation with the Long administration.

87 Automotive Safety Foundation, op. cit., p. 27.
88 Williams, op. cit., p. 28.
89 Louisiana Highway Department, op. cit., p. 7.
90 Ibid.
91 Act 74 of the Regular Session of 1932.
Long had been criticized for getting "a maximum of political benefit" out of his road program, "and his successors a maximum of highway repair bills." Obviously since Long constructed thousands of miles of new roads the repair bills would be huge in the future as compared to maintenance required in his term. To criticize him for this fact is denying logic. The addition of many unneeded roads to the system was the price Long had to pay to secure approval of his program. The result was distressing but the alternative was prohibitive--leaving the state in the mud.

Financing the Kingfish

Long's ambitious plans for Louisiana required money--lots of it. The governor succeeded in raising the necessary revenues by two methods, both novel in Louisiana: floating bond issues and the raising of highway user taxes. Prior to 1930, 57.4% of highway revenues came from property taxes and the general fund, with one-third (36.0%) coming from highway user taxes. After 1930 the pattern changed in Louisiana, with 52.9% coming from highway user and 36% from property taxes and the general fund. Prior to 1928 no state bonds had ever been sold for highway construction in Louisiana.

92 Sindler, op. cit., p. 103.

93 The remaining 6.6% came from federal aid. Automotive Safety Foundation, op. cit., p. 97.

94 The remaining 11.1% came from federal aid. Ibid.

The gasoline tax was the underlying prop of the highway program. In 1921 a one cent gasoline tax was levied, and this was raised to two cents in 1924. Long managed to have the tax raised to four cents a gallon in 1928. Long asked for the increase to pay off the $5 million dollar debt left to him by the vacating administration and to provide additional revenues for increased highway construction. In addition to the increased tax a constitutional amendment was adopted authorizing the proceeds from a cent of the tax to be used to fund a highway bond issue. The remaining three cents were dedicated to the general highway fund. Since then the gasoline tax has been the prime source of highway monies.

Long in 1928 secured approval of a thirty million dollar highway bond issue which when added to the gasoline tax receipts gave impetus to his projected highway program. The bond issue was approved by every parish but Caddo in the November election. In December Long called a special session which ratified his highway program.

The 1930 regular session balked at approving any additional bond issues. Following legislative adjournment Long took his case to the

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96 Ibid.

97 The gasoline tax was raised to four cents in 1930 but the additional revenue was dedicated to education and ports. Automotive Safety Foundation, op. cit., p. 97.

98 Also authorized in the same year was a bond issue dedicated exclusively for the construction of specified bridges. The amendment was declared legally defective. No bonds were ever issued on it. Ross, op. cit., p. 51.

99 Sindler, op. cit., p. 60.
people by announcing for the U.S. Senate. In his statement he declared:

My platform will be the public-improvement program that the people want, but that the legislature killed. If I am elected, that will mean the people approve my program. If I am defeated, that will prove they approve the action of my enemies.\textsuperscript{100}

Long was elected Senator by the count of 140,640 to 111,451.\textsuperscript{101} Shortly after his election Long summoned the legislature into special session. His road program was quickly ratified. A constitutional amendment authorizing $75 million for new highway construction was approved with $8 million specified for eight bridges. In addition $7 million was dedicated to paying the state's share of the new Mississippi River bridge at New Orleans.\textsuperscript{102}

The Politics of Payment

Highway expenditures received the overwhelming mandate of the people. The newspapers and the opposition, however, never tired of criticizing Long's highway program and of searching for favoritism and scandal in the large amount of monies that were spent on the program. The criticism of the highway department grew increasingly more bitter from impeachment time onward. In the fall of 1928 newspapers carried an article headlined "Marks first time that commission has ever received bids

\textsuperscript{100}Herman B. Deutsch, "Huey Long--The Last Phase," \textit{The Saturday Evening Post}, CCVIII (October 12, 1935), p. 82.

\textsuperscript{101}Sindler, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 70.

\textsuperscript{102}Ross, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 51.
for maintenance gravel." The article stated: "an inspection of the
bids received revealed no tendency on the part of the bidders to take
advantage of their monopoly in certain freight zones." 104

The newspapers in the early stages of the Long administration
prominently displayed a report by attorney general Perry Saint of highway
commission practices under the previous administration. Headlines
entitled: "Idle relatives listed on payroll" and "sensational findings
made by attorney general" 105 are almost identical to news reports a year
later concerning Long's commission. Highlights of Saint's report were
disclosures that the chairman's daughter was on the payroll but per­
formed no services for the commission, and testimony by a gravel company
executive that he was "forced" to pay 10% of his contracts back to high­
way officials if he expected to receive any state business. 106 By
impeachment such episodes would be shelved and it would be made to appear
that Long should be ousted because he "politicized" the highway depart­
ment. Resentment grew as Long fired additional state employees who
had been hired by previous administrations and replaced them with
pro-Longites. At one sweep in early 1929 Long dismissed 74 engineers
from the highway department. The press particularly frowned on this

103 Baton Rouge Advocate, October 5, 1928.

104 Ibid.

105 Ibid., February 10, 1929.

106 Ibid.
action. Before Long's first year in office was complete the highway commission payroll increased by almost 50%. At the end of his first eighteen months in office the payroll had been doubled. Highway expenditures grew daily in importance. The $30 million dollar bond issue was beginning to take effect. Both Huey and his opposition realized the political importance of controlling the highway department and moved to consolidate their positions.

Impeachment failing, the anti-administration alliance instituted a resolution to investigate the highway commission during the 1930 regular session. Huey took the thunder away from the opposition by having his leaders vote also to investigate the commission. The resulting investigation made headlines but much of the ballyhoo ended up as that and nothing else. Testimony disclosed the commission was paying five attorneys a total of $1,400 a month but during the 1928-1932 period over 13,000 parcels of property were purchased and over 100 expropriation suits were filed.

The investigation documented the fact that Long as well as other governors placed friends and legislators on the payroll. A favorite

107 Ibid., January 3, 1929.
108 Ibid., January 17, 1929.
109 Ibid., April 16, 1930.
110 New Orleans Times-Picayune, May 22, 1930.
position for political friends was the classification "inspector." Long had so many inspectors on the payroll, 206 in June of 1930, that the commission developed the title "non-classified inspector." While friends were rewarded the result was not chaos. In fact the percentage cost of engineering and administration decreased under Long (see Table XXIX) from 4.9% in 1928 to 2.0% in 1931. Inspection of commission records revealed that numerous legislators or their relatives were on the payroll. A total of nineteen were on one listed at salaries ranging from $125 to $400 a month.  

TABLE XXIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


113 Baton Rouge Advocate, June 10, 1930.

114 Ibid., June 15, 1930.
Favoritism towards companies owned by legislators or their relatives was also revealed. The Wimberly Construction Company owned by relatives of Representative Lorris Wimberly had received $292,000 worth of non-bid highway work. The state also purchased $117,000 worth of shells without bids from Joe Fisher a relative of round-robineer Senator Jules Fisher who lobbied for the purchase at the commission.

Fisher was a busy lobbyist for his interests. Under oath he admitted obtaining orders for automobiles from the highway commission. Fisher and Senator Fred Oser, also a signer of the round robin, managed to reverse commission recommendations on a project causing shells to be used instead of gravel which resulted in an additional cost of $22,000. Regarding Fisher's interest in auto sales, he revealed that he owned 150 out of the 500 shares of stock in an auto agency that sold 50 or 60 automobiles to the state.

The assistant engineer of the commission swore several legislators were brazen in their efforts to secure contracts for firms they represented. One round-robineer, Senator Anderson "used to drop in every day." The witness testified that "plenty" of legislators were interested in selling material or equipment to the state. They

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115 New Orleans Times-Picayune, June 18, 1930.
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid., June 22, 1930.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid., June 23, 1930.
were so many he answered to a question that "I could not name them all without a list."\textsuperscript{120}

The investigation died with legislative adjournment. No reports were submitted nor were any prosecutions instituted. The only tangible result of the investigation was the dismissal of the engineers testifying at the probe.\textsuperscript{121}

The Politics of Pavement

Many legislators were bound to support the administration program because of the jobs or contracts they received. Other legislators were more desirous of obtaining roads for their district instead of constructing them. Long astutely used his option as to where the roads would go in order to secure legislators' votes on administration issues. Huey utilized his control over contract lettings in two ways. One, Huey would deprive the legislator's district of good roads. Or, two, Long would lavishly bestow roads in an area. If the electorate and elected officials of a district solidly opposed Long he pursued the first course. If both the people and the officials supported Long roads were built in bountiful quantities. In areas that Long carried in the 1928 election but whose legislator was anti-Long the second course of action was followed. While Long was bestowing pavement on the area of the

\textsuperscript{120}Ibid., June 25, 1930.

\textsuperscript{121}Baton Rouge \textit{Advocate}, July 12, 1930.
recalcitrant legislator he would pressure the people to repudiate the legislator or forfeit any more benefits.

An illustration is Representative Clinton Sayes of Avoyelles parish, a sometime opponent of Long. Because of Sayes' opposition promised roads were delayed. A group of parish businessmen approached Long about the delay. He replied: "I want to tell you fellows one thing. If you don't get him out of the legislature you won't get anything."\(^{122}\) Long was very honest about the situation. Those that supported him received the benefits of Longism. Those who did not received as little as possible. Shortly after the impeachment proceedings the highway department announced a major letting of contracts. The distribution of the contracts was illustrative of this concept. All the roads were necessary and "there is no objection from any source to their being built."\(^{123}\) The timing and choice of when certain sections were to be built was the stick that Long wielded masterfully. An examination of five projects in this letting illustrates his technique:


2. Rapides Parish--eight miles of new pavement in the parish where Long was seeking the recall of Representative Ginsberg who voted for Long's impeachment.

3. Beauregard and Vernon Parishes--five and a half miles of pavement in the district of Senator John Gamble who Long was attempting to recall.

\(^{122}\)Ibid., March 28, 1929.

\(^{123}\)Ibid., June 29, 1929.
4. Calcasieu and Jefferson Parishes—over sixteen more miles of pavement in Gamble's district.

5. Over five miles of pavement in the district of Representative Murphy Sylvest whom Long was seeking to recall.\(^{124}\)

Much of this letting was for roads in areas where Long was seeking to recall legislators who voted for his impeachment. As tempers cooled, Huey lost interest in the movement. In addition voter resentment developed over the recall, which was a foreign notion to Louisianians. Finally the courts voided the procedure and the episode drifted into obscurity.\(^{125}\) However, the point he was making was not forgotten. Huey used the highway program to aid in the achievement of his goals.

An analysis of twelve major issues of the Long administration, all concerned with taxes, bond issues or highway construction, illustrates the small amount of opposition resisting the material benefits of being for Huey. In the House only ten representatives voted against six or more of the twelve selected issues. Of the ten only five voted eight or more times against the key issues. As Table XXX shows, four were from Orleans parish. Caddo and Orleans parishes were the areas of greatest voter resentment against Long. Caddo, parish seat of the most vocal and united opposition to Long, received the least amount of highway money during the two-year period. The Caddo delegation voted a united front against Long and their highway appropriations reflected that united opposition. A recall attempt was made against Representative Bacon whose parish voted for Long in 1928, which accounts for

\(^{124}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{125}\text{Ibid., July 10, 17, and August 2, 1929.}\)
### Opposition to Longism on 12 Key Issues in the House

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representative</th>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Number of Votes in Opposition</th>
<th>Parish Vote for Long in 1928</th>
<th>Highway Appropriation 1928-30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bacon</td>
<td>Webster</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>$655,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogan</td>
<td>Caddo</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>Caddo</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dupre</td>
<td>St. Landry</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>857,153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamiter</td>
<td>Caddo</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayewski</td>
<td>Orleans</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2,241,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meridier</td>
<td>Orleans</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2,241,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>Caddo</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weber</td>
<td>Orleans</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2,241,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. L. Williams</td>
<td>Orleans</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2,241,566</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The generous highway allotment given Webster. St. Landry parish was fortunate enough to have as their senator, Henry Larcade, a round-robiner who offset the anti-Long effect of Dupre. Orleans while receiving the largest single grant of money did not begin to receive its share as the state's largest center of population. The sum probably would have been much lower except that some legislators had a pro-Long
voting record and Huey was determined to gain control of New Orleans, a feat he did not accomplish until shortly before his death.

Thinly populated country areas favorable to Long did much better than Orleans, especially those parishes whose representatives voted against all the impeachment charges. (See Table XXI.) Most parishes that voted for Long in 1928 and whose representatives generally supported his program and in particular opposed impeachment received roads in abundance. An exception to this was evident in St. Bernard's parish. However, wide-open gambling was allowed to flourish there while in the adjoining parish of Orleans Long sent the National Guard to close down the vice in the city. In addition St. Bernard, along with Plaquemines parish, was under the control of Leander Perez who was strongly interested in legislation affecting sulfur since most of the sulfur was mined in the area under his domain. Significantly Long did not attempt to raise the low severance tax on sulfur. It stayed at only $0.27 per long ton until 1934. At that time a $1.25 per long ton tax was considered so that sulfur would be taxed in a manner comparable to oil but "Huey personally had the rate set at $0.60 per long ton."
TABLE XXXI
Representatives Voting Against All Impeachment Charges (Selected)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Representative</th>
<th>Parish Vote for Long in 1928</th>
<th>Highway Expenditures 1928-1930</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bienville</td>
<td>Wimberly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>$1,123,061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcasieu</td>
<td>Lyons</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1,674,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson Davis</td>
<td>Fournet</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>795,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natchitoches</td>
<td>McClung</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>965,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red River</td>
<td>Hankins</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>973,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Bernard</td>
<td>Folse</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7,765</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These statistics reveal the tactics he used of rewarding his friends, offering lucrative inducements to his opponents and trampling on his enemies when it became obvious their hostility was implacable. The opposition was small because Long overwhelmed the Louisiana scene with his personality and his program. He not only changed the rules of the game, he changed the game itself. After his election he did not become frustrated and sell out to the traditional alliance that had ruled the Pelican state. Instead he humbled the establishment, made
them come to terms with him, not the other way around. The populace awoke to a new order. Not hearing promises but seeing accomplishments the masses followed Long. Material progress was evident. Evils transpired but Louisiana had lived with evil throughout her history; only progress was new to her. One Longite observer recalled at Huey's death: "Maybe we moved too fast in the last eight years; certainly we moved too slowly for centuries before that."\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{129}Williams, op. cit., p. 29.
CHAPTER X

"I JUST RENT 'EM. IT'S CHEAPER THAT WAY."

Earl Long's tenure as governor was three times as long as Huey's. And Earl's term as chief executive was even more tempestuous than his brother's administration. Earl's unique style made him a legend and the most quoted Louisiana political figure in history. His gravel voice, candid observations and brilliant timing made his comments sought after as much for their humor as their political sagacity.

**Earl's Political Techniques**

Earl had an earthy demeanor; his philosophy was consistently oriented towards the little fellow and against the "big shot." Long himself recalled: "Whether I am a governor, lieutenant governor, dog-catcher, or what not, I will always be interested in our people and their problems, especially the underprivileged and the down-trodden."¹ This was the core of his political philosophy. Earl understood that the revolution Huey led had not ended. The younger brother strove to appear moderate; he compromised where Huey irritated. Earl was a pragmatist.

¹Press release from the Governor's Office of Long's Farewell Speech to the People of Louisiana on May 3, 1960.

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Earl dealt with people on their level. He refined the technique of appearing to be the common man—a man with weaknesses, seeking only to live a decent life free from the elements of oppression. To "big shots" Earl's brilliance made them respect him. His success at striking bargains made such men accommodating to his wishes.

Earl was a master in the use of ridicule. He effectively blunted newspaper opposition by constantly mocking them. He referred to the Alexandria Town Talk as "The Alexandria Bladder" and liked to tell the story about the Times-Picayune reporter who fell into a ditch with a hog. "Somebody said," Earl bellowed, "you can tell a man by the company he keeps and the hog got up and left."3

Earl's candid observations often stunned both the public and legislators. The Governor flabbergasted a senator after asking the senator to vote for a particular bill. The senator refused, replying "I'm with you when you're right, Governor, and against you when you're wrong." Long responded: "I don't need you when I'm right. I need you when I'm wrong."4 This was a secret of Long's success. He was able on many occasions to obtain legislators' votes when they felt he was wrong, or as Earl once phrased it: "I just rent 'em. It's cheaper that way."5

2Ibid.


Earl’s legislative success was a composite of factors. Every person interviewed during this project volunteered that Earl was the most brilliant politician that he had ever encountered. One anti-Long representative said: "I was not for Earl. However, he used everything at his disposal to convince me. Earl was tough." Universal agreement was also evident on the magnitude and importance of Earl's memory. He retained an unbelievable amount of information both personal and political. Long knew children's names and the skeletons in their parents' closets. On election eve in 1956 after an exhaustive campaign and day Earl again demonstrated this trait:

We (Earl and an aide) went back to the hotel room about 3:30 in the morning. Instead of going to bed Earl started politicking. He called . . . on the telephone and Earl rattled off a list of names to him of people who you'd have thought the Governor had never heard of. Earl told . . . to go out in the morning and give a twenty dollar gift to one family, ten dollars to a few more and five dollars to some others. Earl kept this up for hours--call after call all over the state. All of these minor details, which ordinarily a person of his position would never be concerned with, he took care of personally.  

Earl was devoted to performing details. He delegated little authority. He kept no records or files, trusting his memory to retain an immense amount of information.

Earl was his own campaign manager, his own organization and his own legislative leader. Earl did not like to be told he was not the whole show. At a campaign strategy meeting during the 1956 campaign

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6 Interview, May 26, 1966.

7 Interview, May 28, 1966.
an argument erupted between Earl and a powerful parish political leader. The parish boss barked, "Earl, why don't you ask your advisers about it?" Earl exploded "I don't have any advisers except my instincts, my conscience and my heart." 8

Another factor in Earl's makeup was his keen understanding of people whether legislators or millionaires. Long sized people up, possessing an uncanny ability to determine the type of individual confronting him. When Earl and his wife were on friendly terms Earl was fond of saying "Blanche knows where a politician itches and she knows where to scratch it." 9 The Long aide telling the story added "Of course, he was really referring to himself." 10 Long astutely gauged what made a person tick, what interests his adversary possessed and most importantly, what his opponents wanted. Friends and foes agree Earl did not care especially what a person wanted--just so he wanted something. A friend who was a legislative opponent stated: "He didn't care whatever it was, he would go with you no matter what--if you wanted horses he would get you horses. He knew how to deal with people, any and all types." 11

One highly regarded senator from an anti-Long area of north Louisiana told of the techniques Earl used on him. Shortly after the senator was elected in the 1948 election Earl called him and asked him to come to the governor's office. According to the senator the meeting

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8Ibid.
9Ibid.
10Ibid.
11Interview, May 16, 1966.
was informal and relaxed with "Earl being very courtly to me."\textsuperscript{12} Long asked the senator if he would like to have his wife employed as a committee clerk during the legislative session. The senator politely refused. The Governor again pursued the matter with the senator again refusing, "I didn't want to do things like that."\textsuperscript{13} The Governor stated that other legislators had their wives on the payroll, legislative pay was low, expenses high and that he could arrange for her appointment. Twice more during the conversation Earl resubmitted the proposition and both times "I politely turned it down."\textsuperscript{14}

According to the senator "Earl never again made another proposition to me. He never threatened me or tried to pressure me."\textsuperscript{15} Instead "Earl continued to be very friendly to me and we got along very well."\textsuperscript{16} Long realized the senator came from an anti-Long area and that crass power politics were resented by this senator. This particular senator is a refined intelligent man who Earl respected. Long gave many political plums to the senator's district and in return received the admiration, affection and the vote of the senator on many occasions although the senator was regarded as an anti-Long legislator.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{16}Ibid.
Long could be gracious and courtly but he could also be gruff and dominating. Earl was the leader—no one else—neither Huey's shadow nor legislators with their titles could belie this fact.

During the 1956 campaign Earl gave public evidence of his sensitivity of being compared to Huey. Near Winnfield, at an outdoor rally, a Huey Long stalwart who was now supporting Earl delivered a stump speech in behalf of Earl. The speaker spoke long and glowingly about the benefits Huey had brought to the people of Louisiana. After a while Earl got up from his seat behind the speaker on the platform, pulled the speaker's coat tails and said: "... you've said enough about what Huey's done for this state, tell them what Earl has done."17 A Long aide related "Earl liked to talk about Huey, but only a bit; then he liked to talk about Earl."18

The Governor was the master of his house and at times he made the point emphatically clear. During the 1956 regular legislative session Long noticed a great deal of lobbying on behalf of a bill he did not know anything about.19 Following inquiries, Earl learned that one of his legislative leaders was the chief lobbyist for the bill's passage. The Governor summoned the legislator to his office where Long unleashed his wrath on the legislator. According to a witness Earl screamed, "What is going on here? You didn't tell me about this."20

17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Interview with a Long aide, April 15, 1966.
20 Ibid.
Long ordered the legislator to go back to the chamber and get the non-legislative lobbyists for the bill and bring them back to the office. Upon their return Earl set them straight asking them in effect what they were doing with his legislature. "If you want something you come to me," Earl stated, "I'm the Governor and that's my legislature and I'll decide what's best for Louisiana." Needless to say the legislator failed in his efforts to secure his bill's passage.

Earl was the chief executive and the "chief legislator." This was no vague point. Earl ruled as long as his health permitted. He loved power, understood its uses and wielded it effectively and aggressively.

**The 1948-1952 Administration**

Earl was elected governor for the first time in 1948. Previously he had served almost a year as governor in 1939-1940 after Governor Leche resigned. During his initial term as Governor Long was besieged by the "Louisiana scandals" and his time consumed by an election campaign in which he was an unsuccessful candidate for governor. The 1948 election was Earl's victory and his alone. The "scandals" were a ghost of the past and no election faced Earl. All eyes were on Long to see whether he would reign, rule or dictate. In retrospect it appears Earl practiced some of each but mostly he ruled. His leadership was

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21 Ibid.
candid and effective. His raspy voice and devastating wit became a legend and his program of social welfare outdid even Huey.

Upon assuming office, the new governor settled down to running the state and distributing patronage. The treasury had a forty-five million dollar surplus when Long assumed office but he quickly ascertained that this was woefully short of the money needed. The governor presented a package of tax proposals to the legislature which he estimated would raise forty million dollars a year in new revenue. Included in the tax package was a proposed two-cent increase in the gasoline tax, a two and a half cent tax on a bottle of beer, a doubling of the sales tax to two cents, and an increase of three cents a package in cigarette taxes. The Governor pushed all of these bills through the legislature plus doubling the gas gathering tax. The severance tax on oil was increased more than two fold and the severance tax on all other natural resources except sulfur were doubled. As a coup de grâce he taxed slot machines which were already illegal in the state.

Long, always the showman, turned up on the last day of the legislative session with mail bags containing 75,000 old age pension checks. This fulfilled one of his major campaign promises to have the new increased pension bill passed and the increased checks distributed within his

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22Earl stated he had $1 people and $50,000 people and jobs to match them up. Baton Rouge Advocate, February 27, 1948.

23A clause in the Constitution prohibits any increase of this tax.

24For a fuller explanation of the tax program see the Baton Rouge Advocate issues of May 9, 28, June 9, 25, and 29, 1948.
first sixty days in office. He shaved three days off his limit by having it completed in fifty-seven.\textsuperscript{25} For good measure Long promised the legislators that the new programs would be free of "graft, shake-downs, or rakeoffs."\textsuperscript{26} He complimented them for being "the best behaved, best conducted legislature I've ever known of. I have seen less drunkenness, less rowdyism and more seriousness in the way you have conducted your work."\textsuperscript{27} The scene was like a father talking to his children. They had all been good--they had given Earl everything he asked for. As long as they behaved like children everything was fine but when his parental authority was questioned, as it was in 1959, Earl adopted the tactics of a hurt, angry parent. Besides increasing the pensions the legislators gave Earl laws which enlarged the free dental trailer service and the hot lunch program,\textsuperscript{28} raised teachers' salaries and placed Negro teachers on the same pay scale with white ones and established five new trade schools.\textsuperscript{29} This is only a portion of the vast amount

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., July 1, 1948.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., July 9, 1948.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{28}Long later made these comments on the program: "I think it was one of the finest things that happened to the state and I'm not the originator . . . that's the PTA that started it and then the Superintendent and I took it up and it was more or less dormant while Governor Jones was governor . . . . It progressed some when Governor Davis got in . . . he subscribed to it some and then I got back in in 1948 we made it a going concern . . . ." Brooks Read, former news director of WBRZ-TV, Baton Rouge, tapes of interviews with Governor Long in 1959. Undated.

of legislation that Long secured but it is enough to demonstrate that Earl delivered on his promises.  

Governor Long personally piloted his legislative program. On the opening day of the legislative session, Long sat at the vacant desk of Senator "Willie" Rainach and led the applause as his nominees for legislative positions were unanimously confirmed.  

Two weeks after the legislature convened, Long appeared before an executive caucus of House members to discuss his impending tax program. Other caucuses were held during the session at which the Governor appeared to plead his case for highway legislation and the general appropriations bill. Long also testified at committee hearings in an effort to secure approval of his program. The Governor "was acting as a one man whip to maintain the organization and discipline necessary to secure passage of his bills, a function which might otherwise have been performed by the discipline of a political party." The Governor through these efforts solidified his title as "chief legislator."

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30"Earl was always a square shooter," according to a former high official of LSU. "He always did everything he said he was going to do. Earl was the easiest governor I ever worked with and I served under all of them from Huey through Earl," Interview, January 12, 1966.


33Ibid.

Welfare Measures

Long's 1948 legislative program was ambitious and many sided. One of his principal areas of concern was a greatly increased welfare program. Five House bills made up Long's program. Besides raising the old age pension to fifty dollars per month, Long proposed extending the foster care program and the dedication of a portion of the sales tax revenues to the old age pension fund. The five measures passed unanimously in the Senate. Minimal dissent arose on the dedication issue in the House but the remainder of the package passed unanimously. (See Table XXXII.) The 1948 legislation dramatically increased the percentage of the budget dedicated to welfare issues. In the 1946-1948 budget 26.5% of the state's revenues were allotted to hospitals and welfare. The 1948-1950 budget allocated 34.4% of the total state revenue to welfare.35

TABLE XXXII

Governor Long's Welfare Legislation--1948

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing assistance grants</td>
<td>97-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriations: $750,000</td>
<td>90-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster care program</td>
<td>96-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication of sales tax</td>
<td>88-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriation: $25,000,000</td>
<td>90-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lois Nichols, "Legislative-Executive Relationships in the 1948 Session of the Louisiana Legislature."

35Ibid.
Education Measures

Nine education bills were pushed by Governor Long. In the House, no opposition appeared on any of them. One dissenting vote on a teacher retirement bill marred Long's perfect record in the Senate (see Table XXXIII). The legislature overwhelmingly supported the Governor in his educational program. The raise in educational expenditures from $76,627,431 in the 1946-1948 budget to $161,907,639 in the 1948-1950 budget illustrated Long's seriousness concerning his campaign promises and the legislature's reluctance to oppose the newly elected governor.

TABLE XXXIII
Governor Long's Education Legislation--1948

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriation for free lunch</td>
<td>90-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement pay of certain teachers</td>
<td>86-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum wage scale for teachers</td>
<td>92-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships to children of veterans</td>
<td>91-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriation for vocational education</td>
<td>88-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriation for school community units</td>
<td>92-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement for certain school employees</td>
<td>83-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher retirement</td>
<td>86-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lois Nichols, "Legislative-Executive Relationships in the 1948 Session of the Louisiana Legislature."

36 Ibid., p. 70.
Governmental Reorganization

The Governor also quickly pushed through a package of reorganization bills which had the effect of decentralizing state government. Central agencies were abolished and separate boards created to direct various state institutions. The effect of decentralizing state government and the establishment of numerous new boards was to create a pool of additional patronage for the Governor to distribute through pro-administration legislators.

Institutions, highways and finance were the chief areas reorganized. The legislation passed easily. A number of measures, especially those abolishing the Board of Institutions and establishing numerous new boards in its place, received neither opposition nor discussion.  

Long's Success

Long knew practically no opposition during the session—even though it was the most revolutionary session in years. There was no organized opposition. The eight principal tax measures of Long's program drew the most vocal debate but twelve dissenting votes were the most the opposition could muster. The fact is that "explanation of a bill's being recommended by the governor was sufficient to secure its passage with minimum debate in either the committee considering the

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37 Baton Rouge Advocate, June 9, 12, 20, 1948.

38 Nichols, op. cit., p. 87.
bill or on the floors of the houses." The secret of Long's success was his adept use of the many prerogatives available to him as governor.

The remainder of Long's term was moderate, giving the state time to absorb the enormous changes that had taken place during the 1948 session.

The Last Administration

From the beginning of the 1956-1960 administration Earl was very outspoken. At the first session of the legislature he gave ample evidence of this trait. Long was always outspoken but during the last four years his penchant for candor reached almost unknown heights in political circles. He became convinced that people were persecuting him. Long became even more forceful in his efforts to have his administration be a one-man show. He broke with friends and political allies at times over minor matters only to make up with them again and then repeat the process. Political aides of Long relate that he purposefully picked fights with his friends and stirred dissension among his political and legislative allies to keep them off base and himself firmly in control of them.

39Ibid., p. 108.

40 See Chapter IV.

41 Interview with a legislator who was also a Long aide, August 9, 1966.
Earl and His Feuds

The 1956 session was dominated by Earl's personal feuds with Secretary of State Wade Martin, Jr. and the undisputed political leader of Plaquemines Parish, Leander Perez.

Martin and his father were long-time friends and political supporters of the brothers. Wade Martin, Sr. had been a strong south Louisiana supporter since the twenties. During Earl's administrations the senior Martin was a Public Service Commissioner and the younger, Secretary of State. Yet for unknown reasons the Martins did not support Earl's candidate in 1952, nor Earl himself in 1956. 42

He split with the Martins, according to Earl, because the Secretary of State sat out the 1952 election. 43 The Martin family was a long-time ally of the Longs but that did not deter Earl from putting two candidates into the race against the elder Martin in his bid for re-election. This forced Martin who was not able to undergo the rigors of a hard campaign, because of his age and bad health, to withdraw. 44

In addition Long backed legislation intended to strip Martin, Jr. of his duties as insurance commissioner and as custodian of voting machines.

42One Long aide commented: "The Martins probably thought they were strong enough. They could stand on their own. Felt they didn't need Earl any longer." Interview, May 11, 1966.

43Long said Martin "took a run-out powder" in the 1952 campaign after promising to support Long's candidate Judge Spaht. "While it might not have changed ten votes," Earl said, "he sold him out just the same." Baton Rouge Advocate, May 6, 1959.

44Ibid., June 24, 1956.
The legislative committee hearings on these bills were rampaging affairs with Long and Martin, Jr. shouting insults at each other, and at one point wrestling over the microphone, almost coming to blows. \(^45\)

Long obtained legislative approval to remove the insurance commissioner's duties from the Secretary of State in 1956, and in 1958 to remove the voting machine custody from Martin, Jr. \(^46\) Long was apparently fascinated by the burgeoning power that was slowly developing in the secretary of state's domain. "Earl knew both would develop into full time positions," and "it would have become too much--secretary of state, archives, insurance, elections, and voting machines." \(^47\) Long was always wary of his friends' political power be it his aides \(^48\) or

\(^{45}\) Ibid.

\(^{46}\) A veteran legislator who was an ally of both Long and Martin described how he decided on his course of action: "Wade and I were good friends and had always supported each other for office. Wade was secretary of state and had a falling out with Earl. Earl was going to take insurance and voting machines away from Wade to curb his power. One day before the legislative session opened Wade and I were talking and he asked me to help him keep Earl from getting the voting machines. I told him Earl was going to get those machines no matter what I did. He said oh no that Earl wasn't going to be able to do it. I told him to be realistic, Earl was going to do it. Wade then asked me to do everything I could to prevent Earl from getting them. I told him again Earl was going to get them. Nothing I could do would prevent it. I wanted to be . . . and if I helped Wade I would get not the . . . but Earl would get his machines and Wade would still have his job as secretary of state. Wade was furious but I told him I couldn't prevent it and I wanted the . . . . It was between him and Earl and if I had to make a choice I would certainly go along with Earl." Interview, February 25, 1965.

\(^{47}\) Interview, May 11, 1966, with a Long aide involved in this activity.

\(^{48}\) A Capitol reporter commented: "Earl always broke with his politically competent and politically ambitious supporters--look at Camile Gravel, John McKeithen and Theo Cangelosi." Interview, December 1, 1965. Another case that he did not mention was the case of William "Bill" Dodd. Dodd harbored gubernatorial ambitions in 1951 and again in 1959. On both occasions Long broke with Dodd attacking him on numerous fronts.
his legislative supporters and acted openly at times to curb his "enemies" base of power. Earl did not like rivals for the throne and acted within his capabilities to prevent rivals from securing islands of power.

Leander Perez was an early Huey Long supporter and was a defense attorney for Huey in his impeachment trial. Perez's relations with Earl were not as harmonious as they had been with Huey. Perez ostensibly broke with Earl over his apathy toward the Dixiecrat movement in 1948. In 1952, Perez supported the Register of the State Land Office, Lucille May Grace, for governor against Judge Carlos Spaht, the Long-backed candidate. The feud accelerated in the 1956 campaign. Early in the campaign Earl encountered Perez walking down Canal Street in New Orleans. They shook hands and Perez asked Earl what he could do for him in the campaign. Long replied "Come out as soon as possible against me." Perez did and the feud intensified. Long believed Perez to be a "thief." He felt the Judge exercised his power in behalf of the oil and sulfur industries, instead of in favor of Long's social reform measures. Long believed that Perez was intemperate in his lust for

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49 Two prominent legislative supporters of Long desired to be governor. Long played both of them to the hilt getting his needed support from them. However, neither received Long's endorsement in the governor's race. Note based on interviews with Long aides on May 28, 1966 and August 9, 1966.

50 Sindler, op. cit., p. 230.

51 Interview, May 11, 1966, with Long aide present at meeting.

power, and wanted to become "dictator and custodian of all human rights, races, and creeds." Earl detested Perez's negrophobia and his opposition to the National Democratic Party to which Earl always remained loyal. Long could not stand Perez being the boss of two parishes. Perez had his own island of power and Earl was incapable of countering him.

The Two-Thirds Rule

Two major legislative barriers faced Earl in his last administration: legislative unwillingness to grant the necessary two-thirds majority to pass new tax measures and legislative intent to go on a rampage against the Negro.

During the Robert Kennon administration (1952-1956) the legislature initiated and the people adopted a constitutional amendment limiting any further tax increases unless approved by the vote of two-thirds of the membership of the legislature. Consequently, fourteen senators or thirty-four representatives could defeat any proposed tax legislation.

Besides the high majority needed to enact tax legislation, Long faced two other major problems within the area of tax policy. During the campaign Earl had pledged no further tax increases if he was elected.

54Ibid.
55Interview, May 11, 1966, with a former Long aide.
governor, a pledge he attempted to break upon entering office. Long enjoyed a legislative majority in both houses but nothing like the overwhelming majority he possessed in 1948. In the senate Long had better than a two-thirds majority. However, in the House an opposition quickly formed known as the "34 Club" because this was the number of votes the opposition was usually able to muster to kill Long's tax proposals.

Earl's Dilemma

Earl faced a much more difficult task in 1956 than he did in 1948. He was older and not in good health. The huge tax program which affected the people directly in 1948 left them less ready to accept any new taxes in 1956. In addition the taxes Long proposed in 1956 directly struck at wealthy, well-organized pressure groups not at the public, probably the most under-represented group in the legislature. In his final administration Long also had to contend with Mayor Morrison of New Orleans, a popular figure who wanted to be governor and who was striving to build a coalition of anti-Longs around him. Added to the Morrison opposition were the rabid segregationists who were growing disenchanted with the moderate racial policies of Earl.

The combination of the two-thirds' tax amendment, the people's sensitivity to increased taxes, the influence of well-financed special

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56 Baton Rouge Advocate, June 8, 1956.

57 On opening day Long forces defeated a resolution 29 to 7 putting the senate on record as opposing any tax increases.
interest groups, a popular anti-Long leader and the rising specter of negrophobia coalesced into an alliance that an aging governor in failing health could not overcome.

Long's health became an increasingly more important aspect of his failures as the administration progressed. Long grew distrustful of his family, friends and political associates. He drove himself harder and longer, wanting to do everything personally. Long needed more rest and relaxation; instead, he gave himself less. A legislator who was close to Earl reported the Governor called him twice a week at 12:15 in the morning all during the last term. Another Long supporter stated Earl used to awaken him at 5:15 in the morning with his calls. This killing pace took its toll on Earl.

Earl's growing fanaticism to do everything himself reduced his legislative lieutenants, always a misnomer, to nothing more than errand boys. One prominent legislator began to spend the night at the Mansion so he could start placing Earl's calls early in the morning. Another well known pro-Long legislator was sent on trips around the country to pick up campaign contributions. Under ideal conditions Earl's last term would not have been easy, but as it was the groundwork for disaster had been laid.

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58 Interview, August 9, 1966.
60 Interview, June 25, 1966.
61 Interview, August 9, 1966.
Taxes and Defeat

The Governor's tax programs struck at the heart of most of the state's major pressure groups. Tax proposals included a forty cent per gallon increase in the liquor tax; tripling the sulfur severance tax; raising by five per cent the pari-mutuel betting tax at racetracks and a twenty per cent tax on gate receipts; tripling the tax on natural gas; and doubling the severance tax on timber.

With the session at the half-way point the only tax measure passed by the House was a ten cents a gallon increase in the liquor tax. The Governor took personal charge of his tax program but to no avail. The natural gas tax failed by three votes; and the sulfur tax by nine votes. The racetrack tax also went down to defeat. Even as defeat came upon defeat Long "proowed the House chamber and interrupted speeches in the bitterest most riotous session since the days of Huey P. Long." Earl at one pointed shouted "I had 69 votes. They didn't vote." In direct violation of the rules, the House voted on the racetrack bill again simply because Long demanded it. However, the Governor lost again. Long's timber tax was also defeated. The Governor's entire tax program was torn to shreds by the small House minority.

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62 Baton Rouge Advocate, June 8, 1956.
63 Ibid., June 24, 1956.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., May 22, 1959.
Lobbying was intense on all the tax measures. One pro-Long legislator stated "you can take a $100,000 and block any measure in the Legislature. The sulfur company has spent enough money to kill the tax to pay it for the first year." The representative added "I've seen enough money flashed in the last few days to buy half the Heidelberg Hotel."\(^66\)

The Governor also frantically lobbied for his numerous controversial measures but he was only one man attempting to overcome the efforts of dozens of others. Another obstacle to Long's success was his inability to deliver rewards to a sufficient number of legislators on each of the many controversial bills.

Besides the many tax bills and the requests for increased expenditures, the repeal of the state's right to work law was also undertaken. Discussing the 1956 session one Long aide commented "right to work killed us. We fulfilled our pledge to get it repealed but it wrecked the rest of our program."\(^68\) The AFL-CIO gave support to Long in his 1956 campaign and Long promised the repeal of the controversial law, which had been enacted under the Robert Kennon administration, 1952-1956. It was a difficult task with pressure and money flowing freely. Because of his commitment the Governor was forced to expend much of the resources available to him to secure repeal of the law. Every device was used by the

\(^66\)Ibid., June 26, 1956.

\(^67\)Ibid.

\(^68\)Interview, April 15, 1966.
opposing forces in the fierce debate over the fate of this bill. One Long supporter reported a pro-right to work advocate had offered a $25,000 campaign contribution to a senator in return for his vote against repeal. Long upon learning of the offer made a counter proposition. The Governor offered the senator's brother a lucrative commission appointment carrying with it a stipend of $7500 per year plus expenses. Long called the supporter and demanded that he contact the offerer of the $25,000 contribution and get him not to make any further offers. The two men were relatives and an agreement was reached between them whereby no additional offers were undertaken. The senator voted for repeal with his brother accepting the appointment. Unfortunately for Earl the demand upon him for favors exceeded his supply resulting in many controversial portions of his tax program being blocked by a minority of the House.

The Politics of Race

The second severe and crippling aspect of Long's last administration was the race issue. The Longs had always received the Negro vote. In the middle and late fifties it was finally becoming a significant portion of the electorate. The Longs had built their political structure on economic grounds and the Negro as well as the whites benefited

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69 Interview, May 28, 1966.
70 Ibid.
71 See Chapter II.
from it. A marked lack of Negro baiting distinguished the Long dynasty from most southern political organizations. Long planned to keep his political life free of attacks on Negroes as he desired to retain the Negro vote in his planned bid for re-election in 1960.

The segregationist forces were led by Senator "Willie" Rainach of Summerfield, the President of the Louisiana Association of Citizens Councils.\(^72\) In the 1956 session Rainach and his cohorts introduced a number of segregation measures, including an interposition bill which passed unanimously.\(^73\) Other bills receiving no opposition were proposals ensuring segregation of all the state's recreational facilities; requiring high school graduates to present a letter of "good moral character" for entrance into state colleges and universities; and suspension of the compulsory school attendance law.\(^74\)

Long's chief senate supporters introduced and then withdrew a bill which abolished the required literacy test for voter registration and required a court order to remove a challenged voter from the voting rolls.\(^75\) Long did not choose to make a fight on the measure on which he most certainly would have lost.

Two years later in 1958 the legislature overwhelmingly adopted several more segregation measures. Two bills were aimed at increasing

\(^72\)Baton Rouge Advocate, May 15, 1956.

\(^73\)Ibid., May 29, 1956.

\(^74\)Ibid., June 5, 1956.

\(^75\)Ibid., June 1, 1956.
street car and bus segregation by allowing the first person to occupy a double seat to decide who shall sit next to him.\textsuperscript{76}

The legislature also undertook an investigation of Louisiana State University to determine if professors at the university were advocating integration. Nothing came of the investigation except a statement by the committee counsel: "I don't purport to be objective. We do try to be truthful."\textsuperscript{77} This type of thinking was indicative of the problem that Long faced throughout the remainder of his administration.

The Governor stayed on the sidelines during the 1958 session refusing to support or actively oppose most of the segregation measures. However, an exception was a voting registrar's bill tightening registration procedures by "branding as malfeasance the intentional lack of strict enforcement of voter registration laws."\textsuperscript{78} The bill passed the House receiving only the minimum needed, 51 votes. In the Senate, the state registrars' association, fighting any encroachment upon their prerogatives, opposed it in committee and Long's floor leader, "Sixty" Rayburn stood ready to oppose it because of the poor white and Negro allegiance to Earl.\textsuperscript{79} The bill was killed in committee.

The 1958 legislative session saw a growing tendency towards emotional chaos on the part of the segregationists. Accounts of

\textsuperscript{76}Ibid., June 30, 1958.
\textsuperscript{77}Ibid., July 3, 1958.
\textsuperscript{78}Ibid., June 16, 1958.
\textsuperscript{79}Ibid., July 2, 1958.
Earl's last days always concentrate on his harangues while neglecting to mention the daily frenzied tirades of any number of segregation spokes-
men. This policy was having results for the segregationists--they were gaining in power. By 1958 Rainach had become a threat to Long.  

Rainach teamed up with Perez who had already broken with Long over racial and economic matters. The open break between Long and Rainach came in a heated exchange before the appropriations committee of the House. Rainach desired an additional sum for his segregation committee. Long replied to his request by saying: "A lot of people are following you not because they agree with you but because they are scared not to." Rainach did not obtain the additional money.  

The feud became more intense in the 1959 session when Earl had bills introduced to revise the voter registration laws prohibiting rejection of a voter for making simple errors on his application--thus ending the practice of eliminating voters who wrote "Negro" instead of "colored" on the form under "color." Long frankly said of his proposals: "I want all the colored votes I can get." The Governor also opposed larger appropriations for the "Segregation Committee" which drew the anger of Rainach: "The Governor can spend state money for a

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80 Ibid., August 1, 1958.
82 Baton Rouge Advocate, August 1, 1958.
83 Ibid., May 16, 1959.
84 Ibid.
$10,000 Cadillac for him to ride around the state in, but he doesn't want to spend a red cent for segregation."  

Earl Long was in the political fight of his life and he knew it. Early in the 1959 session he went before the legislature and addressed them for an hour and twenty minutes. Frequently he deviated from the text as he had done in earlier years, especially in 1956. One journalist wrote: "He drifted from the text, which he does poorly, to extemporaneous digs at his opponents and the Times-Picayune in particular, which he does well." The writer continued: "Last night's Earl Long was Earl Long the campaigner--willing to call a spade a spade, but wise enough to play trump cards only when necessary. There was little in the side remarks that he hadn't said before at one time and place or another but he had a receptive audience and he made the most of it." 

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85 Ibid., May 23, 1959.

86 Ibid., May 13, 1959.

87 The Picayune and Earl were perpetual enemies with the exception of a short period following his election in 1956 but preceding his inauguration. The reason was that Earl was having trouble getting the race results. He took to calling the Picayune sports desk which refused to divulge them, resulting in Long calling the City Desk for them. Earl and the Editors would joke around, Earl would give them a story and they would sneak him the race results. Interview, January 12, 1966 with a veteran Capitol correspondent.

Long also had another connection with the paper. His will revealed that he owned a 100 shares of their stock valued at $12,500 at his death.


89 Ibid.
Long attempted in the 1959 Fiscal session to have two bills affecting voter registration introduced in the senate, which required a three-fourths vote of the membership. The senate rejected Long's move 19 to 13.\(^{90}\) The Governor then turned to the House. After a series of legislative defeats involving the registrar bills, Long managed to have a bill relating to deputy registrar's returned from the floor to Judiciary B committee which was dominated by pro-Long legislators.\(^{91}\) This gave Long an opportunity to have committee amendments added to the bill. The Governor asked one of the bill's authors, a close friend, to move the adoption of Long's amendments but he refused, claiming it would be political suicide.\(^{92}\)

The Governor appeared before the committee himself and pleaded that the committee adopt as amendments to the deputy registrar's bill the two senate bills which the senate refused to allow introduced.\(^{93}\) The bills were not revolutionary. The proposed legislation simply made it difficult for registrars to strip registered voters from the rolls on a number of minor pretenses. However, the committee rejected them secretly and unanimously.\(^{94}\) Senator Rainach termed the action "a victory for the white people of Louisiana."\(^{95}\)

\(^{90}\)Baton Rouge Advocate, May 21, 1959.  
\(^{91}\)Ibid., May 25, 1959.  
\(^{92}\)Interview, August 9, 1966.  
\(^{93}\)Baton Rouge Advocate, May 25, 1959.  
\(^{94}\)Ibid., May 27, 1959.  
\(^{95}\)Ibid.
Long's appearance before the committee in behalf of the amendments was explosive with the governor even uttering profanity. Long stated he was against people who sleep with Negroes at night and kick them in the street in the daytime. The Governor also castigated people who keep two families, one Negro and one white. After his appearance, a haggard and defeated Long returned to his office. His supporters drifted from him as if he had the plague.

The next day Long addressed a joint session of the legislature. His appearance was billed as an apology speech for his cursing before the committee the previous day. However, in his speech the Governor even more vigorously lashed out against the segregation leaders, indulging in shouting contests with opponents. Looking at one legislator, Long bellowed "Why there ain't a bigger hypocrite ever lived than you." Another he called a "crank." After an hour of searing the nerves of numerous lawmakers, driving some to fits of madness and reducing one to tears, Earl abruptly quit and returned to his office. The next day action was taken by Long's family to remove the Governor to Galveston.

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96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid., May 28, 1959.
99 Ibid.
100 See Chapter IV.
Conclusion

This was the lowest point the dynasty had reached in its forty-year history. Earl had controlled on most occasions a majority of the legislature until 1959 although not the two-thirds majority necessary to enact tax legislation. In this session Long was destroyed in his attempt to preach sanity in an atmosphere of chaos. Earl was confident that he alone could rule Louisiana and its legislature. As it became more evident that he could not, Long became more convinced he could succeed. Earl certainly was no dictator. Instead Long believed he could play one legislator off against another and offer inducements to them to secure approval of his program. At this juncture in Louisiana politics the legislators desired nothing from Earl. His great bargaining abilities came to nil for there was nothing to bargain. The one unbar- gainable element in southern politics had surfaced—hatred of the Negro.

In his administration Long faced two obstacles that he could not overcome: minority rule, and, as one Long aide phrased it, "the people went nuts." 101

The rules of the game had been altered by the anti-Longs so that the majority could no longer raise taxes but a minority could play havoc with the wishes of the majority. The anti-Long forces realized this tactic could be pursued in one other area: race relations. It was a small coterie of individuals that promoted the race issue; however, in the process they made impotent the majority who

101 Interview, May 11, 1966.
acquiesced rather than be branded "nigger lover." Long realized the pitfalls of direct action against the segregationists but the alternative of total defeat was untenable to him.

The opponents of reform prior to the dawn of Longism had steadfastly defeated all protest movements by raising the specter of race. Huey was successful in evading the curse and succeeding in his aims. Times prevented Earl from evading it or successfully combatting it. Ten years earlier, as we witnessed, it was no problem to Earl. The Negroes were allowed to register and the economic benefits of Longism served Negroes as well as whites. Possibly ten years later Long could have worked out an accommodation. However, it was his luck to be in the middle; he did not shirk from his duty but met inevitable disaster head on. He was a loner in his time. No other southern political figure stood by him and the national administration persecuted him. He was alone and the nation paid him dubious respect by branding him a clown.
CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSIONS

Longism was more than a collection of unusual personalities. Foremost it was a socio-economic revolution, the first successful such revolution in Louisiana. Prior to Huey, Louisiana was a closed society open only to the planter-merchant alliance that quietly and effectively ruled Louisiana in its own behalf. The State lay prostrate; the poor whites disenchanted; the Negro powerless; the middle class dozing. A mixture of pathos and opportunity existed. In the second decade of the twentieth century out of rebellious Winn parish came Huey Long who unified these wanting masses in their quest for recognition. Long, unlike previous southern mass leaders, not only brought hope but also goods to the oppressed and cynical. His methods were as brutal as the societal conditions he encountered. Enemies not only harped on his excesses but vilified his accomplishments. The Long movement was a revolution and the Longs and their opposition exercised every instrument at their commands to succeed in their aims.

Huey was berated as being uncompromising and dictatorial yet his opponents impeached him because his tax proposals did not sit well with an uncompromising oil industry. Huey was derided by his enemies because they said his drive for power was dangerous. However, before Huey governors had thought it beneath them to go on the stump and ask
the common man for his support; and it was from the common man that Huey derived his power.

The Kingfish not only went on the stump but developed and utilized numerous instruments to ensure that the masses heard of his program. Circulars, billboards, radio addresses, sound trucks, and his own newspaper preached the gospel to every hamlet in the state. The opposition called Long's actions "catering to the mob" but if it was a "mob," it was one gathered to exercise its suffrage, not pillage those that persecuted.

Above all Huey was a success. This in his opponents' eyes was his greatest crime. He succeeded where countless others failed. He coalesced the "mob" into a viable political entity capable of putting candidates into office pledged to effectuate certain programs. No matter what color pajamas Huey wore or how insulting his tirades, the populace witnessed the material effects of Longism and at long last possessed the feeling of belonging.

Not only did Huey's program bring the masses economic benefits but Long also made them feel recognized. He came to see them; spoke to and with them; asked them for their support and votes. Hope replaced despair as the center of their lives. They looked to Huey because he looked to them. No one else had ever cared before--now they had an idol.

After Huey's death the Kingfish's younger brother, Earl, moved to inherit the mantle of the martyred Huey. The fulfillment of Earl's
desire came slowly. Eventually Earl became an institution himself. His political astuteness and sagacity outdid even the Kingfish.

Earl's escapades were as tumultuous as had been his brother's forays against the icons of the Establishment. Earl continued the revolution Huey led but pursued a different style. Both were superb politicians who appreciated power and understood its uses. Huey's arrogance, however, dominated his dealings with politicians and legislators. Huey was the Kingfish. His cause was justified and his methods necessary, he believed. Earl was less dogmatic, more moderate, and a first class showman who understood the nuances of individual personalities and dealt with people by making them think they were dealing with him. As a result Earl was beloved where Huey was respected. Earl was desired where Huey was appreciated.

The Longs were experts in the use of the manipulative tools available to them. The formal powers of the governor were fully exercised by both brothers. They used the special session and the veto power to help attain their wants. The Longs averaged more than one special session per year during their terms as governor. The Longs realized the importance of being able to detail the special session call and the trading possibilities available to gain support for specific issues. At times both Longs overestimated their success with the legislature and made serious errors in calling special sessions. Huey was impeached by one such session and Earl was snubbed by two of them.

Vetoes were viewed as personal weapons by the Longs. Huey vetoed bills pertaining to the funds of an attorney general who opposed him.
Earl consistently slighted legislators who opposed him.

In addition to the formal powers available, both brothers refined and utilized informal methods of influence. A compendium of tools was available. Patronage, both state and local, was at their disposal. The levee boards were excellent sources of persuasive influence. Levees were constructed and had to be maintained. The opportunities for contracts to build them and the employees and staff necessary to maintain them were lucrative inducements to wavering legislators and their supporters. The public works and highway construction projects of the Longs, especially Huey, not only were affluent sources of patronage and contracts but also offered the variable of location. Where would the road be situated? This was a valuable consideration for everyone from landowner to shop owner. The grab bag of patronage and influence ranging from roads to oil leases yielded vast benefits to the Longs in their efforts to secure approval of their programs. Patronage was a necessary base for the Longs. Louisiana is a one party state with no clearly delineated political philosophy dividing the populace. The legislator and/or his constituents were given roads or pensions in return for their support of Longism. The Longs dealt individually with lawmakers and obtained their backing in return for a portion of the benefits. The private trading between a strong executive and a weak legislature substituted for the traditional party lines found in a strong two-party system.

The Longs pursued all of the various prerogatives available to them. Their efforts were intensely personal. The Longs were their
own legislative lieutenants with those legislators who bore the titles of leadership actually being but vassals of the Longs. Part of the Longs' appeal to legislators lie in their personalities, particularly in Earl's case. Many a legislator has said: "I liked Earl," "I voted with Earl when he asked me," or "If he needed me I would go with him if I could. I liked him."

The substance of the Longs' message appealed to other legislators causing them to line up solidly in support of Longism. A third group supported the Longs because of the material benefits they or their friends received. Undoubtedly there were pure types in each group but many legislators supported Longism because of a mixture of the three ingredients.

The Longs were one-man shows with no stand-ins or substitutes in the wings. Aides were not built up or successors groomed. Power flowed to and from them as individuals who headed organizations and not as organization heads.

The Longs' administrations were not dictatorial or fascist or any particular ism. They simply overwhelmed the alliance that had ruled Louisiana for generations. Upon assuming power the Longs also took over the instruments of persuasion available to a constitutionally strong governor in a one-party state. Added to the formal and informal powers of the governorship the Longs possessed a broad popular base with an unusually strong allegiance to them. The combination was awesome and devastating to the opposition. In many ways the Longs' will was done. But both brothers knew bitter defeat. Of all twentieth
century Louisiana governors only one was impeached and only one committed to a mental asylum. Indeed few governors of any state have suffered such ignominious defeats. The Longs suffered both and not only survived but won smashing electoral victories afterwards.

In summation, the Longs were crass but intelligent; compassionate in their ends but ruthless in their means. Both exasperated the genteel but brought hope to the uneducated. Both were viewed as dictators but were two of the greatest southern liberals of their era. Both were seen as rabble rousers, yet one gave the poor whites meaning in Louisiana society and the other added Negroes to the human race in the Pelican state. Both were viewed as political opportunists, yet their policies were as traditional as democracy and Christianity. Both were viewed as destroyers of the democratic process, yet both gave large segments of the populace their first taste of democracy.
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