The Hoover Administration
According to Editorial Opinion
In Houston Newspapers,
1929 - 1933

A Thesis

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by
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Section I  Introductory Note

When the study of the Hoover administration as seen by the Houston newspapers was begun, it was intended to cover treatment of that administration in news as well as in editorial columns. But shortly after the beginning of study the plan was found to be impractical. In the first place, there was absolutely no evidence of prejudiced cutting of news dispatches for any purpose. Any cutting which may have been done was not intended to influence opinion one way or the other about the event under discussion, but was done with the requirements of news space in mind. There may have been some local prejudice in the matter of writing headlines, but if so, it was negligible, and apparently unintentional. In the second place, such a complete coverage as was at first intended would have required far more time and far more space than were available. Editorial treatment of the administration developed, in itself, into a lengthy topic.

The first step in preparation of such a paper was necessarily to become thoroughly familiar with the actual sequences of events upon which the newspapers were commenting. For the American political scene is a complicated one. Such texts as The Hoover Administration, a Documented Narrative, by Myers and Newton, and The Growth of the American Republic, by Morison and Commager were invaluable. Lloyd Morris' Postscript to Yesterday, and F.L. Allen's Only Yesterday provided added insight into the attitudes of the times.
The newspapers themselves required a great deal of intensive examination, and gathering certain portions of the material contained therein presented some difficulties. These newspapers were frequently studied under adverse conditions. The staffs of the Houston Chronicle and the Houston Press were most co-operative about allowing me to use their back files in order to collect information. These files, however, had to be used in the newspaper offices between the hours of nine A.M. and four P.M. And the fascinating noises attending the printing of a large daily newspaper are not conducive to concentration upon the events of twenty years ago.

Unfortunately, the Houston Post building was being remodelled, and files of that paper were only accessible in the Houston Public Library, and there only with difficulty, since opportunity for study is far from ideal under existing conditions.

Of the three local newspapers the Chronicle was the most concerned with American foreign policy, and for that reason often gave less consideration than did the others to matters concerning life within the United States. Its lengthy, and numerically few editorials were more frequently concerned with such questions as international debts and America's position as a peace-loving nation than with the problems of policies of sectionalism as pursued by the president; tariffs received more attention than did internal revenues. Consequently I have turned to a considerable degree to the Chronicle for discussions of foreign affairs, and chiefly to the Post for information on
attitudes toward domestic issues.

There may seem to be more editorials from the Post quoted than there should proportionately be. This is due to the fact that more editorials actually appeared in the Post. During the years in question the Post printed two full columns of editorials daily -- or about seven editorials a day -- seven days a week. At the same time, the Chronicle printed one editorial column daily -- averaging about two editorials -- dealing with current events. On Sunday, the Chronicle usually published an ethical or moral discussion in the space.

Little attention has been paid the Press for the reason that its editorials rarely represented local opinion. It was and is a member of the Scripps-Howard chain of newspapers, and its editorial policy was governed by the policies of Scripps-Howard directors. Locally written opinions rarely appeared in its editorial columns. For example, no mention was ever made editorially of the tea to which Mrs. Hoover invited the wife of Congressman De Priest. The Press, like the Chronicle, had no Sunday editorials. Indeed, the Press had no Sunday editions.

Of the three the Chronicle was consistently the least critical of the Hoover administration. Possibly this fact was largely due to the paper's attention to foreign affairs rather than to domestic issues. That is not to say, however, that the Chronicle did not criticize sharply and freely any administration policies of which it did not approve. It simply adopted a policy of watchful waiting to see what the future would bring in regard to results. And, like the Post, it never failed to
label clearly any act which seemed at the time to be the product of bipartisan forces, and to give the co-operating Democrats the lion's share of the credit for the good results of the act.

The Post presented a special problem, for its editorial policies changed shortly after Mr. Hoover took office. The paper had been owned by Texas Governor Ross Sterling, but at that time was sold to Colonel W.P. Hobby, the present owner. During the period of Governor Sterling's proprietorship the Post gave a great deal of attention to state politics, but also covered national affairs thoroughly. The attention devoted to national politics was directed from a militantly Democratic point of view, as may be seen in the editorials dealing with the presidential campaign of 1928. Violently Southern at that time, the Post could not see any good in the doings of one Mr. Herbert Hoover, then titular head of the Republican party. But when the Hobby interests took over, the paper became -- if not favorable to the president -- at least more tolerant of him.

Since newspapers are presumed to assist in molding public opinion, the purpose of this inquiry into the editorial policies of the Houston newspapers during the Hoover administration is to see just what sort of influence the average Houston voter of the time was subjected to. In the light of editorials considered, one may safely say that he was influenced to support the Democratic party. The locally owned newspapers spared no effort in their support of Democratic nominees in the important elections. And in interim periods they were inclined to criticize severely the incumbent Republicans. A great deal of the criticism offered
was perhaps justified, and there could be no basis for the conclusion that such criticism was blind and unfair. Only in such cases as those of unimportant deeds made to appear as world-shaking developments may the newspapers be charged with flagrant distortion and injustice. By and large, however, coverage of important events was thorough and journalistically sound, and seems to have been based upon honest convictions.

In the light of events since the close of the Hoover administration, some of the comments made at that time seem faintly ridiculous. On the other hand, the newspapers were remarkably accurate in some of their predictions, such as the declarations that passage of a bill providing for the freedom of the Philippines would likely presage trouble with Japan over the continued independence of our former possession. But they were far away from the mark in foreseeing the end of government by bureaus and commissions with the incoming Democratic regime in 1923.

We may thus conclude that there was no concerted move to discredit the Hoover administration by way of the editorial columns of the local newspapers, but that those newspapers probably were biased against the administration because of the fundamental loyalty of this section of the nation to the Democratic party, and because of the essential differences at that time between the party policies of the Republicans and the Democrats.

Mildred McCall
Section II The Presidential Campaign of 1928

The presidential campaign of 1928 was perhaps one of the most interesting, although surely not the most enlightening, that this nation has yet witnessed. It took place while there was yet a feeling of prosperity, a certainty that nothing really serious could happen to the United States. Both major candidates were untried in national elections, and consequently had no record of either great triumphs or defeats. But there was no lack on that account of the material out of which campaigns are made. Major issues were treated with dignity or plastered with flying mud; trivialities were raised to the dignity of issues; sentiment figured highly.

In Houston, the Democratic nominees, Alfred E. Smith and Joseph T. Robinson, were favored by the locally owned newspapers. But the Press, member of the Scripps-Howard chain, supported Hoover and Curtis. Attitudes ranged from a continued semi-objectivism to a developing campaign based on essentially emotional issues. While the candidates themselves discussed prohibition, farm relief, the tariff, public ownership of hydro-electric power, and prosperity, their partisans failed to confine themselves to consideration of these topics. The questions of Tammany, religious toleration, the scandals of previous Republican administrations, party loyalty, and the kind of sectionalism which has never been long absent from national politics since 1860. The trend of public opinion as shown in elections in other states was either pointed to with pleasure or dismissed as inconclusive, depending upon the direction of the trend in question.
The issue upon which the candidates were most widely separated was that of prohibition. Smith was known to favor repeal, but was running on a platform which pledged support of the existing law; both the Republican nominee and platform were dry. This part of the country was at least nominally dry. Consequently it became necessary for the newspapers supporting Smith to make sure that their dry readers could not be offended by the personal wetness of the candidate. The matter was given scant mention during the days when the campaign was reaching its climax. The attitude of the Post as expressed on the fourth of September, 1928, was typical of the locally owned papers. In an editorial entitled, "Looking the Dry Enforcement Issue in the Face," readers were assured:

"The Democratic party and its standard-bearer have pledged honest enforcement of the Volstead act if they are successful at the polls. The Republican party has consistently practiced lip service and nullification, and its nominee for president lacks the moral courage to take a clearcut stand or say positively whether he favors bone-dry enforcement, modification or what-not."

On other occasions the same stand was repeated. The Chronicle ignored the question almost totally, and the Press did likewise, albeit for slightly different reasons. Supporting the candidacy of Mr. Hoover, the Press nonetheless desired repeal. Therefore it expressed itself as favoring the Smith stand on prohibition but as feeling that the election could not and would not be decided on that issue. The Chronicle attitude was substantially the same as that of the Post.

On farm relief, the Post and Chronicle decried Mr. Hoover's
proposals as unrealistic and inadequate, and praised Smith's forthrightness and sound program. Early in the campaign they condemned the Republican for his plan to bring farm relief through tariffs on agricultural products, reasoning that a tariff could scarcely help commodities of which there was a surplus. They pointed to the fact that Republican tariff policies during the Harding and Coolidge administrations had actually forced the farmers into competition with cheap foreign labor while protecting the manufacturing interests of the East. The farmers had to buy on a protected market while selling their goods in a free world market, and they had been given plenty of time in which to consider the workings of Republican tariff policies. The South, complained the newspapers, was completely ignored in Republican calculations, save where soliciting votes was concerned. This region of cotton producers certainly could not be helped by a tariff or by a scheme, such as that of the McNary-Haugen bill, whereby the entire surplus would be lifted from the United States market in order to force prices higher. The surplus was simply too great for success, and cotton was largely an export crop in any event. On the seventeenth of October the Chronicle summed up this telling argument:

"Thus Mr. Hoover's tariff ideas do not take in the South at all. The problem of the cotton crop apparently hasn't come within his range of vision. He gives it not a thought, possibly because his republicanism has glued his eyes to the industrial East, to the great corporations and the welfare of the wealthy and mighty. He can't see the Southern cotton fields."
"As the darky says: 'He ain't studyin' the South.'"

On the following day the Post accused Hoover of lacking sympathy with the common man and quoted his former aide during the food administration, Ed C. Lasater, that he was neither a conservationist nor a friend of agriculture. Indeed, while the Chronicle had been carrying out a detailed attack on Hoover for his schemes of farm relief through tariff and through encouragement of the co-operative movement, the Post was first charging him with having no apparent policy about farm relief at all—saying that no one knew what he intended to do about it, or even whether he intended to call a special session of congress or not—then commenting gleefully that events forced him to make a stand at the last minute. This system of attack was particularly evident on November second, in an editorial titled "Confessions of Mr. Hoover." He had planned to speak on inland waterways at St. Louis that night, but had changed his subject to the farm problem:

"So, tonight, we shall hear Mr. Hoover again on farm relief. It remains to be seen whether his death house conversion to the doctrine that the farmer needs help will save his political soul."

In the meantime, the Post was giving little mention except in very general terms to the Smith program for farm relief, but the Chronicle was combining its attacks on Mr. Hoover with support for Governor Smith. Notably, the matter came to the fore in mid-September. Speaking of Governor Smith, the Chronicle said:

"He found that the tariff in itself is no aid to the producer of crops with exportable surpluses; he found that the
co-operatives of the nation are not strong enough, and in all likelihood will never be strong enough, to handle the surpluses of some of the major crops; he found that schemes for waterway building and lower freight rates would take many years to work out, with only partial relief to be expected from them in case they were already realities.

"He found that the one way -- the only way -- to get relief to agriculture is to assure a removal of the surplus products from the domestic market so that such tariff rates as are granted can be effective, and so that the surplus of a fat year can be carried into the shortage of a lean year -- thus assuring a stabilization of prices and a firm foundation for agriculture."

How the editorial writers squared this with the above mentioned analysis of the problem of the cotton crop, one is left to wonder.

The Press was virtually silent on farm relief, preferring to emphasize such other issues as foreign policy and hydro-electric power.

Other than as a farm relief scheme, the tariff figured in the local campaign only when the local papers wanted to attack the traditional alliance between the Republican party and the industrial magnates of the East. It was necessary to play down even this aspect, for Governor Smith was advocating essentially the same high tariff as the Republicans. The Chronicle dismissed the subject with the following comment in addition to those already cited:

"The industrial East has fattened on the republican tariff,
of course, and there can be no denying that Mr. Hoover's appeal there should have weight."

The Post's attitude on the subject may be seen in the following:

"Mr. Hoover's tariff prescription may be stated to mean: Whenever and wherever prosperity exists, the Republican tariff deserves most of the credit; but whenever and wherever ruin and staggering depression exist, the Republican tariff is blameless, and conditions would have been far worse except for outrageously high import duties."

Hydro-electric power, or more specifically the Muscle Shoals power plant, was much in campaign news. Smith was known to favor government ownership and operation of such plants, while Hoover desired private operation of them, with -- or at least the newspapers seemed to believe -- the notable exception of Muscle Shoals. The Chronicle discussed the question of public or private ownership of hydro-electric power at least twice. On the first occasion it upheld the views of Governor Smith that waterpower is part of the natural heritage of the American people, and as such should not be exploited to serve private interests. The moves toward private development of this great resource were pictured as a cunning and stealthy plot, accompanied by insidious propaganda to lull the natural righteous indignation of the American people. Alfred E. Smith was then brought forth as the great savior of this property, a real defender of public rights. This editorial has the merit of making a positive stand rather than taking a merely negative view of the situation. The same view-
point may be noted in the later attack on Mr. Hoover's stand. This, however, is not a defense; it is an attack, and as such indulges -- by implication, at least -- in personalities. The title alone, "Sir Herbert Is Astonished," leads the reader to expect what follows. The opening paragraph contains no surprises:

"Sir Herbert Hoover, of 23 years of residence abroad, is astonished at the discovery of the new idea of putting the principle of public ownership into effect in America. He is amazed that the democratic nominee should propose the public ownership of the hydro-electric power, which already belongs to the people of this country. The opposition of Herbert Hoover arises from his abhorrence to the idea of now borrowing from the effete East a principle so new to the institutions of this country, and which he has seen work so badly in the countries of Europe and Asia."

The editorial continues by noting that the same principle applies to the postal system and has done us no harm. Hoover is then reminded that the idea of public ownership of a utility originated with Benjamin Franklin, and is certainly not a new principle.

At the same time, the Post was not even willing to concede that Hoover had a waterpower program. Commenting on the same Elizabethton speech that brought forth the tirade partially quoted above, the Post said:

"The second great public issue of vital interest to the people of Tennessee and other Southern States is the safeguarding of publicly-owned waterpower. Senator McKellar asked Mr. Hoover
to state his position on Boulder dam, and whether he favored its operation by the government, and also his attitude toward the power trust.

"The G.O.P. nominee, running true to form, dodged the questions and nobody knows for certain whether he made a reference to the Boulder dam or power trust themes or not. Mr. Hoover referred in vague, circuitous language to the evils of government competition with private business, and to the need for public regulation. He also made a cryptic allusion to 'deadly and destructive doctrines' -- presumably the doctrines advocated by Governor Al Smith and the Democratic party that the God-given water power resources of the American people should be held and administered in the public interest, rather than squandered after the manner of the naval oil reserves."

Of the matters recognized as issues by the candidates themselves nothing came in for more staunch support on the one side or more continued bombardment from the other than did credit for governmental economy and prosperity. Republicans cited the record of the post-war years of industrial boom and unprecedented business successes.

But Democrats pointed to business failures and increasing idleness, and on the basis of these, attacked Republican claims. The Press praised Republican rule and named hopes for continued prosperity as a good reason to vote for Mr. Hoover. Early in the campaign, the Chronicle professed to dismiss the subject lightly, but later apparently took a more serious view of the situation, for it devoted four additional editorials to the
question: "The Republican Prosperity Myth," "A Myth Finally Blasted," "Our Pennywise President," and "Prosperity and the Republicans." The Post scornfully mentioned Republican supporters and pictured the situation as being very different from their views. Its final blow at the Republican claims was the evidence of seventeen thousand business failures in the United States during the last ten months -- a singularly unprosperous sounding statistic. With that they closed the campaign.

Such was the serious consideration of major problems in 1928. But when the newspapers were not discussing them, their editorial columns sizzled with burning appeals to emotion -- some to the sentiment for fair play, but chiefly appeals to the feelings on the subjects of race, party loyalty for its own sake, and sectionalism. Charges and countercharges of corruption were hurled back and forth with all the zest of schoolboys flinging rock-centered snowballs. And results of elections in other states were pointed to as significant or explained away as of no importance, depending upon which side the trend seemed to favor at the moment.

From the very inception of the campaign Al Smith's Catholicism was a matter of importance. His supporters wrote at length about religious toleration, and his opponents maintained official silence. During the height of the struggle the Chronicle even printed an editorial called "Stamping Out An Atrocity Falsehood" which condemned the superstitious belief in Jewish ritual murder. While there is no direct mention of the coming election, the significance of the editorial could hardly have been lost on the enlightened reader.
Two other editorials from the same paper came more directly to the point. The first of these, "Governor Smith and Intolerance," discussed Smith's own mention of the religious question in the course of a speech in Oklahoma City. The writer drew upon the history of America as a traditional home of religious tolerance, and further declared that we cannot consistently grant Catholics the right to vote, yet deny them the right to hold high office, or accept them in our armed forces while refusing to elect one of their number to the presidency on grounds of his religion. Later, when the subject was again brought up the appeal to American traditional tolerance was repeated, and the additional comment was made that certainly Mr. Hoover could not in any way be charged with fostering this malicious type of campaign.

The Post also saw a challenge to American democracy in the raising of the religious issue, but carried its implications further by at least indirectly connecting Mr. Hoover's name with it: "No responsible Democrat would want to emulate the dirty tactics employed against the Democratic nominee, Governor Smith, by launching unfair and unjustified attacks against Mr. Hoover." Religious toleration as applied particularly in the South also entered the picture. For the South to vote for Hoover, said the Post, could be interpreted only as political and religious intolerance.

As might have been expected, the scandals of previous Republican administrations -- notably, the Harding oil leases -- and attacks on Smith's connection with Tammany figured in the campaign. The Press, supporting Hoover, took the view that he
could not be blamed for what had happened, since he had minded his own business as a member of the cabinet and concentrated on his own department of commerce, in which no crookedness had been discovered. But if the Press played it down, the story lost nothing in the telling when used by the Post and Chronicle. A sample of Post attitude is the finding of a point of contrast between the anti-Smith Democrat and the one who openly turned Republican:

"As crooked and as rotten as the Republican National record of recent years has been, as unsavory as some of the G.O.P. patronage machines in some of the Southern States are, and even taking into full account the wishy-washy and slippery public record of the Republican nominee, and the fact that he was tongue-tied with reference to gigantic scandals which set the world agog, the anti-Smith die-hard who openly embraces Republicanism is more consistent than his brother die-hard who, proclaiming himself a Democrat, does all in his power to wreck the party as a National organization."

Although professing to attack the one, the editorial also does a thorough job of excoriating the other.

The Post did not confine itself to the earlier record. It included a mention of very up-to-date Republican crookedness in an apparent attempt to reply to charges of Tammanyism against Smith:

"It has developed that while the noted Mr. Vare was bringing about the nomination of Herbert Hoover at Kansas City, certain officials, retainers and favored bootleggers of the Philadelphia
municipal machine were engaged in the business of bribery, murder, extortion, etc., as a means of piling up millions in bootleg profits."

Still later, the Post became more explicit about the Harding administration, saying that there was indisputable evidence that Mr. Hoover knew from the beginning that secret negotiations about the naval oil leases were going on, and that his silence on the subject was wrong.

The Chronicle also brought up the oil scandals again. On the twenty-eighth of September an editorial quoted large sections of a speech by Governor Smith in which he charged the Republican party as a whole with responsibility for the dirty record of the Harding administration and chided his opponent in particular for keeping silent on the matter. The gist of the argument, as summed up by the staff writer is: "For the party cannot escape responsibility for their acts. Nor can the nominee of a party escape responsibility for his party."

The continuance of traditional Southern adherence to the Democratic party was a source of appeal which became increasingly stronger as the campaign progressed toward its climax. And bound together inseparably were the two issues of party loyalty and sectionalism and the attendant race problem. All three were variations on the same theme: the South must and shall remain the Solid South of the past seventy years. Mention has been made above of the use of the same ideas in connection with the tariff.

The Post gave more space than did the Chronicle to the race
issue as such. First mention of the subject came early, and was -- on the surface -- relatively insignificant. But the implications were nonetheless strong:

"If ever politics made stranger bedfellows than it is making this year in the South, through the liaisons effected by Democratic defectionists and wily Southern G.O.P. leaders, negro and white, surely the parallel occurred before the printing press was invented."^31

Then came a still closer linkage between Republicans and the negro:

"The Portland Oregonian is one of the newspapers on the Pacific coast that habitually refers to Southern Democrats, in headlines as 'the Bourbons.' Apparently, the red flag is up against the use of the word 'Democrat' in the columns of this journal. Recently the paper carried on its sport page a large picture of a negro and a white man who were to engage in a prize-fight in a local ring. The negro was quoted as boasting that he would whip his white opponent for the third time. It would be superfluous to add that the Portland Oregonian is strongly supporting Mr. Hoover for president."^32

Next the Republican nominee himself was accused of having desired to end all segregation. A consideration of the present day (1948) situation will show just how seriously such charges might have influenced voting. And the fact must be kept in mind that twenty years ago far more citizens were alive who remembered the War Between the States, or who at least remembered hearing their parents describe its horrors. The earlier abolition of the racial segregation rule prevailing in the department of
commerce provided fruitful fields for the Democratic Post.  

Apparently feeling that the subject had been rather thoroughly covered, the Post then adopted more nearly the same line of attack as the Chronicle. The latter was basing its appeal upon that Southern regionalism which at times becomes almost a nationalism. For example, there was an editorial entitled, "Our Own Country First," which referred to Mr. Hoover's total inability to understand Southern problems, although well prepared to cope with the international situation. One reminder of the Reconstruction period followed another in the Post, with the purpest of all purple passages coming just two days before the balloting. Practically the entire argument is summed up in the following two paragraphs:

"When the smoke of battle clears away, Texas will be found faithful to its principles and traditions, faithful to the counsel of the hosts of distinguished Southerners who are pointing the right course; faithful to the immortal Jefferson, upon whose tomb, at his own request, are chiseled the words, "Author of the Virginia statute of religious freedom."

"Texas will be found faithful to the gray-clad warriors who went forth to battle the cohorts of Republicanism. It will not by its vote indorse the record of Republicanism extending over a period of 70 years, a record so black and foul that even today the memory of it arouses savage resentment in the breasts of all true Southerners."  

On the same day the Chronicle said substantially the same thing. And the next day followed up with "Lest We Forget,"
which opened with the remarkable simile: "For the South to support the republican party would be as absurd as it would be for a Christian to worship at the shrine of Mohammed." Then the whole sordid story of the Reconstruction was repeated. The demand for Texan support for the Democratic party reads like the speech of a general addressing his troops before a decisive battle:

"It is not enough that Texas go democratic Tuesday. We must roll up such a majority that the world will know we have not pulled down our flag in surrender to the enemy. The democratic party and the South are wedded indissolubly. It is a union not of mere convenience, but of two spirits that believe and think alike.

"That union can not be broken by a man of Hoover's type, nor by his party that has been the lifelong enemy of the Southland.

"Vote Tuesday, and vote as a real soldier of democracy. That party has done much for us, and we ought not to forget it now. Full-blooded, enthusiastic support is needed. We must give it."

One can almost see the stars and bars waving above a heroic, gray-clad line.

While the campaign went on each side pointed to each new development as a proof of its certain victory on November sixth. If the development did not seem favorable, it was usually explained away as better than what might have been expected, or at any rate no worse. The title of a Post editorial, "Maine, Republican as Usual," is indicative of its contents.

The prevailing attitude toward general trends in the nation is best shown, however, by the treatment of the travels of the candidates. Mr. Hoover did not plan the type of campaign favored
by Governor Smith. He limited the number of his addresses sharply, while the Democratic nominee stumped the country. The Post was always critical of Mr. Hoover's silence.

As the New York governor's speaking tour progressed it was hailed by his supporters here in glowing terms. He was reported to have made gains in the mid-West which frightened Republicans even in the East, and in California as well. Fear was said to be widespread in all Republican camps. The wild demonstrations which greeted Smith, if the Chronicle was to be believed, were comparable to those which customarily were accorded that perennial candidate, William Jennings Bryan, on his tours. The whole thing was summed up by the Chronicle on the twenty-ninth of October. If the account was to be credited, Mr. Hoover stood small chance of garnering any electoral votes at all.

But there was another view of the same subject. The Press, in reference to Smith's tour of the farm belt said simply:

"He did not knock 'em cold. He did not return with the farm belt. He brought home the baloney but not the bacon."

Perhaps the subject may best be left at this point. The final score was Hoover, 444; Smith, 87.

Footnotes

1. The Houston Post; September 8, 1928; 'Itinerary of Smith and Hoover'.
   Ibid.; October 9, 1928; "Hoover's Tennessee Speech".
   Ibid.; October 20, 1928; "Smith, Hoover and Prohibition".
   Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; October 13, 1928; "More Important Than the Man".
   The Houston Post; November 2, 1928; "A Noted Methodist Layman Speaks".
2. The Houston Press; November 5, 1928; "Summing It Up".
3. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; September 19, 1928; "The Hoover Speech"
   The Houston Post; October 5, 1928; "Farm Tariff Fallacy"
   Ibid.; October 6, 1928; "Straining Human Credulity"

4. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; October 17, 1928; "The South Left Out"

5. The Houston Post; October 18, 1928; "No Sympathy For the Common Man"

6. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; November 1, 1928; "Politics and the Farmer"

7. The Houston Post; October 27, 1928; "Indecisive Mr. Hoover"

8. Ibid.; October 30, 1928; "Hoover Slaps Coolidge"

9. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; November 19, 1928; "Governor Smith For Real Farm Relief"

10. The Houston Press; November 5, 1928; "Summing It Up"

11. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; September 19, 1928; "The Hoover Speech"

12. The Houston Post; October 17, 1928; "Nullifying the 1922 Tariff Act"

13. The Houston Press; October 8, 1928; "Hoover on Muscle Shoals"

14. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; October 24, 1928; "Sir Herbert Is Astonished"
   Ibid.; September 21, 1928; "Governor Smith and Hydro-Electric Power"

15. The Houston Post; October 9, 1928; "Hoover's Tennessee Speech"

16. The Houston Press; October 15, 1928; "Scripps-Howard in the Campaign"

17. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; September 19, 1928; "The Hoover Speech"

18. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; October 16, 1928; October 19, 1928; October 22, 1928; and October 30, 1928

19. The Houston Post; September 2, 1928; "Smith Strong in Massachusetts":
   "That Governor Al Smith has an excellent chance to carry the state of Massachusetts, rock-ribbedly Republican for the last 70 years, is admitted by the Springfield Daily Republican, which is supporting the candidacy of Mr. Hoover.

20. Ibid.; November 6, 1928; "Seventeen Thousand Business Failures"

21. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; October 9, 1928.

22. Ibid.; September 21, 1928.

23. The Houston Post; September 1, 1928; "The Anti-Catholic Cry":
   "The raising of the anti-Catholic cry in the present campaign assuredly is not sanctioned by large numbers of laymen helping to make up the membership of the Southern Protestant churches;
men and women who, intensely loyal to their own religious beliefs nevertheless deplore and resent the effort to drag ecclesiastical controversy into a political debate and who hold that the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom means exactly what it says:"

Ibid.; September 6, 1928; "The So-Called Religious Issue"
Ibid.; September 11, 1928; "Religious Freedom in 1928"

24. Ibid.; October 19, 1928; "Hoover Not a British Citizen"

25. Ibid.; September 9, 1928; "One Form of Party Suicide":

"The action could be interpreted in only one way -- that the South is intolerant politically or religiously, or both, to the point where it seeks to read out of the Democratic party the millions of citizens who are not committed to National prohibition and the additional millions who do not affiliate with Protestant religious sects."

26. The Houston Press; October 2, 1928; "The Common Sense of It":

"By no stretch of the imagination can Hoover be charged with any part in what happened in the Harding administration, even though he was a member of the cabinet. He minded his own business and made the department of commerce one of the most important in the government; and there was no crookedness in that department."

27. The Houston Post; September 13, 1928; "The Dallas State Convention"

28. Ibid.; September 5, 1928; "Vare's Philadelphia Machine"

29. Appendix B; The Houston Post; September 26, 1928; "Let Mr. Hoover Speak!"

30. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; September 28, 1928; "Governor Smith and Party Responsibility"

31. The Houston Post; September 7, 1928; "Strange Southern Partnerships"

32. Ibid.; October 4, 1928; 'Consider the Source, etc.'

33. Ibid.; October 10,1928; "Hoover and Race Equality":

"Several months after the segregation rule prevailing in the department of commerce was abolished, a belated and indirect denial that the Republican nominee, Mr. Hoover, was instrumental in the abolition of this rule, is being made for the benefit of Southern Hoover Democrats."

34. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; October 31, 1928.

35. The Houston Post; October 25, 1928; "Texas and the New Carpetbaggers"

Ibid.; October 26, 1928; 'Slanders on Wilson and Bryan' :

"The Republican party is assuming that the Democrats of the South are ignorant, steeped in prejudice and bigotry, credulous, easily deceived and entirely forgetful of the fact that for 70 years the South has suffered at Republican hands."
"On no other basis can the 1928 Southern Republican campaign be explained."

36. Ibid.; November 4, 1928; "Democracy Girds For Victory"
37. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle, November 4, 1928; "Right Then and Now"
38. Ibid.; November 5, 1928.
39. The Houston Post; September 12, 1928.
40. Ibid.; "Itinerary of Smith and Hoover";

"Still another consideration is back of the Hoover policy in dealing only a five-card hand in the game. Mr. Hoover is attempting to straddle the fence in his discussion of such troublesome issues as prohibition, hydro-electric power regulation, farm relief, etc."

Ibid.; October 5, 1923; "Silent Herb Hoover"
41. Ibid.; October 14, 1928; "The Eel as a National Symbol"
42. Ibid.; October 24, 1928; "Hoover's Illuminating Silence"
43. Ibid.; October 31, 1928; "Priceless Gift of Candor"
44. Ibid.; September 19, 1928; "Mr. Hoover Misrepresents";

"But for Mr. Hoover to insinuate that the Democratic platform and nominee favor a letting down of immigration bars, with the resulting admission of a 'horde of job hunters' is to indulge in willful misrepresentation. These utterances do small credit to Mr. Hoover's recent assurances that he would use words to 'reveal rather than conceal' meanings. The effort to distort and misrepresent the Democratic program toward alien entry savors of desperation. Republican prospects along the Atlantic seaboard must be gloomy, indeed, when the G.O.P. nominee goes on record in any such fashion."

Ibid.; November 1, 1928; "The Farm Belt Trend to Smith";
45. Ibid.; November 4, 1928; "Governor Smith and His Tour";
46. Ibid.; "Smith at Home Everywhere"
Section III The President and Domestic Issues

Economic Problems

When Herbert Hoover took office in March of 1929 he found a multitude of problems awaiting his attention. Not the least of these were farm relief and limited tariff readjustment, both of which he mentioned in his inaugural address. His supporters regarded his advent with joy and eager expectation. The Press, which had favored his campaign from the outset proclaimed confidently that the incoming leader enjoyed the complete faith of the nation. The Chronicle, apparently willing to make the best of the situation, praised the principles laid down but criticized the address on the ground that it was too general in its entirety and completely lacking in concrete proposals. The editorial closes, however, on a note of optimism, saying that since Mr. Hoover's training had been specific, the country could expect a great deal of him.

On the same day, the Post had come out with praise for the president's first official statement, taking the view that his ideals were certainly praiseworthy and saying that criticism of the address as too general would be unfair, since such a message is not expected to enter into specific problems and detailed methods at any length. But at this point even qualified approval of the sort ended so far as the local newspapers were concerned. The Chronicle adopted a policy of suspended judgement, a variety of watchful waiting. The Post immediately began a highly critical attack on the new chief executive, his
policies, and his appointees.

The Farm Problem

First, and apparently most pressing among the problems faced by the new president was that of the farm situation. As he had promised, to do in his campaign and promised again to do in his inaugural address, Mr. Hoover called a special session of congress to deal with agricultural relief. Commented the Chronicle:

"The last occupant of the White House favored a do-nothing policy. Apparently his successor intends to change all that. Congress and the whole country will welcome action."

That any federal farm bill offered numerous difficulties was obvious from the outset. Immediately there was speculation on what would be the outcome of the president’s recommendation that the tariff be changed to favor the farmer. It seemed doubtful that Mr. Hoover could persuade congress to hold rates on industrial goods down while raising those on agricultural products. Early predictions were that possibly the farmer would emerge the loser in any tariff tinkering.

Criticism was also levelled at continued reclamation of agricultural lands in the far west when overproduction was already an acknowledged cause of the existing surpluses. Mr. Hoover and Secretary of the Interior Wilbur, the Post noted, were both Californians, but the entire nation would be called upon to pay the bills for reclamation.

At the same time rumors were circulating freely that certain members of congress favored inclusion of the export deben-
ture and the equalization fee in whatever farm bill they might eventually authorize. The debenture plan provided for a bounty, amounting to one-half of the tariff duty, to be paid on agricultural products, thus raising domestic prices to world prices plus one-half of the tariff rate on the particular commodity. The equalization fee was to be paid by the farmers, and was intended to cut surpluses. The portion of an agricultural staple necessary for domestic consumption was to be set aside and sold at a fixed price -- world price plus protective tariff duties. The surplus was then to be sold in the world market. The difference in the two prices was to be met by the producers of each commodity in the form of a tax. And Secretary of Agriculture Hyde was reported to believe that any plan adopted should provide for a method of curbing production. The latter idea found favor here, but the secretary's neglect of giving out concrete details about how this happy result was to be accomplished did not.

When the farm bill was reported ready for consideration in the house its principles were accepted as good, but there was complaint that no specific program could be found. The Chronicle summation is typical:

"The farm bill now reported as ready for the house simply sets up a half-billion dollar federal farm board and tells it to go to work on farm relief.

"So the new farm bill gives a new federal board more authority, and more money than the McNary-Haugen supporters
ever proposed, but it also places restrictions of operation on it that diminish its chances of success.

"Taking the new farm bill as a whole it should pass.... there is every reason to believe that it would eventually accomplish vast good for the country."

Such praise is far from being vociferous approbation, especially when considered in the light of another editorial in the same paper on the following day. The best that can be said for it is that it indicates some doubt as to the merits of the proposed measure. Further comments on the same subject after the congress had actually started debate on farm relief showed stronger support for the house bill as opposed to the senate measure, largely because the latter included the export debenture plan.

It was known that President Hoover did not favor the debenture, and there was speculation about what his course would be should the plan be a part of the measure eventually placed before him to sign or reject. But the bill as passed did not contain the plan after all, perhaps due largely to the president's opposition. The part he played in enactment of the legislation was large enough that the final bill was referred to as his work, despite the congressional wrangling which preceded passage:

"In an extraordinary degree the authorized program is Mr. Hoover's program. At his insistence the debenture clause in the bill was eventually thrown out, and the measure went to the executive desk in the form he desired it to come.... The
responsibility for it has been put squarely upon him. If it turns out well, he will be acclaimed as the saviour of agriculture. If it fails he must bear the burden of failure almost alone.

"The opinion is widespread that the program as authorized by congress will only reach to the surface of the farm problem, and will not offer a complete or permanent solution. Supplementary legislation is forecast. But to reiterate the statement above, it is necessary to wait and see how the law turns out." 12

Another criticism of the program was that the operation of the farm board might remove the fear of lower prices which would otherwise serve as a curb on overproduction.

When the plan actually went into operation its purpose was explained to be "to so help the farmer market his products that he will be able to take advantage of all tariff rates available, and to finance holding movements which will prevent disastrous price breaks at times when surpluses are produced." Nominees to fill places on the newly established board offered another problem, but it was eventually solved to the near satisfaction of even critics of the administration. Mild complaints continued, but by the autumn of 1929 the prevailing feeling was that the farm board was at least entitled to a chance to prove its value and should be released from the continued annoyance of the senate:

"Both the bill and board are entitled to a fair trial. Obviously three months is not a long enough time to set agri-
culture on its feet. Senatorial hurling of bricks at Chairman Legge and other members of his board because they do not immediately repeal the law of supply and demand and ignore the limitations on their activities set by the farm relief law, only serves to weaken farmer confidence in the board and impair its usefulness.

Reasonable hopes for the success of the board were expressed with an air of confidence, but there was natural doubt that it could provide a panacea for all the ills besetting the farmer. In the first place the problems were too numerous for immediate solution, and the reaction of the individual farmer to government concern with his business was still a factor to be reckoned with. Cotton and wheat crops had been overproduced, and continued to be so throughout the entire term of the board's operations. Greatest interest, of course, was attached here to the fate of the cotton farmers. Not unnaturally the feeling was that the acid test of the farm act's merits was the success of its operations in bringing relief to the raisers of this crop. But the board also had to deal with such difficulties as that of the Florida citrus fruit industry, which was plagued by the fruit fly to so great an extent that Secretary of Agriculture Hyde gave the matter special attention. If there were any real doubts at this time about the future success of the board in dealing with the situation they were perhaps best expressed by the Chronicle, which said that the partial or complete failure of the bill would offer a challenge to the Democrats to bring justice to agriculture.
After the senate confirmation of the members of the federal farm board the doings of that body dropped out of sight as far as editorial writers were concerned -- except for a few minor comments of an uncritical nature and an item on the inconsistency of conflicting government policies of reclamation and of abandoning marginal lands -- until the drought of mid-summer, 1930, brought them back into focus.

In June of 1930 the president had signed the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, which was designed to end unfair practices in the marketing of perishable agricultural commodities. In a press statement on the subject Mr. Hoover said that he had long favored such a piece of legislation and felt that all concerned with such commodities would agree with him. Probably his assumption was correct, at least as far as the South Texas sector was concerned, for the sole direct comment came from the Chronicle and called for farmer co-operation with the plan since it was conceived entirely in his interest.

By the early part of August the drought had assumed really serious proportions, but even in this time of great crisis the spirit of American co-operation was making itself felt. Government plans for relief met with approbation at this time rather than the criticism which was to be manifest as time for a new election came closer. Even the Post, ordinarily a severe critic of administration policies, commended the promptness of the government in formulating relief measures. Mr. Hoover's excellent record as a relief administrator was again cited.

To meet the crisis President Hoover took prompt steps. He first secured a report from the department of agriculture show-
ing the scope of the areas affected and the degree of suffering in each -- the whole totaled about a million farm families and about twenty million animals. He abandoned a scheduled trip to California, persuaded the railroads to reduce their rates fifty per cent on hauling food and supplies to afflicted areas, called a conference of the governors of the states concerned, and directed the department of justice to make public reports on any attempt to profiteer in food as a result of the drought. That the program was necessary, none denied, but some of the methods employed met with less approval:

"Reports agree that the 1930 drought has been one of the most serious in recent years. But a question remains whether the spectacular methods adopted by President Hoover to meet the drought emergency are justified, or advisable.

"Certainly the Federal government should do all within its power to alleviate distress among the people where drought conditions prevail. But relief measures apparently could have been taken just as effectively without such a blare of trumpets and so much alarmist propaganda.

"It is to be feared that the Hoover penchant for appointing boards, bureaus and commissions, and for dramatizing relief work and basking in the limelight as a good angel to the distressed, has entered into the drought situation. It may be, too, that a political element is involved."

To what extent the political element may have entered into such an editorial may also be called into question.
There seems to have been no general criticism at this time of the measures taken by the government. Indeed there was a mood of hope that success would result, a mood dispelled eventually by the continued difficulties encountered in getting any sort of relief bill through congress, the realization that no one really knew what to do, and the failure of farm board holding operations to secure results. Beyond these, any further developments in attitude may be considered as a part of the 1932 presidential campaign.

Hydro-electric Power

Public ownership of hydro-electric power had also been an important issue during the campaign of 1928. The assumption at that time was, at least in the opinions of the Houston newspapers, that Mr. Hoover favored private ownership of the industries except in a few particular instances, notably including the Muscle Shoals power plant. The plant had originally been built as a war industry, but had lain idle since its building. It was also capable of use as a fertilizer plant.

Consequently the issue again arose when the new administration took office. Dilatory tactics which had been employed during discussions on the subject in the past were recounted by the press, and current delays were severely criticized:

"At the rate at which progress has been made in deciding what to do with the great power plant, it will be another 100 years or more before it is put to use. Mr. Hoover is reputed to be a man who gets things done. Let's see him tackle the Muscle Shoals problem. That will be a real test for him."
The real question of what to do with Muscle Shoals was essentially the question of whether the government should be allowed to compete with private industry in any field. When, after more delays, the congress eventually (June, 1930) adopted the Norris bill for government ownership and operation of the plant there had been no indication from the White House of whether or not the president favored it. In the absence of any announcements to the contrary he was expected to sign and put the idle plant into immediate operation. But at that stage the whole question of government competition with private enterprise, and all the implications thereof, was reopened. For the president vetoed the measure, and the only comfort to be derived from that was clarification of his stand on the matter. Observers felt that he had been unfortunately slow in so doing, for had he made his views known earlier much more progress could have been made toward eventual disposition of the plant than had been made. Late in November of the same year Senator Norris served notice that he planned to demand action, but it was not until the following January that the big plant on the Tennessee again made the editorial pages.

When the new form of the bill had been accepted by the congressional conference committee studying it, the Chronicle stated that it should be speedily approved so that the power plant could be put into operation for the benefit of the people of this country. The Post, on the other hand agreed with the viewpoint presumed to be held by the president that government operation of utilities would bear strong resemblance to
soviet ideas. On March third the president again vetoed a congressional measure for disposal of the Muscle Shoals plant, and the senate upheld his action. In accordance with previously expressed views, the Post again supported the president on this issue:

"In his veto of the Muscle Shoals bill President Hoover ably set forth the doctrine that the government should refrain from commercial and industrial activity in competition with its citizens. That is sound American doctrine, which needs to be upheld, if we are to avoid following in the footsteps of Soviet Russia.

"The proposition that the United States government operate the Muscle Shoals power plant and peddle power over the South-east was as thoroughly a 'socialistic project as ever was suggested in this country."

The same editorial also commented upon the other great power project of the government, Boulder Dam, this time in an unfavorable way:

"While this much may be said in regard to the president's veto, it may also be said that Mr. Hoover was inconsistent in vetoing the Muscle Shoals bill when he just a little while ago had signed the bill providing for Boulder dam. The Boulder, or Hoover, dam project likewise puts the government not only into the power business, but in the water business. As a Federal project it was even more undesirable than Muscle Shoals."

The above was merely a re-expression of views expressed earlier. Rears had been felt that the government was using
the threat that it would compete with private industry to coerce private industry to lease the dam." Another objection was that Arizona, one of the five states concerned, had expressed itself as violently opposed to the project. While opposing it on these grounds, the Post apparently felt great admiration for the vision which could conceive and bring into reality the tremendous enterprise. It praised sincerely the idea of naming the dam for the president, but could not refrain even on that occasion from making one remark of criticism:

"It would be following a precedent to name the new dam for President Hoover, under whose administration its erection was authorized.... Its construction will be the greatest engineering feat of its kind in the history of the country. The president is one of the country's greatest engineers, and it would be an honor fittingly bestowed to select his name for the project. And, then, too, the president is a Californian, and this dam is primarily a California enterprise, even though it is located 'in Arizona.'"

Tariff

No question, with the exception of prohibition, had received so much attention during the campaign of 1928 as did that of the tariff. The Republican party had followed its traditional policy of favoring a high protective tariff, at that time adding the claim that such a tariff on farm products would allow the farmer to share in the prevailing national prosperity. Even the Democrats had soft pedalled their usual opposition to the principles of a protective tariff.
It was only natural, then, that when the president called his special session of congress for farm relief, the tariff should be placed on the agenda for early action. Editorial predictions of dire events to follow were soon being freely made. Typical of these is a Chronicle comment:

"The new Republican administration will be faced by... that little group of Pennsylvania protectionists who feel and always have felt that by some dispensation of Providence they have been divinely ordained to assist in the raising of tariff schedules.

"... To the old guard of the Republican party, tariff revision means... revision upward for the benefit of already highly protected industries.

"... To the victor belongs the spoils -- if not offices, at least higher schedules."

The last paragraph includes a very unsubtle comment that one Mr. Grundy, a millionaire in favor of high tariff, had contributed heavily to Hoover campaign funds.

As the year progressed it became increasingly apparent that predictions of difficulties in framing a satisfactory tariff bill were entirely justified. The special session of congress called early in 1929 passed without the completion of a new tariff, for the legislators early discarded the president's proposal that limited tariff readjustments be made in order to favor the farmer. Instead they took up the task of writing an entire new tariff.

During the discussions many proposals for changes of
various types were made. Mr. A.P. Tennis, vice chairman of the tariff commission, suggested that the whole problem of regulating the tariff rates should be put in the power of the commission. Opposition to this was voiced by the Post on the ground that such a plan would extend government by bureau and take government further away from the people. It felt certain that neither congress nor the people themselves would favor the idea, although the president probably would.* Another like proposal was that for a 'flexibility clause, which would allow the president to modify the schedules. Again the objection was voiced that to do so would be to transfer a governmental power from the department which was actually supposed to exercise it. The export debenture, discussed above, at one time crept in.

As the new tariff took shape the feeling that the farming interests were being neglected for the benefit of manufacturers grew. For an example of the operation of this principle the Post quoted the disparity between duties on hides (10%) and that on boots and shoes (20-35%), and expressed the opinion:

"The Republican majority of the ways and means committee, which has compiled the tariff bill, might as well drop all pretense of being concerned with giving the farming and ranching interests relief through the medium of the tariff, and confess that its principal purpose is to use this called session of congress to give the big manufacturing interests in the East another windfall." *

Certain specific items created problems. When the
Timberlake resolution for a tariff on sugar from the Philippines was introduced immediate protest followed. Secretary Stimson's opposition to this was heartily approved. Trade between the United States and her possessions should be free, for otherwise the trust of a dependent people would be betrayed. Such was the opinion of the secretary.«

Throughout the battle the lack of a concrete statement by the president on the tariff was felt to be a handicap. Part of the blame for the failure to pass a tariff bill by the end of the special session was laid on Mr. Hoover.« Congressional wrangling dragged bitterly on, and still the president remained silent.« The entire G.O.P. was reported to be in difficulties over the measure, and the administration opponents here were nothing loath in commenting on the fact. The Chronicle said cryptically that "The fight over the present tariff bill will picture the true political alignment of the country much better than the election of last year pictured it," and later noted that, although there was some possibility of eventual peace, the fact might as well be understood that the battle even at the time was not over principle, but was merely a scramble for favors.« The Post's remarks were, if possible, even more critical. The following are typical:

"Whether Mr. Hoover can extricate his party from the difficulties and embarrassments brought on by the tariff fight is doubtful. Mr. Hoover's administration so far has been notable mainly for its major blunders and its steady loss of prestige."«
"Sooner or later President Hoover will be called to account by members of his party on the score that he has failed to dis¬play leadership or to take steps to avert the situation now im¬pending." 55

Both local papers waxed indignant over the proposed change from a bipartisan tariff commission to a nonpartisan one. They informed their readers that the change would take all limits off high protectionist groups and enable them to achieve their objectives. 56

When the bill was finally framed it did not include the export debenture plan, but neither did it contain the provision for flexibility desired by the president. The bipartisan tariff commission was also retained. 57 Whether or not Mr. Hoover would sign became an important question, and when it became known that he would do so he was charged with lack of courage. 58

From the moment that the Smoot-Hawley tariff became law it also became a target. Immediately after it was put into effect it was criticized for hurting rather than stimulating business. 59 Its results in the sphere of domestic economy were deplored, and the blame for the whole thing was laid at the president's door. Undoubtedly editorials like the following one from the Post tended to hurt Mr. Hoover's standing in Houston:

"As the first two years of the Hoover administration are brought under review, the fact stands out more clearly that the first big mistake of the president was that of permitting the tariff to be raised to unprecedented levels. If he is denied a second term, that mistake will have been indirectly
responsible in large measure.

"And that mistake was made by Mr. Hoover because he lacked two things that he should have had. One was a thorough knowledge of the tariff question, and the other was the courage to oppose, even to the extent of a veto, a measure which he was suspicious of from the beginning.

"A greater betrayal of the agricultural interests of the country has never been witnessed. For this the president is going to have to answer in the coming election. No one envies those G.O.P. chieftains, who have started out this early to mollify the farmers of the West, their job."

The tariff thus became a campaign issue for 1932.

The results of the new tariff in the field of foreign trade was also food for thought. Before the bill was enacted there were reminders that retaliation would probably follow its passage, and that the United States could hardly expect to collect those debts left over from the first world war without being paid some portion in goods -- the chance of collection would thus be endangered. When American export business declined and revenues from the Panama Canal fell off, the tariff was blamed. And retaliatory measures by foreign countries were indisputable evidence of the evil results of high tariffs.

Internal Revenue

Early in the Hoover administration, while national prosperity was still an accepted fact, observers looked confidently forward to a time when tax rates would be cut. The
president was known to favor governmental economy, and when he did away with the expense of a presidential yacht and came out in favor of cutting taxes hope ran high. His position was by far more popular than that of Secretary Mellon and Senator Smoot, who wished to apply the surplus revenue upon the national debt. But by July of 1929 Mr. Hoover was warning the nation that perhaps it would be better after all to wait and see if the national revenue really would continue to be large enough to warrant a tax reduction. A deficit in the post office department caused concern, and the interior department requested a larger appropriation for maintenance of national parks. Nevertheless, Secretary Mellon chose November of 1929 to make a request for a tax cut. Locally the request was taken with reservations:

"Secretary Mellon... may have had some prompting from President Hoover, who some time ago expressed the hope that a slash in taxes might be effected in 1930. Hope of replenishing the waning prestige of the Republican party may have some part in the secretary's move. At the same time it is a business proposition, and a secretary of the treasury would hardly dare recommend a reduction in a tax rate, if there were any likelihood of a deficit resulting therefrom. The recommendation is therefore to be accepted as having been made in good faith."

By the early part of 1930 a treasury deficit seemed increasingly probable. The president's own admitted mistake in predicting a large surplus was pounced upon by the Post:

"Mr. Hoover's recent avowed miscalculation of the Nation's
finances makes one wonder whether he hadn't misplaced his glasses or something. Only a few days ago he pointed with pride to a promised treasury surplus of about $40,000,000 for next year. Now, in a letter to the chairman of the senate appropriations committee, he views with alarm the prospect, discovered upon a re-examination of the budget, indicating a deficit of perhaps $30,000,000. That makes a difference of only $70,000,000 between the president's expectations of last week, and of this week.... Perhaps we will ultimately be given final, unchallenged figures -- within 50 or a hundred millions, a trifling amount -- as to just what the treasury outlook is."

Doubts about the probability of a tax cut became stronger as it became apparent that the treasury faced a deficit and that increased appropriations would be necessary in order to carry on public construction, federal aid to roads, farm relief, waterway development, and flood control. By December of 1930 the idea of a tax cut faded from the national picture, and in March of the following year a treasury deficit was assured.

Increasingly, blame was being placed upon the administration for the existing conditions. The question was raised as to why the administration had not launched its economy program much earlier and thus avoided the present troubles, and indignant protest followed Secretary Mellon's proposal to increase certain forms of taxation. The remedy offered instead is characteristic:

"Secretary Mellon's proposals for new Federal taxes and the extension of income levies to low-salaried workers now exempt
are just another manifestation of the Hoover administration's inability to cope with economic problems.

"Probably it has never occurred to Mr. Mellon or President Hoover that the drastic decline in Federal revenue has been due to falling incomes which are a direct result of the strangulation of industry by high tariffs.

"Rather than increase tax burdens, let down the tariff barriers and bring about a resumption of foreign trade and industrial activity. This will produce more income and more taxes for Mr. Mellon to disburse."

Inland Waterways and Flood Control

There was local agreement with the president's views on development of inland waterways and flood control. In October of 1929 Mr. Hoover spoke in Louisville on the subject. Reviews in the Houston papers had a distinctly favorable tone on this occasion. The Chronicle referred to "A Mighty Vision of Transportation," calling the president's policy "comprehensive and inspiring," and saying further:

"The vision, however, is not a vision alone. It is the considered and pledged program of a very practical-minded president of the nation, and will be supported not as a partisan measure but as one of direct interest to all parties and all sections of the country."

The Post noted with approbation the idea that the government should only pioneer in a field until private enterprise could take over, and saw two great virtues in the president's
program: the plan for comprehensive development, and the abandon-
ment of government operation of water carriers to private enter-
prises. At this point the Post made the statement, which it
was to follow up whenever waterways were again the subject for
discussion, that development of inland waterways should have
priority over development of such other waterways as the St.
Lawrence, the Panama canal, and the proposed Nicaraguan canal.

A Chronicle editorial of somewhat later date adequately
sums up the prevailing attitude upon the subject:

"The Middle West expects to receive a share of the growing
trade with South and Central America. Texas and other states
of the South directly facing the new and undeveloped countries
across the Caribbean naturally count on securing the lion's
share. But with St. Louis and Kansas City and Omaha and Louis-
ville linked to the gulf by means of inland waterways the pros-
perity of the Middle West will be greatly enhanced.

"Not only that. The safety of the Southern states along
the Mississippi will be guaranteed by the flood control system
which keeps the swift-flowing waters of the north away from the
slower currents of the south until all danger of floods is
averted. The process will naturally be a slow one, but the
federal government is proceeding with its task and the next few
years should see notable improvements. The disaster of 1927
is still fresh enough in people's minds to make all inhabitants
of the Mississippi valley pull together for their common pro-
tection." 

Thus it may be seen that the president's efforts to carry
out provisions of an act passed by congress in 1927 met with continued approval locally.  

Depression -- Relief Plans

In March of 1929 the country was riding the crest of a great wave of prosperity. The Republican party had made much of the financial soundness of the nation in its campaign, and at the time there was apparently no serious popular apprehension lest there be a change. Lloyd Morris, in his excellent Postscript to Yesterday, gives a clear picture of the America of that time:

"'Normalcy' was being ushered in by the ubiquitous wail of the saxophone. By petting parties and gate crashing. By drunken brawls in exclusive country clubs. By bootleggers and speak-easies; rumrunners, hijacking, bank robberies. By a procession of weeping women eleven blocks long which filed past the mortal remains of Rudolph Valentino. By the cozy extermination of new enterprisers whose disgruntled competitors took them 'for a ride' or buried them alive in barrels filled with cement. The Federal government fostered a boom in padlocks. Jewelers did a brisk trade in hip flasks. These new accessories were usually made of silver; but one could likewise procure them in gold, sometimes encrusted with gems. For this was the coprosperity era of Harding, Coolidge and the luckless Hoover -- who foresaw a national destiny of two automobiles in every garage, a fat chicken in every pot. Cooks, bootblacks, clerks, housewives, teachers, errand boys were plunging into the maelstrom of a runaway bull market in Wall Street."
Even when the inevitable depression came there were very few who recognized its seriousness. The Chronicle, for example, commented that since stocks had gone down, bonds might become more popular as an investment, and that would be a good thing. By January of 1930 the same paper was still inclined toward encouraging reports, saying that there was then more money in the pockets of the small investor than usual. Even the Post at this time manifested no serious concern, and indeed commended the president upon his business program and supported his plan for speeding needed public works.

Apparently the attitude that everything would be all right in a little while was not confined to this locality, but prevailed nationally. There were no dismal reports until June of 1930, at which time there was sad acceptance of the fact that a depression was really upon the nation. On the tenth of June the Post made the somewhat wry comment that, while it would be unjust to blame Mr. Hoover for the current depression, it seemed that his administration certainly had not had much luck in restoring prosperity.

After that time comment grew increasingly bitter, sounding more and more like the forces of desperation seeking a scapegoat on whom the blame could be laid. Debt payments from Europe were welcomed with joy. And Mr. Hoover steps to alleviate suffering did not meet with the approval which might have been expected. Unfortunately, the glittering promises of the Republican campaign of 1928 left the president singularly vulnerable to precisely the type of attack most frequently levelled at him.
When the first hysteria after realization died down there was a more rational type of discussion of the president's relief plans. When it became known that he intended to call no special session of the newly-elected Democratic congress to deal with relief, there was even approval. Special sessions were considered by and large ineffective.

Specific efforts on the part of Mr. Hoover were sometimes given guarded approval, but the response to his demand that congress immediately authorize the expenditure, under his direction, of $150,000,000 was more favorable. By this time the country seems to have been ready to cease partisan strife over major problems. The one note of disapproval was sounded by the Chronicle, which doubted that congress would care to increase the sum already proposed. The Post, on the other hand, registered its approval. The course of events in this case may be readily seen in the following excerpts from three Post editorials:

"Critics of the president's request to be allowed to direct the use of the $150,000,000 to be asked of congress to aid the relief of the unemployed have been disarmed by his explanation that the money would be applied to hastening the execution of projects already authorized by congress. A more practical, effective plan for getting this money to work quickly could not be suggested."

He then issued a sharp rebuke to congress because he was denied authority to spend the above mentioned money. Although the paper considered the message a tactless one, it made this
admission:

"It is clear, however, that the Hoover popularity in Washington has waned almost to the vanishing point, and he alone is responsible for this latest 'break' against him. It is too early to predict how this situation will react on his political fortunes in 1932. A factor that must not be overlooked is that people are not fond of congress, and in a battle between the senate and the president, the folks in the provinces usually side with the executive." 92

And when congress reversed its stand:

"It is worth noting, however, that seldom has the president received so much approbation from the press of the Nation as he was accorded when he boiled over at what he believed was politics playing in the houses." 93

"By no stretch of the imagination may these comments be considered riotous approval, but they were the best the president received at this time. More typical were criticisms for not recognizing the seriousness of the situation much earlier, and demands that the utmost in economy be practiced while all federal employees be retained on the payroll. 94

Only in cases where there was some justification for belief that a relief measure was a bipartisan one was there any tendency to give it wholehearted support. Otherwise comment was neutral, or highly critical. Contrasting examples may serve to illustrate this.

When the Democratic congress took over, one of the first
pieces of relief legislation upon which it was called to act
was the president's proposal to strengthen the banking structure.
When leaders of the majority party also espoused the plan,
editorial writers apparently could not express their approval
rapidly enough. The Post stated that early enactment of the
program was highly desirable, and the Chronicle agreed, adding
that credit should be given for the measure where credit was
really due — that is, to the co-operative Democrats who helped
sponsor the measure.  

But sentiment was very different when the time actually
came to pass a composite relief bill. Mr. Hoover had always
favored the use of private organizations to handle relief
problems, but the new congress disagreed with him. The newspa-
pers took the side of congress:

"Two developments have forced the president to change his
attitude toward direct Federal relief to the unemployed needy.
One is the pressure from the Democrats in congress for measures
that will bring the government into the field of relief. The
other is the knowledge that local relief funds everywhere are
becoming exhausted and that something drastic and definite
must be done at once if multitudes of Americans are saved from
actual starvation."  

In the course of the disagreement over methods of offering
relief between congress and the president, Speaker of the House
Garner offered a plan of his own, which was immediately hailed
as the only real solution for the problem:

"There is sound reason why the administration should approve
the plan and put the weight of its influence behind the move-
ment to have it speedily incorporated into law. The plan does
not call for any new governmental agencies. It would use the
machinery now in existence, much of which was created at the
instance of this administration, and which is in the hands of
Mr. Hoover."

Such was the economic situation of the nation at the time
of the 1932 campaign.

Footnotes

1. The Houston Press; March 1, 1929; "President Hoover"
   Ibid.; March 5, 1929; "Hoover's Inaugural"

2. The Houston Chronicle; March 6, 1929; "The Inaugural Address":
   "President Hoover's inaugural speech laid down principles
   which the majority of Americans will commend."

3. The Houston Post; March 6, 1929; "The Hoover Inaugural Address":
   "The outstanding feature of the address is the emphasis which
the new chief executive places on law enforcement generally and
dry law enforcement specifically. Mr. Hoover as president is an
ardent dry, and his pronouncements on the liquor issue should
please even the most zealous divisions of the dry army.
   
   "... As the expression of an ideal it merits praise. It is
not expected that an inaugural address will enter at any length
into specific problems before the country or detailed methods
proposed for their solution. It is unfair, therefore, to criti-
cize Mr. Hoover's words or speech on the score that they deal
mainly in generalities.

"Here and there in the inaugural address are statements which
have an immediate significance. Mr. Hoover speaks of the need
for 'limited' tariff revisions in the interest of farmers,
laborers and manufacturers and repeats his campaign pledge to
call a special session for farm relief, including consideration
of the tariff. The inference is that the new president will
oppose a general tariff hike, demanded by some of his strongest
supporters in the North and East."

4. The Houston Chronicle; March 10, 1929; "The New Congress"

5. The Houston Post; March 11, 1929; "Tariff Tinkering Invited":
   "The farmer's problem is to sell his products at a price, and
to be enabled to buy necessities at a price, that will enable
him to make a profit. If the tariff on the goods the farmer
buys is shoved up along with a tariff on what he sells, he will
be no better off. If he is as well off as when he started he
will be lucky."
6. Ibid.; March 25, 1929; "A Waste of Money"
7. The Houston Chronicle; April 3, 1929; "Another Ghost Arises": "The nation's billionaires, we are told, decline to advise congress on the formation of a farm relief program. Rumor has it that they received a hint to let congress make up its own mind on the problem.

"Secretary of Agriculture Hyde says any plan adopted must provide for restraint on production. Yes, yes. But how is it to be done? That is the vital thing.

"So that term equalization fee is slipping back into the vocabulary of Washington. That is the heart of the one definite plan in which the farmers have had faith. Mr. Hoover may yet have to do battle with it. Certainly he will have to bid high in order to have its ghost laid."
8. Ibid.; April 16, 1929; "The Farm Bill"
9. Ibid.; April 17, 1929; "Mr. Hoover's Program": "The president's program will mean much or little, according to how congress sees fit to carry his general principles into specific acts. And the president's farm relief program if adopted as outlined in the farm bill now before the house, will mean much or little according to how its very general principles are put into effect by the proposed farm board.

"General authorization now with specific executive acts to come later seem to be the program. As a consequence the public will have to wait a good while to pass judgment on the wisdom or weakness of the measures passed."
10. Ibid.; April 19, 1929; 'The House Bill Best': "The outcome is doubtful because we do not know how the Hoover administration, or any other administration, would use the mechanism given it. However, a mechanism is provided, one which should be very powerful, and it seems to have safeguards about it which will prevent radical misuses. So the Chronicle is for the bill.

"Word comes that the senate has added the so-called debenture plan to the house bill.

"...the debenture plan should be defeated. The farm bill as it is now before the house should be passed."
Ibid.; April 24, 1929; "Better Drop It": "Why is this debenture plan, anyway?

"It wasn't mentioned at the Republican national convention last year. It isn't mentioned in the Republican platform.

"It wasn't mentioned at the Democratic national convention last year. It isn't mentioned in the Democratic platform.

"Why then is this plan put forward now? Seemingly merely because it offers a means of opposition to farm legislation and of opposition to the administration.

"The sooner it is withdrawn the better for the reputation of everyone backing it."
Ibid.; June 4, 1929; "Logic and Debenture": "Contending for it may serve very well to demonstrate that
the Republican tariff is in fact a governmental bonus (a fact which the Republicans have always tried to hide), but contending for it as an effective means of farm relief is sheer economic folly, and the sooner the cause is dropped the better.

11. The Houston Post; May 13, 1929; "Hoover Faces Predicament":

"What will Mr. Hoover do? He is strenuously opposed to the debenture provision in the farm relief bill. Would he veto the measure and let Congress go home without a farm relief program, the formulation of which was one of the chief purposes of calling the National legislature together, being provided? Because Mr. Hoover disapproves of the debenture plan, will farm relief again be postponed?

"Likewise, in the case of the tariff bill? The bill that has been presented is certainly not what the president asked for."

12. Ibid.; June 16, 1929; "Farm Relief at Last"
13. Ibid.; June 19, 1929; "Encouraging Surplus Production"
14. The Houston Chronicle; June 18, 1929; "Two Visions of Progress"
15. The Houston Post; October 9, 1929; "Board Entitled to a Chance"
16. The Houston Chronicle; July 17, 1929; "Suiting Production to Needs";

"President Hoover's declaration to his new farm board that one of its major responsibilities will be to find methods of better adjusting production to needs must sound especially timely to Texans who just now are reading reports of an increase in the cotton acreage in the state, and in the South generally."

Ibid.; August 15, 1929; "The Farm Board is Busy"
17. Ibid.; November 10, 1929; "Farm Relief For Texas"

"This puts the farm relief proposition to the acid test. And as Governor Moody pointed out some time ago, since the act has been passed and the taxpayers of the Nation assessed for the money, Texas might as well get her share of the benefits, if any, even though it is from a Republican administration."

18. Ibid.; August 29, 1929; "Protect the Fruit Industry"

"Secretary Hyde is entitled to a favorable response from Congress when he asks aid in fighting the most deadly enemy that has ever attacked the citrus fruit industry in America."

19. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; June 13, 1929; "A Party Mission"
20. The Houston Post; May 4, 1930; "Farm Act Will Stand"

Ibid.; May 8, 1930; "Chairman Legge Carries On"
21. Ibid.; November 21, 1929; "Hyde's Farm Relief Plan"

"Mr. Hyde would control farm surplus by abandoning the poor land or the 'marginal lands.' It is a sensible suggestion.

"Before Secretary Hyde can get very far with his proposal, however, he will have to secure a halt on reclamation work. While the Federal government pours money into projects that turn swamp land and desert land into producing farm land, it will be difficult to control surpluses.... As a matter of fact,
appropriating money to handle crop surpluses while expending money for extensive reclamation enterprises which increase the surpluses is like pouring in at the bunghole while the spigot is open. It doesn't get anywhere."


23. The Houston Chronicle; July 22, 1930; "The A B C of the Farm Plan!"

24. Ibid.; August 14, 1930; "Drought and the Nation"

25. The Houston Post; August 16, 1930; "Drought Relief Projected": "The Federal government is moving with commendable promptness in taking the initiative in formulating relief measures. In the realm of relief administration, Mr. Hoover is thoroughly at home."


27. Ibid., pp. 42-43.

28. The Houston Post; August 21, 1930; "The Drought in Politics"

29. The Houston Chronicle; August 26, 1930; "Better Help the Present Plan"

The Houston Post; January 10, 1931; "Useless Argument": "The administration should be willing to accept this alternative. Certainly it could not take the position that those who are hungry should be denied the assistance. The Democrats and Republicans aligned with them would welcome such a solution."

The solution referred to was a provision for food loans to stricken farm families.

Ibid.; January 16, 1931; "The 1932 Accounting": "President Hoover's victory in striking the food loans provision from the drought relief bill is marked up in big black letters on the bill of account which he must settle with the voters when the presidential year of 1932 rolls around. This victory of politics, won at the expense of human misery, will be hard to explain when the next roundup of votes is launched.

"President Hoover, apparently, has shifted the burden of relief to the Red Cross, which now must make a public appeal for funds. The failure of the administration to act in this emergency will not be forgotten."

30. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle, December 7, 1930; "The Message to Congress"

The Houston Chronicle; April 23, 1931; "Facing a Few Facts"

The Houston Post; September 7, 1930; "Agriculture and Wages": "Mr. Legge's latest theory, as expounded to the New York Grange, appears to hold little if any merit. No right-thinking person can subscribe to the doctrine that agriculture would be aided by impairing the earning power of workers in industry."

31. The Houston Chronicle; March 25, 1931; "What Next In Farm Relief"

Ibid.; August 6, 1931; "Uncle Sam Isn't Santa Claus"

Ibid.; August 13, 1931; "Williams' Monstrosity"

Ibid.; August 19, 1931; "A Better Farm Program"

Ibid.; July 6, 1932; "The Farm Board Gets Out"
If the government directed the operation, the government would be placed in direct competition with private interests manufacturing the same product for which Muscle Shoals is fitted to manufacture. It need not be said it is inadvisable for the government to be in competition with private citizens in any line of industry or business.

Had the president come out at the beginning of his administration, or at the assembling of congress, in favor of private operation of Muscle Shoals, by this time some disposition might have been made of the gigantic power plant on the Tennessee. His delay means that the issue will have to wait a long time yet before being settled. It is an economic crime to allow such a costly plant as that at Muscle Shoals to remain idle year after year. Mr. Hoover has always left the impression that he was opposed to putting the government into business, but he failed, until recently, to be specific in his attitude toward Muscle Shoals. It is a step toward ultimate utilization of the plant for him to come out in the open with his views on who should operate it.

In itself, the Boulder Dam enterprise is one to arouse the admiration of the American people. But there are some phases of it which are decidedly distasteful to the great majority. One of these is the putting the government in competition with private enterprise, and the other is the injustice that is done to Arizona.

The Chronicle did not commit itself on this issue.

Mr. Hoover has indicated he does not favor much upward revision in the duties on manufactured products. What he would do with the augmented power to raise or lower schedules is problematical. His course in that respect might or might not be objectionable.

The favored interests are insistent upon flexibility, since it leaves the way open for them to get through action by the
president, the maximum in tariff benefits. The president's favor for the provision arises no doubt from his partiality to those interests and also out of his bureaucratic training which naturally would lead him to approve of enlarging the powers of the executive."

The Houston Chronicle; October 3, 1929; "The Flexible Tariff Provision":

"The power of adjusting rates should have been taken away from the president. The Chronicle believes it should never have been lodged with him. Here it should be placed may be difficult of determination, but we might as well recognize that we are making no headway toward a scientific handling of tariff problems."

47. The Houston Post; May 29, 1929; "Unfair to Farmers"

Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; June 21, 1929; "Where Principles Are Lacking"

48. The Houston Post; May 25, 1929; "Losing Deal For the Producers"

49. Ibid.; March 22, 1929; "A Selfish Scheme"

Ibid.; April 25, 1929; "Stimson Hits Sugar Tariff"

50. Ibid.; June 21, 1929; "Congress Takes a Recess":

"The work might have been further along had the president been more communicative on the kind of a bill he would approve. He can not escape part of the blame for the delay in getting the tariff bill out of the way."

51. Ibid.; July 20, 1929; "Hoover, Mum on Tariff":

"If he is still of the mind that characterized him when he called congress, he will veto the measure, when it finally comes before him. As a matter of fact nobody expects him to do anything of the sort."

Ibid.; July 21, 1929; "To Brush Up on Tariff"

Ibid.; August 7, 1929; "Hoover's Silence on the Tariff":

"Perhaps Mr. Hoover is playing a shrewd political game in saddling the odium of the tariff bill upon congress."

52. The Houston Chronicle; July 24, 1929; "The Tariff Rebellion"

53. Ibid.; August 2, 1929; "Possibilities of Tariff Peace"

54. The Houston Post; July 31, 1929; "The Senate and the Tariff Fight"

55. Ibid.; August 18, 1929; "The G.O.P. In Its Own Web"

56. The Houston Chronicle; August 10, 1929; "Two Tariff Iniquities":

"The first is the proposal to abolish the bipartisan nature of the tariff commission, thus enabling the president to name its members from his own party. The second is the provision that in the case of custom valuations, the only appeal is to the secretary of the treasury, whose decision is to be final, thus preventing a settlement in court.

"These two provisions would give to a protectionist administration the opportunity of raising the tariff duties almost at will. Believers in a just system should fight these proposals to the last ditch."

The Houston Post; August 15, 1929; "The Non-Partisan Tariff Idea":
"Not satisfied with nullifying the intent and purpose of the law which created the tariff commission, the Hoover administration is seeking to reorganize the commission along strictly partisan lines, making it more than ever a tool of high protectionist groups."

57. Ibid.; October 4, 1929; 'A Great Democratic Victory':

"The president was able to keep the debenture plan out of the pending tariff bill, but he is not able to keep the flexible clause in.

"The senate's vote on flexibility is, therefore, a victory for constitutional government, and this is the most important victory of all."

Ibid.; October 8, 1929; 'Another Tariff Victory':

"The victory of the Democratic-Republican insurgent coalition over the president in the fight over the flexible provision in the tariff bill has overshadowed another victory won subsequently by the same group. Reference is made to the vote to retain the bipartisan tariff commission of six members, in preference to the house plan for a commission of seven members chosen without regard to party affiliations.... If both the flexible provision and the seven-member commission, named without regard to the commissioners' party allegiance, had been accepted, the president would have been able to appoint a commission composed entirely of men of his own party, subject to his domination, and thus could have more fully controlled changes in the tariff rates.... The proposal to appoint commissioners regardless of party affiliations sounds like taking the tariff out of politics. Practically, it would be putting the tariff deeper into politics."

58. Ibid.; September 21, 1929; 'Will Hoover Reverse Himself?':

"If the president signs this bill, he ought forever afterward keep silent about being concerned for the welfare of the common people, the consuming masses which for years have been exploited by high tariff beneficiaries."

Ibid.; October 21, 1929; 'Tariff Bill Veto Looms':

"Anyone who is familiar with the characteristics of the president can see why he would be sorely tempted to veto the measure if it came to him with the flexible clause left out. He made a vigorous fight for flexibility, and if he cannot have it in the proposed law, he can just let well-enough alone, and allow the Fordney-McCumber act, which contains a flexible provision, to remain in force. In the pending bill, an extension of executive power in changing tariff rates is provided, over what is allowed in the Fordney-McCumber law. The president is anxious to have that extension of his power.... If the debenture scheme is written into the bill, as now is being threatened, it is virtually certain that a veto will materialize. No flexibility, but debenture instead, will make the measure unacceptable to Mr. Hoover."

Ibid.; May 29, 1930; 'Knifing the Tariff Bill':

"But Mr. Hoover has avoided making a decision, and he is still trying to avoid making a decision between the demands of the people and the demands of special interests. He will doubtless
be glad if congress takes such action as will prevent the necessity of his deciding whether this bill shall become a law."

59. Ibid.; June, 17, 1930; "Tariff Revision Assured":
"Mr. Hoover discloses unmistakably that he is not enthusiastic for the measure as it is coming to him.... In effect, Mr. Hoover appears to be trying to wash his hands of the whole business. It was scarcely to be believed that he would have had the courage to veto."

60. Ibid.; June 20, 1930; "An Unfavorable Reaction":
"Getting the bill out of the way has not stimulated and encouraged business, as the president expected. The opposite seems to be true. And the opposite promises to become even more pronounced as the year advances."

61. Ibid.; March 18, 1931; "A Tragic Blunder"
62. Ibid.; June 14, 1929; Tariff and War Debts
63. Ibid.; March 1, 1931; "A Jute Tariff":
"The effects of raising tariff barriers about the country has been seen in a steady decline of American export business. The tendency to place a high tariff on every commodity which competes with an American product will lead us eventually to commercial isolation."

64. Ibid.; May 27, 1930; "Canada Prepares a Blow"
65. Ibid.; July 12, 1930; "France and Our Tariff"
66. Ibid.; September 13, 1930; "Denmark's Protest"

67. Ibid.; March 28, 1929; "Mayflower Decommissioned"
68. Ibid.; March 26, 1929; "Prosperity Brings Surplus":
"Another Federal tax cut will be in order soon, unless expenditures are allowed to increase sharply. Mr. Hoover hasn't said much about economy, but he is known to be the enemy of waste. There is hope for another reduction."

69. Ibid.; April 8, 1929; "Hoover For Tax Cut":
"Mr. Hoover, apparently, thinks the taxpayer should be given more direct relief. The president's position is more popular, to say the least."

70. Ibid.; April 24, 1930; "The Nation's Pocketbook"
71. Ibid.; August 25, 1930; "Saving the Tax Cut":
"Mr. Hoover is extremely eager, of course, to avoid a deficit
and a consequent tax raise, and every taxpayer sympathizes with him, though few who are informed as to the actual situation can share his optimism at this time. The increased appropriations for public construction, for Federal aid to roads, for farm relief, for waterway development, for flood control works, surely make it doubtful whether a departmental economy program can assure a balance between revenue and expenditures this fiscal year. Mr. Mellon did not think so until after he had talked with Mr. Hoover."

72. Ibid.; December 5, 1930; "Tax Reduction Goes":

"Finally, the president has gotten around to an admission that the treasury faces a deficit, and that the one per cent tax reduction authorized for this year can not possibly be retained. Mr. Hoover is about the last to admit that this condition exists."

73. Ibid.; March 25, 1931; "The Treasury Deficit"
74. Ibid.; May 21, 1931; "Governmental Economy"
75. Ibid.; May 30, 1931; "Mellon Tax Reforms"
76. The Houston Chronicle; October 25, 1929; "A Mighty Vision of Transportation"
77. The Houston Post; October 26, 1929; "Hoover's Waterway Program"
78. Ibid.; October 27, 1929; "Middle West and Canals"
Ibid.; October 31, 1929; "Waterway Development"
Ibid.; May 5, 1930; "A Nicaraguan Canal"
79. The Houston Chronicle; August 23, 1930; "The Importance of Inland Waterways"
80. Only on a single minor occasion was there disagreement with Mr. Hoover. In May of 1929, Senator Hawes declared that the government should pay for land taken for levee and flowage purposes. And on May 26, 1929, the Post printed the following comment:

"The president's reaction to the Missouri senator's protest indicates that he will favor a review of the plans, with the possibility of a change in at least some phases of that now in force."

The Post desired that the flood control plans referred to be put into effect without any delay whatsoever.

82. The Houston Chronicle; October 30, 1929; "The Stock Deflation"
83. Ibid.; January 7, 1930; "Checking Up on the Market Crash"
84. The Houston Post; November 20, 1929; "Hoover's Business Program"
Ibid.; December 7, 1929; "Hoover Advises Work":

"But when the president urges the heads of business houses and industries to keep as many persons employed as possible, and impresses upon them that it is essential to the stabilization of the economic life of the Nation that employment be kept up to a high level, he is talking in a circle where it will do the most good."
Ibid.; December 30, 1929; "Bound Together in a Bundle":

"The president's plan of speeding public works that are needed contemplates not only providing employment for labor
upon these works, but also helping to keep the wheels of industry turning by furnishing demand for materials."

Ibid.; February 24, 1930; "A Gratifying Response":

"Criticism has been levelled at the president from some sources for alleged forcing of building projects merely to give jobs to laborers. The criticism is unjust. The president has not asked that any construction not serviceable or needed be contracted for. His plan contemplates only getting busy on what was needed. The needs were great enough to afford a substantial relief to unemployment. Under the operation of the plan the country is receiving the dual benefits of acquiring needed buildings and improvements and of having labor more fully employed."

Ibid.; February 24, 1930; "A Gratifying Response":

85. Ibid.; June 10, 1930; "Prosperity Claims Exploded"

86. Ibid.; June 19, 1930; "Debt Payments Help":

"With 'Hoover prosperity' proving to be a myth, we are finding that our government can use the debt money from Europe quite handily. In fact, had these June payments not come in, the treasury likely would have shown a deficit at the end of the fiscal year. Business depression, unemployment, and slump in foreign trade are causing many an American now to be glad that the American debt commission had the courage and good sense to demand that Europe pay at least a part of her war debts."

87. Ibid.; November 7, 1930; "A Rap for Hoover Prosperity":

"Hoover may not have brought the depression that has engulfed the country, for it is worldwide and attributable to international causes. But he has certainly shown little ability or disposition to cope with it. Which would not have been quite so bad, had he not made such glittering promises in that direction."

Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; November 11, 1930; "Party Co-operation"

88. The Houston Post; January 4, 1931; "Concerning Special Sessions"

89. Ibid.; November 3, 1930; "Creating Postal Jobs"

Ibid.; December 29, 1930; "Maintaining Wage Scales"

Ibid.; March 11, 1931; "The Wagner Bill Veto":

"In his view, the Wagner bill would scrap the whole Federal employment agency system, which he declares has been finding jobs annually for 1,300,000 people, and would put this responsibility on a joint Federal-State system, the establishment of which would require many months. State legislatures in the various states would have to approve the plan and make appropriations. That would require time.

"Under the circumstances Mr. Hoover's objections to 'swapping horses' in mid-stream do not seem so unreasonable."

90. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; December 3, 1930; "The Message to Congress"

91. The Houston Post; December 7, 1930; "Put the Money to Work Now"

92. Ibid.; December 15, 1930; "Hoover and Congress"

93. Ibid.; December 26, 1930; "Quick Action in Legislating"

94. Ibid.; May 16, 1931; "Whittling Expenses":

"The habit of acting only after an emergency arises instead
of moving to avert it before it is too late seems one of the outstanding Hoover characteristics. In the face of unmistakable signs of an economic explosion, the administration did nothing. Until the census figures revealing 6,000,000 unemployed persons in the United States, the administration refused to admit that the idle presented a problem. With cries of protest arising from businessmen at home and from governments abroad, President Hoover apparently still considers our disastrous tariff policy for the best interest of the people.

"When our foreign commerce has been irreparably crippled, he will turn his attention to revision of tariff policies. As usual, the president will have waited too long."

95. Ibid.; June 9, 1931; "Reducing Navy Personnel":

"Apparently, this curtailment in the personnel of the navy met with Mr. Hoover's approval. But, where is the consistency, one wonders, in the course of the administration in calling upon industry to retain employees on their payrolls and to use every resource at their command to relieve unemployment, while government departments cut employment, some of them, such as the navy, effecting most of their savings by eliminating employees? By its course, the government aggravates the very situation it pretends to be trying to relieve."

Ibid.; September 28, 1931; "Another Hoover Moratorium":

"The president is, however, mobilizing public opinion against demands for non-essentials, and the Legislature's precedent is aiding mightily in the mobilization. The people are thoroughly alive to the need for rigid economy in government expenditures at this time, and the pressure of public opinion against the pork barrel is likely to lessen the congressional crowd about that hitherto overworked adjunct of the legislative chambers."

96. Ibid.; October 8, 1931; "Hoover's Economic Plan":

"His plan for strengthening the American banking structure as a means of restoring public confidence indicates that the chief executive realizes at last that the situation at home deserves attention.

"The president, however, has not yet lost his conviction that America's depression is due entirely to a combination of untoward events in Europe.

"The plan has won the immediate approval of the nation's leading bankers, who have indicated a willingness to subscribe $150,000,000 toward the $500,000,000 capitalization of the proposed National organization. Both Republican and Democratic members of congress who were called into the conference at the White House have discarded partisan political considerations to give their assurance of co-operation. The plan has been accepted as a non-political movement designed to benefit the entire nation. As such it should meet with an equally enthusiastic acceptance by the people."

97. The Houston Chronicle; January 13, 1932; "Turning the Tide of War"

98. The Houston Post; May 15, 1932; "Federal Relief Forecast"

99. Ibid.; May 21, 1932; "Adopt Garner Program"
Other Domestic Problems

Immigration

The question of what to do about immigration had played a relatively minor role in the campaign of 1928, but when Mr. Hoover took office it was known that he did not approve the new national origins act which would go into effect in 1929. There seems to have been no quarrel on any side with the idea of exclusion as a desirable policy, and Mr. Hoover's own objections to the coming change were based on the difficulties which would be presented in the administration of the law. There was certainly no strong feeling about the issue at that time.

The Chronicle did not even make much of the president's view of the situation, merely summing up the arguments on both sides with the additional comment that, however illogical the National Origins act might be, it was perhaps better than the existing one -- but the existing one was working so well that congress might see fit to leave well enough alone.

The Post gave more attention to the president's stand, saying that his objections were based not on how the act might affect any particular group, but on the difficulty of administering it. The paper agreed that no change should be made. But when it appeared that the congress was not planning to follow presidential recommendations, the Post changed its tack. The emphasis was then laid upon the position that the senate was thus placing the president in. That he had a fight on his hands and would probably have to give the new law a trial was noted for the first time. About six weeks later the supporters
of the president in the senate were warned that they had better get the national origins clause either repealed or postponed, for rejection of the president's leadership in this matter would cause a serious loss of prestige, since he had served on the commission which studied the plan, and did not favor it. Said the Post: "It will be another blow to his reputation of being a man who gets things done."

The next occasion on which the administration was required to express an opinion on immigration and related matters came after the depression struck. Unemployment had become a serious problem by September of 1930, and the president announced his determination to curb all immigration as a relief measure. The Chronicle voiced immediate approval: the plan would be a kindness to aliens as well as citizens to prevent those aliens from entering who are in danger of becoming public charges. There was assurance that the majority of Americans would approve of the government's action. The Post expressed substantially the same ideas, with the further note that it is better to take care of the idle and needy already with us before allowing others to enter the country.

The lone cause of dissent from the administration's policy of dealing with foreigners desirous of becoming Americans was the Oriental exclusion act. Both of the local newspapers felt that to deny Japan a quota was to offer a needless insult to a friendly power, and a very sensitive one.

Sectionalism

For very few reasons was the president criticized so much
as for the apparent discrimination he practiced against the South, and probably the criticism was justified. For the solid South of the previous seventy years had been broken in 1928, and expected at least a cabinet post in return for the electoral votes of Texas, Tennessee, Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia. But it was doomed to disappointment in this expectation, for the original Hoover cabinet was composed entirely of men of non-Southern origin. The Post was the strongest local critic of this policy. Shortly before Mr. Hoover took office that organ discussed the president's selections with no small degree of bitterness:

"As completed, the cabinet slate of Mr. Hoover discloses a 100 per cent shut-out of the South -- the South that for the first time since the War Between the States ceased to be 'solid,' and permitted its four most important States to slip into the Republican column in a national election. Not only is there not one cabinet member from the South, there is not one of recent Southern origin. Even Mr. Doak, the railway labor leader, who lives in Virginia, was finally eliminated. Massachusetts, which failed to go for Mr. Hoover in November, is given recognition in the appointment of Mr. Adams to the navy secretaryship. Virginia, North Carolina, Texas and Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky and Oklahoma, which went for Mr. Hoover by big majorities, are ignored. The 'Hoovercrats,' in whatever state they reside, haven't fared any better in the selection of official presidential advisers.... The broad vision, enabling him to see the whole country, which the incoming president was touted as
This feeling of resentment continued throughout Mr. Hoover's term, although talk died down after a time. Even the later appointment of Mr. Patrick J. Hurley as secretary of war to succeed Mr. Good did little to appease the wrath already stirred up. The appointment seemed to be merely the remedying of an oversight, or even an apology for a deliberate insult.

But it was not only the filling of cabinet posts without representation from the South that drew editorial fire; other Hoover selections met with criticism on the same grounds. The federal farm board, for example, was far from satisfactory to the Post, which felt that with its current membership the South was left dependent on men with no understanding of Southern problems. When a place on the Interstate Commerce Commission was left vacant the desire was expressed immediately that a Southerner should be named to fill it, and in the nomination of Judge Hugh McTate of Knoxville, Mr. Hoover did not reach deep enough South to please his critics.'

When the president did, however, go into North Carolina to select a justice to serve on the supreme court he met with the approval of the Houston newspapers, but the disapproval of the senate, which refused to confirm Judge Parker. The incident is perhaps typical of feeling on the entire subject of sectionalism. When the nomination was first announced both local papers made known their pleasure, and as the battle in the senate progressed supported the presidential choice wholeheartedly, to the fullest extent of a very effective type of name-calling:
"All this looks like making the filling of a supreme court vacancy an occasion for factional controversy of the political campaign type.... Labor organizations oppose him on the strength of a single decision, of which the public is just now learning, and other opponents found nothing wrong with his record as a lawyer and judge but fight him because of alleged utterances in a political campaign."

"If Barker is not confirmed, it will be merely another instance of truckling by Republicans to the negro.... A Parker defeat will constitute a signal negro victory."

Mr. Hoover himself lost support during the discussions by letting it be known that if Southern senators did not vote for confirmation of Parker he might not be disposed to consider appointments of Southerners in the future. This smacked entirely too much of coercion.

The actual rejection of Parker and the selection of Owen Roberts brought forth another tirade:

"President Hoover's announced desire to reserve the geographical balance (already badly distorted in favor of the industrial East) by naming a Southerner to succeed the late Justice Sanford of Tennessee evidently was a feeble desire, after all. Whether from pique at the Democrats who joined with Republican progressives and several Old Guardsmen to defeat Judge Parker, or from some other motive, the president has accentuated the already lopsided geographical make-up of the court."
In the light of such events the essential accuracy of the following analysis of the situation may have been strong:

"President Hoover's persistent ignoring of the South is becoming more and more a matter of remark among leaders in both parties. Apparently, he is making a studied effort not only to leave the South out of his administrative forces, but to defy Southern sentiment."*

The same editorial continues with a quotation from Sam Small, political reporter for the Atlanta Constitution, who said that Mr. Hoover was not sure that the South would ever go Republican again, and was angry anyway at Southern resolutions condemning his wife for the De Priest tea -- of which more hereafter.

Did the last Republican president waste a splendid opportunity to restore the two party system in the South after seventy years of unceasing devotion to Democracy?

The President and Congress

One of the most vexing problems which perplexed President Hoover was congress. During the first two years of his administration he had a Republican legislature to deal with; during the last two a Democratic legislature. Whether he had more difficulties with the Republicans, satisfied of their power after a decade of supremacy, or with the Democrats, confident in a long-awaited victory, is a moot question. Certainly there were conflicts with both.

The difficulties which Mr. Hoover was to have were foreseen by the Post at an early date. That paper called the ques-
tion of whether the president would be able to control congress his initial test." If he could prove to the country that he was master of the situation, he would strengthen an already strong hand. But the penalty for failure would be severe. Comment had already been made on his decision not to read his first message to congress:

"Mr. Hoover will develop his own system of getting congress to do what he wants it to do. Perhaps he will invite recalcitrant members to join in the play with the medicine ball on fine mornings."

His early difficulties in securing passage of the type of farm program he desired have been noted. Sidelights on the battle, as offered by the Post and Chronicle respectively, are interesting. As it frequently did, the Post began with the reminder that Mr. Hoover had a reputation for getting things done, but added that he never before had the United States senate to deal with:

"Obviously if the president intends to display a firm policy with congress, the time to begin has arrived. Efforts to obstruct his program are well under way. If he is to wield the 'big stick,' he needs to get the timber on exhibition."

"It is obviously not a partisan affair. There is no indication in it of any division as heretofore between those who have been concerned about the farmer and those who have not; but, seemingly, a political division between those who would embarrass the administration and those who would not."
By the summer of 1929 it was apparent to observers that all was not serene in relations between the two ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. The congress adjourned without any action on two measures the executive had especially wanted; repeal of the national origins law and transfer of prohibition enforcement from the treasury department to the department of justice. In August the Chronicle, which customarily did not take editorial notice of the bickerings in Washington, printed a favorable comment on Mr. Hoover's choice of Senator Walter E. Edge for Ambassador to France, but added:

"The new envoy will not go to his post until late in the fall. He is administration spokesman in the senate, and Mr. Hoover apparently thinks he needs him there during the tariff fight certain to come."

And come the tariff battle did, embodying all the fireworks which could have been expected. During the early stages the Chronicle mentioned prevailing attitudes about the relative efficiency of Mr. Hoover and the congress, drawing conclusions far from pleasing to the president's adherents. While not acutely critical -- mention was made of the appointment of the farm board, and prompt opening of naval limitations discussions -- the editorial voiced the opinion that the results of the president's actions would be a long time coming:

"Many invidious comparisons have been drawn lately between the speed of the president and the dilatory tactics of congress. It is all a part of the seeming fondness certain groups have for dictatorial methods as opposed to those of democracies."
"At present Mr. Hoover is the darling of those who make efficiency their god.

"It is the executive's place to initiate proposals, start boards to work, administer the law; it is the part of congress to make the law and decide on policies.

"The slightest amount of common sense should show that the last involves more responsibility and more deliberation."**

A Post comment worthy of note appeared on the second of November, 1929, shortly after the president had chided the senate for its delay in enactment of a tariff measure. Here the paper was supporting the executive:

"In his statement issued Thursday urging speeding up of action on the tariff President Hoover takes a back-handed slap at the senate by saying that he 'could not believe, and therefore would not admit, that the United States senate was unable to legislate.'

"This rebuke for the long delay in enacting tariff legislation is gentle, but it is a rebuke just the same. The implication of the statement will not be lost on the senate. He might just as well have said that the senate is up to its old tricks of talking away valuable time and doing nothing and that he was disgusted with it. Had he gone as far as that, the country would have approved, just as it approves the diplomatic reminder that he has given it of its dereliction."**

But from this point on, the president's position in his conflicts with congress tended to appear in less and less favor-
able light in local editorials. Periods between compliments on his various dealings with that body became longer than at first, and more and more frequently there appeared editorials calling attention to actions of congress which were interpreted as criticism of the executive. The following, from the Post, are typical. The first refers to the occasion on which the senate did not have the president's message on prohibition read:

"Any way the action of merely referring the message to the judiciary committee is viewed, it is a slap at the executive by the senate, and is well calculated to widen the gulf that has come to exist between the upper house and the executive."

When the president threatened to call the senate into a special session if it did not ratify the London naval arms limitations treaty, the Post remarked:

"Mr. Hoover does well not to temporize with the senate. Any show of conciliation or compromise on his part is interpreted as weakness, and will be taken advantage of. Had the president shown the same decisiveness in dealing with the tariff question, when the house a year ago started to deliver the country over to the special interests, the present tariff mess would have been avoided."

Another occasion on which Mr. Hoover and congress disagreed came early in 1931 when the latter passed a bill providing for immediate cashing of veteran's bonus certificates which the former disapproved. The Chronicle agreed with the president:

"The secretary of the treasury and... the president have registered their determined opposition to the payment of compen-
sation certificates. Congress has yet to voice its disapproval of the plan to borrow two or three billions of dollars. It is to be hoped that its responsible members will not be stampeded into hasty action because of popular clamor in behalf of measures which are ill-considered and which will inevitably tend to retard the business recovery of the nation."

The Post, on the other hand, favored the legislation, and was pleased when President Hoover's veto was overridden by a large margin.

Other occasions on which the president and congress came into conflict over legislation have been discussed under other topics. We have already seen the difficulties Mr. Hoover met in getting the senate to confirm such appointments as those of Judge Parker (He failed completely here.) and of members of the farm board. These were typical of relations between Mr. Hoover and congress on the subject of presidential appointees.

Law Enforcement

The question of enforcing federal laws, particularly those stemming from the eighteenth amendment, and related problems filled numerous editorial column inches between 1929 and 1933. Much of this coverage, however, had little or nothing to do with the administration in Washington or its members, and is therefore passed over here. But frequently the administration was concerned in events which were brought to public notice by editorial writers.

In his inaugural speech Mr. Hoover had emphasized the need for law observance as well as for law enforcement, and -- although
he did not say so specifically -- everyone knew that he was referring to observance and enforcement of the Volstead Act. This attitude he kept throughout his administration, and in it he was supported by the Chronicle. A typical editorial states the situation:

"The citizen reports immediately that his house has been burglarized, but that some citizen does not immediately or on any other occasion send to any man in official power the name and address of his bootlegger.

"Upon that theory we can afford to rest the case of non-enforcement. The truth is, it is the answer.

"Whenever violation of the eighteenth amendment becomes truly odious to the citizens of this country -- when citizens of this country begin to see that their self-respect is involved in becoming a party to a felony in dealing with a bootlegger -- when the citizens of this country make themselves, as they should be, the same part of the enforcement of the liquor laws that they now make themselves a part of the enforcement of other odious felonies, then graft to the extent which it now exists will not dare to show its head."

Both local papers commented critically on cases of shootings in liquor raids. The Chronicle, for example, said:

"We cannot tolerate in this country anything faintly similar to that. We cannot have any man's rights or life placed at the mercy of any official."

The Post was not at first convinced that the administration
seriously intended to keep previous promises to enforce prohibition. The law enforcement commission was given approval as soon as it was appointed, but Mrs. Iabel Willebrandt's departure as head of prohibition enforcement brought the following reaction:

"It is no doubt gratifying to the Hoover administration to be rid of her. It can now go ahead with its program of big talk about enforcement, but with the brakes operating perfectly whenever it appears that aggressive war is inexpedient."

In June and July, the law enforcement commission -- or Wickersham commission, as it came to be called -- was ready to begin its work. Twice the Post approved the plans of the administration for a just and non-sensational type of prohibition enforcement, but a letter from Mr. Wickersham to Governor Roosevelt brought immediate protest. The offending letter stated that there should be better co-operation between federal and state enforcement agencies, and here was the cause of complaint -- possibly there might be modification of federal and state laws. The Post chided him for making known his views favoring modification before the commission even started its work, and the Chronicle said that his views would cause the findings of the committee to be discounted in advance.

But when the scope of the proposed crime study was announced, that paper felt reassured:

"The latest announcement from the federal crime commission serves to quiet the fears of those who felt the investigation would not be comprehensive enough to do any good. But if the
commission pursues its labors through the eleven fields it has chosen, something of real value ought to come out of it."

The Post, however, had been greatly displeased by the letter, and had read into it intention to do away with national prohibition." Consequently, when Senator Howell stated on the floor of the senate that the president could enforce prohibition if he wanted to, and the president replied that he would be glad to hear the evidence with which the senator could support the statement, the Post said:

"The White House statement Sunday night was beneath the dignity of the president of the United States. It was but another illustration of how sensitive Mr. Hoover is to criticism. Six months in the executive mansion have not thickened his skin, apparently. Prohibition enforcement in Washington city is notoriously lax, and if the president does not know that, he is peculiarly unaware of local conditions. The machinery for enforcing the law is in the president's hands. As Senator Howell asks, Why does he not use it more effectively? It might be asked further, why does he not enforce the law in New York, where there are 42,000 speakeasies, and where the Federal administrator passes the buck to the local police, and the latter pass it back to the administrator? Why does he not enforce it in Chicago, in Detroit, and in other wet cities where the wet element is in open and successful defiance of a provision in the Federal Constitution? Is he waiting for some senator or private citizen to send in the names and addresses of the booze peddlers in all these cities?"
For a time after these events, affairs ran smoothly. Both papers approved Mr. Hoover's various messages and appointments, until Senator Harris demanded (December, 1929) that the commission make a report. The Post declared in favor of the senator, but the Press felt the demand was premature, and condemned government law enforcement agents for such illegal acts as gun play, wire-tapping, and house-breaking. The Press was, of course, in favor of repeal.

Early in January the commission submitted a report of its progress which the Chronicle described as "Reasonably Satisfactory," and which the Post also commended:

"Submission of the commission's report is without question the most definite and the most important step that has been taken toward giving prohibition a fair trial since the breakdown in enforcement began to be apparent, shortly after the Volstead act went into effect. The commission has rendered a service. The responsibility is now upon congress."

In June of 1930 the senate cut down on funds allotted to the Wickersham commission, and made known its intention that all money allotted should be spent on prohibition investigation. The Post referred to this as a rebuke to the president, and considered it just since the commission had apparently done little to justify its existence. When the 1932 campaign started, attitudes had not changed; no one was pleased with the work of the commission, the Chronicle and Post because they felt it had not accomplished enough, and the Press because it favored repeal.

Early in 1932 the president submitted a court reform message
which the Chronicle discussed at length, saying that the plan submitted by the president covered a wide scope, but that none of the single reforms proposed in itself was of far-reaching importance. But with this single noteworthy exception, the question of law enforcement meant enforcement of the Volstead Act.

Child Welfare

Mr. Hoover showed his interest in children and the problems relating to childhood on numerous occasions. He early called a conference to study these very problems -- a move which brought him decided approval:

"President Hoover, who called the conference three months ago, demonstrated a profound understanding of social conditions in pronouncing this survey one of the most pressing needs of the country."

And he asked in vain for renewal of the Sheppard-Townes Act for maternity aid, and for a new federal policy on education. Both requests, however, brought him local favor.

Indian Affairs

The Indians of the nation were an unhappy lot when Mr. Hoover took office, and Secretary of the Interior Wilbur recognized the fact. He discontinued the government's policy of looking on them as perpetual wards and decided to help them take their places in modern civilization. He stopped the government's attempts to put the Seminoles of Florida on a reservation. These steps were immediately approved locally. But, as in the cases of so many of the reforms instituted when the administration was new, the problem of the Indians received
less and less attention as the vexing economic difficulties which faced the nation received more and more. The following Post editorial explains the situation clearly:

"Lack of adequate laws to reach these irregularities on the part of the Indians and lack of proper policing of the reservations, are blamed for the deplorable conditions that have developed, and an appeal for aid to cope with the situation is to be carried direct to the president. What has become of the reforms the new commissioner was going to institute, one wonders."

But, by and large, the nation simply had no time to consider the poor Indian.

The Philippines

During Mr. Hoover's years in office the question became increasingly pressing as to what we should do about the Philippine Islands -- those somewhat unwilling little brown brothers -- and their desire for independence. The nationalists in the islands strongly desired the passage of the Hawes-Cutting bill, which would grant them independence after a period of years. And after much delay and argument, the bill was approved by the lawmakers.

A point of debate regarding the desirability of the measure arose in connection with the possible resulting danger of Japanese aggression in the islands, and frequent newspaper warnings were sounded reminding the Filipinos that what was even at that time happening to the luckless Chinese might also happen to them. And the objection was also raised that it would be something less than kind to remove the Filipinos suddenly from
the protected markets of the American system to unprotected world trade at that time. The change of position from the inside to the outside of the American tariff curtain was pictured as being sufficient in itself to wreck the economic life of the Philippines completely.57

When the congress finally approved the bill providing for Philippine independence, the Chronicle spoke of it as the kiss of death for the islands, and when President Hoover vetoed the legislation, said:

"The presidential veto of the bill guaranteeing Filipino independence should yet be sustained.

"Not that the Philippines are not entitled to their freedom, but there is a time and a place for everything. The present 'chaotic condition' existing in the Far East should be evident to anyone who reads the headlines. It should deter even the most ardent advocate of liberty from pressing a movement which apparently can have no other end, as things now stand, than to bring us into conflict in the Far East, or to pass Philippine sovereignty to some Asian power.

"The main objection to the bill, of course, lies in the fact that the house and senate rejected the idea of a plebiscite. Hitherto that proper provision was indorsed by every responsible element in the Philippines....

"The measure which has just been vetoed ignored that right. It assumed that the people of the Philippines would desire freedom at any cost. It would practically turn them loose to make their own way in the world, unassisted and unaided, at a time
when the entire Eastern hemisphere from India to Japan is troubled and restive. It would violently thrust arbitrary trade restrictions upon a dependent people, forcing the practical destruction of great industries."

But the house and senate overrode the president's veto in January of 1933, and the promise of independence for the islands in 1945 was confirmed. And the newspaper predictions about the trouble which would in all likelihood ensue were all too accurate.

Footnotes

2. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; March 12, 1929; "The Immigration Puzzle"
3. The Houston Post; March 24, 1929; "National Origins" 4. Ibid.; March 9, 1929; "National Origins"
5. Ibid.; June 14, 1929; "Another Rebuke Threatened"
7. The Houston Chronicle; September 10, 1930; "Raising the Bars"
8. The Houston Post; November 27, 1930; "Immigration Restriction" Ibid.; December 11, 1930; "Suspending Immigration"
9. Ibid.; February 23, 1930; "Japan Has Earned Fair Treatment" Ibid.; June 1, 1930; "Fair Play For Japan": "It is a matter of pride with her, and our country should cease to wound the pride of so good a friend as Japan has proved herself to be."
10. The Houston Chronicle; December 11, 1930; "Justice For Japan"
11. The Houston Post; March 3, 1929; "Complete Shut-Out For the South"
12. Ibid.; March 5, 1929; "An Outsider Looking In": "The South, and this term includes the Southwestern States of which Texas is one, will continue to be ignored, snubbed and treated with disdain by Republican majorities in congress, just as long as it continues to cherish meekness and timidity as ruling passions.
Ibid.; March 8, 1929; "The G.O.P. in the South"
Ibid.; January 1, 1930; "Texas Ignored, As Usual": "A perusal of the list of 30 prominent educators, selected by Secretary Wilbur of the interior department, to make a Nationwide survey of secondary education, reveals that none of the investigators named is from Texas. For that matter, none of the gulf tier of Southern States is represented on
the commission. Secretary "ilbud, it would seem, is remaining true to the policy of the Hoover administration, which is to quietly ignore the fact that the States of the "Deep South" are members of the Union."

12. Ibid.; December 4, 1929; "A Chance For Mr. Hoover"
Ibid.; December 8, 1929; "Southerner in the Cabinet";
"And the South is gratified for the recognition that has thus been accorded it even though it is belated, and even though Mr. Hurley comes not from one of the States of the Old South. This great Southern section is gratified to feel that it is again considered a part of the Union."
The Houston Chronicle; December 9, 1929; "The New Secretary of War"

13. The Houston Post; August 1, 1929; "An Outrageous Discrimination":
"The selection of Sam R. McElvée, former governor of Nebraska, as the ninth member of the Federal farm board emphasizes and gives final confirmation to the gross sectionalism practiced against the South by President Herbert Hoover."

"He does not answer the request of the South that a real Southerner be put on the commission, for "noxville is by no means a Southern city and Judge McTate cannot properly be classified as a Southerner. "Once more the president has exhibited his disinclination to give any recognition to the real South in filling high government positions."

15. Ibid.; March 24, 1930; "The New Associate Justice"
The Houston Chronicle; March 13, 1930; "Mr. Justice Sanford"Ibid.; March 23, 1930; "A North Carolina Justice"

16. The Houston Post; April 14, 1930; "Supreme Court In Politics"

17. Ibid.; April 23, 1930; "The Parker Case"

18. Ibid.; April 30, 1930; "The Debate on Parker";
"And if Parker loses, the administration will be supplied with a quid pro quo justice naming other Southerners to the supreme bench."

19. Ibid.; May 1, 1930; "Another Sectional Note";
"Whether or not Southern senators are susceptible to coercion ought not to be the hinge upon which the matter of Southern representation on the court turns. . . . There are nine members of the court and the 26 Southern States have only one representative on the court, Judge McReynolds of Tennessee. He will be eligible for retirement soon. Should Mr. Hoover carry out his threat to appoint no other Southern man as a justice, then the entire court would be recruited from States comprising less than one-half of the country. That would be sectionalism with a vengeance."

20. Ibid.; July 15, 1929; "Hoover and the South"

21. Ibid.; March 23, 1929; "Mr. Hoover's Initial Test"

22. Ibid.; April 16, 1929; "Won't Read His Message"
"... it is perfectly clear that there has been a serious disagreement between the president and the members of his party in the house, and had the executive been inclined to take an arbitrary position in the matter it might have resulted seriously.

The action of the house in refusing to name members of a joint committee to consider prohibition enforcement measures was a direct slap at the president's penchant for calling into being special commissions. Mr. Hoover can scarcely fail to realize the import of this rebuke.... What the house did was to put its foot down hard on the commission idea."  

Admirers of Mr. Hoover may defend him by saying that he isn't a politician, but is, nevertheless, a very able administrator. Unfortunately for him, the position he now holds is one that calls for a very large measure of political ability. There, as everywhere, real ability means getting results. And, regrettable as it is to have to say so of one devoted to efficiency, Mr. Hoover isn't getting anywhere as commander-in-chief of the Republican party.

President Hoover has thus far disapproved two measures passed by congress. His first veto occasioned quite a bit of dissatisfaction in the far Southwest, but effected its purpose, killing a bill to provide for the minting of Gadsden Purchase Memorial coins. His second, aimed at a bill to place Spanish-American war pensions on a new basis, seems certain to prove far more unfortunate.

"... the dangers seen by the president in the Spanish War bill are more apparent than real and those who sense as much must feel that his viewpoint, for all its sincerity is somewhat narrow and bureaucratic."

Cash Bonuses Menace National Security

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Ibid.; May 26, 1929; "Commission Commands Respect"
37. Ibid.; May 30, 1929; "Mrs. Willebrandt Out"
38. Ibid.; June 23, 1929; "Giving Prohibition a Chance"
Ibid.; July 8, 1929; "Society" Going Dry?"
39. Ibid.; July 18, 1929; "Wickersham's Plan"
40. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; July 23, 1929; "The Wickersham Blunder"
41. The Houston Chronicle; August 12, 1929; "An Extensive Crime Investigation"
42. The Houston Post; July 26, 1929; "Trying to Keep Up a Fiction":
"It is very plain that the Wickersham letter was intended to prepare the country for a Hoover program of modification of the liquor laws, perhaps as far-reaching as Smith would have proposed had he been president."
43. Ibid.; September 24, 1929; "A Familiar Evasion"
44. Ibid.; October 15, 1929; "Hoover and the W.C.T.U."
"This doesn't sound as though the president desired the temperance society to drop its work for law enforcement and confine itself purely to education against the evils of liquor. His two messages taken together make it plain enough that he values both anti-liquor education and co-operation in bringing enforcement of the anti-liquor laws as they now exist."
Ibid.; November 4, 1929; "A Few Dry Enforcer":
"President Hoover has commendably selected a man who is unequivocally a believer in the prohibition cause, and who resides in a State where dry sentiment prevails.... The appointment has been delayed unnecessarily, it would seem, but now that it is made, it is one against which no criticism should lie from dry forces."
The Houston Chronicle; November 8, 1929; "Official Lawlessness"
Ibid.; December 4, 1929; "The President's Program":
"President Hoover's first formal message to congress is a businesslike document that is bound to impress the public with its comprehensiveness, its definiteness of policy, its appeal to common sense, its avoidance of extremes, and the zeal of its author for ordered progress in the various lines of governmental activity. Only when he comes to the subject of law enforcement does he assume something of the tone of a crusader. In that connection he departs from any conciliatory note and directly charges persons who foster or countenance law violation as destroyers of society. No more forceful an expression on the subject has appeared in a presidential document.

"Just as the president has in the past committed himself to great undertakings in the foreign field, so he now commits himself to a far-reaching program of domestic reorganization and construction."
45. The Houston Post; December 21, 1929; "A Timely Reminder"
Ibid.; December 24, 1929; "Showdown Called For":
"The Harris resolution is a call from the senate's drys for a showdown on the president's part of whether he really intends to get anything worthwhile on the enforcement problem out of his commission."
The notion of the senate in providing an appropriation to be used exclusively in the committee's work in prohibition investigation is a distinct rebuke to the committee for its dilatory and time-killing tactics. The country will back the senate in its demand that the committee get busy on the job it was originally intended it should do.

President Hoover again displayed his interest in humanitarianism and his concern to child welfare when he recommended in his message to the short session of congress restoration of the Sheppard-Towner act.... But the thing that commends the law, now sought to be restored, more than anything else, is the result of the law. Comparative records disclose that it was instrumental in reducing mortality of mothers in childbirth, and in curtailing infant mortality.

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Section IV Foreign Policy

From the moment he entered office there was one thing on which Mr. Hoover was for the most part supported locally by those elements which had most ardently sought his defeat at the polls in 1928: namely, his foreign policy. Though he met with difficulties in getting the senate to follow his wishes over certain agreements arising out of relations with foreign nations, his actions were usually given wholehearted backing in local newspapers.

The question of whether or not the United States should join the World Court is a case in point. From the outset of his administration Mr. Hoover favored our adherence to it, and his position was enthusiastically upheld here. Indeed, there was every reason to believe that American participation in the international body was a foregone conclusion, for its members had accepted the Root reservation -- which provided that the court should not issue advisory opinions on cases in which the United States had, or claimed to have, an interest -- a reservation which the Post characterized as selfish and unsportsman-like, and resembling the work of a spoiled child who refuses to play unless the game goes his way.

The Chronicle had been hopeful that the reservation would be accepted, thus removing all barriers to our joining the court, and when it was accepted, called for immediate action:

"Now that the signatories of the World Court have made known their intention of meeting the United States much more than half way in the matter of our reservations, President
Hoover should ask the senate to ratify the agreement without further delay, so we may find where we stand on the matter."

In January of 1930 the delay apparently became irksome, and demands for action were repeated, the Chronicle's containing more than a shade of annoyance:

"Reports from Washington indicate that Republican leaders in the senate are advising the president to postpone consideration of the World Court issue. If Mr. Hoover follows such a course, it will be painfully evident that he lacks political courage. America's endorsement of the Court of International Justice has been too long delayed."

The same editorial states that the country as a whole will favor any step for ratification that the president might take, but there is no hope for support from Hiram Johnson and James J. Blaine until "a certain well-known hot place freezes over."

Naturally, when the president voiced his determination to submit the question to the senate his statement was favorably received and the memory of Woodrow Wilson was recalled.

In the summer of 1930 the Post took the most critical of all views on the court issue during the Hoover administration, saying that the country was indifferent to it. But by late November interest began to rise. The paper definitely favored the court, but stated that perhaps more pressing matters should be attended to first. It commented, however:

"Latest information is that the president will submit the court protocols to the senate at the session of that body when congress meets. Unquestionably the senate has had plenty of
opportunity to learn that the country favors ratification."

Repeating its stand that other matters required first attention, the Post again clarified its position with an interesting suggestion:

"However, when this session is over, the president should call a special session of the senate and hold the noses of the members of that august body to the grindstone until they dispose of the World Court protocol proposal.... A few irreconcilables should not be allowed to delay indefinitely our entrance into the court."

The Chronicle, always supporting the court, concurred heartily that a special session of the senate was in order. But no special session was called, and throughout Mr. Hoover's term of office America refused to join the court. Periodic editorial comment on the subject continued with no significant change in tone or content, and Mr. Hoover yielded to Mr. Roosevelt without a change in the relationship of the United States to the Court of International Justice. For this the senate rather than the chief executive received editorial castigation.

World Disarmament

A project apparently very dear to President Hoover's heart was the cause of world disarmament in the interests of world peace, a project in which he was ardently supported by all commentators here. Prospects of early agreements between the major powers for arms limitations were received with joy.

The visit of Prime Minister MacDonald of England to Mr. Hoover brought assurance to the hearts of all concerned. The
prime minister was welcomed eagerly by the local press and developments were followed closely as he conferred with the president. Growing accord between the leaders of the two great Anglo-Saxon nations seemed a harbinger of deep and lasting world peace." The Chronicle caught the spirit of the day remarkably well:

"We have had a lot of war propaganda, but apparently that ugly creature has taken a facial and signed the Kellogg-Briand treaty, for now he is working for peace.

"President Hoover and Prime Minister MacDonald, apparently, deserve credit for the reform.

"Mr. Hoover, especially, is an expert in the field of propaganda. He used the better brand of it effectively in his war relief work.

"And now he has put it to work for peace, with the help of Mr. MacDonald.

"Last week was the greatest week for peace the world has ever known. And why? Not only because there were several developments of importance, but because these were appropriately staged."

When the president actually did something concrete about cutting armament expenditures by delaying the building of cruisers already authorized by the congress, he met with varying response. From the very first the Chronicle spoke in praise:

"The president's plan to cut army and navy expenditures probably will bring a tremendous roar from the jingoistic section of the populace."
"Nevertheless, the common sense of the country can be depended on to rally behind the program. We have been talking about lessening the armament burden for a long time. We can now see our way clear to action, and the people as a whole are going to hail it as a boon to humanity.""^2

The Post said warily that the world peace news apparently justified the president's proposal,"^7 and the following day voiced the assurance that Mr. Hoover had the backing of the people in his peace efforts."^6 But postponement of laying of keels for three more cruisers authorized by congress brought stringent criticism:

"Mr. Hoover's move is open to the double challenge of being arbitrary and lacking clear sanction in law, and of being premature and poorly suited to the driving of a new arms limitation bargain."^2

Two weeks later the same paper commented acidly that some Americans, in favoring the president's delay of the three cruisers, seemed to want a dictator."^2 But the Chronicle's support for the presidential peace program was unwavering:

"Senator Swanson may be right that President Hoover had no legal authority to delay the cruiser building program even during this fiscal year. It is to be assumed that the president had a few legal authorities of his own to fall back on, and the public generally has heard too many controversies over legal matters to accept offhand the dictum of Senator Swanson or anyone else.""^3
Hopes for a real peace increased as time for the London conference on arms limitations drew near, and the local newspapers were equally pleased with the president's choice of delegates.

Before the conference itself opened President Hoover made a highly important Armistice Day address in which he called for naval parity and reduction of armaments, and proposed that all ships 'carrying food be designated as hospital ships. The Chronicle's response to these proposals was favorable, but judgement on how they might work out was withheld:

"President Hoover's Armistice Day address carries a very great significance. His proposals concern two of the most important international problems of today and of recent years, and apparently those proposals commit him to a line of action which must bring victories of very great importance to the entire world, or a defeat which will reflect on his own leadership.

"The country generally will hail his daring, but its verdict on his wisdom must await the outcome of the London conference."

The Post also considered the suggestions desirable, but felt that they might not be well received abroad because of the difficulties attending application. If such principles could be applied, however, they might serve as a powerful preventative of war, for nations would then realize that they could not starve out others. Certainly one result might be the reversal
of the trend toward making war on helpless women and children. But, on the other hand, the result might be the prolongation of conflict indefinitely and horribly.**

When the London conference actually began its sessions expectations of its success were great. Explaining the support which the American delegation was receiving from both political factions at home, the Chronicle said:

"The democrats have no reason to wish any credit to accrue to Mr. Hoover or the republican party for accomplishments at London. Nevertheless, they realize that accomplishment there is of such vast importance to America and the world in general that they have become the most enthusiastic well-wishers of the conference."**

Progress was noted with joy during the conference.** Even the Post, usually a strong critic of Mr. Hoover, took issue with critics of the administration:

"The opinion is already being expressed that if the London naval conference fails to achieve reduction of armaments, the responsibility will rest on Mr. Hoover.... The American delegation at London, following instructions from President Hoover, has steadfastly declined to enter into any agreement guaranteeing French security.... The Hoover policy in regard to the French security proposal is consistent with the policy the country has followed from the earliest times, and there is not the least doubt that it meets with the approval of the majority of Americans."**

In its pleasure at the outcome of the conference the
Chronicle said that getting rid of the expense of great armaments should prove a boon to humanity, quoting as evidence statistics taken from the United States budget for 1928-29: navy, $336,673,000; army, $379,539,000; air, $56,772,000.

When the treaty drawn up at London came before the senate for ratification the papers again declared in favor of the administration's works, agreeing that—though the senate might have reasons to be annoyed when Mr. Hoover refused to turn over all correspondence relating to the treaty—its immediate confirmation was highly desirable. And when ratification came, neither overlooked the opportunity to point out that both political parties had played a part in the great achievement.

Long before the next world conference on disarmament the president addressed the International Chamber of Commerce on the subject of armaments, and this time no voice of disagreement was raised. The Chronicle supported Mr. Hoover's views wholeheartedly:

"Mr. Hoover was right when he urged the business men of the world to unite and force the statesmen to disarm. It is the intelligent and enlightened public opinion in all countries which will ultimately force the powers that be to cease thinking war and to eliminate the preparation for war."

And the Post also agreed:

"Powerful words, these, simply and straightforwardly spoken. A world ill socially, politically and economically arming itself blindly for another rampage of destruction. A world which is starving and has not yet learned the futility of settling its
differences with the sword. Millions of humans crying for bread and billions spent for arms. A futile, blind old world, grasping a weapon before the wounds of its last conflict are healed.

"By uttering courageous words at Washington, before the business leaders of 46 nations, President Hoover has provided the keynote for the forthcoming land disarmament conference in which the nations of the world will participate. Let us hope that his ringing challenge to militarism will not be soon forgotten."

The first paragraph from the Post might have appeared in 1948, so apt is the picture it paints.

A few days later the Chronicle mentioned the forthcoming disarmament conference at Geneva and noted that the United States might be more willing to help the rest of the world with debt and reparations problems if the other nations would only start helping themselves by throwing off some of the burden of armament expenses.

Interest in the Geneva arms limitations conference reached a high level as the opening date approached, and the usual type of comments on delegation members were made, with the group as finally announced accepted as an excellent one. The usual great hopes for success of the parley were expressed, and thus the conference was opened in style.

The work of the American delegation was for the most part noted with favor during the period of the sessions at Geneva, but the Post evidenced far less interest then did the Chronicle, especially after the Japanese attack in Manchuria made talk of
disarmament seem a little out of place."

When the American proposals for limitations on navies and tanks and for outlawing war were made, the Chronicle praised them for their soundness and their concrete nature, and expressed gratification that the American delegation had made a fortunate impression. This was followed up with further praise later on, and still later with the statement that the conference was laying a foundation for the future, and therefore critics here at home should be silent:

"There has been a tendency here in America to criticize with some degree of severity the slowness with which negotiations are being carried on at Geneva.... Nevertheless the critics of the slow-but-sure policy being followed by the American delegation at Geneva forget that Rome was not built in a day."

Possibly this indicates disapproval of a slightly earlier editorial in the Post which had criticized Mr. Hoover:

"Had the president named some strong man, in sympathy with the arms limitation movement, to head the American delegation, and kept him at Geneva, much more would have been accomplished. By its attitude, however, the American government has thrown cold water on the whole enterprise."

But would not the same tone have been used had Secretary Stimson not been named delegation head, or had he been kept at Geneva when he was obviously needed in Washington to deal with the developing crisis in Manchuria?

International Debts

The whole question of reduction of armaments was closely
connected with the other great international question of what to do about the debts and reparations problems left over from the world war. Indeed, the European war debts were scarcely ever mentioned without a simultaneous note that the countries in economic hot water were the very ones which were rearming to the teeth.

Between 1928 and 1933 there were essentially only two popular viewpoints in this country about European war debts: 1) the debtor nations should be required to pay in full, and 2) since the debtor nations did not have the means to pay in full, debts must be scaled down. Those expressing the former pointed out that nations which could spend billions for weapons could afford millions to pay debts. And those who were willing to readjust the debts demanded that the nations in return reduce their armaments.

The two groups, as represented by the Post and Chronicle respectively, both responded favorably to the president's proposal for a moratorium on war debts. The Post expressed itself thus:

"As President Hoover's proposal for a one-year suspension of war debts and interest payment is flashed to the world, it appears that his plan, if it meets with unanimous approval of the nations concerned, will do much to turn the world back into the paths of economic recovery.

"There is no doubt that President Hoover made his offer at the psychological moment, at a time when all of Europe was
grasping uncertainly for steady footing in the quagmire of economic troubles.

"As a measure to restore confidence, the plan seems destined for success. As an indication that the world is learning that its common problems must be solved by international agreement, its value cannot be overestimated."  3

The Chronicle also favored the plan, saying that the emergency justified Mr. Hoover's informal method, and lost no time in noting that both Democrats and Republicans were party to the program:

"The president took pains to point out that the action he purposes can be authorized only by congress, but that he has consulted with the leaders of all parties and groups in congress, and that he presents his program as a non-partisan one, the responsibility, and credit, if any, to belong to all parties alike.

"The Chronicle hopes that Democrats the country over will quickly pledge their support to this non-partisan effort at world rehabilitation, which it has fallen to the lot of a Republican president to announce."  4

On the first of July the Chronicle noted that certain elements which urged that debtor nations be held to full account had lost sight of realities:

"The average American, educated by the isolationists, and taught that the people of Europe are aggressively hostile to any plan whereby the payment of debts owing us would be accelerated, seems to feel that it would be a comparatively easy
thing to force the debtor nations into compliance with our wishes, forgetting, of course, that an international debt is not the same as a private note made with good security and collectible by means of a bank and, if that means fails, through the good offices of the local sheriff.

"There is in the world no international sheriff.... no court of adjudication which could render a decision which would call for levying on the property. The situation is impossible from every standpoint. Uncle Sam...depends...upon that intangible substance, good-will, and upon the desire or capacity to pay of debtor countries.

"How are we going to make them pay? Let the stern opponent of all melioration tell us."**

After the moratorium was accepted, neither the Post nor the Chronicle allowed the public to forget their initial ideas. The Chronicle frequently pointed out the relationship existing between armaments and war debts, on one occasion citing a statement by Roger Babson that the postponed $394,000,000 in war debts was a mere drop in the bucket when compared to the $4,000,000,000 Europe was spending annually for war preparation. Europe, said the Chronicle, should show its good faith by reducing armaments if it expected American aid."** The Post thought the same."**

Probably realization that partial debt reduction was inevitable came when the visit of Premier Laval of France to the United States was announced,** and after that time each newspaper
published periodic editorials reflecting the sentiment but adding no new ideas, until the crisis of non-payment actually arrived in November of 1932. On the fifteenth of the month the Post reported, not without satisfaction, that the election results had probably convinced the debtor nations that they must prepare to pay. A few days later the Chronicle merely commented that the debts were due.

When the French made it clear that they had no intention of paying, the Post declared that the probable result would be a degree of estrangement between the two peoples, but the Chronicle tended to place some of the blame on the American attitude:

"America has persisted in maintenance of a program which never could be carried out, and which nearly everyone outside the United States believes is largely responsible for the accumulated ills of the world today."

Remaining statements on the debts may best be considered under the section devoted to the 1932 campaign and its aftermath.

The St. Lawrence Project

During President Hoover's term of office the yet unsettled project for developing the St. Lawrence river into a great international waterway became an important subject of discussion. The attitude taken by the Post on this subject is typical of the feeling in this section of the country: such a waterway might have its merits, but development of other inland waterways and Southern ports should come first. The argument was advanced that such a project would be impractical because the
St. Lawrence is frozen over and not navigable during about one half of each year. Furthermore, the project would make necessary an agreement with a foreign country.

Latin America

Maintaining a non-intervention policy toward Latin America was impossible during the years in question. When Mr. Hoover came to the White House he found awaiting him the twin problems of Haiti and Nicaragua. United States marines were firmly entrenched in both countries — in Haiti under provisions of a treaty of 1916, and in Nicaragua to protect American investments and keep order.

Mr. Dwight Lowell Dumond says that the Haitian and Nicaraguan adventures "were the two most deplorable incidents in our attempt to follow investments with armed forces." Certainly they must have been so regarded by President Hoover, for American public opinion was unalterably opposed to keeping the marines in foreign lands, regardless of the cause.

When the president appointed a commission to study the Haitian situation, his action met with immediate approval here, and the study made by that commission was also hailed as a step in the right direction. President Hoover's action in this situation aroused no criticism. Two Post editorials adequately sum up the situation as it appeared to local observers:

"President Hoover's Haitian commission has scored a success. Whatever one may think of the policy of naming many commissions, fairness demands the admission that the commission to Haiti has served well both the interests of the United States and
and Haiti. It silences complaints against American military intervention in the republic. And it cannot fail to convey to the people in all Latin-American countries a new assurance that this country desires to engage in no imperialistic policy at their expense."

"Incorporation of a provision in the Hoover Haitian commission report for the gradual withdrawal of marines from Haiti and substitution of civil advisers to the Haitian government to represent the United States, to the extent that it is deemed necessary to have representatives in the black republic, marks a change in policy that should be reassuring to the Haitian people and to the people in Latin-American countries generally, who fear the United States entertains imperialistic aims, and likewise satisfactory to our own citizens who are opposed to the use of our military forces in interventions in neighboring countries. It is an experiment, to be sure, but the new plan is undertaken in good faith.... The history of Haiti has not been such as to encourage the belief that the Haitians are capable of self-government, but they have been given a new chance. Let's hope they make a go of it this time."

Until April of 1931 periodic criticism of American policy in keeping the marines in Nicaragua appeared in Houston editorial columns, but at that time an insurrection broke out, and all sides recognized that we had no choice except to keep our forces in the unhappy country. The Post advanced one reason for doing so:
"Desirable as it may be as a matter of principle that American intervention in Nicaragua be ended, if our troops evacuate the country under fire, bandits and insurgents are likely to interpret the action as based on fear of them, and those elements in other Latin-American countries will be encouraged to make attacks on Americans and American property."

And the Chronicle cited yet another: under the Monroe Doctrine the United States could not allow foreign intervention and therefore had to protect the citizens of Great Britain, France, Japan, Germany, and others who were caught within the country when hostilities broke out. The only real hope for getting out, then, was the restoration of order.

At last some form of order returned to Nicaragua, and all sides rejoiced.

The revolt in Nicaragua was not the only problem of its kind which our state department faced between 1929 and 1933. The question of whether or not to recognize a new government in a country to the south recurred frequently. The quick recognition tendered a new regime in Argentina brought comment from both local papers on the delicacy of such situations. The Post approved:

"The new South American governments, on the other hand, immediately profess their friendship to the United States and pledge themselves to the meeting of all international obligations, and to co-operate with this country for the promotion of the welfare of all the Americas. Such a bid for recognition should not be rejected by a powerful and friendly neighbor, and
nothing important would have been gained by delaying resumption of relations. The state department's course will meet with the approval of the American people."

But the apparent inconsistency of the state department's policy brought a reaction of doubt about its wisdom from the Chronicle:

"Perhaps the quick recognition of the revolutionary governments of Peru, Bolivia and Argentina does not represent any change in our foreign policy, as Secretary Stimson asserts, but certainly the secretary has to deal in very fine shades of meaning in order to make such a statement.

"Just why we should insist on constitutional governments in some Latin American countries, while being disinterested where other countries are concerned, it is hard to understand.

"Nevertheless, this policy gets us back to the old situation where the government at Washington can, by extending or refusing recognition, virtually make and unmake revolutions in Latin American countries.

"This development may have been inevitable, but it is nevertheless not very encouraging."

A few months later, after Secretary Stimson's refusal to recognize a new government in Guatemala, the Post said essentially the same thing:

"New regimes in Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, and Brazil, all
built on armed force and in defiance of constitutional provisions for orderly setting up of governments in those countries, have been recognized by Washington. But a new government in little Guatemala, accused of slipping into power by a trick, is denied our notice. Consistency, thou art a jewel."

The same problem arose in connection with a revolution in Brazil, but was somewhat complicated by the American government's tactical error of allowing armaments to be sold to the soon-to-be-ousted federal government, and refusing them to the rebels. "Consequently administration critics had a clear field. The Post, for example, expressed itself thus:

"The United States has much to gain by adopting a rigid hands-off policy in regard to Latin-America and its political troubles. Continued meddling with our neighbors to the South provides world critics of our foreign policy with excellent grounds for their charges of American imperialism." "

Russia

The United States did not recognize the soviet government of Russia until after Mr. Hoover was succeeded as president by Mr. Roosevelt; nevertheless there was plenty of discussion in this country about whether or not recognition should be granted. At that time our policy was based on the Hughes-Kellogg formula, which the Chronicle criticized as impractical on several counts. The formula required that Russia pay her debts to the United States. But, said the Chronicle, Russia could never pay all of the czarist debts, and everyone knew it. Furthermore the United States had never followed such a policy with other nations.
In the second place, the United States totally ignored Russia's counter-bill for damages suffered due to allied attempts to defeat the revolution. Thirdly, the demand that Russia stop communistic propaganda in the United States was rather an unrealistic one, since Russia—knowing that such propaganda could have no chance of success—obviously would not waste the money necessary to put it out and was really unable to stop the propaganda of the International. The Post, on the other hand, never questioned the essential rightness of the formula.

The Chronicle, be it understood, never advocated unconditional recognition of the Soviet Union. Its opinion as expressed when Secretary Hyde announced in September of 1930 that Russia had been selling wheat short in the Chicago market makes that clear:

"To say that the manipulation of our market in any such way by a foreign government is intolerable is to put the case mildly."

The Post treated the same announcement as pure nonsense and merely an administration alibi for the existing low prices.

The following year the Chronicle again discussed the problem of Russian recognition. Repeating its earlier arguments, it added:

"With these preliminaries out of the way, the main question of Soviet recognition remains. She is, and will remain, the hotbed of enmity for the ideas of private property and private rights on which our civilization is partially based. She is a summons to every disgruntled element in the world to rise and
take from those who have built things for themselves. She fights religion, which is the universal basis of civilization.

"All labor within her bounds is a sort of forced labor, with conditions and wages fixed by the government.

"She holds a vast monopoly of all Russian production, imports and exports. She...can manipulate world prices at any time it suits her to do so.

"The nations of the world are facing a new thing in their relations with Russia. Our formal recognition of her, aside from certain questions of honor and precedent which we can not waive, should depend on whether it helps or hinders us in meeting the menace that she presents."

Further Chronicle editorials about this appeared, but added no new material. Nor did the Post change its attitude.

The Far East

The attitude toward discrimination against Japan in the United States' immigration policy has been referred to above. The protests from local newspapers on this subject dropped off abruptly when the Japanese troops in Manchuria became a menace to United States citizens and their property. At that time the Japanese became very unpopular indeed with local editorial writers. The first warning that Japan was treading on dangerous ground was sounded by the Chronicle.

But when the United States, under provisions of the Four Power and Nine Power treaties and the Kellogg pact, joined with the League of Nations in protest, the Japanese showed willingness to discuss the situation. The Post heartily approved the action
of the state department:

"Japan...expected the United States to make only a nominal protest, and that as an independent power.

"American co-operation has stiffened the backbone of the league in dealing with the Sino-Japanese controversy, and it has taken Japan unawares. It is as if the policeman on the beat had just waked up as the burglar was ready to make a getaway with the loot. Japan protests she has no thought of war. She sees she must drop the spoils. It will be a long time before she forgives the United States for that interruption of a calculated steal."73

The Post foresaw strained relations between the two nations because of the joint attempts to keep peace by the League and the United States. Japan, it concluded, had practically admitted she was in the wrong by showing concern when the Manchurian case was brought up for discussion. And the Chronicle also favored the stand taken by Secretary Stimson. The Japanese may not have been attempting trickery in Manchuria, it remarked, but she seemed to be doing so, and was certainly crushing China's authority and destroying her sovereignty. The time was ripe for action:

"Consequently we are justified now -- nay our government has the solemn obligation -- in taking strong action to require both China and Japan to observe the letter and spirit of the anti-war treaties to which they as well as we, are formally and solemnly committed."75

Then Japanese troops entered Shanghai, and in the course
of the invasion endangered the American mission and brutally attacked a United States consul. Immediately America demanded, and received, an apology. The Post commended the administration for its new firmness and recalled earlier criticism for spinelessness:

"Secretary Stimson's note to the governments of Japan and China, invoking the provisions of three treaties to which those two nations, along with the United States are signatories is quite the most positive and drastic step that has been taken by way of protest against Japan's course in Manchuria. In view of the mild and timid policy our state department has hitherto followed, since the Japanese militarists invaded Southern Manchuria, the sudden reversal of attitude at Washington is as surprising here, as it doubtless was in Japan.

"In a respectful, but nevertheless firm way, the American government has 'called the bluff' of Japan. The new policy will meet with general approval in the United States, where there has been much criticism of the weak and unavailing course of the government thus far in the negotiations with Japan."

The Chronicle questioned what we were facing. It decided that actual war was not in the offing, but that Japan cared nothing for treaties. And the Post said that Japan faced western unity, and further proposed cutting Japan off economically and thereby compelling her to cease aggression.

The Chronicle again praised Secretary Stimson:

"The statement of Secretary Stimson on the far Eastern situation probably will go down in history as one of the impor-
tant pronouncements of our government.

"Certainly the position of America is now clear to the world. Other nations have been invited to join us in that position but we have gone ahead without waiting for approval."

And here ended the problem as far as the Hoover administration was concerned. The Roosevelt administration then stepped into the picture.

Footnotes

1. The Houston Post; April 2, 1929; "The Root Reservation"
2. The Houston Chronicle; September 4, 1929; "Getting Into the World Court"
3. Ibid.; September 30, 1929; "The World Court Issue"
4. The Houston Post; January 6, 1930; "Ratification in Order"
   Ibid.; January 11, 1930; "America and the World Court"
   "Ratification of the protocol is the logical next step in a course we have followed under three National administrations. A refusal to ratify would place us in an attitude of insincerity at a time when we are most anxious to prove our devotion to the cause of world peace."
5. The Houston Chronicle; January 13, 1930; "Where Delay Is Fatal"
6. Ibid.; April 16, 1930; "The World Court Issue"
   The Houston Post; April 18, 1930; "A Rose by Another Name?"
7. Ibid.; July 13, 1930; "The World Court Issue"
   Ibid.; August 12, 1930; "World Court Entry Delayed"
8. Ibid.; November 28, 1930; "If It Interferes, Postpone"
9. Ibid.; December 1, 1930; "The World Court"
10. Ibid.; December 19, 1930; "Delaying World Court Action"
11. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; November 25, 1930; "The World Court Issue Again"
   Ibid.; December 1, 1930; "For World Court Ratification"
   Ibid.; December 3, 1930; "The Message to Congress"
   Ibid.; December 8, 1930; "The World Court and the Press"
   Ibid.; December 18, 1930; "A Longer Fight For the World Court"
12. Ibid.; December 27, 1930; "One Way of Getting Action"
13. The Houston Chronicle; February 27, 1931; "When Will We Join?"
   Ibid.; May 19, 1931; "The World Court Works"
   Ibid.; November 15, 1931; "The Matter of the World Court"
   Ibid.; December 21, 1931; "No Time For Delay"
   Ibid.; March 23, 1932; "Vote Now On World Court"
   Ibid.; April 11, 1932; "Time to Vote On the Court"
   Ibid.; April 15, 1932; "The Root Protocol Is Next"
   Ibid.; May 2, 1932; "Congress and the World Court"

"When the Republicans came in power twelve years ago, the
committee Mr. Borah heads was loaded with those members of the G.O.P. who had bitterly fought Woodrow Wilson and all his works.... Their pover lies in their ability to do nothing so far as the World Court is concerned."

Ibid.; May 9, 1932; "Senator Robinson and the World Court"
Ibid.; May 14, 1932; "Another Delay For the World Court"
Ibid.; December 14, 1932; "Now Is the Time"
The Houston Post; September 5, 1931; "World Court Favored!"
Ibid.; September 8, 1931; "Court Prospects Improve"
Ibid.; September 23, 1931; "Bar Approves the Court"
Ibid.; November 17, 1931; "Lawyers For the Court"
Ibid.; December 8, 1931; "Vote on the World Court"
Ibid.; March 24, 1932; "Vote on the World Court"
Ibid.; December 12, 1932; "Vote on the World Court"

14. Ibid.; June, 5, 1929; "Naval Reduction Looms":
"The wisdom in that provision in the naval expansion bill, which clothed the president with power to suspend activity in shipbuilding, if limitation of armaments should be agreed to by the chief powers, is now being made manifest. Such an agreement has not been entered into, but it is so much in prospect that President Hoover has halted our cruiser-building program pending the outcome of a conference expected to be held shortly."

15. Ibid.; June 17, 1929; "MacDonald Will Be "welcomed"
Ibid.; June 18, 1929; "Naval"accord Looms"
Ibid.; October 5, 1929; "MacDonald is Here"
The Houston Chronicle; June 26, 1929; "Two Ambassadors"
16. Ibid.; October 5, 1929; "Two Very Excellent Politicians"
The Houston Post; October 11, 1929; "The Hoover-MacDonald Statement"
Ibid.; October 12, 1929; "Promise To Alliance"
Ibid.; October 15, 1929; "The Peace Move Gains"
17. The Houston Chronicle; July 21, 1929; "Peace Propaganda"
18. Ibid.; July 26, 1929; "At Last, A Day of Action"
19. The Houston Post; July 30, 1929; "The "elogy Fact"
20. Ibid.; July 27, 1929; "Cutting ?ar Expenditures"
21. Ibid.; July 30, 1929; "Hoover's Arbitrary Course"
22. Ibid.; August 14, 1929; "The President Can Do No Wrong"
23. The Houston Chronicle; August 5, 1929; "The Cruiser Delay"
24. Ibid.; October 14, 1929; "The Key to the "aval Parley"
25. Ibid.; October 19, 1929; "Laying the Groundwork for Success"
Ibid.; October 22, 1929; "Five Men":
"President Hoover's selection of the five Americans who will represent this nation at the naval disarmament conference to be called in La Jolla January indicates his determination to prevent any such disagreement as that which blocked the league of nations' ratification in the United States Senate and hastened Woodrow Wilson's death."
The Houston Post; October 23, 1929; "Stimson Heads Mission"
Ibid.; January 9, 1930; "The American Mission Sails":
"The president has sent to London as our representatives a body of as able and patriotic citizens as he could have assembled. There is not one that does not enjoy the confidence
26. The Houston Chronicle; November 12, 1929; "High States For Peace"
27. The Houston Post; November 18, 1929; "Exempting Food Ships"
28. Ibid.; November 15, 1929; "Food in Wartime"
29. The Houston Chronicle; February 6, 1930; "Why the Sad Tales?"
30. Ibid.; March 9, 1930; "A Brighter Outlook In London"
Ibid.; March 27, 1930; "America Helps at London"
Ibid.; April 4, 1930; "A Three Power Pact"
Ibid.; April 23, 1930; "Anglo-American Friendship at London"
31. The Houston Post; March 28, 1930; "No Entangling Alliances"
32. The Houston Chronicle; April 24, 1930; "Nations and Armies Come High"
33. The Houston Post; June 10, 1930; "Rebuffing the Wrecking Crew"
"It might have been better strategy on the president's part to have submitted the correspondence, but it certainly was not necessary for him to do so, and by refusing he serves notice again that he is not to be intimidated by the Borah-Johnson wrecking crew in the senate. Among the recent political developments in the capital, none is more significant than is the stiffening of the presidential spinal column."
The Houston Chronicle; July 16, 1930; "ratify the Naval Pact"
34. Ibid.; July 22, 1930; "Glory Enough For All"
Ibid.; July 26, 1930; "A Non-partisan Achievement"
"In rebuking those ardent Republicans who have been claiming so much credit for the recent senatorial ratification of the London naval pact, the president has rendered a distinct service not only to the nation but to his own party as well."
The Houston Post; July 23, 1930; "The Treaty Ratified"
"Fairness requires that President Hoover be credited with an achievement worthwhile in bringing about the agreement. It stands out as perhaps the greatest of his achievements since he entered the White House. However, much many citizens may differ with him on many of his policies, in his support of the London treaty the president had the backing of a great majority of the people, who stand ever ready to support reasonable and feasible programs for promoting international amity, and for removing causes of wars."
35. The Houston Chronicle; May 5, 1931; "The Business of Disarmament"
36. The Houston Post; May 6, 1931; "Hoover on Disarmament"
37. The Houston Chronicle; May 13, 1931; "The Ethics of Disarmament"
38. Ibid.; June 28, 1931; "A Lost Leadership Regained"
39. The Houston Post; January 31, 1932; "Geneva Policy Scuttled"
40. The Houston Chronicle; February 10, 1932; "America's Disarmament Proposal"
41. Ibid.; April 20, 1932; "America and the Arms Slash"
42. The Houston Post; April 2, 1932; "The Geneva Conference"
43. Ibid.; June 23, 1931; "The War Debt Moratorium"
44. The Houston Chronicle; "A Time For United Action"
45. Ibid.; July 1, 1931; "Make Them Pay Us Back"
46. Ibid.; July 25, 1931; "The Mathematics of Armament"
47. The Houston Post; July 13, 1931; "U. S. For Arms Cut":
   "President Hoover very properly sees a close connection
   between armament cutting and the moratorium. He has linked
   the two together, first by asking for the moratorium, and now
   by pledging the co-operation of the United States to the league
   in the coming arms conference."
48. The Houston Chronicle; October 27, 1931; "Opening the Way For
   Debt Revision"
   The Houston Post; September 25, 1931; "France and Uncle Sam"
49. Ibid.; November 15, 1932; "War Debt Decision Due"
50. The Houston Chronicle; November 24, 1932; "The Crisis is Here"
51. The Houston Post; December 16, 1932; "The French Default"
52. The Houston Chronicle; December 15, 1932; "The French Challenge"
53. The Houston Post; May 31, 1929; "The St. Lawrence Project":
   "Would it not be a better investment, and an avoidance of
   possible friction with a foreign country, for the United States
   to develop its inland waterways, and the Gulf and South Atlantic
   ports, and in this way give the inland exporters better faciliti-
   es for reaching the sea with their products?"
   Ibid.; December 3, 1929; "The Frozen North":
   "Wouldn't it be more sensible to take that $100,000,000 or
   more that the United States government is being asked to contri-
   bute to the St. Lawrence improvement project, and put it into
   the improvement of the Mississippi river, and into the improve-
   ment of the warm water harbors?"
   Ibid.; September 13, 1930; "No Entangling Alliance"
54. Dwight Lowell Dumond, Roosevelt to Roosevelt (New York, 1937),
   p. 192.
55. The Houston Chronicle; December 10, 1929; "Once More Haiti"
   The Houston Post; December 11, 1929; "More Trouble In Haiti"
56. Ibid.; March 23, 1930; "The Commission's Victory"
57. Ibid.; April 1, 1930; "Haitians Given Few Chance"
58. Ibid.; January 6, 1931; "Intervention in Nicaragua"
   Ibid.; February 15, 1931; "Withdrawing the Marines"
59. Ibid.; April 27, 1931; "The Nicaraguan Problem"
60. The Houston Chronicle; April 17, 1931; "The Nicaraguan Problem"
61. Ibid.; December 29, 1932; "The Marines Embark"
62. The Houston Post; September 29, 1930; "Recognizing New Govern-
   ments"
63. The Houston Chronicle; September 19, 1930; "A New Foreign
   Policy"
64. The Houston Post; January 1, 1931; "The Variable Mr. Stimson"
65. Ibid.; October 23, 1930; "The Wrong Horse?":
   "Secretary Stimson may have put his money on the wrong horse.
   If such should prove to be the case, the job of cultivating
   friendly Latin-American relations may have to be done over again."
   Ibid.; October 24, 1930; "Intervention in Brazil":
   "In the several other revolutions that have taken place in South
   America within the last few weeks, Washington has refrained from
   interfering, and rebel success has been followed immediately by
   expressions of friendship on their part for the United States,
   and by bids for prompt recognition. For its reversal of policy,
in the case of Brazil, the administration at Washington owes the American people an explanation."

66. Ibid.; March 6, 1931; "Another Withdrawal"
67. The Houston Chronicle; March 13, 1929; "Russian Recognition"
68. The Houston Post; July 24, 1929; "Recognition Warer"
69. The Houston Chronicle; September 23, 1930; "The Soviets and the Grain Trade"
70. The Houston Post; September 25, 1930; "A Punctured Sensation"
71. The Houston Chronicle; March 10, 1931; "Soviet Recognition Up Again"
72. Ibid.; September 24, 1931; "Japan Treads on Dangerous Ground"
73. Ibid.; October 20, 1931; "Japan Listens to Reason"
74. The Houston Post; October 19, 1931; "U. S. in Oriental Epi tolo"
75. Ibid.; October 20, 1931; "Strained Relations Threatened"
76. The Houston Chronicle; November 10, 1931; "The War Threat Challenges Us"
77. The Houston Post; January 9, 1932; "New Policy Toward Japan"
78. The Houston Chronicle; January 29, 1932; "What Do 'e Face?"
79. The Houston Post; February 3, 1933; "Japan Faces Western Unity"
80. Ibid.; February 23, 1932; "Literary Phase Is Passed"
81. The Houston Chronicle; "A Bid to Japanese Sanity"
Section V  Emotions and Personalities

Public opinion about a nationally important figure is often affected by his reaction to things which cannot be classified as being of vital importance or by his deeds -- or even by the deeds of those closely associated with him -- on minor occasions, but which nevertheless come to public notice. And President Hoover's reputation was no exception.

Mrs. Gann vs. Mrs. Longworth

The first event of this type was the social war waged between Mrs. Edward Gann, sister and official hostess of Vice President Curtis, and Mrs. Nicholas Longworth, wife of the speaker of the house and daughter of the late President Theodore Roosevelt, over which of the two should take precedence in the seating arrangements at official dinners. Mrs. Gann's position was based on the fact that she had always served as official hostess for her brother, and had received the same privileges in the past as a wife would have. Mrs. Longworth, on the other hand, maintained that Mrs. Gann's position should not be determined as if she were the wife of the vice president instead of only his sister. Consequently, thought Mrs. Longworth, her own status as wife of the speaker of the house of representatives entitled her to precedence. Naturally, the mere males who wrote editorials in Houston could not see that where one sat at a dinner table should matter a great deal as long as there was an adequate supply of choice viands to go around, and they wrote many facetious words on the subject.

Early in the April after his inauguration Mr. Hoover
apparently settled the question at a White House dinner. He escorted Mrs. Gann to her place while the vice president escorted Mrs. Hoover. A Post editorial praised the president for his directness in the solution of the problem. And a few days later the Post pronounced with the air of an accomplished social arbiter that Mrs. Gann's position should not be questioned, since she had been Mr. Curtis's hostess since his wife died. She deserved her high place, the editorial added.

But the assumption that all would be sweetness and light after the president had made his position clear was quite false, for the battle was still going on a month later. The Chronicle then declared that women are very silly to fuss about where they sit at the dinner table.

When Speaker Longworth openly supported his wife the conclusion was inevitably drawn that the speaker considered his own position more important than that of the vice president, and that the attack threatened to call into question the privileges of the vice president himself. Typical of the comments on the affair is this from the Post:

"To the wayfaring citizens in the provinces -- the Joneses who pay the freight for the conduct of government -- all this ruckus about where some lady in fine feathers is going to sit at somebody's dinner table sounds like a tempest in a teapot. Also, it tempts many to wonder if this really is a democratic country."

And President Hoover eventually won favor for himself by a piece of diplomacy:

"The Hoover procedure, it seems, was to have nothing to do
with the squabble at all. He simply let it alone by neglecting to invite the two ladies to the same affair."

The De Priest Affair

Mr. Hoover was destined to have more trouble, however, with the next social problem he encountered. The De Priest affair was not funny, and it unquestionably cost the president many supporters south of the Mason-Dixon line.

A district in Chicago elected Oscar De Priest, a negro, as its representative to congress, and shortly he began to provide food for editorial thought. He named three negroes as candidates to West Point and Annapolis. The Post declared that the three were probably qualified and able to make their grades, and stated that there was no precedent for handling the situation should they graduate as officers, but that doubtless some way could be found so that everyone would be satisfied without any official implication of racial inferiority. There seems to have been no strong feeling aroused at this time.

The quiet which ensued preceded a storm. For Mrs. Hoover, in the course of her official duties, invited Mrs. De Priest to a tea at the White House. No wives of Southern congressmen received invitations to the affair. And these two facts were sufficient to cause considerable difficulty. Resolutions of censure from Southern state legislatures followed, and Southern newspapers immediately seconded the protests. The Post remarked acidly that Mrs. Hoover seemed to be willing to ignore the color line:

"She could not have failed to understand, when she asked
the De Priest woman to the executive mansion, that it would arouse equal resentment in the South to that which arose when the negro educator was entertained, and her course, therefore, can not appear otherwise than as a deliberate affront to the Southern people, and a determination to defy their well-known sentiments on the question of social equality between the white and black races."

On June eighteenth, the same paper noted that De Priest was apparently determined to demand social equality because he was running for re-election and seemed to feel that his campaign would be helped by reports that he had been mingling on equal terms with the white people in Washington. But the crux of the matter, according to the Post, was this:

"And then, too, he is not overlooking any chance to 'rub it in' to the Southern white people, who are strongly committed to the idea of race segregation."

The following day -- June nineteenth, a traditional negro holiday in Texas -- both local papers spoke on the subject:

"The Hoover position on a question which has been agitating official society at Washington since Oscar De Priest, Chicago negro entered congress has been defined by an accomplished fact. As that thought sinks in, many thousands of former Hoover supporters will make up their minds not to follow his banner again."

The Chronicle summed up the long history of good relations between the two races in the South, their tolerance of each other and their ability to get along together without bitterness. Then it got down to cases:
"Seeing and feeling all this on this bright June Nineteenth morning, a day that in some degree pleases the heart of every Southerner, white or black, the social action of Mrs. Hoover last week is to us nothing less than a derisive gesture of contempt for the whole South and all it stands for. The explanation, made as an afterthought, that the wives of all congressmen are in turn to be invited, is nothing to us but just what it plainly is -- a lame afterthought. Bear you in mind, no Southern woman was invited to that tea. Nor did that occur by accident. Nothing about it was accidental.

"Over and over again The Chronicle, during the last national campaign, pointed out that the speeches of Herbert Hoover showed plainly that, as far as he is concerned, the South does not exist. And now the action of the lady of the White House shows plainly that it is even worse.

"The occasion was not one of giving recognition to a public benefactor, which remotely excused the action of President Roosevelt in having Booker T. Washington to lunch. Mrs. Hoover's tea was a purely social function. A select social function, as society people would say. Without modification or qualification, it is the first unmitigated gesture that ever came from the White House that had the meaning of social equality, purely and simply, and nothing more.

"Getting right down to the hideous fundamentals of the thing, and looking at it for truly what it means and nothing less, on out at the end, social equality is and can only be amalgamation. There can be no such thing as social blending
without racial blending. Somewhere in the future it must come to mulattoism.

"It doesn't mean raising anybody up, Mrs. Hoover. Far from it. It means letting everybody down!"

The Press did not at this, or any other time, comment on the race question.

The issue was not allowed to die at that point. In July the Post again mentioned it editorially. And late in the year it recurred in connection with another social incident. The president had given a dinner for a group of visiting diplomats, and had neglected to send an invitation to Senator Johnson, an important member of the senate foreign relations committee. The president immediately apologized to Senator Johnson, explaining that no slight was intended, and that the entire incident was a result of a mix-up. Senator Johnson accepted the apology with good grace and did not mention the matter afterward. Not so the Post:

"The Johnson incident is but the latest thing of its kind that has marked the social side of the still young Hoover administration. There was the giving precedence to Mrs. Gann over Mrs. Longworth and all the bickering that followed it. And there was the De Priest tea party -- what a world of trouble might have been saved by a little 'inadvertence' in connection with that affair. It is hard to believe that bad luck alone is responsible for this unfortunate record. When a De Priest is remembered and a Johnson forgotten in getting out White House invitations, the public must suspect a need for better
And on the fourteenth of December, 1929, the Post printed a resume of its grievances:

"The sidestepping of the prohibition enforcement plank in the Hoover platform by the appointment of a crime commission, empowered to investigate the whole problem of crime, instead of concentrating on the problem of prohibition, as the country had been led by the president to believe it would do was one of the first. Then the De Priest incident, which made the South again safe for democracy; the split between the Eastern and Western wings of the G.O.P. over which was to be allowed to hold up the American consumers for the biggest swag via the protective tariff, accompanied by the desertion of the president by Senator Borah, Mr. Hoover's chief pre-election supporter. The Moses speech, in which the 'sons of wild jackasses' from the West were excoriated by the high priest of the old guard, and these same sons encouraged to keep on voting with the Democrats in the senate. The White House's second social error to become a sensation, the failure to invite Senator Johnson of the foreign relations committee to a dinner for the diplomats." 

What would have been the result if Mrs. Hoover had invited the wives of Southern congressmen to the same tea as the negress?

Chairman Huston

Early in 1930 the Republican national chairman, Claudius Huston, was proved to have speculated on the stock market with funds entrusted to him by a lobbying organization which opposed government operation of the Muscle Shoals power plant. Either
of the two -- speculation with funds not strictly his own, or connection with a big industry lobby -- would have been enough by itself to have provided the Democratic newspapers of this part of the country with plenty of material on which to comment. But the combination was almost too much for them to have desired. The Chronicle referred to Mr. Huston as "A Democratic Asset," and the Post called him another straw on the elephant's back:

"The Republican chairman's apparent indifference to presidential and party embarrassment may seem odd at first glance, but it is quite in line with the traditions of that wing of the G.O.P. to which he belongs. The 'standpatters' did not get their nickname for nothing. It is possible that the Grundy-Davis contest is as much a thorn in Mr. Hoover's side as the continued chairmanship of Mr. Huston."

A few days later the Post positively gloated:

"The longer Chairman Huston of the Republican National committee bows his neck and refuses to resign under fire, the more pleasant life seems for the Democrats. His connection with lobbying activities for the disposition of Muscle Shoals to certain interests directs the attention of the people that Republican chiefs are chronically in the service in one way or another of special interests seeking favors at the hands of the government."

And when Chairman Huston resigned both of the local papers expressed their grief that such a good friend of the hopes of the Democratic party was leaving his position of national prominence."
The 1930 Election

The election of 1930 was revealing. As far beforehand as April there was already speculation as to what would be the result if the Democratic party should win control of the house of representatives:

"If the Democrats should win the house, Mr. Hoover would be near to helplessness in the last part of his administration, assuming that the senate will continue its obstreperousness."

And as the actual voting time drew near, the Post and Chronicle took slightly different attitudes about the election. The Chronicle was interested in the individual contests, but did not seem to attach as much significance to the president's position as did the Post. The stand of that organ was clearly explained on the first of September:

"The merit of boldness, at least, may be claimed for the campaign statement issued last week by the Republican National committee. The statement, prepared under the direction of Chairman Fess, makes President Hoover's record the main issue in the congressional races of this year, calling upon the country to choose a Republican congress by way of expressing its confidence in the National administration.... For all its boldness, the Republican statement can not be regarded as formidable to Democratic hopes. On the contrary, it constitutes an acceptance of most of the grounds of argument chosen by the Democrats themselves. The latter should be prepared to do battle enthusiastically on such issues as Republican prosperity and the merits of the latest Republican tariff."
In October the same paper printed an editorial which was as near to pure propaganda as anything which appeared at the time. The editorial in question is entitled "Our Republican Stamps," and discusses the fact that faces of Democratic personages of the past have been replaced on the national stamps by the faces of dead Republicans. And a few days later the Post hailed the coming election as a sure victory for the Democratic party, saying that the Republicans should not expect any mercy for Mr. Hoover, since they showed none to President Wilson.

When the accuracy of their prediction of victory became apparent, both local papers hailed it enthusiastically, and the Post commented that such a turnover in congress was calculated to tax the ingenuity of the most sympathetic and resourceful presidential labor placement bureau imaginable.

Personal Notes

The president's relations with the press were far more cordial than those of his predecessor in the White House. His efforts in the direction of achieving such successes were frequently noted with favor locally.

And on a few occasions these improved relations served him well. One such was the time shortly after the most severe criticism in the senate of the president for keeping Secretary Mellon in the cabinet had died down:

"The Mellon critics have quieted down perceptibly since Mr. Hoover moved into the White House. That is not the result of their feeling any more kindly toward the secretary, but it is due to the recognition of the fact that he is not the power
in the administration that he was in the Coolidge and Harding regime.... He has not dominated Hoover."

And in November of 1929, after Louisville had accorded the president an unusually cold reception, the Post spoke out:

"Some of the president's policies are not popular in Texas, but the people of this state have not yet reached the point where they will fail to turn out and give the president of the United States a reception in keeping with the high office he occupies, and in keeping with what is due the distinguished man who occupies it." 47

In December of the same year the president refused to allow Washington police to charge a group of young communists who had been picketing the White House, but ordered instead that they be sent home. The Chronicle agreed heartily with the stand of the chief executive:

"President Hoover showed some very common sense when he ordered the picketing communists released and sent home to their parents, so that they could not suffer 'cheap martyrdom'." 47

Then in May of 1931, the president had as his guest at the White House Bryan Untiedt, thirteen year old hero of a school bus tragedy. The boy said in an interview that after he had talked to Mr. Hoover for a little while he forgot about the fact that he was president. By this time, of course, the tide was running against the president, but the boy's compliment did not go unnoticed:

'But Mr. Hoover must be a very human sort of person if he can engage so interestingly in conversation with a 13-year old
boy as to cause that boy to forget his companion was the president of the United States. That is certainly a revelation of the sympathetic attitude, the democratic spirit and simplicity of manner and speech of the president. Evidently, he is capable of speaking to his fellow citizens in other than formal and prepared phrases. Mr. Hoover should have more boy visitors. It would present him to the country in a different light."

The above are typical of the favorable notices the president received. But which comments — the praise of this sort, or the censure for such affairs as the De Priest tea — influenced public opinion most?

Footnotes

1. The Houston Post; April 6, 1929; "Mr. Hoover Settles It"
2. Ibid.; April 12, 1929; "Mrs Gann's Social Status"
3. The Houston Chronicle; May 12, 1929; "Those Dear, Delightful Ladies"
4. The Houston Post; May 19, 1929; "Trincess Alice Aspires"
5. Ibid.; October 2, 1929; "Social Kou Quelled"
6. Ibid.; January 6, 1930; "Another Hoover Accomplishment"
7. Ibid.; May 16, 1929; "Phase of the Race Problem"
8. Ibid.; June 19, 1929; "Social Equality at the White House"
9. Ibid.; June 18, 1929; "A Mistaken Policy"
10. Ibid.; June 19, 1929; "Political Results of a Social Tea"
11. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; June 19, 1929; "June Nineteenth"
12. The Houston Post; July 4, 1929; "Coolidge Still A Factor": "To one really expects his farm relief measure to bring appreciable results. The Hoover future is closely bound up with the outcome of that experiment. The De Priest incident practically destroyed any possibility of his holding the gains made in the South in 1928. His very apparent effort to shunt aside consideration of the prohibition question is displeasing to both vets and drys."
   Ibid.; July 5, 1929; "Aftermath of the Hoover Tea": "It is perfectly apparent now that the Hoover tea precipitated an agitation of the question of racial equality that has already resulted in much harm, and is destined to produce more misfortune."
13. Ibid.; November 11, 1929; "The Hoover-Johnson Incident"
14. Ibid.; December 14, 1929; "Democrats Getting the 'Breaks'"
15. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; March 26, 1930; "A Democratic Asset"
16. The Houston Post; April 2, 1930; "Straws on the Elephant's Back"
17. Ibid.; April 6, 1930; "Huston, Democratic Ally"
18. Ibid.; July 20, 1930; "Exit Mr. Huston"
Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; August 8, 1930; "Following a Good Example"
19. The Houston Post; April 7, 1930; "Democratic Prospects"
20. Ibid.; September 1, 1930; "Making Hoover the Issue"
21. Appendix B; The Houston Post; October 26, 1930; "Our Republican Stamps"
22. The Houston Post; October 31, 1930; "Chickens Come Home to Roost"
23. Ibid.; November 23, 1930; "Hoover Keeping Fit":
"He will have to carry on, conscious of the fact that his popularity has waned, that his administration had been virtually repudiated in mid term. And he has as serious problems to face, such as unemployment, business depression, farm relief, treasury deficits, as any president has ever faced in peace time. The real test of Mr. Hoover, physically, mentally, as well as politically, is to come between now and the end of his term."
Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; November 11, 1930; "Party Co-operation"
24. The Houston Post; November 21, 1930; "Seeking Federal Sanctuary"
25. For example: Ibid.; March 6, 1930; "Hoover Asks Advice"
26. Ibid.; October 12, 1929; "His Wings Clipped"
27. Ibid.; November 6, 1929; "Louisville's Cold Reception"
28. The Houston Chronicle; December 17, 1929; "How to Treat Communists"
29. The Houston Post; May 5, 1931; 'A Boy's Compliment"
The presidential campaign of 1932 was far different from that of 1928. The four intervening years had brought about great changes in the average American's outlook on politics. The Republican "full dinner pail" had seemed startlingly empty after the depression actually set in. People had no faith in the existing administration. Perhaps they had no faith in themselves. Perhaps they were looking for a scapegoat. In any event, they were evidently convinced that the time was ripe for a change in leadership. This was the attitude apparent in the editorials of all three Houston newspapers pertaining to the later campaign.

It is difficult to decide just when the campaign of 1932 -- a deadly serious affair -- really opened. Almost from the beginning of Mr. Hoover's years in office, editorials reminded Houstonians that he must be made to answer in 1932 for the deeds of the day. But the campaign gathered in intensity in the summer of 1932. By that time the issues were crystallized, and the real questions which were to figure had appeared.

From the very passage of the Smoot-Hawley tariff bill, its potentialities as campaign thunder had been realized, but in 1932 it was again brought to public notice with a vengeance. Discussing "The Republican Plan" for the next four years, the Chronicle said:

"It proposes higher tariffs and more tariffs; it proposes a continuation of present farm board practices."
"The Republican party says we should have more and more isolation. With nations already unable to buy most of our products, the Republican party proposes to shut the door in the face of still more foreign products, thereby guaranteeing that those nations will buy still less from us."

And again, in October, in the course of a general indictment of Mr. Hoover for failures in the great economic crisis, the Chronicle suggested that a wiser tariff bill might have helped to preserve our foreign trade, and thus made the economic crisis a little less serious.

The Post also expressed the idea that the tariff made the struggle for foreign trade a hard one, and after the president's acceptance of renomination, commented that he avoided the issue:

"That means that the president ignores completely all the evidence tending to show that the operation of the high tariff has impaired our foreign trade and stood in the way of our economic recovery. He ignores entirely the retaliatory measures being taken in many countries of the world against the United States."

The unpopularity of the tariff measure was taken as a foregone conclusion, and nothing could be added by the newspapers which could create a great stir over the question. Much the same was true of the farm problem. One Post editorial linked the two in a discussion of the worst failures of the administration. In contrast, the stand of Governor Roosevelt on the farm problem was highly praised:

"The governor never said a truer thing than when he
declared that the present administration and the two previous administrations utterly failed to understand the farm problem, and utterly failed to solve it. The administration has not only failed to give the farmer any real aid, but it has by its mistaken policies brought unnecessary injury to the producers. The American farmers no doubt would be better off if there had never been a farm board.

"The reference by the governor to formulation of a definite policy looking to the planned use of land touches upon a great need in agriculture."

And when Mr. Hoover prepared to speak in Des Moines, the Post foresaw an unfavorable welcome:

"A considerable part of Iowa's farming population is in open, even armed, revolt against market conditions, and market conditions are attributed by many to ill leadership on the part of the president. A cold reception at Des Moines today will mean that Mr. Hoover may as well withdraw from the presidential race."

But he got a favorable reception, which the Post dismissed as merely the normal thing in the president's native state.

And this was the newspaper which had reminded its readers, in connection with the Hoover Dam project, that the president was a Californian.

Because of the change in the Republican position on prohibition, that party was widely condemned. Newspapers here commonly referred to it as two faced, because of its wet candidate for vice president and its dry president. The platform plank calling for resubmission of the question to the nation's
voters was spoken of as a straddle. The Chronicle said of it:

"The Republican repeal plank is full of equivocation and self-righteous sophistication. Principally it means nothing, and, in so far as it means anything, it would have been better to have said nothing."

And the Post contrasted the positions of the two parties:

"The prohibition plank in the Democratic platform is in striking contrast to the treatment of the liquor problem in the Republican platform. Where the former is definite, straightforward, unequivocal and remedial, the latter is evasive, equivocal and subject to as many interpretations as there are interpreters."

Earlier the Post had said that, since the White House had controlled the Republican convention, there could be little doubt that the prohibition plank as written at that gathering had the support of the president. Nothing beyond what the plank promised might be hoped for from Mr. Hoover. "Dry Democrats would do better to vote the ticket of their own party.

Essentially, however, both parties were advocating the same thing with respect to prohibition. If it was to be repealed, as the Democrats demanded, it must be resubmitted to the voters, as the Republicans proposed.

The Roosevelt position on what to do with the utilities was also favored. The Press defined and commented upon it:

"Full publicity for utility financing and interlocking relations; substitution of the prudent investment basis for rate valuation in place of the reproduction cost theory, and
regulation of security issues on this new basis; regulation of holding companies by the Federal Power Commission; and the use of public ownership, production and transmission as a yardstick and a club over competing private industry -- such federal clubs to include the St. Lawrence, Muscle Shoals, Boulder Dam and Columbia River projects.

"For, unless the Roosevelt type of program can be put into action very soon, it is apparent that the utility industry, in its greed and blindness, will kill itself." 2

And the Post, which had earlier condemned these very methods, said that the governor would use government competition, and threat of government competition, and publicity for the doings of big power corporations in order to control them. He would put teeth into the laws. 3 The Chronicle added that such a program would fill the needs of Texas exactly.

All of the foregoing questions were part and parcel of the larger question of the nation's economic prosperity. 4 And this was the thing which became most damaging to Mr. Hoover as the campaign progressed. Four years before, he had been elected on a platform which promised the continuance of prosperity, and the practical abolition of poverty. The bull market, which broke disasterously in 1929, had been affectionately termed the "Hoover market" -- a Republican compliment which became a Democratic term of reproach.

The Chronicle expressed its dislike of the methods used by Mr. Hoover in his effort to restore prosperity. The presi-
dent, complained that newspaper, talked about doing in the future those things which he might more effectively have done during the years already allowed him as chief executive of this nation. Then, a few days later, Mr. Roosevelt's attitude toward the same problem was held up as a contrast to the failure of the Republican:

"Nevertheless... Mr. Roosevelt has gone much further than Mr. Hoover in thinking how the next depression may be prevented, his program involving necessarily the more equitable treatment of all classes of society in times of prosperity, in order that slowly accumulating maladjustments may not breed panics.

"In this he gives new hope for the future.

"The primary blame for the great distress of the nation in the last three years he places directly on the administration -- emphatically and convincingly so -- and a detailed pledge is made as to how such distress will be prevented in the future.

"With a bitter knowledge of Republican failure touching literally every home in the land, there is small doubt that the nation will turn to the greater humanitarianism and the brighter hope of the Democratic party as presented by Mr. Roosevelt."

The Chronicle seems to have refrained from use of the more obvious types of propaganda in connection with the question of the depression and who was responsible for it. But the Post discussed the issue in all conceivable ways. First it mentioned the president's inability to keep his campaign promises of prosperity for all:

"Four years ago, when Hoover was being ballyhooed as the
superman, as the great economic engineer who was going to abolish poverty, and who was going to lift the country to a new plane of prosperity, the Republicans were able to pick up dissatisfied Democratic votes. They will not be able to do that this year. The great object of dissatisfaction in the South today is the Hoover administration. No illusions regarding the super-qualities of the president remain."

In September, the Saturday Evening Post published an article by Calvin Coolidge which defended the president on the grounds that the depression was largely an international one, and therefore largely outside the jurisdiction of Mr. Hoover. In commenting on this, however, the Houston Post characterized it as typical of the Hoover alibis.

The paper said the same thing again by inference in an editorial on the twenty-sixth of October. This is illustrative of the type of blame by inference which was used with great success during the period of American politics in question. That such editorials did inestimable damage to Mr. Hoover's campaign cannot be doubted:

"A motorist returning from the North tells the New Orleans Times-Picayune of a new type vehicle he encountered on numerous roads in the agricultural districts in the Northern States. The quaint vehicle is known in those parts as the 'Hoover cart.' Here is the story of its origin, and a description of it:

""When a farmer has run his automobile, acquired in more prosperous days, until it will run no longer and is beyond
repair, he junks it. But having no cash wherewithal to finance its replacement in kind, he salvages the wheels, attaches them to a wagon box or improvised cart body, hitches a horse or a mule thereto and rolls more or less merrily along.'

"This story is on a par with one of similar import, though somewhat older. It goes after this fashion: A man rolling along the highway in a dilapidated motor car, which sounded as if its every chug would be its last, came upon a pedestrian, in a state of equal dilapidation, and carrying his belongings bound in a bandana handkerchief, which had been attached to a cane, the latter carried over the walker's shoulder. The motorist stopped and eyed the man on foot sympathetically, and then said: 'Get in brother, I voted for him too.'"

The call of Southern tradition was not used with anything like the frequency of 1928. Probably there were two reasons for this: the fact that the major question of the depression was counted upon to insure a return to Democratic party loyalty in this section of the nation, and the fact that a Texan was the Democratic vice presidential candidate. Very few editorials of the type of the following from the Chronicle appeared:

"Aside from the views, ability and character of Messrs. Roosevelt and Garner, The Chronicle submits two important reasons for support of the Democratic nominees -- for Texas support of them in particular.

"Thus a vote for Roosevelt and Garner is a vote for maintenance of our one party system in Texas and of our two party
The two things are not contradictory, but are necessary to the continues welfare of Texas and the United States."

The Post's attitude about stirring up sectionalism is not entirely clear in the light of the words of an editorial published early in October. Republicans as a party are charged with responsibility for the campaign practices of Oscar De Priest:

"De Priest, according to reports of his speeches, is going about among the negroes in the Northern and Middle Western cities telling them that the Democrats are working a scheme to get a Southerner from a 'Ku Klux ridden State' into the White House. Roosevelt's health is bad, he tells them. He will not last six months, if he is elected. Then John Garner will become president. Then De Priest and his dusky colleague from Mississippi load up their audiences with frightful pictures of negro persecution in the South, of the terrors of Ku Kluxism, and the risks of lynching negroes are alleged to run when they live in the South."

Then the editorial adds:

"This clearly is carrying political license to excess. To attempt to arouse sectional and racial prejudice, for political or any other purpose, is highly reprehensible. It is bad enough to lie about the physical condition of the Democratic nominee, and to peddle weird conceptions of Democratic plans. But to seek to stir up hatred among the people of one section against the people of another section on false and exaggerated
accounts of conditions is much worse."

How editorial policies changed in four years!

Aftermath

On election day Mr. Hoover only received fifty-nine electoral votes. And the Houston newspapers expressed extreme gratification but no surprise. The Chronicle spoke of "The Mighty Victory," and the Post -- characteristically -- was already looking four years ahead and making predictions that the Republicans would pass Hoover by and not renominate him in 1936.

The two parties immediately expressed their willingness to co-operate with one another in order to restore the country to economic security as soon as possible. And the Post commended Mr. Hoover for his display of this attitude:

"Mr. Hoover has shown a nobly patriotic spirit in inviting the man who is to be his successor in office to come to the capital immediately and to share with him the duty and the responsibility of meeting the war debt crisis, and Mr. Roosevelt manifested a similar spirit when he accepted the invitation."

Then Mr. Roosevelt decided to take no further part in the war debt controversy, giving as his reason his dissatisfaction with the actions being taken at the time by the president. And the Post approved of Mr. Roosevelt for this too:

"The Roosevelt position in the discussion is sound. In the absence of official responsibility, he cannot be blamed for refusing to take sponsorship of a body over which he holds no authority whatsoever."

On the whole, however, the papers seem to have considered
Mr. Hoover's defeat at the polls sufficient hardship to lay upon him, for after the election date they tended to give the administration more favorable -- or at least more tolerant -- notices than before that time.

The last speech the president made on world affairs met with general approval. The Chronicle said that he was absolutely right in saying that America must follow the road to international stabilization, and the re-establishment of world confidence everywhere, rather than rely on high tariffs and isolation. If America does not choose such a path, commented the paper, the result would be inflation and world economic war. Commentary and the Post agreed.

On March fourth, 1933, Franklin Delano Roosevelt became president of the United States.

Footnotes

1. The Houston Chronicle; June 18, 1932; "The Republican 'Plan'"
2. Ibid. October 6, 1932; "The President's View of It'
3. The Houston Post; March 1, 1932; "Fighting For Foreign Trade"
4. Ibid.; August 15, 1932; "Hoover and High Tariff"
5. Ibid.; July 12, 1932; "Farm Board Failure"
6. Ibid.; September 15, 1932; "Roosevelt's Farm Aid"
7. Ibid.; October 4, 1932; "Test For Hoover"
8. Ibid.; October 6, 1932; "Mr. Hoover's Speech"
9. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; June 16, 1932; "The Republican Repeal Plank"
10. Appendix B; The Houston Post; July 1, 1932; "The Democratic Platform"
11. The Houston Post; July 3, 1932; "No Hope For Hoover"
12. Appendix B; The Houston Press; "Roosevelt on Utilities"; September 23, 1932
13. The Houston Post, September 23, 1932; "Roosevelt and Power"
14. The Houston Chronicle; September 23, 1932; "A Sound Waterpower and Utility Program"
15. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; August 12, 1932; "The President's Speech"
16. Ibid.; August 23, 1932; "Assailing Failure"
17. The Houston Post; July 31, 1932; "South Solid in 1932"
18. Ibid.; September 8, 1932; "Coolidge Defends"
19. Ibid.; October 26, 1932; "The Hoover Cart"
20. The Houston Chronicle; November 4, 1932; "Two Reasons"
21. Appendix B; The Houston Post; October 3, 1932; "A Despicable Campaign"
22. Appendix B; The Houston Chronicle; November 9, 1932; "The Mighty Victory"
23. Appendix B; The Houston Post; November 14, 1932; "Passing Hoover By"
24. The Houston Post; November 16, 1932; "There'll Be No Doldrums"
25. Ibid.; December 24, 1932; "Roosevelt Remains Free"
26. The Houston Chronicle; February 15, 1933; "The Road For America"
27. The Houston Post; February 15, 1933; "Hoover's Speech"
Bibliography

Factual Works


Interpretative Works


Appendix B

Appendix B is a collection, under separate cover, of editorials clipped from Houston newspapers between 1925 and 1933. For the material included I am indebted to Dr. Floyd S. Lear, Professor of History at the Rice Institute.