Insurgency in Minnesota
The Defeat of James A. Tawney in 1910

ROGER E. WYMAN

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY was in serious trouble in the summer of 1910. The eruption of bitter internal warfare threatened an end to the control of both branches of the federal government and most state governments which the Republicans had enjoyed for a decade and a half. A Democratic victory in the 1910 congressional elections seemed imminent, and party leaders worried about Republican chances in the 1912 presidential contest.

The internecine strife which split the party into two warring factions was essentially a power struggle between the Old Guard conservatives, or "standpatters," who dominated Republican congressional leadership, and the progressive "insurgents" who challenged that leadership. The progressives charged that the Old Guard ruled the party and the nation for the welfare of vested interests rather than for the people as a whole. The insurgent revolt in the Sixty-first Congress of 1909-10 was an integral phase of the widespread progressive movement which permeated many aspects of American life in the early 1900s.

The defection of progressive Republican congressmen centered around the autocratic domination of the House by its colorful and irascible speaker, Joseph G. Cannon. The insurgents attacked Cannon's arbitrary exercise of his powers to block, delay, and water down progressive legislation. By the spring of 1910, the strength of the rebellious group, composed mostly of Midwesterners, had grown considerably. They attacked the legislative program which President William Howard Taft presented in January; after bitter and protracted struggles, they forced the regulars to accept their amendments to several administration bills. Their most notable achievement, however, was their victory in an epochal three-day battle to amend the House rules and strip the speaker of some of his powers.

As summer approached, both factions marshalled forces for the coming primary elections. With Taft's quiet but active support, the regulars engaged in a massive effort to purge the insurgent congressmen, while local progressive groups prepared to replace prominent standpatters. The insurgents' patronage was curtailed and support from the national campaign committee was denied them; indeed, the administration...
backed standpat elements in the insurgents' own home districts. Party regularity and allegiance to President Taft was the basis of the conservatives' campaign. Insurgent congressmen relied on progressive elements in their home states and a growing progressive temper across the nation.

A series of primary battles took place throughout the spring and summer, beginning in Ohio during May and ending in Minnesota on September 20. After a few minor victories by each faction, national progressive sentiment surged in late summer. One by one, the progressives scored impressive gains in August and September. Altogether, insurgent challengers unseated twenty regulars, many of them committee chairmen, while only one progressive incumbent met defeat. In the Midwest, ten standpatters were retired from Congress.

By far the greatest progressive triumph was the final one—the defeat of James A. Tawney, representative from Minnesota's first district and chairman of the powerful appropriations committee. Tawney was the most influential standpatter to be unseated in 1910, and progressives around the nation rejoiced at this devastating blow to the Cannon organization. Tawney's defeat for renomination by a young political novice was regarded as proof of the nation's progressive temper and the rejection by Republican voters of "Cannonism" and rule by special interests.

The victory over Tawney registered the high-water mark of the insurgent revolt. But when progressives described his defeat as a vindication of their principles and a return to true representative government, they allowed political rhetoric to cloud the realities of the situation. Although the ideological factor was probably the most important one, Tawney's defeat might not have been accomplished except for a combination of fortuitous local circumstances: quirks in the Minnesota primary law, widespread participation by Democrats, and the ethnic attraction of his opponent.

Tawney had been a regular Republican since his entry into Congress in 1893. Throughout the insurgent revolt he resolutely stuck by Cannon and the House leadership except for a brief and unsuccessful fight for free lumber in the 1909 tariff debates. Extremely able and industrious, Tawney had risen quickly within the ranks of the party, reaching the chairmanship of the committee on appropriations in 1905. This post made him a key figure in the federal government; he was regarded as second only to Cannon in the power he wielded in the House. Since Cannon had aided Tawney's career, the Minnesotan stood by him faithfully.

George E. Mowry, Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement, 98, 107, 113 (Madison, Wisconsin, 1946); William P. Hepburn to George D. Perkins, February 21, March 2, 1910, George D. Perkins Papers, in the State Department of History and Archives, Des Moines, Iowa.

For a detailed account of the events of the summer and the midwestern primaries, see Roger E. Wyman, "Insurgency and the Elections of 1910 in the Middle West," unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1964.
Tawney was supreme in the realm of governmental expenditures. A diligent guardian of the public treasury, he never ceased to scrutinize appropriation bills to eliminate waste and to keep expenditures minimal; at the same time he was willing to vote considerable amounts for purposes he felt necessary, as, for example, a scientific tariff commission.

Tawney was also a steadfast believer in the supremacy of the legislative branch. The combination of his talent, strong beliefs, and powerful position made him a formidable opponent, as President Theodore Roosevelt discovered during his final years in the White House when Congress jealously sought to maintain its ascendancy over the executive. In 1908–09 Tawney became a chief source of the president's bitterness. A large and powerful navy had always been one of Roosevelt’s fondest hopes, and he persistently wrangled with Congress over naval appropriations. In 1908 Congress withheld two of the four battleships he requested, and Tawney sought to have the number cut to one. After Roosevelt used the secret service to investigate land frauds, some of which involved congressmen, Tawney had the agency's appropriations cut in 1908 and limited its functions to deterring counterfeiting and protecting the president; the Rough Rider fulminated against this more than any other action of Congress. Roosevelt’s pioneering work in the field of conservation was regarded by conservatives like Tawney as another example of executive usurpation. One of the president’s more important contributions in this area was the creation by executive order of the Conservation, Inland Waterways, and Country Life commissions. Just before Roosevelt left office, Tawney secured an amendment to an appropriations bill prohibiting the use of money by any agency not created by Congress, thus effectively halting the operations of these valuable but extralegal commissions.5

Tawney’s diligence was apparent in electoral politics as well as in congressional matters. He seemed secure from defeat, if not invincible, in the ten counties of southeastern Minnesota which made up the first congressional district. Over the years Tawney had created an extensive and loyal political organization that provided him with huge victory margins. He never faced primary opposition until 1908. In that year he lost two counties but polled 57.4 per cent of the district’s vote; in November his usual margin slipped somewhat but remained a comfortable 2,756 votes.6

Tawney’s formidable machine ran on federal patronage. He used the ingenious device of appointing publishers as postmasters, which gave him virtual control over the district’s press and assured him of its loyalty at election time. This was perhaps his greatest political asset and was so recognized by the opposition; the few dissenting newspapers repeatedly denounced the Tawney “postoffice press.”7 Postmasters and other appointees also formed vital links in Tawney’s campaign organization. Indeed, it proved so efficient that Tawney rarely campaigned actively himself; he made only one major speech in the 1908 primary.

Patronage distribution was not Tawney’s only strategy for continuing electoral success. He worked arduously to insure that his district received more than its share of federal buildings and other benefits from the pork barrel. He was instrumental in

---

6 Congressional Record, 60 Congress, 1 session, 4806, 4614–4616, 5554–5559; 2 session, 3118–3120. Cannon later told Taft he believed the source of dissatisfaction between Tawney and Roosevelt lay in Tawney’s opposition to naval construction. Archie Butt, Taft and Roosevelt: The Intimate Letters of Archie Butt, Military Aide, 1:304 (Garden City, New York, 1930).

7 Tawney won 53.8 per cent of the 38,172 votes cast. See tables, p. 328, 327. Except where otherwise noted, all Minnesota election returns cited in this paper are from the Legislative Manual for the year following the election.

protecting the district's dairymen from oleomargarine, and his fight for free lumber was popular in Minnesota. His influence in Washington made him a valuable asset to the whole state, a fact readily admitted even by progressives who opposed his conservative economic philosophy.

DESPITE TAWNEY'S apparent security, serious concern for his political future was voiced as much as a year before his defeat. In the early fall of 1909 Taft embarked on a nationwide speaking tour to increase support for his young administration, particularly to allay nascent discontent within the party and the nation over the recently enacted Payne-Aldrich tariff. Midwesterners vociferously complained that the tariff had sacrificed the region's agricultural interests for the benefit of influential eastern corporations and manufacturers. Tawney had been the only Minnesotan to vote for the final bill.

On September 17 the president's train reached Winona, Tawney's home. The address which the harried Taft delivered there was a colossal political blunder. Speaking in the state where antitariff sentiment was probably the most pronounced, Taft stoutly defended the law, criticized those who voted against it, and lavished praise on Tawney for his support of it. After a long recitation of several schedules, Taft stated "without hesitation" that the law was "the best tariff bill that the Republican party has ever passed, and therefore the best tariff bill that has been passed at all." The president implied that it had been the duty of all Republicans to vote for it and praised Tawney's course: "I am glad to speak in behalf of what he did, not in defense of it, but in support of it."^3

Reaction to Taft's intemperate remarks was immediate throughout the Midwest. For the first time the progressive Republican press criticized the president publicly and took a more antagonistic tone toward

---

"Presidential Addresses and State Papers of William Howard Taft From March 4, 1909 to March 4, 1910, 225 (New York, 1910)."
his whole administration. Minnesota insurgent Congressman Charles R. Davis contended that Taft’s “most unfortunate” visit only served to widen the intraparty breach. The St. Paul Pioneer Press believed the speech had arrayed the bulk of the local population against the president and continued: “Mr. Tawney was safe of his re-election until Mr. Taft reached Winona. Now, if he squeaks through it will be by the paint on his planks.” Strangely, Tawney believed that Taft’s speech was “well received” in Minnesota and advised that the Republicans print half a million copies for distribution.

Preparations to defeat Tawney were made early in 1910. In March the Democrats chose Judge Harry L. Buck of Winona as their candidate, with the hope that he might win progressive Republican support. Soon afterward the progressive Republicans of the district quietly began sounding out anti-Tawney sentiment and searching for a strong candidate to oppose the congressman in the primary. Several possible contenders were considered and then withdrawn, while Tawney and his newspapers ridiculed their “Gaston-Alphonse act.” By midsummer it seemed that Tawney might receive the nomination unopposed. On July 26, however, the progressive leaders met at Rochester and unveiled their candidate. He was Sydney

Anderson, a young lawyer and political neophyte. A native of Minnesota, Anderson was a Spanish-American War veteran who had settled in rural Lanesboro after practicing law for a short time in Minneapolis and Kansas City. His half Swedish, half Norwegian ancestry was a political asset in the heavily Scandinavian district.10

Anderson immediately announced that his campaign would be waged on progressive principles rather than personalities. A week later he outlined the basis of his campaign in a platform statement. After asserting that the major issue was “whether the people or the ‘interests’ shall rule this nation,” Anderson attacked “Cannonism” and the Payne-Aldrich tariff. He portrayed Cannonism as a “menace to a government by the people” and a source of discrimination in favor of big business in taxation and national legislation.11

On August 12 the First District Progressive League issued its own platform, which went beyond Anderson’s statement of principles. It echoed the ever-present progressive concern with rule of “the people” as opposed to rule by “the interests,” quickly linking Congressman Tawney to the latter. It lumped “Tawneyism” with “Cannonism” and “Aldrichism” as detrimental to good government and an obstacle to progressive legislation. The league assailed Tawney’s use of money and appointments to control the press, charging “misrule and gag-machine domination” of the district’s politics. The platform endorsed the insurrection of most of Minnesota’s congressmen and advocated downward tariff revision, stricter railroad legislation, and implementation of the Roosevelt conservation policies.12

Anderson’s keynote address, delivered a week later, was typical of many he would give during the campaign. He dealt primarily with Tawney’s record in Congress, presenting him as Cannon’s chief henchman in opposing progressive legislation. In particular, Anderson assailed Tawney’s support of

---

7 Charles I. Reigard to Tawney, April 6, 1910; Tawney to Dunn and Carlson, May 4, 1910, (copy) Tawney Papers, in the Minnesota Historical Society; The Public, 13:290 (April 1, 1910); Joseph E. Chamberlin, in the Boston Evening Transcript, June 18, 1910; Lanesboro Leader, July 16, 1910; St. Paul Pioneer Press, July 27, 1910; Mower County Transcript (Austin), August 3, 1910.
8 La Crosse Tribune, August 4, 1910.
9 Evening Tribune, August 13, 1910; St. Paul Pioneer Press, August 12, 1910. Senator Nelson W. Aldrich of Rhode Island was the standpat leader in the Senate; his name was often linked with Cannon’s as a representative of the privileged interests.

Fall 1967 321
the Payne-Aldrich tariff and his thwarting of Roosevelt's conservation policies. The young challenger also denigrated Tawney's efforts on behalf of the district: he claimed that most of the credit for antioleomargarine legislation belonged to other congressmen, not Tawney, and implied that Tawney's fight for free lumber in 1909 had been halfhearted. Throughout the campaign, Anderson hammered endlessly at Tawney's "standpattism" and his connection with Cannon and the "interests." In contrast, he promised to support the insurgents and to represent the people of the district.^^

Anderson labored under considerable handicaps. He was little known and his supporters could not hope to match the efficiency and financial resources of the Tawney organization. Anderson's managers, however, made the most of what they had. Their basic strategy was to get as much publicity as possible. Accordingly, Anderson undertook an immediate and vigorous canvass of the rural areas, and as many speakers as could be found were enlisted to cover the district. The La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune, which had many Minnesota readers, became an active agent in Anderson's campaign and was instrumental in persuading Wisconsin leaders to cross the Mississippi and preach the gospel of progressivism. More than a half dozen Wisconsin politicians answered the call during the final two weeks of the campaign, and Senator Robert M. LaFollette sent an open letter of support.14

A meeting of the National Conservation Congress in St. Paul on September 5-8 provided a wealth of ammunition for the insurgents. Because of it they were able to bring to the first district two nationally prominent progressives: Gifford Pinchot, conservation authority and confidant of Roosevelt, and Francis J. Heney, who was noted for his prosecution of graft and of land frauds. Meanwhile in St. Paul the well-known agriculturist Henry Wallace criticized Tawney for killing appropriations for the publication of significant findings of Roosevelt's Country Life Commission.15

Tawney and his supporters refused to take the candidacy of the young and inexperienced Anderson seriously. The efficient campaign organization that had disposed of primary opposition in 1908 was still intact. The Tawney press either ignored Anderson or belittled his campaign; other observers also testified to its futility.16

By the end of August, as prominent standpatters fell in other primaries, the contest in southeastern Minnesota began to attract national attention. Political commentators from around the country visited the district to assay political conditions there. One visitor commended Tawney's "able, honest, and useful" work in Congress. "But

322 MINNESOTA History
he stands for the sort of things that the people are trying to get rid of. He is arrogant and tyrannical in the exercise of power that he has obtained by the long, careful, determined process of insinuating himself with the inner circles." Other correspondents made similar observations. 17

Despite the growing interest in Anderson's campaign, the Tawney organization proceeded in its customary casual fashion. Tawney greatly underestimated the temper of the district, and his lofty aloofness only gave more substance to the progressive charge that the congressman was not representative of the voters and their sentiments. Tawney was finally jolted out of his complacency in the second week of September. The increasingly favorable impression that Anderson was making in his canvass, the entry of Pinchot and other prominent progressives into the campaign, and the specter of widespread Democratic participation in the primary frightened the Tawney forces into a belated frenzy of activity. They charged that Anderson was deliberately soliciting Democratic votes as well as espousing Democratic principles. Judge Buck, running unopposed, also recognized the possibility that hundreds of Democratic votes might be cast for Anderson and urged Democrats to abstain from taking Republican ballots. Reportedly Buck felt that Tawney would be easier to beat in November than Anderson; if Tawney were the nominee, Buck might get the progressive Republican vote. 18

The Tawney campaign effort which swung into action in the final weeks of the canvass was conducted along three major lines: an assault on Anderson's inexperience, the branding of his platform and basis of support as more Democratic than Republican, and a defense of Tawney's record based on his influence in Washington and what he had done for the district. The congressman pointed out that Anderson had lived in the district for only three years and had previously held no public office. The young attorney had emerged only after the "so-called insurgents . . . failed to induce a Republican of standing to become their candidate." After stoutly reaffirming his own party loyalty, Tawney declared that Anderson's platform ignored the principles and policies of the Republican party. He contended that Anderson's managers had supported the Democratic congressional nominee in 1908 and would do so again if Anderson lost. Tawney's press went much further, bitterly assailing Anderson as the "assistant democratic" candidate. 19

The heart of the Tawney campaign was a recitation of how much he had done for the district and how much he could accomplish in the future through his key position. Tawney disposed of the insurgent movement as a revolt by dissident "outs" seeking to overthrow the established party leadership. "The District is on the inside, it is getting substantially everything it wants," stated one campaign article. Tawney particularly stressed his diligent work to protect the dairy farmers. One pamphlet quoted other congressmen attesting to Tawney's effectiveness in preventing repeal of the oleomargarine tax law and denied that any new congressman could get such results. Tawney supporters also implied that he might become the next speaker of the House, in which case the district would reap both prestige and material benefit. 20

Prominent Minnesotans defended Tawney's record in Congress. The support of popular Scandinavian Senator Knute Nelson was an important asset. Nelson stated firmly
that Tawney was more responsible for anti-
oleomargarine legislation than any other
representative and had even sided the Sen­
ate in the matter. He contended that both
houses of Congress had upheld Tawney's
view on Roosevelt's unauthorized commis­
sions, and he refuted the charge that Taw­
ney had vitiated the investigation of land
frauds. Nelson added that Tawney was
"one of the ablest most industrious, and
most energetic members" of Congress.^^ In­
surgent Minnesota Congressman Halvor
Steenerson also defended Tawney, praising
his efforts for free lumber and for appro­
priations for a tariff commission. The pow­
erful National Dairy Union staunchly
confirmed Tawney's support of the dairy
interests. Its board of directors "assert[ed]
boldly that no member of the Congress has
done more in the past to defend these inter­
ests." 22

THE PACE of the campaign quickened
as election day approached. Anderson con­
tinued his vigorous speaking tour of the dis­
trict, and the Lanesboro band accompanied
its home town candidate to provide added
excitement. The progressives virtually ig­
nored the river counties of Wabasha
and Winona — Tawney strongholds — and
concentrated on the rural areas. Both sides
focused on Rochester and surrounding
Olmsted County, which had supported
Tawney heavily in the 1908 primary but had
given him a bare plurality in the general
election.^^ Rochester was the scene of ma­
jor speeches by Pinchot and Tawney.

Both sides claimed misrepresentation
of their positions. Forced to answer Tawney's
challenge to his party loyalty, Anderson as­
serted his fidelity to Republicanism and its
principles; his quarrel was "with the men
who . . . sacrifice them upon the altar of the
system." Tawney angrily declared that An­
derson misrepresented his record on the
tariff, conservation, and dairy legislation.
Each side resorted to petty politics and
chicanery as the battle progressed. In one
town Anderson was denied use of the band-
stand to speak from when Tawney support­
ers threatened to withdraw band subscrip­
tions; reports that the progressives were
openly and extensively soliciting Democratic
votes also persisted.24

Pinchot vehemently assailed Tawney in a
speech on September 5, branding him "the
most dangerous opponent of the public wel­
fare in the United States." He charged that
"Tawney takes his orders from Cannon, and
does his will," and rejected any possibility
of Tawney becoming speaker of the House.
"The people . . . would [not] tolerate cast­
ing out one twin [Cannon] and putting the
other in his place." Most of the address
was devoted to a detailed portrayal of Taw­
ney as the archfoe of Roosevelt's most
worthwhile conservation programs. He
bluntly proclaimed that Tawney was Roose­
velt's "bitterest enemy in the House." 25

The next day Roosevelt himself got into
the act. In his speech to the National Con­
servation Congress in St. Paul, the popular
ex-president took a sideswipe at Tawney for
blocking his conservation commission. An
indication of the progressive spirit of Min­
nesota was the noticeable difference in the
receptions given to Roosevelt and Taft, who
had addressed the Congress the previous
day. The crowds were polite to the presi­
dent but wildly enthusiastic over "T.R." 26

Tawney made only one major speech dur­
ing the campaign. On September 13 three
special trains carried faithful supporters of

21 Knute Nelson to C. L. Swenson, August 31,
1910. Nelson's letter was ostensibly in reply to one
from Swenson; Tawney sent Swenson's letter to
Nelson with one of his own, dated August 25, in
which he solicited a public reply and suggested its
contents. Copies are in the Tawney Papers.

22 Minneapolis Journal, September 7, 1910; Daily
Post and Record (Rochester), September 12, 1910;
Board of Directors, National Dairy Union to
Tawney, September 10, 1910, Tawney Papers. Wil­
liam D. Hoard, ex-governor of Wisconsin and editor
of Hoard's Dairyman, was instrumental in securing
the resolution.


24 La Crosse Tribune, September 19, 1910.

25 La Crosse Tribune, August 24, September 6, 14,
1910; St. Paul Pioneer Press, September 6, 7, 1910.

26 St. Paul Pioneer Press, September 6, 1910; Min­
neapolis Journal, September 6, 1910.

“Our Jim” to Rochester for a huge rally. Tawney completely ignored Anderson and devoted his address to answering charges that Pinchot had leveled against him. He asserted that Pinchot’s attack upon him was made because he “stood in defense of government by law as against government by executive choice and discretion and stood between him [Pinchot] and his lawless expenditure of the people’s money.” He defended his 1908 amendment and pointed out that it had passed both houses of Congress unanimously. On the tariff issue Tawney cited his fight for free lumber and named some leading insurgents who had helped to defeat it; he also boasted of his successful efforts to get $250,000 appropriated for a scientific tariff commission. Pinchot was not the only one who saw him as a menace to the public welfare, he averred; so did the oleomargarine and shipbuilding industries and other powerful vested interests who were working to defeat him. Tawney also claimed he was a friend of Roosevelt, had voted for his legislation, and was a supporter of his policies.

The speech was an effective answer to Pinchot, but Tawney failed to confront the issue uppermost in the minds of many Minnesotans: his relationship to Cannonism. The Pioneer Press later reported that his skirting of the foremost issue dismayed even his ardent supporters; moreover, many felt Tawney’s specious declaration of Roosevelt’s friendship to be an insult to their intelligence.

---

Anderson acknowledged the aid of Roosevelt, Pinchot, and Heney, but credited his victory to his “educational campaign against Cannonism.” Other factors reportedly affecting the outcome were Anderson’s nationality and Tawney’s complacency. But informed opinion almost unanimously cited the tariff and Tawney’s connection with Cannon as...
## Vote for Congress in Minnesota’s first district primary elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>TAWNEY Repub.</th>
<th>KNATVOLD Repub.</th>
<th>KNATVOLD % R. Vote</th>
<th>FRENCH Dem.</th>
<th>PRIMARY, 1908</th>
<th>TAWNEY Repub.</th>
<th>ANDERSON Repub.</th>
<th>ANDERSON % R. Vote</th>
<th>BUCK Dem.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dodge</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>1,358</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fillmore</td>
<td>1,653</td>
<td>1,619</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1,473</td>
<td>2,464</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeborn</td>
<td>1,269</td>
<td>1,964</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1,277</td>
<td>1,873</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>1,232</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mower</td>
<td>1,857</td>
<td>1,328</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1,452</td>
<td>1,918</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olmsted</td>
<td>1,440</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>1,230</td>
<td>1,864</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steele</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabasha</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>921</td>
<td>921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waseca</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>1,049</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winona</td>
<td>1,626</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>1,624</td>
<td>1,441</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>1,780</td>
<td>1,780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>TAWNEY Repub.</th>
<th>KNATVOLD Repub.</th>
<th>KNATVOLD % R. Vote</th>
<th>FRENCH Dem.</th>
<th>PRIMARY, 1910</th>
<th>TAWNEY Repub.</th>
<th>ANDERSON Repub.</th>
<th>ANDERSON % R. Vote</th>
<th>BUCK Dem.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dodge</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>1,358</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fillmore</td>
<td>1,653</td>
<td>1,619</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1,473</td>
<td>2,464</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeborn</td>
<td>1,269</td>
<td>1,964</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1,277</td>
<td>1,873</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>1,232</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mower</td>
<td>1,857</td>
<td>1,328</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1,452</td>
<td>1,918</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olmsted</td>
<td>1,440</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>1,230</td>
<td>1,864</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steele</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabasha</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>921</td>
<td>921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waseca</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>1,049</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winona</td>
<td>1,626</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>1,624</td>
<td>1,441</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>1,780</td>
<td>1,780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overriding factors in his downfall. Perhaps the *New York World* put it best: "We may gain a fair idea of the intensity of the revolt against tyranny in the Speakership and perfidy and corruption in tariff legislation when an enlightened district retires a man like Tawney for those reasons and overlooks wholly his courageous and patriotic labors in other directions." 32

The congressman had an entirely different explanation for his defeat. It was neither "the false representations of me made by my opponents" nor the exploitation of Roosevelt's popularity. "It was simply the vote of the Democrats in counties where there was no Democratic contest for the Democratic nominations." Tawney provided data to support his claim. In seven counties where there were no contests for Democratic nominations for local offices there had been less than 150 Democratic votes compared to more than 2,000 in November, 1908. "In a single precinct there were seventy more Republican ballots voted than were cast for President Taft in the same precinct two years ago." 33

Tawney further charged that Democrats had worked for Anderson throughout the campaign and had even boasted of their intent to cast Republican ballots. Anderson's victory meant that Democrats had determined the nomination of the candidates of both parties. Tawney wrote Cannon that his defeat was "due entirely to political chicanery and debauchery, of the betrayal of my opponent for the nomination of his party into the hands of the Democrats." He also demanded that the primary law be amended to prevent such practices. Democratic participation in Republican primaries was so widespread in Minnesota in 1910 that many others echoed Tawney's desire. 34

Judge Buck, the Democratic nominee, deprecated Tawney's contention. He admitted that some Democrats took Republican ballots but insisted that Democratic leaders opposed the practice, and he cited his own plea for noninterference in the Republican primary. Moreover, he argued, just as many Democrats might have voted for Tawney as Anderson, and in any case the returns did not support Tawney's assertion. 35

Tawney and his ardent backers remained intensely bitter over the results. Tawney rejected pleas that he run independently, but he did consider refusing to endorse Ander-
son as the Republican nominee. His strong party loyalty overcame his personal pique, however, and the appearance of Scott Laird, editor of the Winona Republican-Herald, to speak at a congratulatory rally for Anderson was regarded as Tawney’s personal endorsement and plea for party harmony. Tawney’s support of Anderson was not enthusiastic, and some of the Tawney press openly backed Judge Buck.36

Rumors of widespread conservative defection from Anderson continued up to election day. Many standpatters believed that a victory for Buck, in addition to punishing the progressives, would leave a clear field for Tawney in 1912; if Anderson won, however, he would almost be assured of re-nomination. Desertion of Anderson in favor of Buck did manifest itself on November 8, but was largely confined to Winona County and isolated pockets of disgruntled standpatters; it did not affect the outcome. Anderson defeated Buck easily, winning 55.3 per cent of the 33,131 votes cast. Anderson increased the Republican share of the vote considerably in areas where Tawney had slipped in 1908 and in Scandinavian areas, and he surpassed Tawney’s 1908 plurality by 676 votes.37

THE TOTAL Republican primary vote was 4,165 votes larger than that of the previous primary, and greater than Taft’s vote in the district in 1908. The counties showing the greatest increase in total vote all witnessed a marked decline in the percentage cast for Tawney. The surprising turnout was the result of Democratic votes and the effect of Anderson’s whirlwind campaign upon Scandinavians and progressive-minded voters.

The fact of widespread Democratic participation emerges clearly from the returns. The primary vote in the seven strongest Anderson counties was considerably larger than the Republican vote in November, 1908. In Waseca County, with a substantial proportion of Democrats and few Scandinavians, the Republican turnout increased by 55 per cent and the Democratic vote was cut in half; Democratic support for Anderson was instrumental in cutting Tawney’s share of the vote from 71.8 to 35.2 per cent. In Dodge and Fillmore counties the Republican primary vote exceeded that cast for both Anderson and Buck in November, 1910, and in four others it was more than 80 per cent of that total. The ludicrous primary totals for Buck of 4, 20,

---

35 Lanesboro Leader, October 1, 1910.
36 Standpat knifing of Anderson was particularly obvious in the town of Chatfield and the village of Wykoff, Tawney strongholds in Fillmore County. See Lanesboro Leader, September 25, November 13, 1910.

Fall 1967
and 9 in Dodge, Fillmore, and Freeborn counties indicated that not even Democratic election officials and poll watchers voted their own ticket. One supporter wired Tawney on election day that "Dem's. here are working the 'Anderson racket' for all that it is worth," and similar complaints came from all parts of the district.  

The Minnesota primary law, which applied only to local, legislative, and congressional offices, was partly to blame for the widespread Democratic participation. In 1910 the Minnesota Democratic party was rent with factional strife over the issue of liquor regulation. Had the state-wide offices been included in the primary election, it might have provided a strong deterrent to voting in the Republican primary. In addition, the fact that the primary was open, requiring no statement of party affiliation or registration as a party member, made crossover voting extremely easy.  

Democratic participation in Republican primaries prior to 1910 seems to have been commonplace in some parts of the first district, although never before reaching such runaway proportions. The Democratic congressional candidate in 1908 received totals of 4, 49, and 11 votes in Dodge, Fillmore, and Freeborn counties compared to Buck’s 4, 20, and 9 in 1910. In those counties no Democratic slate existed for local offices; the only chance for Democrats to maintain a voice in local affairs was to choose between rival Republican candidates. This seemed to be the accepted practice, and such candidates openly solicited the votes of Democratic friends and neighbors. Their ballots for or against Tawney may have been incidental to their participation and not the motivation for it.  

Scandinavian solidarity was also a factor in producing a heavy turnout and boosting Anderson’s majority. As in most midwestern states during this era, nationality was a prime determinant of voting behavior. In general, American-born Minnesotans of American parents and voters of Scandinavian ancestry were more Republican than Democratic. Most non-Scandinavian foreigners, particularly Germans and Poles, tended to vote Democratic. For example, Wabasha and Winona counties, with few Scandinavians and large German and (in Winona) Polish populations, were the only counties in the district to support Democrats consistently.  

Anderson’s heaviest vote was polled in counties with large Scandinavian populations. Scandinavians were prominent among Anderson’s campaign workers, and Norwegian progressives from Wisconsin campaigned for him. Several Tawney supporters lamented the solidarity of Scandinavians behind one of their own in the election. “When a Norsk, Swede, or a Dane calls on the Scandinavians,” one remarked, “it is politics and principle to the devil, as shown by the vote.”  

Of the three major factors which determined the outcome—the issues raised by the progressives, Democratic participation, and ethnic bloc voting—the most crucial role was played by the issues. Tawney’s ability, prestige, and popularity could not  

---

328

MINNESOTA History
erase the fact that he had aligned himself on the unpopular side of these issues. Anderson’s victory, however, was not a clear-cut mandate for progressive principles. It is extremely doubtful, moreover, that the impressive margin that Anderson polled could have been achieved without the extra votes provided by Democrats and fellow Scandinavians. These three factors were closely interrelated, and the extent to which the latter two operated in affecting the outcome was in part determined by the force of the issues and the sheer vigor of the progressive campaign. The magnitude of Anderson’s victory would have been impossible without any one of the three factors.

The election serves to illustrate the multifaceted nature of electoral victory in the progressive era, as well as the triumph of the new type of politics that developed concurrently with the progressive movement. Tawney represented the old politician — a rigid partisan whose campaigns were based on strict party loyalty and whose victories were the result of smooth party organization rather than personal appeal to the electorate. In contrast, Anderson’s campaign represented the new political style that emerged in the progressive era. Its appeal was nonpartisan and based on abstract principles and ideology — popular rule versus special interests, democracy versus bossism. Its elements of success included good political sense, vigorous campaigning, attractive candidates, and at times a sprinkling of demagoguery. Anderson’s victory — the upset of an experienced, talented, and entrenched political veteran by a dedicated and eager novice through an appeal to the voters in the name of greater democracy — was typical of many which occurred in the Midwest in 1910 and throughout the progressive era.

THE CARTOON on page 320 is from the Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch, September 21, 1910; other illustrations are from the society’s picture collection.