

10-1-1972

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Recommended Citation

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*THE PURGE THAT FAILED:
THE 1934 SENATORIAL ELECTION IN NEW MEXICO:
YET ANOTHER VIEW*

G. L. SELIGMANN, JR.

I traveled 82 miles on election day in my car, transporting Democrats to and from the polls.¹

Ruth Hanna McCormick Simms

THE SENATORIAL election of 1934 represented the culmination of Bronson M. Cutting's political career.² The fruits of the past—both bitter and sweet—were harvested. His old disregard for party lines and party loyalties partially backfired. Both parties split, the old Guard Republicans formed "Tingley-Chavez Clubs" while the left wing of the Democratic party supported Cutting over Dennis Chavez, the apparent choice of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The majority of the New Mexico American Legion remained true to Cutting. He also retained the trust of the Catholic Mexican-American voters although his opponent, Dennis Chavez, had grown up in fairly humble surroundings and was himself a Hispano Catholic. It was this latter support that gave Cutting the victory. In short the election was not characterized by a normal grouping of factions and parties.

After the Republican defeat in 1932 political alignments would have to shift in order for the New Mexico GOP to regain a preeminent position. To accomplish this many Republicans hoped to bring Cutting back into the party fold. The task was made easier by the death of Arthur Seligman, the Democratic Governor to whom Cutting had given support. Had Seligman lived, the

task of wooing Cutting back into the Republican party might indeed have been difficult—Cutting probably could have retained the support of the Seligman faction.³ With the election of Congressman Dennis Chávez as Seligman's replacement on the Democratic National Committee the A. T. Hannett-Clyde Tingley-Dennis Chavez faction gained control of the Democratic Party. Although Chavez denied it, he appeared to be the only person in the Democratic party who could run Cutting a close race.⁴ Republican leaders such as B. C. Hernandez, Reed Holleman, and Albert Simms and his wife Ruth Hanna McCormick Simms began making overtures to Cutting during the fall of 1933. Hernandez went so far as to say Cutting had not bolted the Republican Convention in 1932 but, "we threw him out of our stacked convention."⁵ The only important opposition to reunion came from H. O. Bursum, Cutting's long-time antagonist who felt that "The party should base its action on principle, integrity, and self-respect, and not the doctrine of expediency."⁶

In the spring of 1934 Cutting indicated to the regular Republicans that he intended to support them. The Santa Fe *New Mexican*, which he owned, backed the entire Republican ticket in the April Santa Fe city elections.⁷ Cutting privately informed his supporters that he probably could not gain endorsement from the Democratic Administration unless he formally changed party allegiance.⁸ In April the New Mexico Legislature chose its leaders from the Tingley-Hannett-Chavez faction of the Democratic party. Moreover, some of the more important Cutting leaders, such as Maurice Meira, were not at all enthusiastic about fusion and indicated they would remain with the Republicans should Cutting switch allegiance.⁹ On May 16 the Republican Central Committee voted to explore the possibilities of reconciliation with the Cutting Progressives.¹⁰ But some Democrats still hoped to arrange a shift of party alignments. Early in July Clinton P. Anderson, then the State Treasurer of the Democratic Party, announced he had asked James Farley "to put the support of the Democratic organization behind the Progressive-Republican Senator."¹¹ It is unlikely Farley could have worked out such an ar-

rangement, even if he had wanted to. The New Mexico Democratic Central Committee had already banned from their agenda any discussions concerning a possible merger. Cutting wrote Otero:

It seems to me obvious that since the meeting of the Democratic State Central Committee last Monday, that there is absolutely no self-respecting way in which we can play ball with that organization. This at least clears air, even though the other alternatives may not be any too agreeable.

Under the circumstances I do not believe that Jim Farley can influence the situation in any way.¹²

When he arrived in New Mexico a few days later, Farley was noncommittal. According to the *New Mexican* his "hands-off policy was taken to mean that the Democrats would select an out and out Democratic ticket this fall and make no overture to Senator Cutting who gave the party his support in 1932."¹³ Cutting had to choose between returning to the Republican fold or running as a Progressive in a state with a strong two-party tradition.

Cutting chose to run as a Republican. The Republican state chairman, Ed Safford—under pressure from the county leaders—resigned on July 12. He was replaced by Peter Rapkoch, a long-time Cutting supporter.¹⁴ In addition to becoming the state chairman Rapkoch created two committees: one fixed the time, place and apportionment of the nominating convention: the other consisted of a committee of five to "purge the party of irreconcilables."¹⁵ Cutting also met with former Republican Governor Richard Dillon. They announced a tentative platform modeled after the Progressive platform of 1932, which included increased educational facilities, increased social services, legislative reapportionment, an eight-hour day, and other "liberal" innovations.¹⁶ Rapkoch's committee to purge the party did not have to search too far to find "irreconcilables" in the Republican ranks. On the same day the existence of the loyalty committee was made public, an announcement was made of a conference of such prominent Republicans as H. O. Bursum, Ed Safford, and others, and including

John Miles, the state Democratic Chairman, to discuss Cutting's Republican candidacy. At the end of the meeting Bursum released a statement to the press concluding "the conference expressed the opinion that there is no reason apparent why any Republican should cast his vote for Mr. Cutting. The conference definitely determined that there will be organized opposition to the re-election of Mr. Cutting."¹⁷ Cutting left New Mexico in the early part of August for a trip to Alaska, ostensibly to investigate the chances of opening the public lands there to homesteading, but most likely to prepare himself for the coming campaign.¹⁸

When Cutting returned to the state in early September, he had received the endorsement of a variety of national figures: Robert Scripps of the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, Senators LaFollette (Rep.), Shipstead (Rep.), and Nye (Rep.), and Edward Costigan of Colorado (Dem.), who later campaigned for Cutting in northern New Mexico.¹⁹ At a press conference upon his return, Cutting reiterated the proposals he and Dillon had arrived at and stated he would not run as a Republican unless a liberal platform was adopted by the state convention. He went on to remark that if the platform was sufficiently liberal, it would really make little difference who the nominees were.²⁰ Undoubtedly unhappy at the splintering process going on in the Republican party, he was pleased that factions of the Democratic party were breaking off to form Cutting clubs in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, Harding, and San Juan counties—northern counties which were mainly Republican.²¹

The Republican convention opened on September 24 with the keynoter condemning the Democratic party for its "vote right or starve" policies. He was followed by Cutting who chastised the state's Democratic administration for its advocacy of the sales tax.²² Cutting received the nomination for the long term in the Senate while Dillon got the nomination for the short term. Jaffa Miller, the superintendent of the Industrial or Reform School, received the gubernatorial nomination, Maurice Meira was the convention's choice for Congress and Jose Gonzales for Lieutenant Governor.²³

The Democrats held their convention two days later. After a brief factional struggle, they nominated Dennis Chavez to run against Cutting, and Carl Hatch against Dillon. Tingley received the nomination for Governor. John J. Dempsey was chosen to run for Congress.²⁴ Chavez at the time could have received any nomination he wished and was under some pressure to run for the short term in the Senate to avoid having to face Cutting. In deciding to make the race he was probably influenced by a desire to replace Cutting as the leader of the Hispanic voters in the state.²⁵

In looking over the tickets it is difficult to say which was favored at the outset. Chavez was probably the second most popular man in the state, and he had the advantage of being a Democrat. Both Hatch and Dillon were well known, but Dillon had been out of office several years while Hatch had been in the Senate a year. Early in the campaign it appeared Meira had a distinct advantage over Dempsey for he was a native-born, Spanish-speaking New Mexican. Dempsey, who was originally from New York, had moved west at a fairly late age. However, he had been serving as National Recovery Administration Director for the state of New Mexico and had become closely identified with the New Deal. In 1934 this was a great advantage. At the state level Miller was probably better known around the state than Clyde Tingley, whose sole political experience had been in the realm of Albuquerque and Bernalillo county activities, but Tingley had received an excellent grounding in professional politics.²⁶ No matter how well qualified the Republican candidates were, 1934 was a Democratic year in New Mexico, as in the rest of the nation, and the Democrats could probably have beaten any Republican for any office, with the single exception of Bronson M. Cutting. However, his presence on the Republican ticket put the Democrats in a difficult campaigning position. They could not run as pro- versus anti-New Dealers. Cutting was a New Dealer before most of the New Mexico politicians had realized that it existed.

Cutting's only opposition to the President was over veterans' policies. To attack Cutting for opposing these policies, however,

could only increase his popularity with the veterans and their supporters. The Democratic campaign tactic was to stress the need for Democrats in Washington since they could best cooperate with the national administration. Cutting, on the other hand, campaigned on his record, which he continually compared to Chavez's. Both parties disavowed mud-slinging—but engaged in it at will. According to one newspaper account Cutting was called "fat boy, damn nuisance, jackass, traitor, hands dripping with blood, damned Progressive, wild bull, adulterer, unmarried and rich, the Cutting Blight, Jesus Christ Cutting and a political butcher."²⁷ Cutting charged that Chavez had done nothing in the House except "sit in his seat and vote."²⁸ Cutting defended his record in the Senate where he had supported labor, voted against the Bankhead Cotton Bill, voted for the sulphur permit bill and supported legislation to ease the obstacles in the way of prospecting for oil and gas on government land. Naturally he stressed his support of the veterans and their interests.²⁹

The New Mexico campaign had national implications for the Progressive bloc. Senators Johnson, Shipstead, Costigan, Nye, LaFollette, and Norris endorsed him publicly. So did Fiorello La Guardia and Harold Ickes. Senators Steiwer and Costigan both spoke on his behalf in the state, where Steiwer accused Chavez of failing to support legislation to help ex-servicemen. Cutting received the endorsement of William Green, the President of the American Federation of Labor and by the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen as well as the active support of the Oil Association. The Farmers' Holiday Association instructed its members in New Mexico to work for his re-election.³⁰ Nor was he without friends with access to the White House. Both Senator Norris and Secretary Ickes voiced their disapproval of the Democratic Party's opposition to Cutting directly to the President. At first Norris, calling it "a case of awful ingratitude,"³¹ blamed the policy on Jim Farley. Later he blamed the President himself for the episode.³² Ickes told the President that "the opposition of the Administration to Senator Cutting in New Mexico, had created a bad feeling among the Progressives in the West. Senator Johnson was very

much worked up over this and I too am very unhappy over it."³³

Dennis Chavez also claimed champions from out of state. The principal attraction was a speaking tour of the state by Senator Joe Robinson, the Senate Majority Leader. Cutting challenged Robinson to a public debate on the general topic of support given to New Deal legislation but the challenge went unanswered.³⁴ The Cutting forces accused Chavez of padding the welfare rolls with his relatives and of using welfare funds for political purposes. The Democrats distributed a handbill quoting John Miles as saying "I have the proof that Bronson M. Cutting contributed to the Communist Party, both national and local, and he has not denied these charges."³⁵ The *Literary Digest* may not have been completely inaccurate when it referred to the election battle as a struggle between "Outlander Baronies."³⁶

The National Guard appeared in several counties on election day. The Governor, however, denied having ordered the troops out. He later admitted he had given the Adjutant General the authority to bring out the troops if they were needed.³⁷ The initial returns gave Cutting a margin of 1,284 votes but the remainder of the Republican ticket went down in defeat. Cutting carried a total of nineteen of the state's thirty-one counties. He lost only Rio Arriba and Socorro counties from that group of Hispanic counties which had been the backbone of the Republican Party since statehood. The victory came despite the fact that the leading Old Guard Republicans had withdrawn from the party and, in the words of one of the leaders, taken "the whole organization into the Democratic Camp. We wrecked the GOP organization, but we were willing to do it to beat Cutting. We nearly did it too but we were counted out."³⁸ Some kind of arrangement had obviously been made, for H. O. Bursum was later named to the Interstate Streams Commission and in some counties local Republicans were given places on the Democratic ticket.³⁹ Cutting was elected by his core of Mexican American supporters. (See Table I.)

Before the State Canvassing Board could meet to certify Cutting a victory, the Chavez forces contested the election by filing a motion to disregard the returns from sixty-seven precincts in San

Miguel County on the grounds that between fifteen and twenty per cent of those voting were not duly registered.⁴⁰ Following two separate investigations into the returns, which resulted in increasing Cutting's total by fourteen votes and the filing of a Republican countersuit by the defeated candidates, the Canvassing Board issued Cutting a certificate of election when it was ordered to by the State Supreme Court.⁴¹ The Chavez faction then shifted the fight to the United States Senate, charging excessive use of money in the campaign. This despite the fact that an investigator from the Senate had been in the state prior to the election and found nothing to justify a hearing.⁴²

As Table I shows, Cutting did not attain the same high percentage against Dennis Chavez as he had against the Anglo J. S. Vaught in 1928. But in those areas of the state most predominantly Hispanic, Chavez ran behind Cutting. Chavez also ran significantly behind his showing in the 1932 election when he ran against Jose D. Armijo. Chavez's ethnic and religious background apparently helped him in these areas but not enough to overcome their traditional Republican traditions, particularly when the Republican in question was such tried and true *amigo* as Senator Cutting, "El Viejo." In those precincts in San Miguel County which have been identified as being heavily Penitente and therefore the most tradition bound as well as the most isolated precincts, the same trend holds true.⁴³ Here Chavez had been beaten by Armijo in 1932 when ethnic origin and religion could not have possibly been an issue. In 1934 when the seeds of such conflict were present, Cutting improved on Armijo's vote by almost five percentage points. It was, of course, in this county that the bulk of Chavez's legal challenges lay but it remains a distinct possibility that Cutting was simply more popular in this part of the state and with this type of voter than was Chavez.

While Chavez's ethnic origin and religion might not have helped him in the heavily Hispano areas of the state, it appears to have harmed him on the east side of the state in the area known as "Little Texas." Here, when the voters had the choice between the two Hispano candidates in 1932, they had kept their traditional

TABLE I: ELECTION RETURNS FROM PREDOMINANTLY HISPANIC COUNTIES

| County | Vaught | | 1928 Cutting | | Chavez | | 1932 Armijo | | Chavez | | 1934 Cutting | |
|------------|--------|------|-----------------|------|--------|------|----------------|------|--------|------|-----------------|------|
| | Vote | % | Vote | % | Vote | % | Vote | % | Vote | % | Vote | % |
| Dona Ana | 2306 | 42.4 | 3132 | 57.6 | 4977 | 66.0 | 2560 | 34.0 | 3617 | 48.5 | 3834 | 51.5 |
| Guadalupe | 1131 | 39.7 | 1717 | 60.3 | 1899 | 54.0 | 1616 | 46.0 | 1643 | 45.3 | 1986 | 54.7 |
| Mora | 1661 | 44.5 | 2075 | 55.5 | 2873 | 65.3 | 1527 | 34.7 | 2330 | 51.3 | 2209 | 48.7 |
| Rio Arriba | 2204 | 33.2 | 4428 | 66.8 | 3032 | 37.1 | 5148 | 62.9 | 4449 | 52.4 | 4042 | 47.6 |
| San Miguel | 2932 | 33.6 | 5789 | 66.4 | 4610 | 44.4 | 5767 | 55.6 | 4006 | 36.9 | 6852 | 63.1 |
| Sandoval | 1045 | 35.9 | 1868 | 64.1 | 1837 | 54.4 | 1541 | 45.6 | 1768 | 45.9 | 2087 | 54.1 |
| Santa Fe | 2364 | 30.8 | 5299 | 69.2 | 5710 | 61.1 | 3636 | 38.9 | 4988 | 49.7 | 5040 | 50.3 |
| Socorro | 1362 | 38.5 | 2177 | 61.5 | 2539 | 57.3 | 1890 | 42.7 | 2479 | 54.8 | 2046 | 45.2 |
| Taos | 1572 | 36.3 | 2755 | 63.7 | 3138 | 51.3 | 2981 | 48.7 | 2774 | 46.2 | 3233 | 53.8 |
| Valencia | 956 | 21.5 | 3499 | 78.5 | 2344 | 42.7 | 3151 | 57.3 | 2142 | 39.9 | 3224 | 60.1 |
| TOTAL | 17536 | 34.9 | 32739 | 65.1 | 32959 | 52.5 | 29815 | 47.5 | 30196 | 46.6 | 34553 | 53.4 |

TABLE II: VOTING RETURNS 29 RURAL PENITENTE PRECINCTS IN SAN MIGUEL COUNTY

| Precinct | 1928 | | | | 1932 | | | | 1934 | | | |
|------------------|--------|------|---------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|---------|------|
| | Vaught | | Cutting | | Chavez | | Armijo | | Chavez | | Cutting | |
| | Vote | % | Vote | % | Vote | % | Vote | % | Vote | % | Vote | % |
| San Miguel | 36 | 31.0 | 80 | 69.0 | 38 | 34.5 | 72 | 65.5 | 49 | 44.1 | 62 | 55.9 |
| La Cuesta | 15 | 9.4 | 144 | 90.6 | 33 | 15.9 | 174 | 84.1 | 66 | 28.3 | 167 | 71.7 |
| Tecolote | 25 | 20.0 | 99 | 79.8 | 58 | 49.6 | 59 | 50.4 | 62 | 43.1 | 82 | 56.9 |
| San Antonio | 3 | 4.5 | 64 | 95.5 | 22 | 22.2 | 77 | 72.8 | 10 | 11.4 | 78 | 88.6 |
| Pecos | 141 | 35.5 | 256 | 64.5 | 256 | 46.7 | 292 | 53.3 | 201 | 37.4 | 336 | 62.6 |
| San Geronimo | 48 | 41.4 | 68 | 58.6 | 50 | 42.7 | 67 | 57.3 | 61 | 44.9 | 75 | 55.1 |
| Rociada | 22 | 40.0 | 33 | 60.0 | 29 | 30.9 | 65 | 69.1 | 40 | 44.4 | 50 | 55.6 |
| Sapello | 33 | 47.1 | 37 | 52.9 | 47 | 54.0 | 40 | 46.0 | 59 | 54.6 | 49 | 45.4 |
| Las Manuelitas | 24 | 32.4 | 50 | 67.6 | 32 | 32.3 | 67 | 67.7 | 39 | 37.9 | 64 | 62.1 |
| Casa Colorado | 6 | 7.2 | 77 | 92.8 | 12 | 26.7 | 33 | 73.3 | 0 | 0 | 120 | 100 |
| Sabinoso | 31 | 35.6 | 56 | 64.4 | 34 | 28.1 | 87 | 71.9 | 34 | 26.8 | 93 | 73.2 |
| Los Alamos | 13 | 28.3 | 33 | 71.7 | 38 | 57.6 | 28 | 42.4 | 28 | 48.3 | 30 | 51.7 |
| Canon Manuelitas | 22 | 33.8 | 43 | 66.2 | 30 | 32.6 | 62 | 67.4 | 39 | 43.3 | 51 | 56.7 |
| Puertecito | 48 | 48.0 | 52 | 52.0 | 34 | 27.5 | 90 | 72.5 | 57 | 44.5 | 71 | 55.5 |
| San Isidro | 54 | 48.2 | 58 | 51.8 | 48 | 72.7 | 18 | 27.3 | 48 | 63.2 | 28 | 36.8 |
| Las Gallinas | 0 | 6.7 | 83 | 93.3 | 50 | 45.5 | 60 | 54.5 | 43 | 36.1 | 76 | 63.9 |
| El Cerrito | 0 | 0 | 37 | 100 | 30 | 48.4 | 32 | 51.6 | 6 | 10.2 | 53 | 89.8 |
| Los Torres | 3 | 5.4 | 53 | 94.6 | 11 | 29.7 | 26 | 70.3 | 4 | 19.0 | 17 | 81.0 |
| Tecolotito | 6 | 10.5 | 51 | 89.5 | 50 | 62.5 | 30 | 37.5 | 41 | 47.7 | 45 | 52.3 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Bernal | 13 | 15.1 | 73 | 84.9 | 61 | 47.3 | 68 | 52.7 | 61 | 40.9 | 88 | 59.1 |
| Ojitos Frios | 14 | 16.5 | 71 | 83.5 | 34 | 39.6 | 52 | 60.4 | 19 | 20.7 | 73 | 79.3 |
| Cherryvale | 10 | 52.6 | 9 | 47.4 | 13 | 52.0 | 12 | 48.0 | 9 | 23.7 | 29 | 76.3 |
| Empazado | 22 | 30.1 | 51 | 69.9 | 21 | 29.2 | 51 | 70.8 | 39 | 54.2 | 33 | 45.8 |
| Trementina | 32 | 19.6 | 131 | 80.4 | 130 | 52.2 | 119 | 47.8 | 73 | 33.5 | 145 | 66.5 |
| Agua Zarca | 0 | 0 | 16 | 100 | 3 | 12.0 | 22 | 88.0 | 8 | 40.0 | 12 | 60.0 |
| San Ignacio | 20 | 24.1 | 63 | 75.9 | 15 | 17.9 | 69 | 82.1 | 20 | 20.8 | 76 | 79.2 |
| Las Colonias | 39 | 44.3 | 49 | 55.7 | 37 | 41.1 | 58 | 58.9 | 34 | 36.2 | 60 | 63.8 |
| Gonzales | 46 | 44.7 | 57 | 55.3 | 61 | 44.2 | 77 | 55.8 | 66 | 45.8 | 78 | 54.2 |
| Santa Ana | 6 | 16.7 | 30 | 83.3 | 23 | 48.9 | 24 | 51.1 | 4 | 10.5 | 34 | 89.5 |
| TOTAL | 738 | 27.7 | 1924 | 72.3 | 1300 | 40.6 | 1929 | 59.4 | 1220 | 35.9 | 2175 | 64.1 |

TABLE III: ELECTION RETURNS FROM "LITTLE TEXAS" COUNTIES

| County | 1928 | | 1932 | | | | 1934 | | | | | |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| | Vaught Vote | % | Cutting Vote | % | Chavez Vote | % | Armijo Vote | % | Chavez Vote | % | Cutting Vote | % |
| Chaves | 1798 | 39.7 | 2846 | 61.3 | 4402 | 73.6 | 1581 | 26.4 | 2866 | 52.3 | 2618 | 47.7 |
| Curry | 2303 | 61.8 | 1424 | 38.2 | 3661 | 82.7 | 768 | 17.3 | 3139 | 65.8 | 1632 | 34.2 |
| De Baca | 614 | 59 | 427 | 41 | 1025 | 80 | 256 | 20 | 605 | 47.9 | 652 | 52.1 |
| Eddy | 1577 | 55.1 | 1285 | 44.9 | 3593 | 83.4 | 715 | 16.6 | 2658 | 68.5 | 1223 | 31.5 |
| Lea | 780 | 71.8 | 306 | 28.2 | 2317 | 90.4 | 245 | 9.6 | 1652 | 70.4 | 694 | 29.6 |
| Roosevelt | 1654 | 70 | 710 | 30 | 2831 | 86.4 | 446 | 13.6 | 1919 | 66.4 | 971 | 33.6 |
| TOTAL | 8726 | 55.5 | 6998 | 44.5 | 17829 | 81.6 | 4011 | 18.4 | 12839 | 66.2 | 7795 | 33.8 |

TABLE IV: ELECTION RETURNS SELECTED INDIAN PRECINCTS

| Precinct | 1928 | | 1932 | | | | 1934 | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|-----|------|-----|------|
| | Vaught Vote | Cutting % | Chavez Vote | Chavez % | Armijo Vote | Chavez % | Cutting Vote | Cutting % | | | | |
| Zuni ¹ (McKinley) | 17 | 40.5 | 25 | 59.5 | 21 | 38.9 | 33 | 61.1 | 7 | 15.6 | 38 | 84.4 |
| Rehoboth ² | 10 | 27.0 | 27 | 73.0 | 20 | 43.5 | 26 | 56.5 | 17 | 30.1 | 36 | 69.9 |
| Crown Point ² | 25 | 39.1 | 39 | 60.9 | 55 | 57.3 | 41 | 42.7 | 34 | 50.0 | 34 | 50.0 |
| Tohatchi ² | 2 | 12.5 | 14 | 87.5 | 10 | 50.0 | 10 | 50.0 | 11 | 50.0 | 11 | 50.0 |
| Bent ³ (Otero) | 45 | 42.5 | 61 | 57.5 | 67 | 54.0 | 57 | 46.0 | 17 | 13.9 | 105 | 86.1 |
| Dulce ⁴ (Rio Arriba) | 91 | 58.0 | 66 | 42.0 | 97 | 46.6 | 111 | 53.4 | 125 | 72.3 | 48 | 27.7 |
| Lumberton ⁴ | 96 | 56.5 | 74 | 43.5 | 128 | 61.8 | 79 | 38.2 | 136 | 68.7 | 62 | 31.3 |
| Shiprock ² (San Juan) | 30 | 44.1 | 38 | 55.9 | 41 | 53.9 | 35 | 46.1 | 27 | 32.5 | 56 | 67.5 |
| Toadlena ² | 5 | 20.8 | 19 | 79.2 | 8 | 25.0 | 24 | 75.0 | 2 | 7.7 | 24 | 92.3 |
| Laguna ¹ (Valencia) | 13 | 22.8 | 44 | 77.2 | 40 | 74.1 | 14 | 25.9 | 6 | 24.0 | 19 | 76.0 |
| TOTAL | 334 | 45.1 | 3407 | 54.9 | 487 | 53.1 | 430 | 46.9 | 382 | 46.9 | 433 | 53.1 |

1. Pueblo
2. Navajo
3. Mescalero Apache
4. Jicarilla Apache

Source of statistics: *New Mexico Blue Book*, 1929, 1933, 1935.

political ties to the Democratic party intact and given Chavez an overwhelming 81.6 per cent of the total vote.⁴⁴ Two years later, when it was Chavez against Cutting, the Democrat dropped fifteen percentage points and 5,000 votes. If Chaves County, which was a Cutting stronghold,⁴⁵ is eliminated the scale tips slightly in the direction of Chavez. It is still obvious when compared with the election of 1932 that Dennis Chavez's not being a white Anglo Saxon Protestant was detrimental to his candidacy in this area. Cutting did not run as well in these counties as he had in 1928. These are the most heavily Protestant and Southern-oriented counties in the state. They are well known for their anti-Catholic sentiment. There is, therefore, a distinct possibility that Cutting received the benefits of some anti-Catholic straight-ticket voting in 1928. The primarily Indian precincts in the state do not lend themselves to any sort of pattern.⁴⁶ They voted for Chavez in 1932 by the same percentage that they voted against him in 1934. There is no ready explanation for this.

Why did Cutting have to run against an administration-backed candidate in the first place? He had supported Roosevelt; why was the favor not reciprocated? On this question the authorities, when they deal with it at all, are in agreement. The President and Cutting split over the veterans issue.⁴⁷ These authors, however, leave this reader with a confused view of the problem. The general image they present is that of Roosevelt as a master politician, and it does not seem that a politician of such competence would have dealt with Cutting the way he did. The President surely knew that one of the central pillars of Cutting's support was the veterans and he also must have known that Cutting was genuinely concerned with their problems and that these problems would surely increase if their pensions were cut. In short, to this author, it does not appear that the punishment of administration opposition quite fitted the crime of opposing the White House on this one issue, particularly since by almost any criterion it was not central to the New Deal program. Peter Rapkoch, one of Cutting's strongest supporters in New Mexico, in a memorandum written in 1936, notes that Cutting also opposed the transfer of

legislative power to the executive and the many bureaus and commissions that "regimented society." He also opposed the destruction of food and crops under the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.⁴⁸ While Cutting may well have been in opposition to these aspects of the New Deal, he did not publicly raise these points, and this author has found no supporting evidence for this contention in his papers. There is, moreover, no mention of these complaints in the memoirs and published diaries of individuals in the administration such as Tugwell and Ickes, both of whom consider the election in the works cited earlier. This lack of evidence leads the present writer to conclude there is a distinct possibility Rapkoch was reading some of the later criticisms of the New Deal into an earlier situation.

There is, however, another explanation of why Cutting found the full weight of the administration thrown against him in New Mexico during the election—and in Washington during the contesting of the election.⁴⁹ The President may have viewed Cutting as a potential threat either as a possible Republican, or more likely as a Progressive, nominee, and desired to remove him from public life by the most effective means at hand. This interpretation tends to fit the general picture of Roosevelt as it has been brought into focus by the various students of the President and the period. Moreover, it tends to agree with some small bits of evidence available regarding the administration of patronage in New Mexico in this period, as well as a letter written by Cutting in which he discussed briefly his relationship with the President.

In a letter dated October 1933, before the final break with the President is supposed to have occurred, Cutting wrote his friend and confidant Phelps Putnam, "The whole damn Federal patronage has been turned over to my bitterest enemies, and now that Seligman is dead, will have the whole state outfit against us as well."⁵⁰ However, Ickes presents a different story, "I [Ickes] do not intend to make any appointments in New Mexico that won't help him [Cutting]. He is very modest about patronage and has never asked me for anything."⁵¹

The interpretation that there was a personal break between Cut-

ting and the President also does not seem valid when compared with the letter cited earlier, stating Roosevelt would support him for the Senate if he were to run as a Democrat, a letter dated after the supposed break.⁵² The President must have been at least partially motivated by political self-interest in the matter of defeating Cutting. This contention is borne out by a letter from Roosevelt to Colonel Edward M. House written after the 1934 election in which the President noted:

Progressive Republicans like LaFollette, Cutting, Nye, etc., who are flirting with the idea of a third ticket anyway with the knowledge that such a third ticket would be beaten but that it would defeat us, elect a conservative Republican and cause a complete swing far to the left before 1940.

in a discussion of "the schools of thought of our opponents at the present time."⁵³ A similar analysis of the political situation was made by Huey Long in 1935. He could support Senators Borah, Norris, Nye, Frazier, Wheeler or Cutting for the Presidency.⁵⁴ This opinion of Cutting is also advanced in a book by John Heaton published in 1932. Heaton argues that Hoover would probably win again because the majority of the voting public was Republican and

If Democracy fails to grasp the opportunity of becoming a majority party instead of a minority party, then the interval between 1932 and 1936 should witness the birth of a new party drawing the left-wing members from both the old parties. To succeed in this there is need of organization and need of leaders.⁵⁵

Commenting on possibilities for leadership, Heaton noted "Senator Cutting of New Mexico is an interesting possibility."⁵⁶

It appears there was a distinct possibility that the events Roosevelt discussed in the letter to Colonel House might well have come true had not Huey Long been assassinated before the election of 1936. This author does not think there was any real possibility

that Long himself might have been elected to the presidency. It is difficult to believe he could have commanded much effective political support outside of the South, if for no other reason than that his type was unknown to the United States outside of the South. He appeared uncouth. Cutting did not suffer from this handicap. If anything he was more progressive and at least as aristocratic as Roosevelt. Moreover, he had money, and this is something a third party needs desperately. To Roosevelt, with the political acumen he apparently had, Bronson Cutting may have represented a threat. This may have been the basic reason for the contest in the state in 1934.⁵⁷ If there is any truth to this argument, it is indeed strange Roosevelt did not remember it when he attempted to rid the party of Millard Tydings, Walter George, *et al* later in the decade. To attempt to purge and then to lose is, if anything, to strengthen your enemies. Cutting, as a result of his victory, would have been a more powerful figure in the Senate and in the state than before. This could hardly have been what the President desired.

NOTES

1. Albuquerque *Journal*, Nov. 8, 1934, cited in John T. Russell, "New Mexico: A Problem of Parochialism in Transition," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 30, p. 287.

2. For a brief analysis of Cutting's political support see G. L. Seligmann, Jr., "Bronson M. Cutting, Politician" in Richard N. Ellis, ed., *New Mexico Past and Present* (Albuquerque, 1971), pp. 222-29. The only analysis of Cutting's entire career based on his papers is G. L. Seligmann, Jr., "The Political Career of Senator Bronson M. Cutting" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, Tucson, 1967). Other studies of Cutting are Jonathan R. Cunningham, "Bronson Cutting" (unpublished M.A. thesis University of New Mexico, 1940); Patricia Cardigan Armstrong, *A Portrait of Bronson Cutting Through His Papers*, University of New Mexico Dept. of Government *Bulletin* No. 57 (Albuquerque, 1959); Francis McGarity, "Bronson Cutting, Senator from New Mexico" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1934); and Andrea A.

Parker "Arthur Seligman and Bronson Cutting: Coalition Government in New Mexico" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of New Mexico, 1969). An excellent listing of the other sources for this period of New Mexico history may be found in the notes to William H. Pickens, "Bronson Cutting vs Dennis Chavez: Battle of the Patrones in New Mexico, 1934," NMHR, vol. 46 (1971), pp. 5-36. I would like to thank my colleague Professor Ronald Marcello for a number of very perceptive comments on the initial draft of this article. I didn't follow them all—perhaps I should have.

3. For a description of Seligman's role as a Democratic party leader and perhaps New Mexico's foremost practitioner of the art of coalition building, see Paul A. F. Walter, "Necrology: Arthur Seligman," NMHR, vol. 8 (1933), p. 314.

4. For an example of such a Chavez denial, see Severino Trujillo-BMC, Oct. 9, 1933. Bronson M. Cutting Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, hereafter referred to as *BMC Papers*. It should be noted that Trujillo, a member of Cutting's Washington staff, did not believe Chavez.

5. Santa Fe *New Mexican*, Nov. 20, 1933.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*, March, April, 1934.

8. BMC-Phelps Putnam, March 21, 1934, *BMC Papers*.

9. Miguel B. Otero-BMC, May 5, 1934, *Otero Papers*, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico.

10. Santa Fe *New Mexican*, May 17, 1934.

11. *Ibid.*, July 9, 1934.

12. BMC-Otero, July 13, 1934, *Otero Papers*.

13. Santa Fe *New Mexican*, July 17, 1934.

14. *Ibid.*, July 13, 1934.

15. *Ibid.*, July 13, 1934.

16. *Ibid.*, July 21, 1934.

17. *Ibid.*, July 23, 1934.

18. *Ibid.*, Aug. 3, 1934.

19. In an interview with the author, Oscar Chapman, one of Costigan's law partners, said that Costigan asked Cutting in late 1933 to invite him to campaign in New Mexico for him so that he (Costigan) could claim a prior commitment if pressure were brought on him to keep out of the state. Interview dated Aug. 6, 1963.

20. Santa Fe *New Mexican*, Sept. 11, 1934.

21. *Ibid.*, Aug. 25 and Sept. 14, 1934.

22. *Ibid.*, Sept. 24, 1934.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, Sept. 27, 1934.
25. Interviews with New Mexico politicians cited in Cunningham, p. 192.
26. The bulk of the above analysis is based on interviews with New Mexico politicians referred to in Cunningham, pp. 192-93. Cunningham's conclusions are supplemented and supported by the author's conversations with members of both parties who were active in the party battles of the period.
27. Albuquerque *Journal*, Oct. 23, 1934. This listing appeared in a story denouncing Democratic mud-slinging. The author is unaware of a similar listing prepared by an anti-Cutting newspaper.
28. Santa Fe *New Mexican*, Oct. 11, 1934.
29. *Ibid.*, Oct. 26, 1934.
30. There are letters or telegrams from these individuals in the *BMC Papers*.
31. Alfred Lief, *Democracy's Norris: The Biography of a Lonely Crusade* (New York, 1939), p. 446.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 445. See also Norris-FDR, Jan. 13, 1934, President's Personal File, FDR Library, Hyde Park, N.Y. The President's reply to Norris about the lack of patronage that Cutting was receiving was:

Dear George,
I wish you would speak to me some day about Bronson Cutting. As you know, I am personally mighty fond of him and have known him since he was a boy. I do not want to do anything to hurt him, but a lot of Bronson's retainers in New Mexico are not considered especially fine citizens.

Very sincerely yours
- While the President's analysis of the character of Cutting's following is not inaccurate, it should be noted that the same characterization could have been applied to his opponents and their retinue.
33. Ickes, *Secret Diary*, vol. 1, p. 217. See also Ickes-FDR, Sept. 20, 1934, FDR Library.
34. Albuquerque *Journal*, Nov. 4, 1934. Also see the memorandum from McIntyre to the President suggesting that Roosevelt "create the impression that Senator Robinson is representing you and the administration." McIntyre-FDR, Oct. 29, 1934, FDR Library.
35. Broadside in the *BMC Papers*.
36. *Literary Digest*, Nov. 3, 1934, p. 13.

37. Santa Fe *New Mexican*, Nov. 6, 1934.
38. Interview cited in Jack E. Holmes, "Party, Legislature and Governor in the Politics of New Mexico, 1911-1963" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1964), pp. 199-200. The reference to being counted out refers to the charges brought later of fraud in the election.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
40. Santa Fe *New Mexican*, Dec. 3, 1934. The *BMC Papers* contain copies of all of the legal documents filed by both sides in the case but in view of the fact that the actual details of the election contest are not important to the theme of this paper the author will refer to the contest only in passing. It is probably safe to say that while the Cutting forces were not blameless in matters of voting fraud, neither were their opponents. There is a letter in Cutting's papers containing an affidavit to the effect that when a Mrs. Sturmquist and her husband went to vote in a strongly Democratic area they found their names had been left off the poll books although they were legally registered. However, both their son and daughter had already voted despite the fact that they were both dead. Mrs. A. W. Sturmquist-BMC, April 16, 1935, *BMC Papers*.
41. Santa Fe *New Mexican*, Dec. 3-31, 1934.
42. *Ibid.*, Nov. 3, 1934.
43. See Table II. Holmes, "Party, Legislature and Governor," p. 343, identifies these precincts as Penitente areas.
44. See Table III.
45. Edgar Puryear, Cutting's Administrative Assistant, was a former Democratic State Representative from this county and J. D. Atwood who was to represent Cutting in the election contest also resided here. Moreover, Cutting's efforts to get a Federal Land Office located in Roswell, the county seat, undoubtedly paid dividends.
46. See Table IV.
47. See for example Rexford Tugwell, *The Democratic Roosevelt*, p. 340; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt, The Politics of Upheaval* (Boston, 1960), pp. 139-40; and James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York, 1956), p. 202. Raymond Moley in *The First New Deal* (New York, 1966), p. 93, notes that in a conversation with Cutting, the *New Mexican* "left to my inference . . . a basic distrust of Roosevelt—in some degree a sharing of the reservations which were so common in the Eastern social and economic circles to which Cutting had belonged in his earlier years. Later this distrust flared into opposition to a number of Roosevelt's policies. A healthy mutual dislike grew up between them." Like many matters which are "left to inference" this analysis is none too precise. To be sure Cutting came from

a very wealthy, very prominent New York family. Such people did look askance at FDR's policies but usually from a position somewhat to the right. Cutting's opposition to the New Deal came from the left. Moreover Cutting's letters to his mother for this period (February, 1933) do not show any distrust of Roosevelt. That comes later.

48. Peter Rapkoch memorandum to Senator Robert M. LaFollette Jr. dated 1936. Copy in the *BMC Papers*. As John L. Shover demonstrates in "Populism in the Nineteen-Thirties: The Battle for the AAA," *Agricultural History*, vol. 39 (1965), pp. 17-24, the AAA was the first of those measures known collectively as the First New Deal to meet with significant opposition. Cutting was a voting but not debating member of this opposition and he was certainly not one of its leaders. Moreover Cutting voted with those who were more radical than was President Roosevelt and Rapkoch's memo would place Cutting to the right of the President.

49. "Meanwhile F. D. Calls me up personally and most affectionately, Dear Bron. or Brons, yet I know all the while he is urging on my colleagues to unseat me." BMC-Phelps Putnam, Feb. 7, 1935, *BMC Papers*.

50. BMC-Putnam, Oct. 3, 1933. *BMC Papers*. Burns, *Roosevelt*, p. 202, also states the patronage in the state had been turned over to the Democratic organization and not to the Cutting forces.

51. Ickes, *Diary*, vol. 1, p. 27. It should be noted that the date on this entry is April 26, 1933, very early in the FDR administration.

52. BMC-Putnam, March 21, 1934, *BMC Papers*.

53. FDR.—Edward M. House, Feb. 16, 1935, printed in Elliott Roosevelt, ed., *FDR.—His Personal Letters, 1928-1945*, vol. 1 (New York, 1950), pp. 452-53.

54. Huey Long quoted in "The Unofficial Observer," *American Messiahs* (New York, 1935), p. 5.

55. John Heaton, *Tough Luck—Hoover Again* (New York, 1932), p. 91.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

57. There is another possible reason for Roosevelt's opposition to Cutting. The President might not have been able to keep Democratic support in New Mexico and elsewhere had he not supported the party's nominee in New Mexico. This argument is, however, somewhat weakened by Roosevelt's praise of Robert M. LaFollette, Jr. in his Senatorial campaign that year against Democratic opposition. See Roger T. Johnson, *Robert M. LaFollette, Jr. and the Decline of the Progressive Party in Wisconsin* (Madison, 1964), p. 33.

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