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The Panama Canal Tolls Question in the Upper-Midwestern Press

Grant K. Anderson

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THE PANAMA CANAL TOLLS QUESTION
IN THE UPPER-MIDWESTERN PRESS

by

Grant K. Anderson

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B.S. in History, University of South Dakota, 1967

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of the

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Grand Forks, North Dakota

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This thesis submitted by Grant K. Anderson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done.

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Title: The Panama Canal Tolls Question in the Upper-Mid-
western Press

Department: History

Degree: Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

In 1912, the United States Congress passed a measure which granted free use of the Panama Canal to ships engaged in the coastwise shipping of the United States. Although Great Britain protested that the measure was a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty of 1901, President Taft signed the bill into law. Two years later, newly elected President Woodrow Wilson appeared before a joint session of Congress and requested repeal of the disputed clause. Several months later, Congress concurred in this point of view and repealed the exemption clause. The question arises: What was the reaction of the upper midwest to such a reversal of policy?

In determining midwestern public opinion regarding the exemption clause, editorial comment was examined in a random sample of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota newspapers. In this examination, particular attention was paid to the various arguments advanced, and an effort was made to determine whether there was any one regional argument advanced. Within this random sample, an effort was made to examine the weekly press of the region to determine the extent to which they covered foreign affairs.

In an addition to an examination of press comment, the position of the region's Congressional delegation was also noted to determine whether there was any variation between the way the editors viewed the issue and the way the region's Congressmen voted. Attention was also paid to the arguments advanced by these Congressmen to determine if they were similar to those advanced in the region's press.

From the examination of the random sample of newspapers and the position of the upper-midwestern Congressmen, it is concluded that the people of this region were overwhelmingly opposed to the exemption clause in 1912 and supported strongly the repeal movement of 1914. To the people of this region, the exemption clause appeared to be a move by the coastal states to secure an economic advantage. The upper midwest was opposed to being taxed for a benefit it did not receive.

Contrary to the widely held opinion, the upper midwest was both informed on and interested in the tolls question. This region took an active part in the exemption clause debate and strongly voiced its opposition to the measure. Little evidence was found, however, to support the contention that the upper midwest was an outspoken opponent of Great Britain. Very little Anglophobia was expressed in the papers examined. To the people of this region, this was an economic, not an ethnic, question.

CHAPTER I

SETTING THE STAGE

Addressing a joint session of the Senate and House on March 1, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to repeal a law which it had passed two years earlier by a majority of almost three to one. This law, which President Wilson had supported during the 1912 campaign, and which formed a plank in the Democratic platform of that year, granted the free use of the Panama Canal to the coastwise shipping of the United States.¹

In making his demand to Congress, President Wilson, the first Democratic president in sixteen years, reflected the change of sentiment that had taken place in the United States since the passage of the law. When initially passed in 1912, this law appeared to merely a routine domestic measure. After its creation, a rapidly moving chain of events--an official protest by Great Britain claiming the exemption violated the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1901, a presidential election in the United States, and a nation-

¹The term "coastwise shipping" means, for the purpose of this paper, shipping from one port within the United States directly to another U.S. port without landing at a foreign port; as from New York to Seattle.

wide debate of the issue--greatly altered the complexion of this routine domestic measure. What had begun as merely a domestic matter now involved questions of sectionalism, national honor, economic advantage and/or disadvantage, as well as partisan political promises.

The question naturally arises: what would be the response of the man on the street to such a reversal of policy? Also, since this measure largely affected the coastal states, what would be the response of such upper-midwestern states as Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota? Would geographical proximity and a similarity of economic interests produce a regional opinion--would local interests be the determining factor in the formulation of opinion--what influence would ethnic backgrounds and tradition have on public opinion regarding the canal tolls and President Wilson's request?

United States interest in an interocean canal dated back more than eight decades prior to President Wilson's unique request. Shortly after the republics of Central America asserted their independence from Spain in the mid-1820's, filibusters from the United States began searching for a suitable location for the proposed canal. These expeditions resulted in negotiation of a treaty with New Granada (present-day Colombia) in 1846. Throughout the early part of the nineteenth century, the United States de-

sired a canal "open and free to the commerce of all nations on equal terms." The language varied, but the meaning was always the same.

It was soon discovered, however, that the United States was not the only country to see the advantage in a canal across Central America. Great Britain was also active in the area, and the consequent maneuvering of their representatives led to considerable diplomatic tension, which resulted in the signing of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty of 1850.

Realizing that neither nation would consent to the sole control of any canal by the other, the United States and Great Britain agreed that "neither Great Britain or the United States will ever obtain or maintain for itself any exclusive control over the canal."²

Prior to the signing of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, the policy of the United States had been to build a canal that would benefit the entire world equally, provide for freedom of transit and neutral passage. In the period after 1850, there occurred a marked shift in the attitude of the United States towards the canal. In the late 1880's and early 1890's the United States desired to obtain control of any man-made passage in order to control the movement of vessels through the canal. In this period, the Ameri-

²Harmodio Arias, The Panama Canal, A Study in International Law and Diplomacy (London: P. S. King and Son, 1917), p. 30.

can attitude was that the canal was to be built and operated for American advantage only.³

The main obstacle to an American-owned canal was diplomatic rather than physical. Before any canal could be built, the United States would have to be freed from its obligations under the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. In an effort to remove this obstacle, Secretary of State, John Hay, and the British Ambassador, Lord Pauncefote, began in early 1899 to discuss possible alternatives.

Great Britain, realizing that the United States was now a world power, offered no serious opposition to the revision of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. A new treaty, the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, was signed February 5, 1900. The main features of this treaty were as follows:

- (1) Great Britain released the United States from its obligations not to build a purely American canal.
- (2) Seven rules were listed, similar to those governing the Suez Canal for securing the "General Principle" of neutralization specified in the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, the most noteworthy of them being the fourth, which provided that the canal should be free and open in time of war as in time of peace to vessels of commerce and of war on terms of entire equality. . . and the canal should not be fortified.⁴

After the signing, the Hay-Pauncefote treaty was sent to the Senate for what was expected to be almost instant

³Ibid., p. 35.

⁴Charles S. Campbell, Jr., Anglo-American Understanding, 1898-1903 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1957), pp. 192-193.

consent to the treaty signed by President McKinley. While it was being considered in the Senate, several amendments were proposed to the treaty. One of these, the so-called Davis Amendment, made provision for the fortification of the canal. Another was introduced by Senator Bard of California. This amendment proposed:

The United States reserves the right in the regulation of and management of the canal to discriminate in the charges of the tariff in favor of vessels⁵ of its own citizens engaged in the coastwise trade.⁵

While the Bard Amendment was defeated by a vote of 47 to 23, it was a significant proposal, the importance of which was to be apparent later.

The treaty, including the Davis Amendment, was approved and sent to President McKinley, who was forced to deal with a treaty of which he did not approve because of the fortification clause. He was faced with the problem of either re-submitting it to the Senate for further study or of forwarding it to England where it was sure to be rejected because of the fortification amendment. He chose to send it to London where the treaty, altered by Senate amendments, was rejected.⁶

⁵"Why the President is Right," North American Review, May 1, 1914, p. 645.

⁶R. W. Mowat, The Life of Lord Pauncefote, First Ambassador to the United States (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929), p. 271.

Secretary of State Hay immediately reopened discussions with Lord Pauncefote. Shortly, a revised treaty was drawn up and approved. The second Hay-Pauncefote treaty gave the United States the right of sole ownership of the canal and implied the right to fortify it. It is enough to say here that under this treaty, Great Britain had reversed its policy and made several concessions to the American point of view.⁷

⁷Campbell, p. 238.

CHAPTER II

1912: YEAR OF DECISION AND PROTEST

When the completion of the Panama Canal was close at hand, Congress began to legislate for the operation and regulation of the canal. The selection of the most beneficial policy, from the American point of view, was an extremely perplexing one. What should be the proper rate of tolls charged for the use of the canal? Should all ships pay at the same rate or should American ships be granted special consideration since this was an American canal built on soil leased by the United States? These were but a few of the many questions debated as Congress took up the matter of regulation of the Panama Canal.

The first step toward canal legislation was taken in the last days of 1911 when two measures were introduced into the Sixty-second Congress. On December 11, Senator Henry C. Lodge of Massachusetts introduced a bill (S. 3632) proposing that American ships should not be required to pay tolls.¹ Less than a week later, Representative Roberts of Nevada introduced a bill (H.R. 16095), which prohibited the collection of tolls from vessels flying the American flag for passing

¹U.S. Congress, Senate, S. 3632, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., 1911, Congressional Record, p. 184.

through the Panama Canal while engaged in coastwise traffic of the United States."² This issue, whether or not ships engaged in the coastwise trade of the United States should pay tolls, was one of the most hotly contested of the era. Public opinion was stirred, tempers flared, and an international incident resulted.

William C. Adamson, Representative from the coastal state of Georgia, introduced in the House on March 15, 1912, a bill (H.R. 61969) to provide for the opening, maintenance, protection, and operation of the Panama Canal. It was referred to the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce; by a 16 to 5 vote, the committee reported the bill favorably and included the following recommendation:

While many members of our committee believe that by the terms of our treaties with Great Britain we are prevented from allowing preferential or free tolls to ships of American registry either coastwise or foreign, the majority of the committee voting for uniform tolls authorize and request the statement positive, plain, and unequivocal--that no language of this section was chosen or used for the purpose of foreclosing discussion and differing opinion on that question.³

Minnesota's Representative Frederick C. Stevens (St. Paul), the ranking Republican on the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, and South Dakota's Representative Eben W. Martin (R.--Deadwood) voted with the majority in a decision

²U.S. Congress, House, H.R. 16095, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., 1911, Congressional Record, p. 144.

³Editorial, American Journal of International Law, VIII (July 1914), 594.

which sparked an extensive debate when the bill reached the House floor.⁴

The proposal came up for discussion in the House of Representatives on May 16, 1912. It was debated heatedly and at length with an abundance of arguments presented on both sides. In a fiery speech, Representative Adolph J. Sabath (D.--Illinois) declared that he opposed the granting of free tolls or any other form of subsidy. He considered the coastwise exemption to be not only a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, but also a benefit to the very few for which the American public would have to pay. Furthermore, free tolls would not, in Sabath's opinion, contribute to the upgrading of the American merchant marine as supporters of the bill had claimed.⁵

A somewhat similar view was held by Lynden Evans (R.--Illinois). While he agreed that the exemption could be a violation of the treaty, he stated that European countries could not be discriminated against because the coastwise trade was a monopoly of American shippers. He opposed the exemption clause for two reasons: (1) it would hurt the image of the United States abroad, and more importantly, (2) to remit tolls would be a Republican measure and strictly

⁴U.S. Congress, House, House Report 423, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., 1912, p. 3491.

⁵U.S. Congress, House, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., June 25, 1912, Congressional Record, pp. 230-231.

"undemocratic" because it would merely be a subsidy to the shipping trust.⁶

John H. Small, a Democratic Representative from the coastal state of North Carolina, declared that he would support the tolls exemption measure. While dodging the issue of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, he claimed to base his opinion on the theory of an American-owned canal for American use. According to Representative Small, the tolls exemption clause was designed to break the back of the transcontinental railroad and thus to bring about a cheaper form of transportation. In his opinion the net result of collecting tolls from coastwise ships would be to increase the cost of water transportation.⁷

Holding a view somewhat similar to that of Small was Frederick H. Gillet of Massachusetts. He also evaded the treaty issue but claimed that the coastwise trade should be required to pay the tolls. These collected tolls, however, should be refunded to the ship owners. He claimed that by refunding the tolls the freight rates would be reduced to the favored community that the shippers served.⁸

Representative Martin of South Dakota voiced support for Gillet's proposal to collect and then refund tolls from

⁶Ibid., p. 174.

⁷Ibid., pp. 228-229.

⁸Ibid., p. 174.

coastwise shipping. Although he was opposed to "subsidies or special considerations," he considered this to be a better proposal than repudiation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty. However, Martin questioned Gillet's theory about freight rates and warned of the possible consequences for people of the midwestern states:

. . . we of the intermediate states, from Indiana to Nevada, and from Canada to Mexico, may find, if we throw down the last card that we have in this game at the very outset--we may find ourselves taxed to pay the interest on this great indebtedness, which inures mostly to the benefit of the coastwise trader.

In Martin's opinion, free tolls to the coastwise trade would increase, rather than decrease, railroad rates, as Representative Small had claimed, since the railroads would become more dependent on interior commerce for their existence.⁹

Martin's colleague on the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, Frederick C. Stevens of Minnesota, also opposed the free tolls measure when it reached the House floor. In presenting his case, Stevens listed six arguments against free tolls:

- (1) treaty obligations of the United States
- (2) unfair discrimination in favor of American ships

⁹Ibid., pp. 6685-6687. Representative Martin admitted that he had first favored free tolls as a method of building up the merchant marine. However, after a thorough study, he opposed additional benefits to the shipping trust and pointed out that Canadian coastwise trade would suffer unfair competition.

would seriously injure foreign trade

- (3) subsidies to coastwise shipping would not build up the American merchant marine
- (4) the cost of building, operating, and maintaining the canal should be shared by everyone
- (5) the benefit of discrimination, or free tolls for American ships in coastwise trade, would aid the mercantile interests of the coasts in competing with their trade rivals in the interior
- (6) free tolls and discrimination against other nations in violation of treaty obligations would incite resentment and reprisals against American commerce and interests in the use of other international waters under the control of some one nation suffering from American discrimination.

In his closing remarks, Stevens stated that he could see no reason for giving additional benefits to an "already bloated and pampered monopoly." Fellow Minnesota Congressman Halvor Steenerson (R.--Crookston) also voiced opposition to the subsidy request of the coastal states.¹⁰

It may be concluded that the House was divided along geographical, rather than political, lines. The coastal

¹⁰U.S. Congress, House, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., May 17, 1912, Congressional Record, p. 6654; May 21, 1912, Congressional Record, p. 6916.

states favored the tolls exemption clause, while the landlocked states opposed the passage of such biased legislation. The will of the coastal states prevailed, and the House passed the measure by a vote of 147 to 127 on May 23, 1912. An examination of the vote shows that Winfield S. Hammond of Minnesota, the only Democrat among the upper-midwestern representatives, voted in favor of the exemption clause. Republicans Sydney Anderson, Charles R. Davis, Charles A. Lindbergh, Clarence B. Miller, Frank M. Nye, Frederick C. Stevens, Halvor Steenerson, and Andrew J. Volstead of Minnesota, along with Henry T. Helgeson of North Dakota, opposed the measure. South Dakota's Eben W. Martin was counted among the eight members who answered present rather than cast a vote on the measure, while Louis B. Hanna (R.--North Dakota) and Charles H. Burke (R.--South Dakota) did not vote.¹¹

With House passage, the bill was sent to the Senate where it was to be subjected to even more extensive and torrid debate. Before it reached the Senate floor, however, it was transformed from a purely domestic measure to one of international importance. Great Britain had followed the House debate closely and believed that passage of this meas-

¹¹U.S. Congress, House, vote on H.R. 21969, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., May 23, 1912, Congressional Record, p. 7019. Representative Burke was ill and absent when the Panama bill was passed in 1912; he said later that he would have voted against it. Congressional Record, June 12, 1914, p. 10333.

ure was a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty. The British government drew up a written protest to the House action and presented it at Washington on July 8, 1912. The foundation of this protest was Rule 1 or Article 3 of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, which read:

The canal shall be free and open to the vessels of commerce and of war of all nations observing these rules on terms of entire equality so that there shall be no discrimination against any such nation, or its citizens, or subjects, in respect of the conditions or charges of traffic or otherwise. Such conditions and charges shall be just and equitable.¹²

It was contended by the British that if American coastwise ships were to use the canal without paying tolls, other ships would have to pay a higher percentage of the cost of operating and maintaining the canal.

With the international importance of the proposed legislation, the Senate debate assumed added importance. It was now impossible to dodge the treaty issue as some members of the House of Representatives had elected to do. As the debate continued, those who favored the exemption insisted that the action of Great Britain resulted from the claims made by Canadian shipowners that they would suffer if American ships were allowed free passage through the canal. This group also pointed out that American money had built the canal and this in itself was reason enough to grant American

¹²"Official Documents--First British Protest," American Journal of International Law, VII, supplement (January 1913), 46-48.

ships free use of the canal. "To build a canal and let all countries use it on equal rates would be philanthropic and sentimental, . . . a discrimination against ourselves," was the manner in which this position was summed up by Coe I. Crawford (R.--South Dakota).¹³

Other Senators, led by Elihu Root of New York and Theodore Burton of Ohio, could not accept this line of reasoning and staunchly opposed the exemption clause. One of the most vocal members of this group was Porter J. McCumber (R.--North Dakota). With regard to the claimed discrimination of the exemption clause, he commented:

. . . it has been suggested . . . that neither Great Britain, nor any other country, could engage in coastwise trade and therefore they would necessarily have no interest. But a vessel from Victoria could engage in coastwise trade. A vessel loaded with lumber from Victoria can be taken to New York. We, by disregarding this treaty and allowing our own coastwise vessels to go free through this canal, give a preferential right to our own coastwise trade, not as against the coastwise trade of any other country, but as against any foreign country's vessels entering our ports.¹⁴

In addition to claiming that it was a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, these Senators pointed out the fate of the proposed Bard Amendment to the Hay-Pauncefote treaty of 1901. They declared that this amendment had been soundly

¹³U.S. Congress, Senate, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., July 15, 1912, Congressional Record, p. 9066.

¹⁴U.S. Congress, Senate, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., July 17, 1912, Congressional Record, p. 9176.

defeated, and now as then, it would be a mistake to exempt coastwise trade from the payment of tolls. Senator Knute Nelson of Minnesota (R.--Alexandria) saw the exemption clause as merely "another bonus . . . [to] the only statutory monopoly we have in this country." Other Senators who were opposed to this granting of a subsidy to the coastwise shipping trust included North Dakota's junior Senator, Asle J. Gronna, who "always was opposed to a ship subsidy," and felt the people of the interior would be saddled with the expense of paying for the canal while the coastal states reaped a bountiful harvest.¹⁵

After heated and lengthy debate, the Senate passed the exemption measure on August 7, 1912. As was true in the House, a majority of those favoring the exemption clause were from the coastal states. However, the measure did draw some support from the upper-midwest. Senators Crawford of South Dakota and Clapp of Minnesota voted with the majority; North Dakota's Porter J. McCumber and Asle J. Gronna and Minnesota's Knute Nelson voted nay, while Robert J. Gamble (R.--South Dakota) did not vote.¹⁶

The Senate version differing slightly from that passed

¹⁵U.S. Congress, Senate, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., July 17, 1912, Congressional Record, p. 9171; August 8, 1912, p. 10436.

¹⁶U.S. Congress, Senate, Vote on S. 16095, August 7, 1912, Congressional Record, p. 10590.

by the House, a joint conference committee of the House and the Senate met to iron out the differences. Representative Stevens of Minnesota was the only upper-midwest member appointed to this six-member committee, which decided to retain the following provisions: (1) exemption of American coastwise shipping from the payment of tolls; (2) admission of foreign-built ships to registry in the United States when American-owned and used in foreign trade; and (3) the power to fix and set the tolls was to be left to the president. The report was agreed to in the Senate on August 16 and in the House the following day.¹⁷

President Taft, who earlier had taken the position that the United States might legally discriminate in favor of its own vessels, signed the bill at 7:40 P.M., August 24. In doing so, President Taft had approved public law 337, of which Section 5 read: "No tolls shall be levied upon vessels in the coastwise trade of the United States."¹⁸

In order to make the position of the United States clear, President Taft sent a memorandum to Congress asking them to pass a joint resolution stating that the new law

¹⁷Saint Paul Pioneer Press, August 11, 1912, p. 2. Representative Stevens refused to sign the report of the conference committee because he opposed free tolls and felt the act to be a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty. Ibid., August 19, 1912, p. 3.

¹⁸Panama Canal Tolls Act, Statutes at Large, XXXVII, 560 (1911-1913).

was not in violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, and that there was no discrimination involved. However, because 1912 was an election year and by late August members were eager to go home, no action was taken by Congress.

After months of hard-fought debates on the Capitol floor, fiery orations, and an international protest, the campaign was over. It had been decided by the duly elected representatives of the people that ships involved in the coastwise trade of the United States should be exempted from the payment of tolls. It remained to be seen how the American people would react to the decision of the lawmakers.

CHAPTER III

THE NATION LOOKS AT THE ISSUES

One of the first expressions of non-legislative opinion concerning the tolls question appeared in the November 11, 1911, issue of Independent magazine. Bernard N. Baker, president of the Atlantic and Pacific Transport Company, supported the tolls exemption. He believed that the canal should be used to afford benefits to the greatest number of Americans. Observing that coastwise trade was reserved by law to American ships, he could see no discrimination in the exemption.¹

Prior to 1912, only those groups that had something to gain by the exemption, such as the coastwise shippers and the ship-building industry, had made their views known. This continued to be the case in the early months of 1912; an example is provided by the action taken by the New Orleans Progressive Union. This group passed resolutions supporting the exemption clause on the ground that these were American ships carrying American goods and passing through an American canal. Its view was concurred with by such organizations as the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and the

¹Bernard N. Baker, "Panama Canal Tolls," Independent, LXXI B (November 11, 1911), 1089-1092.

Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.²

With the British protest of July 15, 1912, the canal tolls controversy assumed new proportions. No longer was it merely an American domestic issue but rather one which affected all commercial nations. The effect of the British protest was best summed up by Outlook, which commented in its issue of August 3:

It is unusual for a foreign government to make a formal protest against legislation proposed by the Congress of the United States. The unusual has happened and the British Government addressed a note to the Department of State asking that final action by Congress regarding Panama Canal tolls be deferred until England can have a full opportunity for presenting its views regarding its treaty rights to the Canal.³

The editorial concluded that the effect of the protest would be a general awakening of the American people, and it called attention to the fact that proper legislation was necessary regarding the operation of the canal.

The British argument rested chiefly on the interpretation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, and upon the fact that if any American ships were granted free use of the canal, British (and all European) ships using the canal would be forced to bear more than

²U.S. Congress, House, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., Congressional Record, pp. 10354, 10436.

³"Panama Canal and the Rest of the World," Outlook, CI (August 3, 1912), 755-756.

their proper share of the burden of the cost of canal upkeep. A broad survey of the British press reaction to events occurring in America during the latter half of 1912 showed a pronounced anti-American feeling. In an editorial headed, "Dishonored," the London Daily Express commented: "The signature [on the Panama Bill] will remain a blot on the Republic's reputation."⁴ The London Daily News concurred in these words:

It might have been excusable merely to attach his signature but Mr. Taft did not scruple to give the bill his benediction in a memorandum which was worthier of a pettifogging solicitor than the chief of a great republic.⁵

The European press in general seemed to feel that the United States had exercised poor judgment in exempting coastwise traffic from the payment of tolls. "What value can be attached to the solemnly pledged word of the American people in light of the Panama episode?"⁶ asked the St. Petersburg Novoye. Another Russian paper, Vremya, stated that the Russians were not interested, since their government was not a party to the treaty in question. Many German papers considered the tolls exemption as an American plot to keep British and German ships out of the Canal. The Berlin

⁴"European Press on the Signing of the Panama Bill," Literary Digest, XLV (September 7, 1912), 362.

⁵New York Times, August 26, 1912, p. 1.

⁶Current Literature, LIII (October 12, 1912), 375.

Vossische Zeitung, while recognizing that German interests might be hurt, stated that Germany was "reluctant to snatch the chestnuts out of the fire for the English."⁷

The European press was nearly united in its opposition to the tolls exemption. In general, the Europeans, feeling that the United States had acted in bad faith, were united in calling for the repeal of the act or at least for referring the question to arbitration. Such was not the case in the United States, despite a variety of public opinion and press comment.

The British protest was strongly resented in many sections of the country. The man on the street thought that this was an American, not an Anglo-American canal, and that it should be regulated solely by the American government. This was the position taken by periodicals such as Review of Reviews and Current Literature. In their opinion, the European countries had no basis for argument because the coastwise trade was reserved for American ships only. "How can there be discrimination in an area where foreign ships are not allowed?" was the question they raised. A poll conducted by David O. Ives, manager of the transportation department of the Boston Chamber of Commerce, supported this viewpoint. After questioning the leading lawyers of Boston, he stated that there was a general

⁷Ibid., 374.

agreement to the cardinal principle "that no foreign government has any business to interfere with our domestic commerce between ports of the United States."⁸

One of the first attempts to refute the foregoing arguments appeared in the October issue of the North American Review. Archibald R. Colquhoun, an Englishman, declared:

"Not only morally, but according to international law, the United States is pledged to equal treatment for all vessels using the canal and coastwise vessels cannot in equity be placed on a different basis."⁹ He argued that it would be better for the United States to grant subsidies to coastwise trade than to permit it a general immunity from the payment of tolls.

The Forum in its October issue supported Colquhoun. Every ship exempted from the payment of the tolls increased the amount which would have to be provided by other ships, it argued. It was therefore not true that the exemption of American coastwise traffic from tolls was a matter of no concern to the other nations. As a result of this exemption, other ships would be forced to make up lost revenue.

Among the nation's newspapers, the leading advocate

⁸U.S. Congress, Senate, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., Congressional Record, p. 10355.

⁹Archibald R. Colquhoun, "The Panama Canal Tolls, a British View," North American Review, CXCVI (October 1912), 513-522.

of the repeal of the exemption clause was the New York Times. While admitting that the Hay-Pauncefote treaty did, in fact, grant the United States the right to regulate the canal, it also stipulated that all rules should apply to the shipping of all nations. The position taken by the Times is best shown in a dramatic editorial entitled, "Imbecility of the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty:"

It is impossible to sympathize with the sort of Americanism which would break a treaty for profit but there can be no reason of any other sort why a treaty should not be observed because of its benefits. The treaty which requires the equal treatment of all commerce via Panama gives a full equivalent from all its obligations cannot be broken without sacrificing the benefits. We cannot break the treaty regarding our duties and expect it to be observed by other nations regarding their duties.¹⁰

A similar view was expressed by C. D. Allin, a Minneapolis lawyer. In a letter to the editor of The Nation, Allin declared: "The United States cannot afford thus to play fast and loose with her international obligations."¹¹ He argued that the exemption clause would lower the honor and prestige of the United States among the countries of the world. In addition, he warned of the danger of retaliation on the part of the Canadian government, whose Welland and St. Lawrence canals were essential to American shipping

¹⁰ Editorial, New York Times, August 18, 1912, p. 10.

¹¹ Letter to the editor, The Nation, XCV (October 31, 1912), 406-407.

on the Great Lakes. Allin was of the opinion that if the Canadian ships were not treated as equals at the Panama Canal, American ships would lose the benefits they now enjoyed when using Canadian waterways.

Whether or not to arbitrate the much-debated question was also the subject of much controversy. One segment of American opinion that favored the exemption clause claimed that arbitration was not the answer. Typical of this point of view was an article in Outlook, which stated that the exemption was purely an American domestic affair and that England, or any other country, had no right to interfere. The views of this group were best summed up in the Philadelphia Inquirer when it asked rhetorically: "What is there to arbitrate?"¹² This question was answered by Senator Elihu Root (R.--New York), who explained: "We have a treaty with Great Britain under which we have agreed that all questions arising upon the interpretation of treaties shall be submitted to arbitration."¹³ The views of the Senator received strong support from many sections of the country by people who wanted the exemption clause repealed. The New York Times stated:

The honorable obligation of the United States to arbitrate does not rest merely on the specific treaty.

¹²U.S. Congress, Senate, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., Congressional Record, p. 10375.

¹³Ibid.

It rests on the avowed persistent, vigorous, and explicit policy of the United States during all its history, in supporting and pressing on other nations the principle of arbitration.¹⁴

This split in public opinion, regarding both the exemption clause and arbitration, was reflected in the party platforms for the presidential election of 1912. The Democratic platform, adopted in July, approved the clause as it stood. While the regular Republican platform was silent on the issue, the Progressive Republicans, or Bull Moose party, championed the free tolls measure more strongly than the Democrats.¹⁵ In their platform, the Bull Moose party claimed:

The Panama Canal, built and paid for by the American people, must be used primarily for their benefit. We demand that the canal shall be operated as to break the transportation monopoly now held and misused by the transcontinental railroads by maintaining sea competition with them . . . and that American ships engaged in coastwise trade shall pay no tolls.¹⁶

Debated in the nation's leading newspapers, magazines, and journals, and deemed important enough to be included in party platforms, the exemption clause issue produced a variety of opinions. Questions of national honor, ship subsidies, treaty interpretation, and economic advantage were mulled over again and again. Although the issue mainly affected

¹⁴ Editorial, New York Times, December 9, 1912, p. 10.

¹⁵ Ray S. Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters, Volume IV, President, 1913-1914 (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1933), p. 396.

¹⁶ New International Yearbook, 1912 (New York: Dodd Mead & Co., 1913), p. 576.

the coastal states, other sections of the country, such as the predominantly agricultural upper midwest, were also involved in the nation-wide discussion of the exemption clause issue.

CHAPTER IV

THE REGION LOOKS AT THE ISSUES

In the early months of 1912, little mention was made of the tolls exemption clause issue in the upper-midwestern press. Prior to the British protest of July 15, the tolls issue appeared to be primarily a domestic question of who should receive the most benefits from the opening of the Panama Canal. As 1912 was an election year, and there was a bloody revolution taking place in Mexico, purely domestic matters of economic advantage did not concern the midwestern reader. Questions of a political nature and the possibility of intervention in Mexico took precedent over the attempt of the coastal states to influence Congress.

The exemption clause debate in Congress received only limited and for the most part back-page coverage in the regional press. A majority of the newspapers merely reprinted news service dispatches regarding the exemption clause while devoting their front pages and editorial columns to, in their opinion, more vital issues. Matters such as treaty violation and ship subsidies, which were to be extensively discussed later, were not as important as the possibility of a twine shortage or the agitation for good roads.

When the House of Representatives passed the Panama bill, it went almost unmentioned in the upper-midwestern press, although this region's representatives had strongly opposed the measure. Typical of this response was the Bismarck Daily Tribune (N.D.), which mentioned in passing that "the provision was bitterly fought, and the result was received with cheers."¹ The House action also prompted the weekly Larimore Pioneer (N.D.) to observe:

The division was not along party lines, but those opposed to tolls, as a rule, represented the states of the Atlantic and Pacific, as well as the Gulf states, and also the region of the Mississippi. The demand for tolls for this class of shipping came principally from the representative inland states.²

Although these papers did mention the exemption clause question, very little opinion was expressed on the issue. However, one knowledgeable editor who had closely followed the House debate, George Thompson of the Saint Paul Pioneer Press (Minn.), staunchly opposed the exemption clause and informed his readers of his viewpoint. Speaking through the editorial columns, Thompson claimed that the exemption clause amounted to a ship subsidy and was also a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty.³ Although almost alone in

¹Bismarck Daily Tribune, May 23, 1912, p. 8.

²Editorial, Larimore Pioneer, June 6, 1912, p. 4.

³Editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, May 24, 1912, p. 8; June 12, 1912, p. 8; June 22, 1912, p. 6.

his coverage of the issue at this time, Thompson would soon receive much support for his point of view.

As was true across the nation, the British protest to the passage of the exemption clause stirred the upper-midwestern press to comment on the issue. What had appeared to be merely a domestic issue suddenly took on international importance. Upon what grounds did Great Britain base her protest? What were the provisions of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty? Would there be any discrimination involved? Should the United States respect the British request? The foregoing were but a few of the questions asked as the upper-midwestern press prepared to join in the nation-wide debate of the issue of the exemption clause.

"There will be a great discussion from now on of the matter of canal tolls, that subject having been brought to the front by the British note," predicted the Grand Forks Herald,⁴ while headlines in The Irish Standard of Minneapolis exclaimed: "BRITISH PROTEST AROUSES AMERICANS."⁵ With this aroused public interest in the matter, many papers such as the Saint Peter Herald (Minn.), the Finley Beacon (N.D.), and the Java Herald (S.D.), reprinted wire service informational stories which told the diplomatic history of canal negotiations and provided the reader with

⁴Editorial, Grand Forks Herald (N.D.), July 16, 1912, p. 4.

⁵The Irish Standard, July 27, 1912, p. 1.

a thorough background for the dispute.⁶

The initial response of the upper-midwestern press to the British protest was varied. The Aberdeen Daily American (S.D.) was of the opinion that "Great Britain performs an act unprovided for by the international etiquette [sic] book, in asking the United States congress to hold up the Panama canal toll bill,"⁷ while the Madison Daily Leader (S.D.) contended that the "United States rules the Zone."⁸ "The question will doubtless be settled," claimed the Minneapolis Morning Tribune, "by the supposed balance of domestic interests, without much regard to the foreigner."⁹ On the other hand, papers such as the Saint Paul Pioneer Press and the Gregory Times-Advocate (S.D.) supported Great Britain's contention that the exemption clause was a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty and urged Congress to vindicate the nation's honor by striking the questionable clause from the Panama bill.¹⁰ Between the two

⁶ Saint Peter Herald, July 21, 1912, p. 7; Finley Beacon, July 20, 1912, p. 3; Java Herald, July 22, 1912, p. 5.

⁷ Editorial, Aberdeen Daily American, July 30, 1912, p. 4.

⁸ Madison Daily Leader, July 25, 1912, p. 1.

⁹ Editorial, Minneapolis Morning Tribune, July 15, 1912, p. 4.

¹⁰ Editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, July 15, 1912, p. 4; editorial, Gregory Times-Advocate, July 17, 1912, p. 5.

extremes, many papers attempted to analyze both sides of the issue without advocating either position. Regarding the debate which occurred between the Senators from New York--O'Gorman (Democrat) and Root (Republican)--the Grand Forks Herald declared in bewilderment: "When such authorities disagree the average citizen is in no position to decide," and cautioned its readers: "There is no occasion for the rest of us to get excited."¹¹ In a similar vein, the Minot Daily Reporter (N.D.) believed that more information would be required to "end confusion, stop the 'rancorous' debate and settle the question."¹²

As the public became more aware of the issues, it began to form opinions regarding the exemption clause issue. The charges made by Senator James A. O'Gorman (D.--New York) that the transcontinental railroads were responsible for the British protest received scattered support in the upper-midwestern press.¹³ In an editorial headed, "Whose Canal?", R. W. Hitchcock of the Hibbing Daily Tribune (Minn.) asked: "Whose canal shall the Panama be? The railroads? Or the people's?" He cited numerous efforts of the railroad com-

¹¹ Editorial, Grand Forks Herald, August 13, 1912, p. 4.

¹² Editorial, Minot Daily Reporter, August 21, 1912, p. 2.

¹³ Aberdeen Weekly News, July 18, 1912, p. 1; Rapid City Daily Journal, July 18, 1912, p. 1; Aberdeen Daily American, July 18, 1912, p. 1, all carried the Associated Press story of O'Gorman's charges.

panies to gain control of the Panama Canal and claimed that free tolls to American coastwise shipping would force the railroads to lower their "exorbitant rates."¹⁴ In agreement with Hitchcock was V. C. Wass, editor of the Dell Rapids Times-Tribune (S.D.) "One of the greatest efforts of the American people . . . has been to control, rather than be controlled by, the great railroad interests," claimed Wass, who saw the British protest as merely "an incident of the contest, however it may be dressed up."¹⁵ The Pierre Daily Capital-Journal (S.D.) also argued that the opening of the canal would lower railroad rates, thus aiding the community:

Pierre and people who have been waiting for a quarter of a century for this place to become a city of great magnitude will be wonderfully benefited, we believe, as a result of the opening of the Panama Canal and the changed conditions of freight rates that will sooner or later be brought about as a result of this opening.¹⁶

Notwithstanding the anticipated forced reduction in railroad rates, the Saint Paul Pioneer Press pointed out that the dispute concerned "a canal and not an institution for penalizing railways or promoting the interests of any

¹⁴ Editorial, Hibbing Daily Tribune, July 23, 1912, p. 2.

¹⁵ Editorial, Dell Rapids Times-Tribune, August 29, 1912, p. 4.

¹⁶ Editorial, Pierre Daily Capital-Journal, August 29, 1912, p. 2.

section of this country or of any class of shippers."¹⁷ That the exemption clause was merely a subsidy to the coastwise shippers and a benefit to both coasts at the expense of the interior, was a matter of much concern in the upper-midwestern press. Why should the entire nation build a canal to benefit an industry which already had a monopoly, asked the conservative citizens of this region. The only justification for the exemption clause, according to the Minot Daily Reporter, was that it would "heap special privilege on special privilege."¹⁸ The act was "a sugar-coated ship subsidy plan," claimed the Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader (S.D.). Pointing to the great expense of construction and the large operating expenses, the Daily Argus Leader explained that the purpose of tolls was to raise revenue to defray the costs of the canal. However, if the revenue raised from tolls was not sufficient to meet the interest and the costs of operation, "the American people must provide the money out of taxation."¹⁹ The Black Hills Weekly Journal (Rapid City, S. D.) claimed that the exemption clause meant "that the whole people will be contributing further millions every year to the steel trust

¹⁷ Editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, July 21, 1912, p. 4.

¹⁸ Editorial, Minot Daily Reporter, December 12, 1912, p. 2.

¹⁹ Editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, August 24, 1912, p. 4.

and ship building trust."²⁰ The Minneapolis Journal, in referring to a Chicago Tribune editorial which claimed that the midwest would be robbed if the exemption clause was allowed to stand, contended that Minnesota would be seriously injured and urged that "the midwesterner should pay close attention to the issue."²¹ This argument, that the real discrimination of the exemption clause resulted from geographical location rather than treaty violation, was widely accepted in the upper-midwestern press. Among the papers that advanced this argument were the Madison Western Guard (Minn.), the Moorhead Citizen (Minn.), the Churchs Ferry Sun (N.D.), the Berthold Tribune (N.D.) and the Miller Press (S.D.) In their opinion, the British protest to the House passage of the measure was of secondary importance; their argument rested primarily on economic matters of possible advantage or disadvantage.

Among the few papers that discussed the alleged discrimination against foreign shipping, it was insisted that as the coastwise trade of the United States was legally reserved for American-owned ships only, no discrimination could exist. In regard to the claim advanced by Senator Porter J. McCumber (R.--North Dakota) that Canadian ship-

²⁰ Editorial, Minneapolis Journal, August 22, 1912, p. 4.

²¹ Editorial, Black Hills Weekly Journal, August 16, 1912, p. 4.

pers would be put at a disadvantage by the exemption clause, the Pipestone Farmer's Leader (Minn.), which felt no sympathy for the Canadian position, offered a possible solution:

Canada is now indignant at the idea of free use of the Panama Canal by the United States coasting ships. If it were not for a fear of causing political prostration, it might be suggested that annexation would leave Canada with no possible grievance in the matter.²²

Although not as outspoken as the Farmer's Leader, the St. Paul Association of Commerce acknowledged the discrimination of the exemption clause and expressed its opposition to the measure.²³

With the region's interest in Panama Canal tolls aroused, the position of the various political parties was also recorded in this election year. It will be recalled that the Democratic and Progressive party platforms advocated the exemption clause while the Republican platform made no mention of the issue. In the traditionally Republican upper midwest, the hottest issue of the 1912 campaign was the emergence of the Progressive, or Bull Moose, Party. In the discussion of campaign promises, a majority of the press comment concerned agricultural and other farm-

²²Editorial, Pipestone Farmer's Leader, December 26, 1912, p. 4.

²³Saint Paul Pioneer Press, August 16, 1912, p. 3.

related planks of the various platforms. A minority of papers, however, deemed the exemption clause planks of the platforms worthy of comment. The Dickinson Free Press (N.D.) announced the Progressive platform to be far superior to that of the other parties and commented: "It is maintained that American coastwise trade should use the Panama Canal without paying tolls." Another Progressive organ, the weekly Brookings County Press (Brookings, S.D.) regarded the no-tolls plank as "an extension of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act," and felt this was another important advance in the nation's struggle to control the trusts. Other advocates on the Bull Moose position were the Crosby Eagle (N.D.) and the Osnabrock Independent (N.D.).²⁴

Among the region's Democratic papers, little support was gathered for their party's stand on the exemption clause issue. It was generally argued that this was contrary to the party's doctrine of opposition to any form of subsidy and also that the people were opposed to the granting of such favors. The Republican newspapers, largely because their party had taken no stand on the matter, did not mention the tolls issue but rather concentrated their ef-

²⁴ Editorial, Dickinson Free Press, Oct. 5, 1912, p. 4; editorial, Brookings County Press, Dec. 19, 1912, p. 4; editorial, Crosby Eagle, Aug. 16, 1912, p. 4; editorial, Osnabrock Independent, Sept. 6, 1912, p. 3.

forts on promoting the agricultural planks of their platform. In a discussion of the forthcoming election, the Yankton Press and Dakotan (S.D.), a Republican organ that held little regard for President Taft, commented: "It is possible that the government [of Great Britain] will await the results of the election in the United States in the hope that the United States government may find a way afterward of meeting British wishes."²⁵

In this political year, the exemption clause issue offered both friend and foe of the administration an excellent opportunity to make their views known. "The United States Senate seems determined," reported the Pierre Daily Capital-Journal (S.D.) approvingly, "to proceed with the Panama Canal legislation without respect to the British request of delay."²⁶ Henry Clews, political columnist of the Minneapolis Morning Tribune, suggested that "the sooner congress adjourns the better. We have had a further illustration of its inclination to mischief by its unsound attitude on the Panama Canal."²⁷ Another Twin Cities paper, the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, snorted: "Uncle Sam has shown his ability to 'make dirt fly' at Panama, but that is no

²⁵Yankton Press and Dakotan, Sept. 4, 1912, p. 1.

²⁶Editorial, Pierre Daily Capital-Journal, July 31, p. 2.

²⁷Minneapolis Morning Tribune, July 22, 1912, p. 4.

reason for the Democrats in Congress making international mud fly in the canal regulations."²⁸ "There must be some reason," explained the weekly Hannaford Enterprise (N.D.), "for the way the Senate has taken the bit in their teeth and ran away from public sentiment."²⁹ Other papers, including the Redfield Journal Observer (S.D.) and the weekly Delmont Record (S.D.), asked Great Britain to have patience and warned that the Congressmen who had voted in favor of the exemption clause would have to defend their actions to their constituents. The Cooperstown Griggs County Sentinel (N.D.) feared that Senate passage of the measure meant that the interior states would be saddled with the payment of a subsidy while the outspoken Pioneer Press proudly exclaimed that "Senator Nelson (R.--Minn.) voted against the no tolls provision. . . . He was one of eleven who were able to tell a ship subsidy in disguise."³⁰

Though over 90 per cent of the region's newspapers condemned the Senate passage of the measure, some slight evidence of support for the action was to be seen. W. A.

²⁸ Editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, July 22, 1912, p. 4.

²⁹ Editorial, Hannaford Enterprise, Aug. 13, 1912, p. 2.

³⁰ Editorial, Griggs County Sentinel, Oct. 24, 1912, p. 2; editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, Aug. 9, 1912, p. 6.

Krause, editor of the Flandreau Moody County Enterprise (S.D.) and an ardent supporter of the Taft administration, claimed:

Congress has done the proper thing in the passing [of] the bill regulating the Panama Canal with the provision for free coastwise ships, American owned, and prohibiting transcontinental railroad owned ships from using the canal. President Taft says he will approve the measure.³¹

The Black Hills region of South Dakota also voiced support for the Taft administration. The Black Hills Weekly Journal and the Daily Journal at Rapid City presented both cartoon and editorial support for the recent action of Congress.³²

The overwhelming majority of the region's editors were too involved at this time in discussing the forthcoming election, particularly for state and local office, to afford much coverage of Congress.

On August 24 when President Taft signed the Panama bill--public law 337--which granted free use of the Panama Canal to American coastwise shipping, the national news services, such as the Associated Press, again launched an extensive discussion of the issue. While continuing their coverage of the fast-approaching election, the upper midwestern press, almost wholly dependent on the wire service for

³¹Editorial, Moody County Enterprise, Aug. 15, 1912, p. 6; U.S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XXXVII, 62nd Cong., 1911-1913, p. 560.

³²Editorial, Black Hills Weekly Journal, Aug. 16, 1912, p. 4; editorial, Rapid City Daily Journal, Aug. 7, 1912, p. 4.

their information on world affairs, joined in consideration of the newly created law. In this discussion, the specific question of treaty violation and national honor engaged the attention of most of the editors.

"That Great Britain has at least a case as to the Panama tolls must be conceded," argued the Minot Daily Reporter.³³ In agreement with this view was the Hannaford Enterprise (N.D.), which felt that the tolls exemption clause was "clearly a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty."³⁴ Editor Charles M. Day of the Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader (S.D.), an outspoken Republican paper, announced that he spoke for his state when he explained:

Already many members of Congress who voted for free tolls to coastwise vessels have begun to see the light, and have indicated a determination to reverse themselves when the question comes up again. This newspaper makes no claim to special inspiration on this subject, but it feels safe in saying that so far as the people of this state are concerned, they only want what is right, and they want the United States to keep to the letter every agreement she makes.³⁵

Day's view was supported by the fence-straddling Black Hills Weekly Journal, which had supported the Taft admini-

³³ Editorial, Minot Daily Reporter, Dec. 14, 1912, p. 2.

³⁴ Editorial, Hannaford Enterprise, Dec. 17, 1912, p. 7.

³⁵ Editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, Dec. 16, 1912, p. 4.

stration when the measure was signed but now was forced to admit: "Viewed in almost any light, article 2 of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty provides categorically that the canal must be open on terms of entire equality. . . ." Joseph E. Gossage, editor of the Weekly Journal, concluded a long consideration of the issue by asking: "Where is the escape from this dilemma?"³⁶ After presenting its view that the exemption clause was a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, the Rapid City Daily Journal expressed a hope that "the language of diplomacy in the future should express rather than conceal the diplomats' thoughts."³⁷

Though not certain that the British interpretation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty was correct, the Crookston Weekly Times (Minn.) firmly acknowledged Great Britain's right to "protest against what she may think a wrongful regulation of the canal."³⁸ Frank A. Day of the Fairmont Daily Sentinel (Minn.) and W. M. James of the Breckinridge Telegram (Minn.) concurred in the views of the Weekly Times. "It illy [sic] becomes us to quibble about the letter of the agreement and violate its spirit now," argued the Saint Paul Pioneer Press. Its editor, George Thompson, called

³⁶ Editorial, Black Hills Weekly Journal, Aug. 23, 1912, p. 4.

³⁷ Editorial, Rapid City Daily Journal, Aug. 31, 1912, p. 4.

³⁸ Editorial, Crookston Weekly Times, Dec. 21, 1912, p. 4.

attention to the Bard Amendment of 1901 and was certain that public sentiment had not changed in the decade since that measure was defeated. The Good Thunder Herald (Minn.) and the weekly Henning Advocate (Minn.) shared Thompson's belief that now as then the people were opposed to the exemption clause.³⁹

Among the upper-midwestern editors perhaps the most outspoken opponent of the exemption clause was the Minot Daily Reporter (N.D.). In its constant comment on the issue, it alleged that "there is no case for free tolls," and "this country is not in the treaty repudiation business." In demanding that the United States abide by the terms of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, the crusading Minot paper pleaded:

It is to be hoped that before consideration of the case is closed more attention will be paid to the question of honor, justice and the public good and less to talking points for politics only.⁴⁰

In its campaign against the exemption clause, the Daily Reporter received support from the Grand Forks Herald (N.D.) which expressed the desire that "whatever our honorable obligations are we ought honorably to fulfill them,"⁴¹ and

³⁹Editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, Aug. 10, 1912, p.4; editorial, Good Thunder Herald, Aug. 4, 1912, p. 4; editorial, Henning Advocate, July 31, 1912, p. 4.

⁴⁰Editorial, Minot Daily Reporter, Aug. 14, 1912, p. 2; Nov. 26, 1912, p. 2.; Dec. 26, 1912, p. 2.

⁴¹Editorial, Grand Forks Herald, Aug. 13, 1912, p. 4.

the Minneapolis Journal, which held that the exemption clause "was not a good bill we may be sure, since the President signed it with an apology. . . ." In explaining the policy of his newspaper, W. J. Murphy explained: "The Journal has favored a policy of equality at the Canal and believes now in that policy."⁴²

In contrast to the position taken by the Daily Reporter, the Herald, and the Journal, a small segment of the mid-western press contended that the exemption clause was not a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty. The weekly Irish Standard (a Democratic paper printed in Minneapolis) agreed with the interpretation presented by Hannis Taylor, one of the best authorities on international law of that period. It was his contention that the term "all nations" in the treaty actually meant "all other nations" and that the matter of canal tolls was purely an American domestic issue. Edward O'Brien, vocal editor of the Irish Standard, concurred in this view and constantly urged his readers to defend their rights.⁴³ W. C. Lusk, managing editor of the Yankton Press and Dakotan (S.D.), echoed this sentiment when he claimed that the Hay-Pauncefote treaty was not being broken. In arguing that the exemption clause was purely an

⁴²Editorial, Minneapolis Journal, July 15, 1912, p. 4; August 28, 1912, p. 4.

⁴³The Irish Standard, Sept. 28, 1912, p. 1.

American domestic issue, Lusk also encouraged the American people to stand up for their treaty rights and prevent the President from submitting the question to arbitration.⁴⁴

The Aberdeen Daily American also joined the small chorus that hoped: "President Taft will decide against arbitration."⁴⁵

To a segment of upper midwesterners who respected honesty and fair dealing, the thought that the United States could conceivably be breaking its solemnly pledged word was reason enough to submit the disputed clause to arbitration. To this group of people, more emphasis was placed on the honor of the United States than a plank in some politician's platform. If the American interpretation of the treaty was correct, Congressmen should then present other arguments against the exemption clause. If the American interpretation was not correct, the exemption clause should be abrogated at once, as the British had requested. Among the earliest advocates of arbitration was the well-informed Saint Paul Pioneer Press, which explained that "refusal to arbitrate would be taken to indicate lack of faith in either our own position or The Hague,"

⁴⁴Editorial, Yankton Press and Dakotan, Dec. 24, 1912, p. 2.

⁴⁵Editorial, Aberdeen Daily American, Dec. 17, 1912, p. 4.

meaning that a refusal to arbitrate would be an admission of guilt. It further declared that "it is assuming much to contend that we alone are right in the tolls affair and every other nation is wrong."⁴⁶ "Public opinion would be-- is now--for arbitration," clamored the Minot Daily Reporter, while the Grand Forks Herald considered it "just and proper to arbitrate the tolls question,"⁴⁷ as the British had requested in December. "To refuse to arbitrate would constitute our shame and demonstrate our shamelessness," remarked the Minneapolis Journal, which expressed its faith in the people of the region when it pronounced: "Our people, if not our politicians, have regards for the sanctity of Treaties, for the obligation of the Nation."⁴⁸ Among other papers voicing strong pleas for submitting the question to arbitration were the weekly Lake Crystal Union (Minn.) and the Sioux Falls Daily Press. The latter reminded its readers that the United States had traditionally urged other nations to arbitrate their disputes:

The United States, which has taken the lead in promoting arbitration at the hands of an international tribunal, cannot honorably refuse to submit this question to the Hague, as suggested by Great Britain.⁴⁹

⁴⁶Editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, Aug. 27, 1912, p. 4; Dec. 22, 1912, p. 4.

⁴⁷Editorial, Minot Daily Reporter, Dec. 13, 1912, p. 2; editorial, Grand Forks Herald, Dec. 15, 1912, p. 4.

⁴⁸Editorial, Minneapolis Journal, Aug. 21, 1912, p. 4.

⁴⁹Lake Crystal Union, Sept. 4, 1912, p. 2; editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Press, July 17, 1912, p. 4.

Its local rival, the Daily Argus Leader, agreed with this view and held arbitration to be "a darn sight safer" and claimed that the national honor of the United States demanded arbitration of the dispute.⁵⁰

As the discussion of the exemption clause continued, some papers suggested another, in their opinion, alternative to the dilemma. "There is a better way than arbitration," suggested the Minot Daily Reporter, which called for "the prompt repeal of the stupid, unecanomic [sic], wasteful, and reactionary provision."⁵¹ In stating its position, the Daily Reporter was echoing the sentiments of George Thompson of the Pioneer Press, who was certain that the Hague tribunal would support the British contention and claimed that the United States would be spared such a "humiliating procedure" if Congress would repeal the exemption clause.⁵² The Minneapolis Journal also saw the merit of such action and held that by doing so the United States "could have the credit of being sensitive to our obligations."⁵³

⁵⁰ Editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, Aug. 8, 1912, p. 4.

⁵¹ Editorial, Minot Daily Reporter, Dec. 14, 1912, p. 2.

⁵² Editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, Aug. 13, 1912, p. 4.

⁵³ Editorial, Minneapolis Journal, Dec. 12, 1912, reprinted in Congressional Record, Appendix, 62nd Cong., 3rd sess., Feb. 23, 1913, p. 124.

But did the United States actually have any obligation either to repeal the exemption clause or to arbitrate the dispute as Great Britain had requested? Could the British protest be justified? After all, had not Great Britain relinquished all claims to joint control of the canal when the Clayton-Bulwer treaty of 1850 had been abrogated in 1901? Why should the United States regulate the canal in a manner acceptable to the British, long the hated arch-enemy of the United States? To a distinct group of upper-midwestern editors, any action taken in regard to the British protest would amount to a surrender on the part of the United States. To these newspapers, which suffered from Anglophobia, the only issue involved was that Great Britain was attempting to dictate what the United States should do as if the nation were still a British colony.

Opposed to any action of Great Britain, The Irish Standard was the most zealous adversary of the British position. "If John Bull wants a scrap with us, the old gentleman will be accommodated with alacrity," announced its editor, Edward O'Brien, who quickly followed with another attack at "Mother England":

The American people of all shades of political opinion are not in a humor to be trifled with. They are determined to maintain their rights at the risk of going to war with European nations. John Bull was driven out of here at the point of a bayonet more

than a century ago, and he will not get back by diplomatic chicanery [sic] to meddle in American affairs.

Always ready to condemn the British, O'Brien found the exemption clause issue tailor-made for his purpose and constantly leveled charges against Great Britain.⁵⁴

W. K. French, editor of the Colman Argus (S.D.), echoed O'Brien's sentiments when he claimed: "The United States is not in the habit of asking Great Britain what laws it can or cannot pass." Although not as outspoken as O'Brien in his condemnation of Great Britain, French resented British meddling in the domestic affairs of the United States. In his opinion, it was an American canal, and it should be used in the way most beneficial to American shipping.⁵⁵

F. C. Preston, editor of the Aberdeen Daily American, also suffered from Anglophobia. Shortly after the British protest had been delivered on July 15, 1912, he asked his readers: "If a man puts certain regulations regarding the use which the public may make of his land, does it necessarily follow, in either moral justice or

⁵⁴Editorials, The Irish Standard, July 27, 1912, p. 4; Aug. 10, 1912, p. 4; Aug. 24, 1912, p. 4; Sept. 21, 1912, p. 4; Sept. 28, 1912, p. 4; Dec. 21, 1912, p. 4; Dec. 28, 1912, p. 4.

⁵⁵Editorial, Colman Argus, Sept. 5, 1912, p. 1.

law, that his own family must conform to these regulations?" In rather dramatic editorials, he attacked the British interpretation of the treaty and suggested that "one way to prick the swollen bladder of the English bluster would be to quickly serve notice of our desire to abrogate the Hay-Pauncefote treaty."⁵⁶

The super-patriotic, anti-British argument that American men and money had built the Panama Canal was also advanced in the region's press. Why should the United States bear all the expense of building the canal and then share the benefits with Great Britain? It would appear that, when filing their protest to the exemption clause, the British were asking for something to which they were not entitled. "We believe American brains and American alertness will take care of America and Americans," announced the Crookston Weekly Times, which had earlier supported the British contention, but which now encouraged the United States to maintain the exemption clause because it would be beneficial in building up the American merchant marine.⁵⁷ "That all nations shall be given free use of the canal, or

⁵⁶Editorial, Aberdeen Daily American, July 30, 1912, p. 4; Dec. 19, 1912, p. 4.

⁵⁷Editorial, Crookston Weekly Times, Dec. 14, 1912, p. 4.

that American vessels shall be compelled to pay the same rate of tolls as those of other countries does not look fair on the face of it," observed the Pierre Daily Capital-Journal which had favored the passage of the exemption clause because it would force a reduction in transcontinental railroad rates.⁵⁸

"As compared with a famous Boston tea party the present protest appears to be rather unreasonable," remarked the Dell Rapids Times-Tribune (S.D.), which urged the United States to cut all ties with the British. "This question seems clearly to cover this country only, and no international court or country should have any concern with it."⁵⁹ "We are not familiar with the terms of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty," admitted the Irish Standard, "but no nation is going to surrender its right to manage its own affairs."⁶⁰ The Sioux Falls Daily Press also defended the American right to manage its own affairs and felt that the British protest was based on the reason that "he [John Bull] is unwilling to trust Uncle Sam in the fu-

⁵⁸ Editorial, Pierre Daily Capital-Journal, Aug. 12, 1912, p. 2.

⁵⁹ Editorial, Dell Rapids Times-Tribune, July 25, 1912, p. 4.

⁶⁰ Editorial, The Irish Standard, July 27, 1912, p. 4.

ture."⁶¹ The Daily Press was of the opinion that the protest was based on the British fear that if American coast-wise ships were exempted from tolls now, all American ships might be exempted in the future. The weekly Flan-dreau Moody County Enterprise (S.D.) also voiced its disapproval of the British protest as did the Canby News (Minn.), which offered the following suggestion:

Senator Nelson [R.--Alexandria] says the United States is under solemn treaty obligation with Great Britain to treat John Bull's ships the same as American boats in passing through the Panama Canal, and he knows, because he was one of those who made that treaty. The next question is how to unmake it, and perhaps Jas. Manahan [newly elected Republican representative] can devise some new interpretation of the Hay-Pauncefote compact.⁶²

As has been shown, Anglophobia and super-patriotism brought forth a variety of alternatives, including a request for treaty violation and even the threat of war, as the various editors were willing to go to great lengths rather than comply with the British request. Although in the minority, these editors were not lacking in spirit as they made their views known.

In retrospect, it may be said that the upper-midwest-

⁶¹ Editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Press, Dec. 11, 1912, p. 4.

⁶² Editorial, Moody County Enterprise, Sept. 12, 1912, p. 6; editorial, Canby News, Dec. 20, 1912, p. 4.

ern press was involved, but did not play a major role, in the nation-wide discussion of the exemption clause issue. While it was true that some of the larger metropolitan papers, such as the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, the Minneapolis Journal, the Minot Daily Reporter, and the Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader did debate the issue, they were but a small part of the whole. Other major dailies, such as those located in Duluth and Rochester, Minnesota, Fargo and Bismarck, North Dakota, and Huron, South Dakota, were content to reprint several wire-service dispatches from time to time and deemed the issue not worthy of comment. The same was true among the region's weekly press. A very small portion discussed the issue, several others referred to it in passing, but the majority did not mention the issue.

As is generally true in an election year, articles of a political nature took precedence over the other, seeming less important, matters such as foreign affairs. With the emergence of the Progressive Party in 1912, the upper-midwestern press became involved in an extensive debate of the campaign issues. Topics such as tariff, currency reform, and trust regulation were hotly contested whereas the question of what to do about the Panama Canal received only limited attention. To the people of the upper midwest the results of the election would, or so they thought, have a direct bearing on their lives; in comparison, the ques-

tion of who should pay for using the Panama Canal appeared minor indeed.

Following the Democratic victory in November, more attention was devoted to questions of treaty interpretation, ship subsidy, and national honor. As the region became increasingly aware of the issues, it began to formulate opinions. The argument that the exemption clause was a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty was widely advanced among the regional press, and support was mustered for submitting the question to arbitration. Notwithstanding the occasional, isolated, anti-British sentiment, the regional press was nearly united in requesting the United States to preserve its honor and comply with the British request by either submitting the dispute to arbitration or, better still, having Congress repeal the disputed clause.

CHAPTER V

1913--A YEAR OF REAPPRAISAL

When the special third session of the sixty-second Congress met in mid-December, 1912, Panama Canal tolls provided a topic of controversy; both the exemption clause and the arbitration issue were extensively debated. In the earliest days of 1913, an effort was begun in Congress to repeal the exemption clause. One of the most vocal spokesmen of this effort was Senator Elihu Root (R.--New York). This group felt that it would be wiser for Congress simply to repeal the exemption clause than to submit it to arbitration. Examining the argument that the Hay-Pauncefote treaty did not prohibit the exemption, Root commented:

It is rather poverty of language than a genius for definition which leads us to call a voyage from New York to San Francisco passing along countries thousands of miles away from our territory, "coast-wise trade", or to call a voyage from New York to Manila, on the other side of the world, "coasting trade". . . .

In an attempt to repeal the exemption clause, Root introduced a bill (S. 8114) on January 14 to prevent discrimination in the collection of Panama Canal tolls. This bill

was referred to the Senate Committee on Inter-Oceanic Canals.¹

Another group in the Senate, led by Senator O'Gorman (D.--New York), opposed repeal of the exemption clause or the submission of the question to arbitration. According to O'Gorman, the purpose of the coastwise exemption was two-fold: (1) to encourage the development of the American merchant marine, and (2) to secure the cheapest possible transportation rates for the American consumer. He also attacked the British protest from a legal point of view. He declared: "We can never permit a foreign power [Great Britain] to intrude its views on our domestic policy." He also introduced evidence to support his position from the Law Magazine and Review, a journal published in London.

- (1) The United States could support its action on the precise words of the material articles of the treaty; that its case was strengthened by reference to the preamble and context, and that its case was difficult to challenge on grounds of general justice.

¹U.S. Congress, Senate, 62nd Cong., 3rd sess., January 21, 1913, Congressional Record, p. 1822.

(2) There was no international obligation to submit the construction of its legislative act to any process of arbitration.

"Why," demanded O'Gorman, "should the United States submit the dispute to arbitration when the leading British legal experts supported the American contention?"²

During the floor debate on the exemption clause, the Senate Committee on Inter-Oceanic Canals voted 10 to 3 to table the measure until the next session of Congress. The committee members who voted to kill the Root measure were: William E. Borah of Idaho, Charles E. Townsend of Michigan, Wesley L. Jones of Washington, Joseph L. Bristow of Kansas, George C. Perkins of California, Coe I. Crawford of South Dakota (who had voted in favor of the exemption clause when it was first passed by the Senate in 1912)--all Republicans --and John R. Thornton of Louisiana, James A. O'Gorman of New York, William E. Chilton of West Virginia, and F. M. Simmons of North Carolina--Democrats. The remaining members of the committee--Frank B. Brandegee of Connecticut, Carroll S. Page of Vermont (Republicans), and Leroy Percy of Mississippi (Democrat)--supported the proposed repeal

²U.S. Congress, Senate, 62nd Cong., 3rd sess., January 22, 1913, Congressional Record, p. 1872.

of the exemption clause.³

The action of the Senate committee on tabling the Root bill on canal tolls exemptions in early 1913 postponed the entire question for treatment by the new administration. During the lame-duck, short session of the sixty-third Congress, no definite action was taken on the question. Although President Wilson, who was concerned with the pressing matters of currency and tariff reform, made no formal statement during his first year of office, he intimated that he was in favor of repealing the disputed exemption clause.

In the earliest days of 1913, agitation had begun in the nation's press to bring about repeal of the provision to which Great Britain objected. Typical of this situation was a letter written to the editor of the New York Times by Horace White, former editor of the New York World, who claimed: "Public opinion must be moved to undo the evil which has been wrought." In his opinion, which was shared by a majority of those who wanted the exemption clause repealed, this was the most important problem facing the nation. It was more important than the money,

³New York Times, Jan. 5, 1913, p. 1. "Though President Taft has signed the Panama bill and he diplomatically opposed Great Britain's protest against discrimination in favor of American coastwise shipping, the Administration indirectly endorsed Mr. Root's measure to the extent that Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, in his annual report, recommended the repeal of the exemption clause." Ibid.

trust, tariff and currency questions combined.⁴

When Congress met in December, a nation-wide discussion of the exemption clause was begun by the leading journals, magazines, and newspapers, and the discussion was carried over into the early months of 1913. "The time for thinking has passed," alleged the Scientific American. "From platform and pulpit, in the magazines and daily press, the question of free tolls has been so intelligently thrashed out, that the general public, or at least the thinking part of it, has pretty well made up its mind as to the wise and just course."⁵

The arguments advanced for the repeal of the exemption clause were best summed up by E. M. Phelps. Writing in the Independent, Phelps pointed out six reasons for repeal:

(1) The United States was restricted by the Hay-Pauncefote treaty from granting the use of the Panama Canal to its own coastwise shipping on any terms not open to ships of foreign nations.

(2) The history of the treaty plainly shows that this was undoubted when the treaty was made.

(3) The treaty cannot be abrogated on the grounds of sic rebus stantibus, even if the Canal was built on our own territory.

(4) It is denied that no discrimination would result from the exemption of our coastwise shippers.

⁴Letter to the editor, the New York Times, Jan. 13, 1913, p. 10.

⁵"Amend the Panama Canal Act," Scientific American, CVIII (Jan. 25, 1913), 82.

(5) To discriminate would be unwise diplomatic policy.

(6) To discriminate would be unwise economic policy.⁶

Press comment supporting the repeal of the exemption clause came from all sections of the country. The New York Times, which strongly advocated the repeal, felt the exemption clause to be "merely a subsidy to an interest already enjoying a monopoly."⁷ Concurring in this view, the Chicago Inter-Ocean declared the tolls exemption clause to be a "subsidy to shipping."⁸ The Sioux City Journal (Iowa) also saw the exemption clause as a "subsidy where subsidy is not needed and cannot be justified."⁹ Another Sioux City paper, The Tribune, commented that "England has been wronged, and all Europe has been offended, in order that the United States may pay a bonus to her shipping interests."¹⁰

A number of the leading magazines seemed to share the opinion of the above-mentioned newspapers. "It would be more consistent with our dignity, and more conducive to

⁶"Panama Canal Tolls Question: Arguments in Brief," Independent, LXXIV A (March 6, 1913), 1193-1195.

⁷Editorial, the New York Times, Feb. 20, 1913, p. 10.

⁸"The Panama Problem: a Poll of the Press," Outlook, CIII (Feb. 1, 1913), 252.

⁹"The Coastwise Exemption: The Nation Against It," (n.p.: The Century, 1913), p. 62.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 4.

peaceful relations between Great Britain and the United States, for Congress to repeal the provision," declared an editorial in Outlook.¹¹ Scientific American argued that because of the cost of construction of the Panama Canal, it would be poor economic policy to release coast-wise vessels from the payment of tolls.¹² In an editorial entitled: "Will Hurt Pine and Cypress," the Southern Lumberman declared: "When public opinion has had time to crystallize . . . there will be a demand for repeal of the clause of the canal bill that Congress will heed."¹³

Public opinion expressed itself in letters to the editors of various journals. In a letter written to the Scientific American, Charles Depesee of Chicago demanded that "in the interest of American fair play, the free tolls measure should be recalled."¹⁴ In a letter to Outlook, Rear Admiral C. M. Chester claimed: "It is better to be right than to have the Panama Canal."¹⁵

Additional support for the repeal of the clause came

¹¹ Editorial, Outlook, CIII (Jan. 18, 1913), 112.

¹² Scientific American, CVIII (Jan. 25, 1913), 82.

¹³ U. S. Congress, House, 62nd Cong., 3rd sess., Congressional Record, pp. 1002-1003.

¹⁴ Letter to the editor, Scientific American, CVIII (Feb. 1, 1913), 113.

¹⁵ "Arbitration and the Panama Canal," Outlook, CIII (Jan. 11, 1913), 73.

from various associations and groups. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace issued an appeal to the American people to "restore the honor of the United States and repeal the tolls."¹⁶ The American Association for International Conciliation petitioned Congress for the settlement of the differences with Great Britain. The New York Chamber of Commerce supported the repeal, as did the Oska-loosa (Iowa) Commercial Club, which held the exemption clause to be "absurd and should be repealed."¹⁷

Although support for the repeal of the exemption clause came from a number of sources, a die-hard minority still favored the exemption. Former Secretary of State Richard Olney, in addressing the American Society for International Law, declared the United States to be fully within its rights to release coastwise traffic from the payment of tolls. In the discussion that followed, a majority of the members present agreed with Olney's views. The Society also pointed out the fact that the Navigation Laws of the United States, section 158, stated:

No vessel belonging to any citizen of the United States, trading between one port within the United States and another also in the United States, shall be subject to tonnage, tax, or duty, if such vessel be licensed, registered, or enrolled. 18

¹⁶New York Times, March 17, 1913, p. 5.

¹⁷"The Coastwise Exemption; the Nation Against," (n.p.: The Century, 1913) p. 58.

¹⁸Phelps, Independent, LXXIV A, 1195.

Perhaps the chief opponent of the repeal movement was Samuel Seabury, a Democrat who was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New York. The basic argument advanced by Seabury was based on international law. He pointed out:

Under international law, if the parties to a treaty contract on the basis of a certain condition or fact in reference to which the treaty is made is changed, the treaty is extinguished, and one of the parties to it cannot, in good faith, hold the other to perform all or any of its terms.¹⁹

Seabury declared that the Hay-Pauncefote treaty was made with the understanding that a canal would be built on land not under the sovereignty of the United States. When the United States acquired rights to the Canal Zone, he insisted, the Hay-Pauncefote treaty was null and void.

In the matter of treaty interpretation, the Dickinson Recorder-Post (N.D.), in a patriotic editorial entitled, "Who Owns the Canal?", explained the situation as follows:

Uncle Sam owns the canal. He can do with it precisely as he sees fit. . . . It is none of England's or any other country's business what he does so long as he permits the vessels of all nations otherwise than those of the United States to use the canal without discrimination between them.²⁰

But what was the opinion of the remainder of the upper-midwestern press? Did they agree with the Recorder-Post's point of view?

¹⁹Samuel Seabury, "The Panama Canal, Shall It Be American or Anglo-American?", Outlook, CIII (March 8, 1913), 543.

²⁰Editorial, Dickinson Recorder-Post, Aug. 21, 1913, p. 2.

Concurring in the views of the Recorder-Post, the Minneapolis Irish Standard assured its readers that "all true Americans" were opposed to submitting the question of canal tolls to arbitration. Constantly attacking "Mother England", the Irish Standard renewed its contention that this was purely an American domestic issue and argued that to comply with the British request would be equivalent to saying to Great Britain: "Here is a chest of silver and here is one containing an equal weight of gold. Take your choice." Blinded by his hatred of Great Britain, editor Edward O'Brien seized upon the canal tolls issue as a means of condemning Great Britain while continuing to call for home rule for Ireland. In his opinion, regardless of the issues involved, the United States should not heed the British request.²¹

The Lake Crystal Union (Minn.) agreed with the views of the Recorder-Post and could see no reason for the United States to honor the British protest. Founded in 1891 by an outspoken opponent of Great Britain, George Washington Gaff, the Union represented the ultimate in super-patriotism. In the first issue of 1913, Gaff asked the following

²¹ Editorial, The Irish Standard, Jan. 11, 1913, p. 3; Jan. 25, 1913, p. 4; March 29, 1913, p. 4; Oct. 4, 1913, p. 4.

question:

What is all this fuss about with Great Briton [sic] in the canal deal? It is our ditch and England has nothing to do with it. All foreign vessels passing thru the canal must pay for the privilege [sic] of so doing and if the people of this nation choose to allow American vessels to go thru without toll whose business is it but our own. If England had dug the canal, the United States vessels would have to pay to pass thru the canal.²²

Gaff, who lived up to his patriotic name, could see no reason for the United States to build the canal and then share the benefits with Great Britain. Disregarding the issue of treaty rights, Gaff placed his newspaper with those who did not want Great Britain to dictate what action the United States must take; to such organs, Anglophobia took precedence over all other aspects of the issue.

In an assault on such newspapers, the Saint Paul Pioneer Press also attacked the 29-page pamphlet prepared by Representative Knowland of California, which contained newspaper clippings supporting the exemption clause. In its bombardment of such a biased publication, the Pioneer Press pointed out that there were 22,837 newspapers in the United States, but only 51 were represented in the Knowland pamphlet. "It would be interesting," observed the Pioneer Press, "to hear from the other 22,786."²³ Counted among

²² Editorial, Lake Crystal Union, Jan. 1, 1913, p. 2.

²³ Editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, Feb. 26, 1913, p. 6.

these 22,786 were the majority of the upper-midwestern papers which put matters of treaty rights and national honor above any ethnic dislike for the British.

"Arbitrate or repeal the exemption clause," demanded the Minot Daily Reporter. "No other course will stand the least examination."²⁴ The Douglas Herald (N.D.) commented: "The United States, at the expense of millions of dollars, have built the Panama Canal, and now we have fool statesmen who want to admit American ships thru this canal without paying anything."²⁵ "Amend the Panama Canal provision," demanded the Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, while headlines in the Fairmont Daily Sentinel (Minn.) proclaimed: "Tolls Question is Fight of Decade."²⁶ The Grand Forks Herald held the opinion that "there is growing a strong feeling in favor of repeal," while the persistent Minot Daily Reporter called for action: "The question must be authoritatively answered some time, and the sooner the better."²⁷ The Valley City Evening Times-Record (N.D.)

²⁴ Editorial, Minot Daily Reporter, Jan. 27, 1913,
p. 2.

²⁵ Editorial, Douglas Herald, March 19, 1913, p. 4.

²⁶ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, Jan. 14, 1913,
p. 1; editorial, Fairmont Daily Sentinel, March 27, 1913,
p. 1.

²⁷ Editorial, Grand Forks Herald, Jan. 20, 1913,
p. 4; editorial, Minot Daily Reporter, Jan. 27, 1913,
p. 2.

echoed this sentiment: "As the canal is expected to be open by the end of the year, the people would be glad to see some sort of amicable settlement reached at the earliest practicable date."²⁸

The Faribault Democrat (Minn.) contended that it would be not only unpatriotic but also dishonorable to withhold the dispute from arbitration. While claiming that President Taft was not in favor of arbitration, the Democrat, which had opposed Taft's administration in general, urged the people to do everything within their power to see that the dispute was submitted to The Hague.²⁹ The Bismarck Daily Tribune, though giving only limited coverage to the matter, also favored arbitration of the dispute and offered this suggestion with regard to future treaties: "If treaties are found to contain surprises in the shape of self-applied nippers, they should be analyzed more carefully before their ratification. It is better to be sure than unpleasantly astonished."³⁰ The Duluth Herald, which had also paid only limited attention to the dispute during 1912, observed that it might be "to the material advantage

²⁸ Editorial, Valley City Evening Times-Record, Jan. 29, 1913, p. 2.

²⁹ Editorial, Faribault Democrat, Feb. 7, 1913, p. 2.

³⁰ Editorial, Bismarck Daily Tribune, May 15, 1913, p. 4.

of the United States to allow coastwise shippers free use of the canal; however, American pledged word said the United States would treat all nations alike and the national honor demanded arbitration."³¹ "With the exception of a few jingo shouters, the nation has declared for arbitration," asserted the Minot Daily Reporter, which concluded a fiery editorial by explaining: "We believe that the Senate will eventually sanction arbitration of the Panama dispute, should no better plan be followed."³²

In light of the fact that Congress had been the body responsible for enactment of the exemption clause, a portion of the upper-midwestern press considered it a better plan for Congress simply to repeal the clause rather than submit the dispute to arbitration. "The Senate will listen to public opinion," argued the Minneapolis Journal, "when perhaps it will not listen to foreign representation."³³ "I am most decidedly in favor of repeal of the exemption clause," announced Rollin E. Smith, editor of the weekly trade journal, Commercial West, published in Minneapolis, while the Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader urged Congress to

³¹ Editorial, Duluth Herald, reprinted in Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 3rd sess., Jan. 24, 1913, p. 1982.

³² Editorial, Minot Daily Reporter, Jan. 23, 1913, p. 2.

³³ Editorial, Minneapolis Journal, Feb. 6, 1912, p. 4.

"go to work and repeal the obnoxious paragraph."³⁴ "The president should send a special message to Congress urging the repeal of the provision," Minot's crusading Daily Reporter clamored, while the Saint Paul Pioneer Press regarded repeal as the "simplest and most honorable way to dispose of further controversy."³⁵

The charge was often leveled by advocates of repeal that the disputed exemption clause amounted to nothing but a ship subsidy. The Douglas Herald (N.D.) explained: "They want the men on the farms and wage workers of the city to pay taxes to support the canal for the benefit of the people rich enough to engage in the steamship business."³⁶ In agreement with the Herald, the Pioneer Press termed the exemption clause "nothing more nor less than a subsidy to a protected American monopoly." In its fight against the exemption clause, the Pioneer Press urged the Minnesota State Legislature to approve the joint resolution, introduced by Senator Wilson of Minneapolis, memori-

³⁴ Editorial, The Commercial West, reprinted in Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 3rd sess., Jan. 23, 1913, p. 1983; editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, Jan. 10, 1913, p. 4.

³⁵ Editorial, Minot Daily Reporter, Jan. 5, 1913, p. 2; editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, Jan. 10, 1913, p. 8.

³⁶ Editorial, Douglas Herald, March 19, 1913, p. 4.

alizing Congress to repeal the exemption clause. Speaking for his state, editor George Thompson explained: "Minnesota is opposed to no tolls for our coastwise shipping because it is wrong in principle and in violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of our agreement with Great Britain."³⁷ The Grand Forks Herald concurred in this view and termed the exemption clause an "unnecessary gratuity to shipping interests which already have a monopoly." A similar view was held by the Duluth Herald, which explained that the exemption clause would benefit only "the interests of a concealed ship syndicate."³⁸

The anti-ship-subsidy movement also gathered followers from a number of organizations and individuals. For J. A. Aasgaard, president of Concordia College (Moorhead, Minnesota), the coasting trade provision was merely an "indirect way of voting ship subsidy which has been defeated so often in Congress." Typical of the viewpoints of various commerce clubs and chambers of commerce was that of the St. Paul Association of Commerce, whose general secretary, J. H. Beck, reported that his organization was "un-

³⁷ Editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, Jan. 7, 1913, p. 6.

³⁸ Editorial, Grand Forks Herald, Jan. 20, 1913, p. 4; editorial, Duluth Herald, reprinted in Congressional Record, 62nd Cong., 3rd sess., Jan. 24, 1913, p. 1982.

alterably opposed to exempting coastwise vessels."³⁹

While commenting on the question of ship subsidy, another segment of the upper-midwestern press attached more importance to the matter of national honor that was involved in the dispute. The Fergus Falls Journal (Minn.) reminded its readers that "treaty obligations and common honesty ought to count for at least as much as the good will of the shipping trust."⁴⁰ "The honor of a nation ought to be as sacred as that of an individual," remarked the Grand Forks Herald, which had opposed the exemption clause since mid-1912.⁴¹ Also demanding the repeal of the clause, the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, in an editorial entitled, "Uncle Sam Should Keep His Word," warned: "Uncle Sam does not want a reputation of keeping his word only when it is to his advantage to do so."⁴²

The constant coverage and the strong editorial comment of the Pioneer Press aroused the interest of many Twin Cities residents and produced a variety of comments.

³⁹U.S. Congress, House, 62nd Cong., 3rd sess., Jan. 24, 1913, Congressional Record, p. 1986; Congressional Record-Appendix, Feb. 13, 1913, p. 79.

⁴⁰Editorial, Fergus Falls Journal, May 9, 1913, p. 8.

⁴¹Editorial, Grand Forks Herald, Jan. 8, 1913, p. 4.

⁴²Editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, April 22, p. 6.

In a letter to the editor, signed simply "A Reader", one supporter of tolls exemption claimed:

The Pioneer Press presently denounces the violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty. To my way of reasoning a treaty is a contract and as such is void if no consideration has been rendered by one of the contracting parties. Has Great Britain done anything toward the building of this canal which entitles it to contract right? Is it not true that this is only another form of exacting tribute?

In answering this charge, George Thompson stated simply:

"We cannot afford to promise one thing and do another."⁴³

Dr. Richard Burton, president of the University of Minnesota, agreed with Thompson and held the clause to be a "plain violation of good faith and will do us incalculable harm before the world." The Edgeley Mail (N.D.) concurred in this view as did the Minot Daily Reporter, which held that repeal would "provide a softer place to fall on," and urged the nation to "make the repeal motion unanimous."⁴⁴

In a letter to the Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, L. A. Swat of St. Lawrence, South Dakota, asked the following question:

I understand the Hay-Pauncefote treaty expires in June [1913]. If so, why is there so much con-

⁴³ Editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, April 22, 1913, p. 6.

⁴⁴ Editorial, Edgeley Mail, reprinted in Grand Forks Herald, Feb. 27, 1913, p. 4; editorial, Minot Daily Reporter, Jan. 23, 1913, p. 2.

troversy over the canal and our coast-wise ships?
Please explain and oblige a reader? [sic]

In reply to Swat's query, editor Charles M. Day explained that there was no expiration date on the treaty and that failure to repeal the exemption clause would amount to "trailing the American honor in the dust and antagonizing the rest of the world."⁴⁵ Editor C. L. Dotson of the Sioux Falls Daily Press agreed with the Daily Argus Leader that the exemption clause was a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty. However, Dotson did not advocate the repeal of the disputed clause but rather suggested that Congress should enact a measure whereby all tolls collected from American coastwise vessels should be remitted to the ship owners. "Why jeopardize the honor of the nation," asked Dotson, "when there is a simple solution to the problem."⁴⁶

The possibility that some action might be taken concerning the tolls issue grew stronger when Woodrow Wilson assumed the Presidency in March 1913. The possibility that a new President would view the situation differently had been raised shortly after his victory in November 1912, when the Pioneer Press claimed: "President Wilson and the

⁴⁵ Editorial, Sioux Falls Argus Leader, Feb. 5, 1913, p. 4.

⁴⁶ Editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Press, Jan. 23, 1913, p. 4.

new Congress could make a fine initial impression of fairness by amending the canal rules and rates so as to treat all alike."⁴⁷ Another Republican paper, the Minot Daily Reporter, stated hopefully in early 1913: "The Democrats will have a chance to do a good deed at the very beginning of their assumption of power."⁴⁸ However, as the Republican Fargo Forum point out, "as the granting of free tolls to coastwise vessels is a part of the last Democratic platform, the chances for the incoming Senate to recede from its present position do not appear to be flattering."⁴⁹ The Republican Bismarck Daily Tribune urged the Democrats to repeal the exemption clause, as did the Pioneer Press (which claimed that the Republicans already favored repeal of the measure although it had been a Republican Congress which had enacted the disputed clause).⁵⁰ Echoing its earlier comments, the outspoken Daily Reporter urged the "anti-subsidy Democrats in particular," to work for the repeal of the exemption clause, while the Fargo Forum warned: "It will not be wise to dismantle the steam shovels after the water is let in at Panama, they may come

⁴⁷ Editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, Nov. 15, 1912, p. 8.

⁴⁸ Editorial, Minot Daily Reporter, Feb. 22, 1913, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Editorial, Fargo Forum, Jan. 29, 1913, p. 4.

⁵⁰ Editorial, Bismarck Daily Tribune, May 21, 1913, p. 4; editorial, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, Feb. 8, 1913, p. 6; May 5, 1913, p. 4.

in handy some day to dig the enterprise out from under the dirt and mud and slime of cheap politics."⁵¹

With the press generally advocating repeal of the exemption clause, the American people, as well as those of Great Britain, waited for a statement by President Wilson. In the first days of his administration, British Ambassador James Bryce had pressed for action on the controversy but had received no definite answer. While dealing with matters of currency reform and tariff rates, the first session of the sixty-third Congress took no definite action in regard to the exemption clause, although the President had let it be known that he favored the repeal of the clause.

The first positive public indication of President Wilson's views was given in mid-October 1913 when Representative Adamson (from the coastal state of Georgia), Chairman of the House Committee on Inter-State and Foreign Commerce, said he would introduce a measure during the next session of Congress that would abolish the exemption clause.⁵² This was quickly followed by the publication of a letter written by President Wilson to William L.

⁵¹ Editorial, Minot Daily Reporter, Feb. 20, 1913, p. 2; editorial, Fargo Forum, Jan. 9, 1913, p. 2.

⁵² New York Times, Oct. 18, 1913, p. 3.

Marbury of Baltimore, which expressed the Chief Executive's point of view:

With regard to the question of Panama Canal tolls, my opinion is very clear. The exemption constitutes a very mistaken policy from every point of view. It is economically unjust; as a matter of fact it benefits, for the present, at any rate, only a monopoly; and it seems to me to be in clear violation of the terms of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty.⁵³

President Wilson's declaration of policy had ended a year of waiting and reappraisal. In advocating the repeal of the exemption clause, President Wilson had satisfied the desires of the greater portion of the mid-western press. Although a minority of newspapers, such as the Irish Standard and the Dickinson Recorder Post, had opposed either arbitration or repeal, the overwhelming majority of those organs that commented on the issue favored repealing the disputed clause. During this period of reappraisal, most of the comment on the question of canal tolls was confined to the larger daily papers. To the region's weekly press, the prospects for a good crop in 1913 and the events of the revolution in Mexico appeared to be far more important than this latest diplomatic dispute between the United States and Great Britain.

The canal tolls issue disappeared from the upper-mid-

⁵³ Frank M. Colby, ed., New International Yearbook, 1914 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1915), p. 525.

western press rather early in 1913. As Congress began taking up matters of tariff and currency reform, opinions were formed on these issues, and the tolls matter was allowed to remain dormant for the remainder of the year. It would, however, return to the headlines with greater furor when Congress prepared to comply with President Wilson's wishes regarding the repeal of the exemption clause.

CHAPTER VI

1914--YEAR OF THE REVERSAL

In supporting the repeal of the coastwise tolls exemption clause, President Wilson faced a difficult situation. He must secure repeal of the action which Congress in 1912 had overwhelmingly approved. But the problem ran deeper than mere reversal. Not only was he trying to reverse Congressional action, but he was also striving for a policy that was in direct opposition to the Democratic platform of 1912. In Wilson's opinion, repeal was a matter of preserving the national honor at the expense of a party platform. This plank had been adopted despite the fact that a majority of the Democrats in the House had voted against the 1912 exemption clause.

President Wilson, who had supported the clause in a speech while campaigning, demanded that his party members repudiate the plank, not for any personal or political reason, but in order to support the foreign policy of the Administration. The President held that the tolls exemption plank had been inserted in the platform by three or four men and therefore it was not binding on the party.

On March 5, 1914, President Wilson went before a joint session of Congress and asked the repeal of the exemption clause. In his message, he attacked the clause on three grounds: (1) it violated the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, (2) it was economically unwise, and (3) it was a great stumbling block to the conduct of foreign affairs. The President, while stating that he was not surrendering to Great Britain, said in summary: "We are too big, too powerful, too self-respecting a Nation to interpret with too strained or refined a reading, the words of our national promises just because we have power enough to give us leave to read them as we please."¹

In the next few months of 1914, a bitterly contested battle was waged in Congress. Although the struggle was basically non-partisan, the Progressive Party declared its intention to support its platform of 1912 and fight against repeal. Representative Victor Murdock of Kansas, the party leader, expressed the views of his party in the following manner: "The Progressives in Congress are substantially a unit against the proposition to repeal the tolls exemption clause in the Panama Canal Act." While declaring the Republicans and Democrats to be hopelessly divided, he in-

¹Arias, The Panama Canal, p. 342.

sisted that the Progressives were "free from the influence of sectional convictions."²

In mid-March, the House Committee on Inter-State and Foreign Commerce reported favorably, by a vote of 17 to 4, a bill (H.R. 14385) to repeal the exemption clause. The report was accompanied by a minority report, which claimed that the proposed repeal would require the United States to pay tolls on its battleships using the canal. South Dakota's Republican Representative Eben W. Martin and Minnesota's Frederick C. Stevens (the ranking Republican on the Committee) were counted among the majority on the measure whereas the minority was made up of Doremus of Michigan (Democrat), O'Shaunsey of Rhode Island (Democrat), Knowland of California (Republican), and Lafferty of Oregon (Progressive).³

When the repeal provision came up for debate on the House floor, there followed a prolonged and heated discussion of the issue. The fight for repeal in the House nearly disrupted the Democratic ranks as party members were torn between their loyalty to President Wilson and their desire to uphold the party promises made during the successful 1912 campaign. The problem worsened when various Republi-

²New York Times, March 21, 1914, p. 3.

³"House Committee Opposition," Independent, March 26, 1914, p. 365.

can Anglophobes claimed that President Wilson had asked for the repeal of the exemption clause as a favor to Great Britain; in return, they contended, the British would withdraw their support of the Huerta government in Mexico, a government which President Wilson had refused to recognize because it came into power by means of a revolution.⁴

"Will you vote for the British policy against the American policy?" inquired James Manahan (Republican from Minneapolis). A staunch Anglophobe of Irish extraction, Representative Manahan termed Wilson's request as dishonorable, rather than honorable as the President had claimed.⁵ Manahan's Minneapolis colleague, Republican George R. Smith (a new member of the House, having defeated Frank M. Nye in 1912), agreed with this view and argued that "the passage of this bill will be a public surrender by the Nation of its right, heretofore maintained, to exempt its coastwise vessels from the payment of tolls." He declared that President Wilson wanted the exemption clause repealed in order to set the United States right in the

⁴Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), p. 92.

⁵U.S. Congress, House, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess., March 30, 1914, Congressional Record, p. 5820.

eyes of the world. According to Representative Smith, President Wilson was not concerned whether the American interpretation of the treaty was correct; he was interested only in complying with the British request.⁶

Representative Charles H. Dillon (R.--South Dakota) was another who condemned the President's request. Arguing that the exemption clause was purely an American domestic concern, the Yankton Republican pronounced that he was "not willing to interpret this treaty in favor of the English contention and thus for all time deprive the American people of making such regulation as they see fit for their vessels." In his opinion, the right to regulate interstate commerce was vested in Congress under the United States Constitution. In presenting his case, Dillon noted that goods could be shipped from San Francisco to New York by means of either the transcontinental railroad or through the Panama Canal. In the first case, he continued, Congress would have the power to regulate rates under the Interstate Commerce Act. Why, he demanded, should Congress relinquish its right to regulate this same interstate commerce using the Panama Canal simply because Great Britain requested it?⁷

Dillon's fellow Republican, Charles Burke of Pierre

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 6079.

(a new member of Congress as South Dakota's delegation was increased to three), also expressed his opposition to Wilson's action. Although he opposed the exemption clause because it was a ship subsidy, Burke was against the repeal of the measure because, in his words, "President Wilson had requested the repeal on the grounds that free tolls was in plain contravention of the treaty with Great Britain." Burke ended his speech by announcing that he would support the repeal movement if it became a matter of economic advantage to the coastwise shippers, but he could not support any measure designed merely to placate the British.⁸

As the House debate raged, other Representatives made their views known. Frederick C. Stevens (R.--Minn.) argued that "the tolls exemption clause is not in the interests of the people, the taxpayers of the United States." Explaining that he had opposed the clause since its first introduction, Stevens congratulated President Wilson for requesting the repeal of the disputed measure and urged the Democrats to place the honor of the nation above a mere party platform. In his opinion, the tolls issue was an international matter, and if the United States refused to repeal the disputed clause, it would "become an outcast and an outlaw among the nations of the earth," a claim

⁸Ibid., p. 10333.

which brought a standing ovation from the gallery and from other members.⁹

Halvor Steenerson of Crookston (R.--Minn.) also lauded President Wilson for the repeal request. He contended that after the Democratic Party had endorsed the exemption clause in the 1912 platform, it realized its mistake and wanted to correct it. Steenerson, who claimed that Republicans already favored repeal, urged all Democrats to support their party leadership, warning any hesitant members: "It will not be long before you will go before the people for reelection on the plea that you will stand by and uphold the President."¹⁰

Winfield Hammond of Minnesota, the only Democratic representative from the upper-midwest, joined the chorus advocating repeal. In an unrehearsed oration, Hammond declared: "Democrats are not obligated to violate the obligations of a treaty in order not to violate the obligations of a party platform," and concluded his remarks by referring to the exemption clause as "a subsidy, indirect, but none the less a subsidy."¹¹

The argument advanced by Representative Hammond that the exemption clause amounted to an indirect ship subsidy

⁹Ibid., pp. 5682, 5698, 5751, 5753-5754.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 5756.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 5983-5984.

was endorsed by other upper-midwestern legislators. Charles A. Lindbergh (R.--Minn.), though opposed to any surrender to Great Britain, supported the repeal movement for "economic reasons", while South Dakota's Charles H. Dillon, who had earlier attacked President Wilson's position, also regarded the clause as an indirect method of bestowing a subsidy on the coastwise shipping industry. In addition to attacking the clause as an unwarranted subsidy, Republican Clarence Miller (Duluth, Minnesota) alleged that the national honor and treaty obligations of the United States demanded repeal.¹²

The assertion that the exemption clause was, in fact, a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, drew support from another Minnesota Representative. Andrew Volstead of Granite Falls believed that it would be dishonorable not to repeal the disputed clause and argued that people who did not want to surrender to England were evading the basic issue. In spite of this, he felt that the exemption clause was the most beneficial for the interior portion of the country. Free tolls would force a lowering of the existing railroad rates; thus, free tolls would benefit, rather than hinder, his constituents.¹³

¹²Ibid., pp. 5873, 10332; ibid., Appendix, p. 306.

¹³U.S. Congress, House, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess., Congressional Record, p. 6035.

In agreement with Volstead's position, James Manahan (R.--Minneapolis) argued that those representatives who supported the repeal were actually doing a great injustice to the interior portion of the country. Claiming that they were "paying homage to the House of Hill" (a reference to James G. Hill, the railroad magnate), Manahan asked if these representatives favored the "railroads against the consumers of the country." He insisted that these legislators were, in effect, voting for an increase in transcontinental railroad rates.¹⁴

After an extensive debate, the House passed the repeal measure by a vote of 247 to 162. A vote analysis on the repeal measure showed that 220 Democrats, 23 Republicans, 3 Progressives and 1 independent had voted favorably on the measure, while 93 Republicans, 52 Democrats, and 17 Progressives constituted the minority. Only Champ Clark (Missouri), Oscar W. Underwood (Alabama), and Tammany representatives and the Irish-Americans from Boston and Chicago, of the Democrats, voted against the measure. Twenty-eight representatives who had voted for the exemption bill in 1912 reversed themselves: these included 27 Democrats and 1 Republican.

Among the supporters of the repeal measure were a

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 5820, 6078-6079.

majority of the upper-midwestern representatives. A state break-down of the vote shows the following:

Minnesota:

for repeal--Anderson, Hammond, Davis, Stevens,
Lindbergh, Volstead, Miller,
Steenerson
against repeal--Smith and Manahan

North Dakota:

for repeal--H. T. Helgesen
against repeal--P. D. Norton and G. M. Young

South Dakota:

against repeal--Burke and Dillon
not voting--Martin¹⁵

On April 29, by a vote of 8 to 6, the Senate Committee on Inter-Oceanic Canals reported to the Senate, without recommendation, the House bill. Along with the bill, the committee introduced an amendment, also without recommendation, which stated: "Neither the passage of this act, nor anything therein contained, shall be constituted, or held as waiving, impairing, or affecting any treaty." Of the members of the committee, 5 Democrats and 3 Republicans supported the measure while 3 Democrats and 3 Republicans formed the opposition.¹⁶

¹⁵U.S. Congress, House, vote on H.R. 14385, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess., March 31, 1914, Congressional Record, p. 6088; "Congressional Action on Repeal," Review of Reviews, XLIX (May 1914), 526; New York Times, March 31, 1914, p. 1.

¹⁶New International Yearbook, 1914, p. 389.

When the bill was brought to a vote on June 11, 1914, it passed the Senate by a 50 to 35 majority, with a majority of the Democrats supporting Wilson. This majority was composed of 37 Democrats and 13 Republicans; 23 Republicans, 11 Democrats, and 1 Progressive opposed the measure. The upper-midwestern Senators who, with the exception of Sterling and McCumber, had taken little part in the debate, were nearly unanimous in voting to repeal the exemption clause. Only Minnesota's Moses Clapp voted against the measure; his colleague, Knute Nelson, along with Porter J. McCumber and Asle J. Gronna of North Dakota and Thomas Sterling and Coe I. Crawford of South Dakota, all Republicans, voted with the majority. The bill was then sent to the House, and the amended form was quickly passed. On June 5, 1914, President Wilson signed the bill which repealed the exemption clause.

CHAPTER VII

THE NATION RECONSIDERS THE ISSUE

President Wilson's stand on the tolls exemption issue met with general approval in the nation's press. Journalistic support for his point of view was not confined to papers of any one section of the country or any political party. Although Wilson was a Democrat, Republican papers such as the Chicago Tribune, the Leavenworth Times (Kansas), and the Kansas City Journal strongly supported repeal. Perhaps typical of the view expressed by the Republican press was the Chicago Tribune's stand on the exemption clause: "As the Canal Act stands today, Chicago will be robbed. It is certain that the American nation will not endure it."¹

In January 1914, the New York Times, calling public opinion "the most valuable guide, counselor, and friend the President can have," declared that opinion was divided but believed that "it was starting to unite in favor of repeal." Claiming the exemption clause to be morally wrong, the Times contended that the "tolls exemption con-

¹"President Wilson Tries to Reverse the Lever on Panama Canal Tolls," Current Opinion, LVI (March 1914), 10.

struction of the treaty was an afterthought," and urged support of President Wilson's stand: "It is hardly conceivable now that any loyal Democrat should fail to uphold the official leader of his party in correcting the terrible blunder into which the party has been betrayed."²

The Times was not the only New York paper supporting the President. The Journal of Commerce felt the exemption clause "to an unprecedented degree lessened our support and respect among foreign nations."³ Also defending the Chief Executive's position was the Republican Tribune, which stated: "The President is absolutely right and sure to win."⁴

Public opinion was stirred to such a pitch that when President Wilson made his repeal message every seat in the galleries was taken. Commenting on the speech, the Topeka Capital (Kansas) thought that "the overwhelming sentiment of the nation is with the President;"⁵ the Washington Post explained: "Probably never in the political history of the country has there been such a swift and complete change of view on any public question."⁶ Strong support for the

²Editorial, New York Times, Jan. 29, 1914, p. 8; Feb. 8, 1914, p. 14.

³Current Opinion, LVI (March 1914), 167.

⁴Ibid. (April 1914), 257.

⁵Ibid. (March 1914), 168.

⁶Ibid. (April 1914), 257.

proposed repeal was given also by such newspapers as the Omaha World Herald and the Helena Independent (Montana).

A number of leading magazines and trade journals also strongly supported the President's views. "Say what he will, the most bitter opponent of repeal must admit that this country is on trial before the whole world in the manner of its good faith and sanctity of its treaty obligations," argued the Scientific American.⁷ While defending the right of the United States to exempt coastwise ships from the payment of tolls, Outlook argued that "for international friendship's sake we waive that right and repeal the exemption clause." Other journals supporting repeal were Harper's Weekly and the American Journal of International Law.⁸

In an often-cited argument that appeared in Outlook, William Jennings Bryan, now Secretary of State, alleged that the tolls exemption plank of the 1912 Democratic platform was in conflict with the views of the majority of his party. According to the editors of Outlook, Bryan saw the clause as "on its face an endorsement of the doctrine of

⁷"Tolls Question in the House of Representatives," Scientific American (CX (April 11, 1914), 304.

⁸"In a Nutshell," Outlook, CVI (April 4, 1914), 744; "Canal Tolls and the Shipping Trust," Harper's Weekly, LVIII (May 9, 1914), 14-15; "The Repeal of the Provisions of the Panama Canal Act Exempting American Coastwise Vessels from the Payment of Tolls," American Journal of International Law, VIII (July 1914), 592-597.

subsidy," and declared that his party opposed such a doctrine.⁹ The Nation hoped Congress would not suffer from Platformitis--"a disease of Senators who make reference to the bearing of the Democratic platform of 1912 upon the question of exemption!"¹⁰

In a speech at the Republican Club luncheon in New York City, Oscar S. Straus, a Progressive, who had been named ambassador to Turkey, praised President Wilson's stand and claimed the call for repeal was based on the "highest plane of national honor." Straus repudiated the Democratic and Progressive platforms as being destructive of international good will. Discussing the party campaign promises, Straus hoped politicians would place the honor of the nation ahead of the word of their party.¹¹

The position taken by Straus prompted the Scientific American to assert: "The country has a right to expect of its representatives that whenever a subject of grave international importance . . . comes up for debate, it shall be . . . free from the least taint of mere party politics." In the same vein, it argued that those who favored the exemption clause were "subsidy seekers pure and simple, those who do not hesitate to stir up racial ani-

⁹"Panama Canal Question," Outlook, CVI (April 25, 1914), 874.

¹⁰"Bristow vs. Common Sense," Nation, XCVI (Feb. 25, 1914), 202.

¹¹New York Times, March 8, 1914, p. 12.

mosity, and not a few who did not disdain to descend to personal abuse of the president himself."¹²

This opposition drew its support from a number of sources. Chief among these were: (1) persons interested in coastwise shipping; (2) the Irish-American element of the Democratic party; (3) minority groups, such as the Germans and the Russians, who did not want the United States to surrender to pressure by Great Britain; (4) those who were opposed to the railroad industry (including a portion of the upper-midwestern press); and (5) the powerful group of Hearst newspapers. In a series of dramatic editorials and cartoons, the Hearst organs accused President Wilson of betraying the United States to both Great Britain and the railroad trust. The language used was so violent that Senator Robert L. Owen of Oklahoma warned that William Randolph Hearst would be investigated. Hearst's actions also prompted the Charleston News and Courier to declare: "Not since the days of Cleveland has there arisen an issue which has called forth such vituperative bitterness."¹³ Other press opposition came chiefly from the West Coast,

¹²"Tolls Question in the House of Representatives," Scientific American, CX (April 11, 1914), 304.

¹³"The First Battle over Canal Tolls a Victory for the President," Current Opinion, LVI (May 1914), 333.

notably the San Francisco Chronicle and the Progressive party newspapers.

Chief among the journals opposing the repeal movement was Review of Reviews, which drew the following picture:

We are precisely in the position of a farmer, who without compensation and through sheer generosity, tells his neighbor to enter his gates and take a short cut across his land to avoid a long detour by the public highway. The neighbor begins to construe his privilege, wholly unpaid for, as a legal right and proceeds to question the man's use of his own private roads for his own position.¹⁴

Many pressure groups were sent to Congress to oppose the repeal measure, not because of the economic issue involved, but rather because of a dislike for Great Britain. Characteristic of these groups were the United German Societies and the Irish Catholics. Meeting in New York, the United German Societies endorsed a policy of opposition to repeal. Through their representatives in Washington, this group called on President Wilson to withdraw his repeal request from Congress.¹⁵

Mass meetings were held by those who protested the repeal movement. Typical of these meetings was one held at New York City's Carnegie Hall in March 1914. After a

¹⁴Review of Reviews, XLIX (March 1914), 261

¹⁵New York Times, March 28, 1914, p. 3.

series of dramatic orations, resolutions were made which claimed the repeal to be

. . . intolerable to patriotic Americans, that the Government has been betrayed and put into a panic by cleverly inspired fears and imaginary dangers, that the proposed legislation was inspired by snobbish subserviency to certain foreign opinion, and that the passage of the repeal would mean a surrender by the United States of sovereignty over its own canal.

These petitions were distributed and signed by the opponents of repeal.¹⁶

The effect of such meetings on public opinion was best summed up in an editorial by the New York Times, entitled: "Patriotism Goes Wrong." The Times claimed that these meetings represented only greedy, snobbish people who wanted more benefits and super-patriots who believed that the United States was strong enough to impress its will upon the rest of the world. Declaring their arguments to be false, the editorial concluded: "If we are to refuse to vindicate our own honor, keep our promises, and advance our real interest simply because we have promised a foreign nation to do so, we must be a muddle-headed and cowardly people."¹⁷

President Wilson's personal request for the repeal of the disputed exemption clause had stirred comment across the nation. Every section of the country debated

¹⁶Ibid., March 21, 1914, p. 3.

¹⁷Ibid., March 22, 1914, editorial, p. 14.

the merits of the disputed clause and the wisdom of the President's plea. Questions involving matters of treaty violation, ship subsidy, national honor, party platforms, and surrender to the British were discussed as the people formed their opinions. Would any one argument be confined to a particular section of the country? Would a certain region, such as the upper midwest, base its opinion on one argument in particular, or would several be advanced? What role, if any, would the geographic location and ethnic background of the region play in shaping public opinion?

CHAPTER VIII

THE REGION SUPPORTS THE PRESIDENT

"To toll, or not to toll, such is the problem," was the way the Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader characterized the decision facing Congress in early 1914. This question, whether American coasting vessels using the Panama Canal should pay tolls, afforded the editors of the upper-mid-western press an excellent opportunity to make their views known on foreign affairs. Little mention was made of the issue during January and February as the editors waited patiently for President Wilson to make his views known officially. A scattering of the metropolitan papers did comment on the issue, but, for the most part, editorial comment was directed toward the conditions in Mexico. It was only after President Wilson addressed the joint session of Congress on March 5, 1914, that the exemption clause issue became a major news item.

The conciseness of the President's address drew much comment from the region's press. Nearly all the weekly newspapers reprinted the entire text of the Chief Executive's request of Congress. Largely dependent upon the

¹Editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, March 20, 1914, p. 4.

national wire services for their knowledge of foreign affairs, these papers merely published the wire-service items (notably from the Associated Press) as they were received and did not comment on the issue. The Colman Argus (S.D.) and the Mitchell Clarion (S.D.) were typical of such papers; although printing the wire-service dispatches intact, these newspapers made no reference to the affair in their editorial columns.²

While only a minority of papers failed to mention the exemption clause, President Wilson's unique request stirred many editors to revive the issue and awakened the concern of others who had not followed the matter during the previous two years. Claiming that the speech was a near-record for brevity, the Devils Lake Daily Journal (N.D.) proclaimed in bold headlines: "IN 417 WORDS PRESIDENT WILSON ASKS CONGRESS TO REPEAL FREE TOLLS." Also remarking on the shortness of Wilson's address, the Madison Daily Leader (S.D.) warned its readers "not to measure the importance of this subject by the number of sentences."³ "Too warm praise cannot be lavished upon President Wilson," claimed the Mankato Review (Minn.), "for his

²Colman Argus, March 12, 1914, p. 7; Mitchell Clarion, March 12, 1914, p. 6.

³Devils Lake Daily Journal, March 6, 1914, p. 1; Madison Daily Leader, March 6, 1914, p. 1.

brief but magnificent message to congress asking that body to repeal the tolls exemption clause in the Panama canal act."⁴

President Wilson's personal request that Congress reverse itself from its stand of two years earlier drew widespread support from the upper-midwestern press. Praising his action, the Yankton Press and Dakotan regarded the repeal as the proper action and remarked that Wilson had chosen "the psychological moment to impress upon congress the repeal."⁵ The Sioux Falls Daily Press also praised the President and claimed that if his request was not heeded, "it will mark an ominous turning point in our history." In contrast, the Rapid City Daily Journal and the Minneapolis Morning Tribune both described the Chief Executive's action as pleading rather than requesting.⁶

In what manner Congress would comply with Wilson's request stirred the Daily Journal to predict: "If congressional ears are deaf to such an appeal, then we have come on sorry days indeed."⁷ In urging Congress to com-

⁴Editorial, Mankato Review, March 10, 1914, p. 2.

⁵Editorial, Yankton Press and Dakotan, March 7, 1914, p. 2.

⁶Editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Press, March 7, 1914, p. 4; Rapid City Daily Journal, March 6, 1914, p. 1; Minneapolis Morning Tribune, March 6, 1914, p. 1.

⁷Editorial, Devils Lake Daily Journal, March 4, 1914, p. 2.

ply with the President's request, the Lake Crystal Union (Minn.) argued that "none can dispute the wisdom of the President in his demand." In a similar manner, the Grand Forks Herald observed that "most of the strong men of both parties of Congress" supported Wilson's position.⁸ The region's approval of Wilson's request was largely echoed across the nation, and all attention was focused on the capital as Congress prepared to answer the President's request.

The Herald, prior to the President's message, informed its readers that the "subject has a very decided interest to a good many people, those of our Northwest in particular."⁹ This interest was demonstrated by the thorough attention given the actions of the Sixty-third Congress. When the Sims bill to repeal the exemption clause was debated in the House, the editors of the upper-midwestern press followed the proceedings with great attention. Discussing the torrid debate, the weekly Vermillion Dakota Republican (S.D.) pointed out that "many of his [President Wilson's] best and strongest party leaders are protesting against his theory with courage and

⁸ Editorial, Lake Crystal Union, March 6, 1914, p. 2; editorial, Grand Forks Herald, March 6, 1914, p. 4.

⁹ Editorial, Grand Forks Herald, Feb. 26, 1914, p. 4.

any amount of eloquence."¹⁰ In its coverage of the House debate, the Rapid City Daily Journal remarked that in its opinion, President Wilson, who had hoped for quick passage of the repeal measure, was annoyed by the continuing debate and reported: "Wilson Characterizes Canal Tolls Debating as Crowning Insult." According to the Rapid City editor, Wilson wished Congress to obey his wishes and not waste time with seemingly endless debate.¹¹

Although hotly contested, the repeal measure quickly passed the House with the aid of a closure bill that limited the amount of time any Representative could speak to one hour. While closely following the debate, many editors had not had time to express their opinion on the issue. The action of the House in reversing itself in the matter of canal tolls did, however, stir the editors to comment. "Under conditions present, the victory was a tremendous one for the administration," exclaimed the Faribault Democrat (Minn.), which held President Wilson in the highest regard.¹² Voicing its approval of the House passage, the Pierre Daily Capital-Journal pointed out the op-

¹⁰ Editorial, Daily Republican, March 28, 1914,
p. 4.

¹¹ Rapid City Daily Journal, March 31, 1914, p. 4.
The House debate of the bill to repeal the exemption clause is discussed in Chapter VI.

¹² Editorial, Faribault Democrat, April 3, 1914,
p. 2.

position which Wilson had overcome: "President Wilson has won the first round in his battle to repeal the Panama canal tolls notwithstanding the opposition of Speaker Clark and leader Underwood." The Capital-Journal, although a Republican paper, praised President Wilson's determination to put justice ahead of mere party platforms.¹³ In agreement with this position was the Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, which casually mentioned: "It is generally dawning on some people that there is a real leader in the white house [sic] these days."¹⁴

The House passage of the measure, which had drawn much favorable comment in the upper-midwestern press, prompted several of that region's papers to comment on how their Representatives had responded to the measure. The Aberdeen Daily American (S.D.) expressed its regret that two South Dakota Representatives, Burke and Dillon, had voted against the measure. The Daily American noted that South Dakotans were generally, in its opinion, against the exemption clause and urged that the state's Senate delegation should comply with the wishes of its constituents. Opposition to the stand of these Representatives was also voiced in the Flandreau Moody County Enterprise

¹³ Editorial, Pierre Daily Capital Journal, March 31, 1914, p. 2.

¹⁴ Editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, April 1, 1914, p. 4.

and the Pierre Daily Capital-Journal. The "nay" votes of Minnesota's Manahan and Smith (both Republicans) were also soundly criticized by the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, the Lake Crystal Union, and the Minneapolis Morning Tribune.¹⁵

Less than a month had elapsed between the time President Wilson had requested the repeal of the exemption clause and House passage of the measure. In these weeks, the upper-midwestern press had attempted to keep its readers informed of the latest events regarding the issue. Now that the House had passed the measure, interest was focused on the Senate. Was repeal the proper course of action? In the days and weeks that followed, many upper-midwestern editors re-examined the various contentions regarding matters of ship subsidy, treaty violation, campaign promises, and national honor. In the words of the Devils Lake Daily Journal, the exemption clause issue had "sundered party relations, set men against each other, created bitterness, inspired suspicion and hot accusations."¹⁶

¹⁵Editorials, Aberdeen Daily American, April 2, 1914, p. 4; Moody County Enterprise, April 9, 1914, p. 4; Pierre Daily Capital-Journal, April 3, 1914, p. 4; Saint Paul Pioneer Press, April 1, 1914, p. 4; Lake Crystal Union, April 8, 1914, p. 4; Minneapolis Morning Tribune, April 2, 1914, p. 6.

¹⁶Editorial, Devils Lake Daily Journal, May 4, 1914, p. 2.

"A great nation like this is not going to twist a treaty to suit a temporary need," argued the Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, while the Dell Rapids Times-Tribune and the Gregory Times-Advocate insisted that the Hay-Pauncefote treaty was a bad bargain but should none the less be upheld.¹⁷ In a series of editorials, the Devils Lake Daily Journal claimed: "The weight of argument is that the exemption IS a direct violation of the treaty." Arguing that the treaty must be honored, it reminded readers of the proposed Bard Amendment of 1901. As this amendment, which would have granted free use of the canal to American coasting ships, was proposed as an addition to the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, the Devils Lake paper declared that the present exemption clause was a violation of the treaty.¹⁸

The Grand Forks Herald, which claimed there could be no justification for treaty violation, argued that all that was involved in the issue was "whether we intend to stick to a bargain when once we have made it."¹⁹ The Mankato Review (Minn.) also urged the nation to uphold its

¹⁷ Editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, March 9, 1914, p. 4; Dell Rapids Times-Tribune, April 2, 1914, p. 1; Gregory Times-Advocate, Feb. 12, 1914, p. 4.

¹⁸ Editorial, Devils Lake Daily Journal, Feb. 28, 1914, p. 2; March 1, 1914, p. 2; March 3, 1914, p. 3; March 14, 1914, p. 2.

¹⁹ Editorial, Grand Forks Herald, Feb. 22, 1914, p. 4; March 13, 1914, p. 4.

solemnly pledged treaty word: "We can make no treaty for any purpose while for our own gain tear up the treaty before the day has come to fulfill its pledge."²⁰ On the other hand, the Vale Call to Action (S.D.), a semi-monthly paper devoted "to a discussion of economic questions," while advocating repeal, held that "no generation is morally bound by the acts of a preceding generation. We are not forced today, by a treaty made yesterday, else if we were progress would be at a standstill."²¹

As the region's press discussed the issue of treaty violation, area residents began expressing opinions regarding the Hay-Pauncefote treaty and its relation to the exemption clause. In letters written to the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, John Kelly, a federal court judge, raised a point of international law. It was his contention that "the negotiators of the treaty could not give away the rights of U.S. citizens to use the canal as they saw fit." According to Judge Kelly, who opposed the exemption clause on economic grounds, the Hay-Pauncefote treaty was not being violated in this matter.²²

In a letter to the Bismarck Daily Tribune, Charles

²⁰Editorial, Mankato Review, March 10, 1914, p. 2.

²¹Editorial, Vale Call To Action, March 21, 1914, p. 2.

²²Letter to the editor, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, April 11, 1914, p. 4; May 6, 1914, p. 5. Kelly's Irish background must not be forgotten.

M. Greene asked the following question:

In relation to the Panama Canal tolls question, will you kindly tell us just what the Hay-Pauncefote treaty was, and why it was made? We agree to that treaty and the only honorable course now is to follow it, but many of us would like to know just why we had to consult England, or anybody else, in regard to constructing the canal.

In answer to Greene's query, the Daily Tribune, which accorded the issue only limited coverage, explained the diplomatic history of the canal and agreed with Greene that the only honorable course of action was to uphold the treaty.²³

The argument that the nation's honor was at stake in the matter of canal tolls was also emphasized by upper-midwest editors. "The controversy over the Panama canal tolls will be settled right, because common honesty will not permit it to be otherwise," alleged the Rapid City Daily Journal, whereas the Sioux Falls Daily Press concurred that the nation's honor should be vindicated, claiming that "we are big enough to do that."²⁴ In calling for repeal, the Cooperstown Griggs County Sentinel Courier (N.D.) stated: "President Wilson realizes that Democracy is on trial and wants to impress the fact on the minds of all." The Fargo Forum asked: "Does any patriotic American want this government to break its word?" In supporting the

²³ Editorial, Bismarck Daily Tribune, March 27, 1914, p. 4.

²⁴ Editorial, Rapid City Daily Journal, April 22, 1914, p. 4; editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Press, May 14, 1914, p. 4.

actions of the Chief Executive, the Forum believed that "the honor of the Nation is at stake in the passage of this repeal of the tolls exemption clause."²⁵

"Our good faith has been brought under suspicion," commented the Bismarck Daily Tribune, which hoped that "we clear our honor at any cost."²⁶ North Dakota's leading Democratic newspaper, the Devils Lake Daily Journal, a strong supporter of repeal, praised Wilson's actions: "Nothing in the president's career becomes him better than this stand for national honor."²⁷ Also requesting the repeal measure to uphold the nation's honor, the Republican Grand Forks Herald insisted: "The standards of a great nation in relation to the carrying out of its contracts ought to be at least as high as those which are commonly insisted on when two men trade horses."²⁸

The Republican Luverne Rock County Herald (Minn.) questioned the President's claim that national honor demanded the repeal of the exemption clause. In its opinion, the question of the nation's honor should be settled by in-

²⁵ Editorial, Griggs County Sentinel-Courier, June 19, 1914, p. 1; editorial, Fargo Forum, Feb. 24, 1914, p. 4; April 1, 1914, p. 2.

²⁶ Editorial, Bismarck Daily Tribune, Feb. 17, 1914, p. 4.

²⁷ Editorial, Devils Lake Daily Journal, March 31, 1914, p. 4.

²⁸ Editorial, Grand Forks Herald, March 7, 1914, p. 4.

ternational law experts rather than by Congressional action. Pointing out that "men possessing far more ability than President Wilson in the matter of international law supported the exemption clause," the Herald warned that the matter should be carefully studied before any action was taken.²⁹ A somewhat similar view was expressed in a letter to the Saint Paul Pioneer Press from Gerstave Orean Ohlsson:

I fail, after a careful study of both sides of the question, to see in what matter our national honor is involved, and further, cannot understand how it was discovered so suddenly that it was a question of national honor.³⁰

Disregarding this small scattering of opposition, the majority of the region's editors requested the honor of the nation be upheld by repealing the disputed clause in the Panama bill. "It is only a question of common honesty," reminded the Minneapolis Journal, while the weekly Lake Crystal Union viewed the issue as a battle between "the interests of the shipping trust as against national honor."³¹ However, upholding the nation's honor was not the only reason advanced in the upper-midwestern press for repealing the disputed clause.

²⁹ Editorial, Rock County Herald, April 10, 1914, p. 6.

³⁰ Letter to the editor, Saint Paul Pioneer Press, April 24, 1914, p. 4.

³¹ Editorial, Minneapolis Journal, Feb. 19, 1914, p. 4; Feb. 24, 1914, p. 4; editorial, Lake Crystal Union, May 13, 1914, p. 4.

"Do you want a situation that will require an annual appropriation by congress to keep the canal going?" asked the Mankato Review. The Delano Eagle (Minn.) pointed out that "if free tolls were allowed to stand Uncle Sam would be making a present of about \$7,000,000 a year to the New York shipping trust for which the people would derive no adequate benefit."³² The feelings against ship subsidy and the granting of special privileges to coastwise shipping, which was by law reserved for American ships only, provided another reason for supporting the repeal that President Wilson had requested. According to the Fairmont Daily Sentinel (Minn.), the upper midwest was "against ship subsidies and graft of all descriptions," and urged the nation to "stand up for the president."³³

The Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader viewed the exemption clause as merely "a ship subsidy in a dress suit with tango slippers," and explained: "Free passes do not sound as well as 'free tolls', but they are the same thing."³⁴ Agreeing with the Argus Leader's views, the Hal-

³² Editorial, Mankato Review, May 12, 1914, p. 4; editorial, Delano Eagle, re-printed in Minneapolis Morning Tribune, May 6, 1914, p. 6.

³³ Editorial, Fairmont Daily Sentinel, April 1, 1914, p. 2.

³⁴ Editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, April 13, 1914, p. 4; April 7, 1914, p. 4.

Hallock Weekly News (Minn.) argued that a "direct subsidy to it [coastwise shipping] would be hissed off the stage of congress, as the disguised subsidy . . . is going to be hissed off now that it has been stripped."³⁵ Echoing this sentiment was the weekly Elk Point Leader-Courier (S.D.) and the Dell Rapids Times-Tribune (S.D.), which argued that there was no reason why the ships of a few men should enjoy the benefits of using the canal without paying tolls while the American public paid the bills for construction and operation of the canal.³⁶

The Canton News (S.D.) regarded the exemption clause as "another one of those concessions to special privileges with which this country has been so long and so disastrously affected." Urging the repeal of the disputed passage, the News voiced the hope that Congress would not form a "cloven-footed alliance with special privileges which are opposing the repeal."³⁷ Also urging repeal, the Grand Forks Herald placed the blame for the creation of the exemption clause on lobbyists sent to Washington by "specially interested groups". Declaring that these

³⁵ Editorial, Hallock Weekly News, April 25, 1914, p. 4.

³⁶ Editorial, Elk Point Leader-Courier, May 21, 1914, p. 4; editorial, Dell Rapids Times-Tribune, May 23, 1914, p. 4.

³⁷ Editorial, Canton News, March 30, 1914, p. 4.

privilege seekers had "carried Congress off its feet in 1912," the Herald expressed the hope that this would not be the case in 1914 and that Congressmen would recognize the exemption clause for what it was, a hidden ship subsidy.³⁸

The debate on the matter of ship subsidy and economic advantage stirred H. A. Humphrey of Minneapolis to express his views. In a letter to the Journal, Humphrey explained:

The claim that the free use of the canal by the people of the United States for domestic commerce is of the nature of a "ship subsidy" and in favor of a "shipping monopoly" is manifestly intended to hoodwink the people. The free use of the canal by our people for domestic commerce is clearly in opposition to capitalistic monopoly.³⁹

In commenting about the monopoly that reserved coastwise trade for American vessels, the Aberdeen Daily American claimed that the exemption clause would only "foster and breed the only remaining monopoly which has the strength to fight openly to control our government."⁴⁰

While Republican papers such as the Journal and the Daily American regarded the disputed clause as a ship subsidy, A. J. Roberts of Hawley, Minnesota, in a letter to

³⁸ Editorial, Grand Forks Herald, Feb. 12, 1914, p. 4.

³⁹ Letter to the editor, Minneapolis Journal, March 3, 1914, p. 4.

⁴⁰ Editorial, Aberdeen Daily American, April 14, 1914, p. 7.

the Fargo Forum, supported the measure as it stood:

It would seem that the great benefits that foreign shippers would gain by a shorter route through the Panama canal would leave the United States free to gain what advantage that would accrue by handling its coastwise shipping with its own ships as it deems best in the interests of the nation. . . . The general reader may not be up on shipping, but it is not difficult to ascertain what is patriotic and sound principle in regard to the operation of the canal in the interests of the United States.⁴¹

In like manner, Minnesota's Governor Eberhard claimed that "free tolls would be a good thing for American ships."⁴²

In addition to the questions of treaty obligations, national honor, and ship subsidy, commitment to party platform planks was also involved. It will be recalled that the Democratic and the Progressive platforms had endorsed the clause while the Republican platform had made no mention of the issue. Elected on a platform that favored the provision, President's Wilson's request that this plank be repudiated produced a variety of opinion. "President Wilson says 'T'ell [sic] with the platform. I am in favor of what's right,' and the American people honor him all the more for his decision," announced the Houston (Minn.) Houston County Chief,⁴³ which strongly lauded the President's

⁴¹Letter to editor, Fargo Forum, Feb. 24, 1914,
p. 4.

⁴²Saint Paul Pioneer Press, April 14, 1914, p. 6.

⁴³Editorial, Houston County Chief, April 25, 1914,
p. 6.

position. Echoing this praise, the Minneapolis Morning Tribune explained: "Planks in a party platform have hardly attained the sanctity of oaths of office. If that was the case, party bandwagons would get a punctured tire because of broken and abandoned pledges strewn in the road."⁴⁴ "Framers of a party platform cannot be any more sure about how every paragraph will work out than framers of a treaty," announced the Bismarck Daily Tribune, which held the opinion that "the free tolls plank of the Baltimore platform was a joker, and was slipped in."⁴⁵

Discussing the role of the campaign promises in the fight for repeal, the Bowman (N.D.) Bowman County Pioneer reported: "The discussion of this repeal bill is making an awful ruction in the Democratic party, and the action of the president shows that he is willing to rip up and throw in the scrap heap this free tolls plank."⁴⁶ The Slayton Murray County Herald (Minn.) regarded the fight to repeal the disputed passage as a contest as to whether "the Democratic party platform or the President of the United States is the real master of the job."⁴⁷ On the other hand, the

⁴⁴ Editorial, Minneapolis Morning Tribune, June 6, 1914, p. 20.

⁴⁵ Editorial, Bismarck Daily Tribune, Feb. 14, 1914, p. 4.

⁴⁶ Editorial, Bowman County Pioneer, April 16, 1914, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Murray County Herald, April 3, 1914, p. 4.

Hallock Weekly News (Minn.) and the Luverne Rock County Herald attacked Wilson's actions, demanding that he honor the platform on which he was elected and withdraw his request for repeal.⁴⁸

"Secretary Bryan says that the Democratic party was misled in the Baltimore statement on the tolls questions," reported the Albert Lea Tribune (Minn.), which was in agreement with the Faribault Democrat (Minn.) which had alleged that the disputed provision was "slipped into the Democratic platform without the knowledge of the majority of the resolution committee or convention and it is pronounced heretical as Democratic doctrine."⁴⁹ Also contending that the majority at the Democratic convention of 1912 had not endorsed the exemption clause was the Devils Lake Daily Journal, which reported on a recent poll of the convention delegates that produced the following results: 682 favored repeal, 125 were opposed to repeal, and 38 were uncommitted. The Daily Journal regarded this poll as "a conclusive answer to those who in spite of the plank against subsidies regard the free tolls plank as binding on the party."⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Editorial, Hallock Weekly News, March 25, 1914, p. 4; editorial, Rock County Herald, March 13, 1914, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Editorial, Albert Lea Tribune, April 18, 1914, p. 8; editorial, Faribault Democrat, Feb. 13, 1914, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Editorial, Devils Lake Daily Journal, May 23, 1914, p. 2.

The Democratic party was not, however, the only party to support the exemption clause in 1912. In its first political contest, the Progressive, or Bull Moose, party had also supported the controversial clause. In reporting on the House passage of the repeal measure, the Devils Lake Daily Journal noted that all but two Bull Moose Representatives had voted against the proposal. Charging that the Progressives were trying to discredit the Wilson administration, the Devils Lake paper criticized the new party's actions: "A third party politician plays the same kind of stupid political game as other kinds of party politicians."⁵¹ Also critical of the course taken by the Bull Moose party, the Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader expressed the hope that Progressive Senators would support the President, a position endorsed also by the Minneapolis Journal, which praised the actions of Hugh T. Halbert, Minnesota Progressive party chairman. Halbert had declined an invitation to become a member of the national committee being formed to oppose the repeal measure.⁵²

There was, nonetheless, some opposition to repeal voiced in the upper-midwestern press. Anglophobia, which had caused several editors to attack the British protest

⁵¹Editorial, Devils Lake Daily Journal, April 18, 1914, p. 2.

⁵²Editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, April 25, 1914, p. 4; editorial, Minneapolis Journal, April 9, 1914, p. 17.

of July 15, 1912, caused a minority of papers to condemn President Wilson's request and fight against repeal. To the Vermillion Dakota Republican (S.D.) it seemed that "philanthropic faddists at Washington" were attempting to force the United States to pay the expense of construction and operation of the canal and then let the entire world share the benefits. "It is neither politics nor patriotic to surrender every right we have," argued the Republican, which asked: "Wonder if, in the event of Woodrow Wilson's toll repeal, it will be necessary to get a permit from England for an American vessel of any description to navigate the canal?"⁵³ A somewhat similar view was expressed by the Breckenridge Wilkin County Gazette (Minn.), which stated that it had "opposed Great Britain in principle since the Boston Tea Party," and argued that the canal should be used solely to aid American shipping.⁵⁴

"Let Great Britain sulk if she wishes," pronounced the arch-enemy of the British, the Irish Standard of Minneapolis, which generally opposed the foreign policy of the Wilson Administration. "She now wants us to kiss the hand that smote us!" cried its editor, who had campaigned

⁵³ Editorial, Vermillion Dakota Republican, April 9, 1914, supplement; April 16, 1914, p. 4; May 7, 1914, p. 4.

⁵⁴ Editorial, Wilkin County Gazette, Jan. 14, 1914, p. 6.

against the British protest since mid-1912. However, regarding the tolls question as "the rock upon which Wilsonian Democracy is sure to flounder," this paper, which had constantly mentioned the issue in 1912, made little editorial comment in 1914. After House passage of the repeal measure, the tolls question nearly disappeared from this paper's pages. It chose to ignore the matter and crusaded for home rule for Ireland.⁵⁵

In a letter to the Sioux Falls Daily Press, Charles E. DeLand (a Republican lawyer of Pierre, South Dakota, and author of several historical articles) supported the present exemption clause. Because the United States had built the canal and the coastwise trade of the United States was reserved for American ships, he could see no basis for the British protest. In closing, he claimed that more capital was going into coastwise trading as a result of the clause, and, in his opinion, this would benefit South Dakota.⁵⁶

DeLand's Anglophobia was similar to that expressed in a letter which appeared in the Egan Express (S.D.). Signed simply, "A Reader", this letter asked:

⁵⁵Editorial, Irish Standard, March 28, 1914, p. 4; June 6, 1914, p. 4.

⁵⁶Letter to the editor, Sioux Falls Daily Press, April 16, 1914, p. 4.

Just why, please, do you take the position that the United States must knuckle down to foreign countries in the matter of canal tolls? Why cannot this nation admit its own merchant vessels toll free through a canal it built and which it will operate?⁵⁷

These isolated cases of Anglophobia prompted the Yankton Press and Dakotan to attack the "jingoists who'd like to cut off the British lion's tail with a meat-ax just because we're going to be decent at Panama." The Breckinridge Telegram (Minn.) agreed with the Yankton paper and argued: "This thing of insulting England and other foreign countries just to show how brave we are is about played out with thinking people." "The time has gone when the English bugaboo can be made to cut much figure with the people," agreed the Republican Daily Argus Leader, which considered matters of ship subsidy and treaty violation to be more important than mere party politics or Anglophobia.⁵⁸

As the upper-midwestern press mulled over the various aspects of the exemption clause, the Senate had taken up the fight to comply with President Wilson's request. "Administration leaders in the senate buckled on their armor . . . and plunged in the Panama canal tolls fight to repeal the measure," announced the Rapid City Daily Journal. In

⁵⁷ Editorial, Egan Express, April 10, 1914, p. 4.

⁵⁸ Editorial, Yankton Press and Dakotan, April 23, 1914, p. 2; editorial, Breckinridge Telegram, May 23, 1914, p. 2; editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, May 1, 1914, p. 4.

agreement was the Daily Argus Leader, which termed the Congressional debate to be: "TOLLS FIGHT LIKE '76 DAYS."⁵⁹ The Minneapolis Journal predicted that the repeal measure would be extensively debated and alleged: "The Senate is going to take its time to decide whether this nation shall break its word or not."⁶⁰

In voicing its support of the repeal measure, the weekly Pipestone Farmer's Leader (Minn.) commented on the Senate Canal Committee's favorable report of the repeal measure:

Credit for this administration victory goes largely to Senator Crawford, Republican, of South Dakota, who was reckoned an uncertain quantity when the committee deliberations opened. His vote for repeal enabled the administration supporters to carry the day by a vote of 8 to 6.⁶¹

On the other hand, the George Washington Branch of the American Continental League (located in Minneapolis) petitioned the Senate Committee not to sanction the repeal measure.⁶²

"It is thought the U.S. Senate will use up three weeks of time in talking over the tolls repeal topic," re-

⁵⁹Rapid City Daily Journal, April 3, 1914, p. 1; Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, March 27, 1914, p. 1.

⁶⁰Editorial, Minneapolis Journal, April 6, 1914, p. 14.

⁶¹Editorial, Pipestone Farmer's Leader, May 7, 1914, p. 4.

⁶²U.S. Congress, Senate, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess., March 28, 1914, Congressional Record, Appendix, p. 337.

ported the Vermillion Dakota Republican, an opponent of the measure.⁶³ In the Senate debate, one of the strongest supporters of the President's position was North Dakota's Republican Senator Porter J. McCumber. When on April 7, 1914, McCumber made a stirring speech supporting the repeal measure, he was widely acclaimed in the upper-midwestern press. "McCumber Stirs Senate," blazed headlines in the Fairmont Daily Sentinel (Minn.), while the Ellendale Dickey County Leader (N.D.) termed his speech as "ringing and lengthy," and praised him for his position.⁶⁴ "The days of partisan politics are passing," observed the Devils Lake Daily Journal. The Sioux Falls Daily Press, also impressed with the Senator's speech, commented: "In the course of time no doubt Mr. McCumber will discover that Taft was wrong on the other issues also."⁶⁵ Supporting the position of McCumber, the Williston Herald (N.D.) offered this advice: "If the senator follows up this sort of course he may be hard to beat two years hence [when McCumber came up for re-election]. L.B.H. [Louis B.

⁶³ Editorial, Dakota Republican, April 9, 1914, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Fairmont Daily Sentinel, April 7, 1914, p. 1; Dickey County Leader, April 9, 1914, p. 1.

⁶⁵ Editorial, Devils Lake Daily Journal, April 9, 1914, p. 2; editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, April 8, 1914, p. 4. McCumber had been a loyal supporter of the conservative Taft.

Hanna_7 please take note."⁶⁶

Another upper-midwestern Senator who created a stir among the region's editors was South Dakota's Republican Senator from Vermillion, Thomas Sterling. "I have always been and am now for the repeal of the exemption clause," Sterling was quoted as saying in the Sioux Falls Daily Press. "Senator Sterling has accurately voiced the sentiment of his state in his speech favoring the repeal of the exemption clause in the Panama canal bill. There has been but one opinion among the majority of South Dakotans," reported the Aberdeen Daily American. Other papers which heralded Sterling's position were the Redfield Journal-Observer, the Pierre Daily Capital-Journal, and the Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, which explained: "We feel quite sure that Senator Sterling has reached the right conclusion in the matter of Panama canal tolls."⁶⁷

When the Senate complied with President Wilson's request and passed the repeal measure, the Daily Argus Leader, a strong supporter of repeal, asked: "Was there really the need for those weeks and weeks of debate on the

⁶⁶ Editorial, Williston Herald, April 12, 1914, p. 4.

⁶⁷ Sioux Falls Daily Press, April 10, 1914, p. 4; the views of Senator Sterling are discussed in Chapter V; editorial, Aberdeen Daily American, June 4, 1914, p. 4; Redfield Journal-Observer, June 4, 1914, p. 2; Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, April 10, 1914, p. 4.

tolls?" Lauding the passage of the repeal measure, headlines in the Fairmont Daily Sentinel (Minn.) proclaimed: "TOLLS REPEAL IS ANOTHER VICTORY FOR PRES. WILSON," a victory, which in the opinion of the Daily Sentinel, was "an expensive one for the Democratic party."⁶⁸ Other newspapers voicing their approval of the Senate's action were the Flandreau Moody County Enterprise (S.D.) and the Gregory Times-Advocate.

Although nearly 100 per cent of the upper-midwestern press approved the repeal of the exemption clause, one die-hard opponent, the Aberdeen Weekly News (S.D.) closed its coverage with a note of protest:

The canal tolls repeal bill has passed the senate in an amended form, and the house, of course, which for more than a year has shown pathetic eagerness to obey its master's voice, and an equal eagerness to avoid the crack of the schoolmaster's whip, hastened to pass the measure in its amended form.⁶⁹

After the repeal of the disputed exemption clause, the matter of canal tolls quickly disappeared from the upper-midwestern press. The Grand Forks Herald stated with finality: "The passage of the tolls exemption repeal bill . . . closes that subject."⁷⁰ The repeal had satisfied

⁶⁸ Editorial, Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, June 15, 1914, p. 1; Fairmont Daily Sentinel, June 12, 1914, p. 1.

⁶⁹ Editorial, Aberdeen Weekly News, June 18, 1914, p. 2.

⁷⁰ Editorial, Grand Forks Herald, June 16, 1914, p. 4.

President Wilson's request, honored the British protest, and, as gauged by the editorial comment of the region's press, was warmly received by the majority of the people. Once repealed, the issue of canal tolls was quickly forgotten as the events taking place in Mexico and Europe now engaged the attention of the press. What was once a highly controversial question was now history.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

In retrospect, it may be concluded that the upper midwest was largely in agreement with the action taken by Congress to reverse itself. From the evidence presented, it may be assumed that matters of ship subsidy, treaty obligations, and national honor were more important to the citizen of this region than any supposed surrender to Great Britain or to the promise of politicians during the 1912 campaign to support the exemption clause. Contrary to the widely held belief that this region was the heart of uninformed isolationism in the United States, it is fairly evident that the people of the upper midwest were both informed on and interested in the issue of the canal tolls. Although not as extensively debated there as in other sections of the country, the exemption clause did stir people to comment on the course the United States should follow and produced an abundance of differing opinions.

In the predominantly Republican upper midwest, only a scattering of Congressional support could be mus-

tered for the exemption clause. To the region's members in Congress (17 Republicans and 1 Democrat) the clause appeared to be, in the final analysis, merely an advantage to the coastal states for which the interior, including their constituents, would be taxed. When the exemption clause, which had been debated along economic lines, passed Congress in 1912, only three upper midwesterners voted with the majority. Although passed by a Republican administration, fifteen upper-midwestern Republicans registered their opposition to the measure (including the entire four-man North Dakota delegation). Only Republican Senators Coe I. Crawford (S.D.) and Moses E. Clapp (Minn.) supported President Taft, as did Senator Winfield S. Hammond (Minn.), the lone Democrat from the region.

This Congressional opposition to the exemption clause carried over into 1914. When President Wilson requested the repeal of the exemption clause, the Republican upper-midwest delegation eagerly supported him. When the House of Representatives passed the Sims bill to repeal the exemption clause (March 31, 1914), the region's Representatives supported the measure by a three-to-one majority. Only four of the upper midwest's delegates opposed the measure: Republicans P. D. Norton and G. M. Young of North Dakota, and Minnesota's Republicans, James

Manahan and George R. Smith, all new members, having been elected in November, 1912.

When the Sims bill reached the Senate floor, Porter J. McCumber (N.D.) and Dean Sterling (S.D.) praised Wilson's actions, although both were Republicans, and urged their colleagues to repeal the disputed clause. Another Republican, Frederick Stevens (Minn.), who was opposed to this hidden ship subsidy, was also counted among the members who crossed party lines and supported the President, as did North Dakota's junior Senator, Asle J. Gronna.

When the measure passed after a lengthy debate, only one dissenting vote was cast by the six-member, all-Republican upper-midwestern delegation. Moses E. Clapp (Minn.), who had favored the clause in 1912, refused to change his position, whereas Coe I. Crawford (S.D.) voted for the repeal although he had also favored the exemption clause in 1912.¹ But what of the people of the region? Did the Congressional delegation reflect their opinion?

From the random sample of newspaper comment examined, it would appear that the upper midwest was opposed

¹In the House of Representatives, only 23 of the 116 Republican members voted with the Democratic majority: one-third of these were from the upper-midwest (8 of the region's 15 Republicans voted for repeal). A similar situation prevailed in the Senate where only one-third of all Republicans (13 out of 36) supported the repeal measure. The upper-midwestern delegations provided over one-third of the favorable votes as five of the region's six Republican Senators supported President Wilson.

to the exemption clause in 1912 and strongly in favor of its repeal in 1914.² To the editors of this region, it was simply a matter of economic advantage and/or disadvantage and the fact that Great Britain had protested the exemption clause appeared to be of only secondary importance. It is interesting to note that very little Anglophobia was evident in the upper midwest, a region that supposedly harbored a deep-seated dislike for the British.

The upper midwest was settled largely by immigrants from Russia, Scandinavia, and Germany, all rivals of Great Britain, and all of whom, it is alleged, were anxious to twist the lion's tail. However, the resentment of Great Britain is said to have deeper roots than mere hostility toward the British. Largely dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, upper-midwestern residents found themselves at the mercy of the Liverpool, England, grain market. As the price of grain, particularly wheat, was extremely

²As might be expected, the daily press coverage of the issue was far more complete than that of the region's weekly papers. Largely dependent on the national news bureaus and the wire services (particularly the Associated Press) for their information, these weekly papers often simply reprinted news bureau stories and made no editorial comment concerning the question of canal tolls. However, a few of the region's weekly newspapers, notably the Cooperstown (N.D.) Griggs County Sentinel (Democrat), the Osnabrook Independent (N.D.--Progressive), the Aberdeen Weekly News (S.D.--Republican), the Henning Advocate (Minn.--Populist), and the Mankato Review (Minn.--Democrat) gave considerable attention to the issue and expressed their opinions of the exemption clause.

low at this time, this economic factor should have created a dislike for the British. However, only The Irish Standard (Minneapolis), the Aberdeen Daily American (S.D.), the Yankton Press and Dakotan (S.D.), the Vermillion Dakota Republican (S.D.), and the Breckinridge (Minn.) Wilkin County Gazette voiced resentment of Great Britain. These newspapers, all organs of the Republican party with the exception of The Irish Standard, contended that this was an American domestic matter in which the British had no right to interfere. They demanded that the United States stand up for its rights and disallow the British protest. Matters of economics and common decency do not appear to have concerned such papers.

That the exemption clause amounted to a hidden, or disguised, ship subsidy was the argument most commonly employed against the disputed clause in the upper-midwestern press. While the questions of treaty violations and national honor were discussed, the largest volume of comment on the issue dealt with this matter of economic advantage. To the region's editors, there was no reason why all people should bear the cost of building the canal while a privileged few reaped the benefits. For the Fargo Forum (N.D.--Republican), the Fairmont Daily Sentinel (Minn.--Democrat), the Hallock Weekly News (Minn.--Republican), the Canton News (S.D.--Republican), and the Elk Point

Leader-Courier (S.D.--Democrat) it was a case of the region being discriminated against: its people were to be taxed to support the canal in the profits of which they did not share.

The effect of the exemption clause on transcontinental railroad rates in the region was another argument advanced against the disputed measure. Long the dominant interest in the upper midwest, the transcontinental railroads were opposed to the exemption clause. If coastwise shipping, the bitter rival of the railroads, were allowed to use the Panama Canal without paying tolls, these railroads would lose nearly all of their transcontinental traffic. Should this happen, the railroads would be forced to increase the rates they charged for short hauls, rather than reduce them as the Hibbing Daily Tribune (Minn.) and the Dell Rapids Times-Tribune (S.D.) had concluded. Midwestern farmers, who were at the mercy of the railroads to carry their grain to the Minneapolis market, were opposed to any measure that would increase the already onerous transportation charges. In the matter of canal tolls, upper-midwesterners found it to their advantage to agree with, rather than oppose as was usually the case, the point of view of the bitterly disliked railroad interests.

From the foregoing, it may be assumed that, as a region, the upper midwest was opposed to the exemption

clause from its introduction. The question, however, arises: Does editorial comment reflect the sentiment of the area (public opinion) or merely the view of the editors (published opinion)? Can an editor influence the way people think and the opinions they form? The Lake Crystal Union (Minn.--Republican) exemplifies the method in which an editor can use his newspaper to present a certain point of view. George Washington Gaff, founder of the paper and a pronounced Anglophobe, strongly resented the British protest and supported the exemption clause throughout 1912 and 1913. On the other hand, when Gaff's son Paul became editor in 1914, he used the editorial columns to demand the repeal of the disputed clause. A similar change occurred in the position of the Aberdeen Daily American (S.D.). In 1912, when its editor was F. C. Preston, it was an outspoken critic of Great Britain; but in 1914 when J. H. McKeever became editor, it strongly supported President Wilson's position. As the citizens of the region were wholly dependent on their newspapers for information and opinions on issues such as canal tolls, it is easy to see how one person's prejudices could be spread throughout an entire community.

It is safe to conclude that the people of the upper midwest opposed the exemption clause, since the battle over canal tolls was fought along geographic lines. The coastal

states were in favor of the measure while the interior of the nation made up the opposition. To the people of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota, repeal foiled the attempt to gain a special privilege for "the interests", preserved the nation's honor, and answered the President's personal request. Satisfied with the outcome of this two-year dispute, upper midwesterners turned their attention toward Europe and the storm brewing there.

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