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Senator Bronson M. Cutting

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A SENSITIVE INSURGENT:
THE POLITICAL CAREER OF
SENATOR BROWSON M. CUTTING

BY
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Webster's defines political science as "a social science concerned chiefly with the description and analysis of political and especially governmental institutions and processes." The study of political science has helped enable society to better understand the working dynamics of not only domestic political institutions and processes, but also those concerning the international sphere. From the days of Plato to the complex times of today, political scientists have endlessly struggled with a fascinating array of eternal questions: what is the ideal political state? Who should lead the state? What is the role of the citizen within the polity?

The study of political science has benefited mankind considerably. It is unquestionably important to not only understand how political processes work, but also the role of those who govern. An understanding of the motivations of those who govern is quite significant; to fully appreciate the behavior of a political actor, one must first understand why he is acting as he is. One of the first places to look for such an analysis is the actor's earlier defined personal drives and motivations.

Appreciating the significance of history is also crucial to a thorough understanding of the political actor. The actor must be seen in the light of history; in which historical time period did the actor live? What events during the period could have possibly influenced him?

Appreciating the importance of the actor's personal history is also invaluable: how does his past influence him in the present? Such
influences cannot be discounted if the political scientist is to fully understand the political actor and the meaning of his behavior in the historical process.

One such political figure which demands such an examination is Bronson Murray Cutting, Progressive United States Senator from New Mexico between 1928 and 1935. Despite his brief tenure in the Senate, Cutting quickly became admired for his fervent support of those less able to reap the benefits of society. By 1933, his consistent, and often emotional, alignment with the Progressive cause helped him to be seen as a possible future presidential contender.

Bronson Cutting was the complete antithesis of other progressives. (1) Whereas the majority of them had roots in the Midwest among the humble poor, Cutting was a decedent of "old Manhattten and New England aristocracy." (2) While other progressives received their education from small, public schools, Cutting could claim to be a graduate from Cutlers, Groton, and Harvard. He was, indeed, the "most exotic character . . . of the American Insurgent movement." (3)

Yet with such a background, what would motivate a man in Bronson Cutting's position to devote so much of his energy in helping those individuals less auspicious than himself? To answer this one must first turn to his personality and ascertain exactly what motivations influenced him. Through such an analysis, one can thus better understand his behavior as a political actor.
PROLOGUE

TWA flight number six from Albuquerque to Kansas City flew low through the heavy rain and the dense fog of the night sky. Inside the craft the passengers attempted sleep despite the loud hum of the engines and the turbulent air. A frightened child sitting in the back of the plane was crying, paying no heed to the mother's efforts to quiet his fears.

In seat nine near the child, Senator Bronson Cutting of New Mexico became increasingly restless. He needed sleep, especially with all the work he knew there was to do back in Washington the next day. A veterans' bonus bill was up for a crucial vote and he realized the amount of work he needed to do to insure its passage. Catching sight of an empty seat near the cockpit, Cutting collected his belongings and proceeded to the front of the cabin.

The weather deteriorated rapidly as the craft neared Missouri's border. The pilot began to prepare for an emergency landing at Kirksville, the closest available town with an airstrip. His ability to guide the plane worsened; he could barely see due to the pounding rain and the increasing density of the fog. Inside the craft the engine's hum grew more and more ominous, the child's cries more piercing.

Down below on the ground two rural boys, Arthur and Harry Rhoades, fought the blinding wind and rain as they attempted their way home. The sounds of an approaching aircraft could be heard in the distance. What was it doing out on a night like this? Suddenly the noise stopped. It was a still, eerie moment. What happened to the plane?
Then came the crash. Within seconds, lights at the nearby Bledsoe farm flickered on; lights at other farms followed. What had happened? Soon, a search party found the remains of TWA flight number six a mile from the Kirksville airstrip.

It was a dreadful sight. Farmers began to sort through the piles of rubble. Survivors of the crash could be heard over the storm and within minutes, two women were found. Towards the rear of the wreckage a farmer motioned the others toward him. Lying atop piles of debris was the body of a man, his attire soaked with blood and rain, his head severly damaged. The farmer carefully removed a wallet from the man's suit pocket and found a piece of identification. It read: Bronson Murray Cutting.

The other papers in his wallet seemed rather strange at first glance. On an old, tattered piece of paper was a collection of quotations. One read:

"This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it."

—Abraham Lincoln

Another quotation was from Thomas Jefferson:

"I hold it that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical. Unsuccessful rebellions indeed generally establish the encroachments on the rights of the people which have produced them. An observation of this truth should render honest republican governors so mild in their punishment of rebellions, as not to discourage them too much. It is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government."

On another piece of paper was a brief description of how a veteran
could use $500 from the government. He would spend the money to help both his parents and his sister's family who had lost their savings, and would buy badly needed clothing for his family. In addition, he would pay the balances owed to the doctor, dentist, and grocer.

As the farmer began to place the strange assortment of papers back into Bronson Cutting's wallet, he noticed a picture of a woman. It was Cutting's mother.

Back in Washington, Senate leaders could not believe the news. Early that Monday morning Senators George Norris of Nebraska and William Borah of Idaho were already in the Senate chamber when they heard of their friend's untimely and tragic death. Norris buried his head in his hands. Borah stood motionless, tears slowly moving down his lined complexion.

Outside the chamber, Senator Robert La Follette of Wisconsin, a close personal friend was disbelieving; he felt not able to enter the chamber. He lowered his head and cried. He had to be alone. Not only had he lost one of the ablest and most distinguished of colleagues, the country had truly lost one of its most promising future leaders.
PART ONE: THE EARLY YEARS

During an era of developing reform movements throughout the United States, Bronson Murray Cutting came into the world on June 23, 1888 at Oakdale, a Long Island estate in the heart of aristocratic New York. (1) His father, William Bayard, was prosperous as a result of his controlling interest in the St. Louis and Terre Haute Railroad and his direction of various banks and corporations. He was born into a very distinguished family: he could trace his roots to the sister of Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch governor of New Amsterdam. His mother's ancestor's arrived in America in the eighteenth century and eventually settled in Virginia. The Cuttings were able to provide their four children, William Bayard, Jr., Justine, Olivia, and Bronson, all the advantages of an upper-class upbringing; they attended the most prestigious of schools and associated with the very best of New York society.

This upper class family also had a social conscience. Despite his wealth and social position, William Bayard Cutting took an active interest in helping those less auspicious than himself. (2) In addition to his involvement in the Episcopal church, he was a trustee of the Children's Aid Society and a developer of the Improved Dwellings Association, a major urban reform project in New York City at the turn of the century. During the late 1890s, William Cutting also became instrumental in government reform as City Civil Service Commissioner under Mayor William Strong.

Bronson Cutting's uncle, Robert Fulton Cutting, was also cut from the same cloth. (3) He was the president of the New York Trade School.
Association in 1889 and the Association for Improving Conditions of the Poor in New York City in 1892. He also assisted his brother, William, in the drive for better urban conditions. An opponent of Tammany Hall corruption, Fulton Cutting was instrumental in helping elect honest government in New York at the turn of the century.

This legacy was important in shaping the young, impressionable Cutting. Looking out into the world from his aristocratic surroundings, he was not just influenced by the fact that his parents danced at Mary Astors';(4) he was also influenced by not just the need, but the obligation, to help others less fortunate than himself.

At the age of eleven Bronson was enrolled at Cutler's, an exclusive all boys school in New York City.(5) He was a shy, often reclusive, lad. William Cutting, concerned about leaving Bronson at the school, wrote his eldest son of his worries:

... I must say it was ... pretty ... tough
[leaving Bronson]. He does not readily make friends, and is very unresponsive, so as to be almost repellant of social advances ... [There is a] relentiveness which makes it impossible for him to open himself freely to anyone— not even to his father and mother. (6)

His father continued:

[Bronson] suppressed all outward manifestations of depression ... but nothing could induce him to join the other boys ... It is possibly a father's prejudice that makes me think Bronson's character ... beautiful, but it has in it undeniable possibilities of unhappiness ... He has shown some signs of nervousness lately by slight facial twitchings and should these increase the doctor would insist on his removal from school.(7)

After two difficult years at Cutlers, Bronson entered Groton School in Massachusetts. During the five years at Groton, Cutting consistently
achieved the highest marks of any student. He was deeply respected by the instructors, many allowing him to take control of the class if called away from the room. Although his classmates admired him for his academic accomplishments, Cutting was socially marginal. He was not very popular. And unlike his older brother who had earlier attended Groton, he lacked the ability to participate in athletics with the other boys due to his frail physique. While his classmates would be playing outside, for example, he would remain indoors to read Milton's "History of Latin Christianity" in its twelve volume entirety.

In 1906 Bronson Cutting entered the freshman class at Harvard University with a brilliant admissions record: eight As and six Bs. With such marks he achieved acceptance honors in English, Greek, Latin, German, French, History, Plane Geometry, and Physics. While attending the Cambridge campus, Cutting concentrated his studies in the humanities, earning As in such subjects as Classical Philology, Comparative Literature, History, and Philosophy. He achieved the award of Deturs, signifying the college's belief in his ability for future public service. The record he compiled at Harvard was one of the best the school had ever seen.

Despite such intellectual accomplishment, Cutting's college years were plagued by both physical and emotional troubles. At the beginning of his junior year he fell victim to his first major attack of tuberculosis, forcing him to return home to New York for a year's recuperation. His condition was compounded by a persistent loneliness. More and more, Cutting found safety in the reclusiveness that had characterized him ever since childhood.

The role Bronson's brother played in his early personal drive should
also be mentioned. William Bayard, Jr. was a high achiever. He preceded Bronson at both Groton and Harvard and, unlike his younger brother, was a gregarious lad. After graduating from college, he chose to enter the State Department where he distinguished himself by achieving the highest score ever recorded on the Department's entrance exam. He went on to establish himself as a reputable government official before dying of tuberculosis.

As a younger sibling, Bronson viewed his brother with an eye of natural competitiveness; such a tendency is common. Bronson wanted to do just as well as his brother. Intellectually, he was able, yet socially he was formed of a different mold. Unlike William, Jr., he was a quiet and reserved individual and found more comfort in reading books than playing outside with the other boys. He did not seem to be able to fit in with others like his brother could.

Once back at Harvard, Cutting continued to rely on an extensive correspondence with his mother that he had enjoyed for many years. Some of that correspondence involved a game that, according to his mother, revealed a side of her son's character that could not be found in any of his other correspondence. Mrs. Cutting and her son exchanged love poetry in which Bronson would play the part of Queen Alexandria of eighteenth-century Prussia, while his mother assumed the role of her husband, King Edward VII. This correspondence, with its psychological role reversal and convoluted play-acting, continued for several years. It provides a valuable clue to not only the extent of the closeness Bronson shared with his mother, but, as well, an important indicator of his personality makeup.

As the autumn chill colored the leaves on the Cambridge campus in
1909, Cutting was struck by another major attack of tuberculosis. Like before, he was forced to leave school; this time, though, it would be for good. (16) The twenty-one year old was much too ill to return to the humid east coast climate. A more suitable environment was urgently needed if he was to survive. For such surroundings Cutting chose New Mexico: with the arid air, the abundance of yearlong sunshine, and the absence of harmful pollution, the conditions were ideal.

At the time of his move, Bronson Cutting was an unhappy man. In his own words, he came out west to die. (17) Aside from his physical troubles, he was subject to a deep sense of personal melancholy as well. Yet it was not his fate to find an early death in New Mexico, for soon he would achieve physical well-being and, much later, he would assume political prominence as one of the United States Senate's most distinguished members.
The early years in New Mexico were times of physical recuperation and emotional solace for Bronson Cutting. He would remark later that the location was perfect: the landscape the most beautiful he had ever seen, the climate ideal, and the personal charm of Santa Fe similar to that of Florence, Italy. (18) Incorporating rigorous exercise, healthy diet, and a persevering will, Cutting was able to regain his health and stamina in less than two years.

Moreover, he found emotional solace when he formed an intimate relationship with a young New Mexican man. Writing only under the name of "Dan" in his earlier correspondence, the young man wrote of his need for Cutting:

My dear baby:

Jesus, I miss you. I think the week I spent with you [in Santa Fe] was the happiest I've ever had. It's meant a lot to me to remember it. I've not written before this because I wanted to be sure that I could tell you truthfully that coming back here was all for the good. But, baby from now on you'll be getting your daily report from me from here at the business school in Kansas City. I'm apologizing about this letter but after the great Guggenheim celebration [last night] it's the best I can do.

Love to you, baby, forever (19)

In another letter, Dan wrote:

This is before school. I did not write yesterday . . . but I wanted to all day long. I wanted to tell you how happy your letter made me. That seems all there is to say about it; it made me happy. I think of you and miss you and sort of hold conversations with you about all sorts of things . . . Got to go to school, Bronson . . .

Love to you, partner (20)

Cutting was able to express the deepest emotions he felt to his friend, something he had apparently been unable to do with anyone since he
was a child. When he would write Dan in a down mood, his friend would always return with a concerned reply:

I was at home this morning when your letter came— I can’t tell you how glad I was to get it. You seemed tired and depressed, though, baby; have you lifted up yet? When I think of all the things you had to do on your arrival in Washington, and then after two days to tear to New York to make speeches again—I can understand your tiredness and depression. Please take it more easily—with that long life in the Senate ahead of you (I know! I know! I know!) some things, surely can wait.

I was damned glad you hadn’t forgotten that I wanted to see you before I go back to Santa Fe. If I don’t see you then I probably won’t have another opportunity until after you return from Europe ... that seems to me as remote as my fiftieth birthday. I think of you constantly and it makes many unpleasant things easier ... My love to you, Bronson (21)

Apparently suffering from a problem with alcohol, Dan repeatedly turned to Cutting for emotional help. In the most revealing letters Dan sent, one can decipher an obvious shakiness in his penmanship. One such letter read:

I’m going to be (remembering your advise) patient, tactful, and even tempered, though, for a month! I’ve cut the booze down to two this far today, but my homework—twelve pages of shorthand—will require a couple. Love to you, Bronson, and goodnight from Dan ... (22)

In another, almost illegible letter, Dan wrote:

I told you in my last letter that I hadn’t had a drink for over a week and that condition continued until yesterday ... I started with a couple cocktails and then a couple more and then left— Blind drunk on four cocktails! It was a new experience. Today I’m back in harness ... I hope you can decipher this ... (23)

In letters from Dan written after 1930 an interesting change takes
place: Dan switches his signature to "Clifford". This change helps one to identify "Dan" as Daniel Clifford McCarthy, the future senatorial aid to Bronson Cutting. The reasons McCarthy changed his signature is not clear. Yet one fact is evident in correspondence after 1930: McCarthy's relationship with Cutting seemed to deepen. In one letter McCarthy wrote:

All the way across Kansas I sat thinking of you and the letter I'd write to you today. But now that I'm writing that letter my thoughts are all confused. And the old thinking machine is turning out purely emotional material.

My dear you gave me the happiest summer of my life and I can't think of any way to elaborate on that statement to give it a deeper and more profound meaning. You've been so so good—so good and patient and understanding and I can't tell you what it's done for me or what it means to me . . .

I feel grown up at last and I feel, for the first time in my life, confidence in myself . . . This is a foolish letter and it [has] probably tired you out. Take care of yourself, my beloved Bronson . . .

All of it—forever (24)

There letters reveal McCarthy to be a dependent personality, which created problems in his relationship with Bronson. In a revealing letter, McCarthy lamented:

I put your picture on my dresser, propping it back against the mirror with a Gideon Bible and an Atlantic Monthly— I moved the Bible to read my Psalms . . . I've missed you already but once or twice I managed to convince myself that I was only thinking of you. Please don't think I'm going to hang on to you—because I'm not— but that's no goddam reason why I can't sign myself . . . affectionally, always, Cliff . . . (I have not had a drink today.) (25)

Cutting was acutely aware of McCarthy's dependency, yet felt unable, and unwilling, to do anything about it. He wrote to a close friend:
As for Cliff... I often wonder whether it is not an insult to human dignity to attempt to influence another life. Yet in a concrete case it is hard to refuse anyone who throws himself on your mercy. Perhaps it is lucky that experiments of this kind so rarely succeed. One can only hope that somehow or other an atmosphere may be created in which the boy can develop himself. (emphasis added) (26)

For a short period they were apart from each other. Once after McCarthy left Santa Fe, he sadly wrote Cutting for "one more chance":

I tried a few moments ago to reach you by telephone, but you weren't home... You told me when I talked to you first about going away that you didn't care what place I would choose. I chose Denver, but after eight hours here (all of them sober— I haven't yet had so much as a thimble full) I find it's too near. I don't believe that I'm being foolish about it. At least I can't blame it on my nerves or emotions—they're both in fine shape, everything considered.

I had to get away from Santa Fe and I suppose it was fear that drove me from there, and perhaps it is fear that has convinced me that Denver is not far enough...

Believe me, Bronson, just one more chance... (27)

Until his death, Cutting continued a very close relationship with McCarthy. Since a number of boxes of personal letters written by Cutting were destroyed by the family, one will never be afforded the chance to see the letters he wrote to the young New Mexican man.

Aside from the opportunity to live a personal life, the type of lifestyle that could have created problems from him at home, Cutting remained in New Mexico to keep a distance from his family. When his father died in the spring of 1912, for example, Cutting did not even attempt the trip to New York for the funeral. Reasons of health cannot be the explanation, for he was already able enough at the time to assume the
active role as State Chairman of the New Mexico Progressive Party. What, then, prevented Cutting from being with his family at such an emotional time?

In a letter to his mother after the funeral, Cutting revealed:

By the time you get this letter, of course you will have already had the funeral and burial. It is very hard sitting idle out here away from you all. But if my coming would have given you any anxiety, I am sure it is better as it is. (Emphasis added) (28)

What anxiety could have possibly been provoked by Cutting's attendance? It surely must have been severe enough to prevent one's own son from attending the funeral of his father. Very possibly, it seems, Cutting's mother had been aware of her son's emotional choices for quite some time; either she, or her friends and relatives, could not accept it. Certainly her 1946 statement in the Cutting Papers, deposited nine years after her son's death, suggests that she was aware of rumors concerning his homosexuality and tried to counter them:

I feel it very much my duty to say some things about my son Bronson which otherwise nobody would say. In the first place I destroyed the . . . box of letters which were to Bronson from Callie Hull . . . After his death I showed them to her and she said for me to destroy them. [But] I should not have destroyed them as they showed how much he cared for her and how he decided to give her up because of his illness; she begged him not to think of other people, but himself. He knew he could not get well and so gave up matrimony. [Yet] when he left for the was in England and she came to say goodbye, . . . the tender way in which he put her cloak around her and took it away from Harry White alone showed how he cared for her. Then they separated after that and [this] was the reason he made up his mind not to get married to anyone. (29)

Mrs. Cutting continued:
People misunderstood and thought he liked the bachelor type of living . . . and tried to give him a bad reputation after that and then said that none of us (his family) went near him because we disapproved of him. It was not true . . . When he went to the Senate a letter was sent to every Senator saying the most terrible things against him—that he had been sent from college . . . One group was the worst—the wife of a former Secretary of the Interior . . . had the inside track to the President because they all had formed a little club years ago and anything she said [circulated around] the bunch . . . so that they turned against Bronson. Some people did not. Senator Norris didn't believe it, Senator Hiram Johnson didn't . . . I feel I destroyed some of the important evidence showing how Bronson cared for some woman . . . (30)

There is other evidence, however, that suggests Bronson was not really attracted to women. In both a fascinating and revealing essay entitled "Personal Recollections of A Friend", Brian Bonne discusses at length his friend's distaste for the female gender.(31) Cutting, he said, took offense to "society women" and always felt more at ease in a room full of "jolly" Western men. English women he also disliked—especially the manner in which they spoke; he found their accent and their pace of conversation obnoxious. Women with extended lower jaws were ugly to him. Bonne describes his friend as going home after a hard day's work and imitating the appearance of such women as he paced back and forth. Bonne, himself, admitted the humor as rather peculiar.

Above all, Cutting was repulsed by the domineering type of woman. He would become incensed when noticing a large woman walking along a street next to a meek, noticeably submissive, man. Cutting would return home and jokingly imitate this type of man as groveling at the woman's every beck and call.

Since the purpose of this paper is not a complete psychoanalytic
interpretation of Cutting, the contribution of his mother to his adult sexual orientation will not be studied at length. But what is crucial to understand is this: the significance of Bronson Cutting's personal dispositions towards both men and women cannot be discounted, for they not only influenced the relationships he had with others, but influenced the manner in which he behaved politically. With his most intimate feelings directed towards members of the same sex, Bronson was in a marginal, more vulnerable position in the society of his day. Manifesting from such a position was an empathy for others who also found themselves as marginal.

What, then, motivated Bronson Cutting? The early influence of his family's liberal social philosophy can be seen as guiding his thinking, while the vulnerabilities stemming from his own personal dispositions helped motivate his driving compassion for others.
Coffing with Bronson, Cutting's physical rehabilitation came an increased interest in the political environment around him. The politics of New Mexico was dominated by the Republican Old Guard which subordinated injustices toward the poorest and most vulnerable sects of society to personal political advantage. (32) Moreover, the state government in New Mexico was completely mismanaged.

Cutting's entry into New Mexican politics came with his acquisition of the Santa Fe New Mexican, a newspaper his father had in New York helped finance. Bronson needed something to occupy his efforts while convalescing, William thought: a project such as owning a newspaper seemed appropriate for someone who had an avid interest in changing New Mexico's political direction. (33) As William Cutting wrote to Herbert J. Hagerman, the governor of New Mexico:

"Bronson is sufficiently interested in the welfare and political conditions of the state in which he has... cast his lot... He has a desire to aid its... citizens in any serious effort to better things." (34)

Writing his son that "an effort to better conditions in New Mexico is well worth making," William Cutting contributed close to $30,000 for the newspaper's acquisition. (35)

Upon assuming control of the Santa Fe New Mexican, Bronson outlined his goals for the publication; it was to conform to his political and social principles of reform and progress. (36) Soon, the newspaper had created a reputable impact on the state scene; for the first time in a state bossed by Old Guard conservatives, a progressive, liberally based viewpoint was at last being heard. Progressive leaders in New Mexico soon
learned who was behind the editorials. They persuaded Cutting to become involved in their political organization and, in 1912, choose him to become the Progressive Party Treasurer. Two years later, Cutting was awarded the chairmanship of the Progressive State Central Committee, a position of rising national importance. (37)

Cutting increasingly became interested in national Progressive politics during Theodore Roosevelt's presidential campaign in 1912. The ex-president was no stranger to Cutting; he had been a personal friend of the Cutting family for years back in New York. (38) Despite Roosevelt's lackluster showing in the New Mexican presidential polls (thus contributing to the election of Woodrow Wilson), Cutting continued to believe in the Progressive cause of local, state, and national social and economic reform.

With the assistance of the William J. Burns Detective Agency, he soon began assiduously working to uncover "all possible evidence of corrupt [political] conditions in New Mexico". (39) Allegations soon appeared in the Santa Fe New Mexican accusing the Republican Party of widespread political corruption. The charges created a political sensation and elevated Cutting to state-wide notoriety. While the newspaper continued to print stories of political misdeeds, an unsuccessful libel suit was filed against Cutting by disgruntled Republicans. (40) Members of the Old Guard were slowly watching their political hegemony disintegrate.

Cutting continued his battle against the political bosses in New Mexico while the country struggled with its obligation in the developing European war. After President Wilson finally broke America's isolation, Cutting decided to enlist. He was sent to London in 1917 where he served for a little more than a year as the Assistant to the United States
Military Attache. (41)

After returning from Europe, Cutting wasted no time in resuming his political involvement. He admired the governor who was elected while he was away, Octaviano Larrazolo, and began supporting his progressive stands towards improving teachers' qualifications, funding bi-lingual instruction in the public schools, and the reform of child labor laws. (42)

Cutting also became interested in a more active political role for himself after returning from Europe. (43) The grounds for such a role were clearly already set: from the beginning, Cutting had won the support of those more vulnerable to social and economic hardship, especially the Mexican-American. He seemed to sincerely enjoy the company of the poorest natives, joining them in their delight-making festivals and their all-night wakes. He invited him into his home on many occasions. In turn, the Mexican-American began to see Cutting as one of them. (44)

Cutting genuinely liked and respected the Mexicans. (45) Such feelings are easy to understand when appreciating his own personal empathies. The Mexican-Americans reciprocated the respect by nicknaming their Anglo friend "El Veijo," meaning the "old one." (46) As Professor Seligmann points out in his study of Cutting, for a man as young as Cutting to be held in such esteem by a strongly patriarchal society is tantamount to their respect. (47)

Veterans groups were also diligently supported by Cutting. He believed the veteran to be a neglected man, often ignored and unable to receive the assistance he deserved. From the beginning Cutting was determined to help them find employment and obtain needed medical assistance. He ultimately promoted the establishment of influential
veterans' organizations throughout the state. (48) With the backing of Governor Larrazolo, Cutting's resolve paid off: within a few years, life for the New Mexican veteran had greatly improved. Their appreciation was quite evident in a letter from an American Legion leader written after Cutting had been appointed to the Senate:

How shall I address you now? As a friend, comrade, or compadre? I am just going to address you as Honorable and our dear and beloved Senator... [Your] past brilliant and unselfish service you have so willingly rendered to our state, and especially to our native people, has given you a wonderful reward... (49)

By 1920, Bronson Cutting was clearly a force to be dealt with in New Mexican politics. (50) He had built a reputation as a "political independent" with his consistent subordination of party affiliation to the importance of ideological concerns. For years he devoted most of his efforts in uncovering past corruption in New Mexico's Republican ranks, despite the official membership he held with the party.

He never saw himself as tied to one party, though. In 1924 he was seen as a staunch Democrat due to his fervent support of Democratic candidates for both governor and United States Senator, and then, four years later, was once again supporting the Republicans, especially the successful gubernatorial candidacy of Richard Dillon. (51) He was, indeed, a staunch political independent.

After the death of Senator Andrieus Jones in 1927, the new Republican governor appointed Cutting to the United States Senate. Writing Cutting's mother, Dillon wrote:

It was for me a great pleasure to have the opportunity of appointing your son to the United States
Senate . . . He is admirably fitted for the high post of senator, and he has not for a moment disappointed us since he took active charge of office. We consider Colonel Cutting a true friend of New Mexico and that he will ably guard the interests of our people. (52)

Bronson Cutting left New Mexico for Washington in early 1928. He had surely come a long distance from the years in which he thought only death awaited him in the southwest. His Senate tenure was to be highlighted by what historians have called "progressivism," a political movement which had social and economic form as its impetus. Cutting was to become in the eyes of many a champion progressive, a distinguished and admired liberal who was consistently devoted to individual rights and the underlying ideal of democracy: a government which serves the interests of its people, rather than the people serving the interests of government. Although his tenure in public life was to be tragically brief, Bronson Cutting was able to stand as a beacon of justice and compassion during one of America's darkest, and most foreboding, hours.
PART II: THE SENATE YEARS, 1928-1932

"Cutting is so much of a New Yorker that one forgets he's a senator from New Mexico. He's rather like an English liberal—like some of the men in the Labor government—we've never, so far as I know, had in the Senate before. He sounds as if he were aiming at something like the English system, the President and the Cabinet responsible to Congress, a congressional majority controlling policy. Would this really help very much? All right no doubt for a Congress made up of Cuttings and LaFollettes, but there are only a few of such men—the rest are professional politicians."

Edmund Wilson

The American Earthquake:
A Documentary of the
Twenties and Thirties

On January 3, 1928, Bronson Murray Cutting was sworn in as the new senator from New Mexico. Initially, Cutting was discounted by the Washington social sect as yet another "millionaire dilettante". (1) Politicians observed him as a man winning office purely by the power of campaign contributions. (2) Moreover, Cutting looked the part of a superficial snob with his handsome, distinguished appearance coupled with a "somewhat supercilious countenance." (3)

This impression was reinforced by Cutting's continued reclusiveness, often misinterpreted by others as deliberate condescension. Instead of joining his fellow colleagues of the "club" for gossip and conversation in the Senate cloak room, Cutting would retreat to his large Norman villa
away in the secluded Washington hills. (4) Here, Cutting would find escape in his vast collections of literature and music. Found on his bookshelf were the writings of such diverse authors as Nietzsche, Postovesky, O'Neill, and Milton. (5) He read extensively in the writings of Jefferson, Washington, and Lincoln, especially those chapters concerning democratic philosophy and social revolution.

In addition, Cutting enjoyed an enormous music collection. It included such greats as Bach, Pavel, Handel, and Vivaldi. (6) He adored the classics and learned to play many on his Steinway Grand. Once when Prince Ferdinand of Prussia came visiting to Cutting's hideaway in the desert of Santa Fe, the Senator found the opportunity to play classical duets with European royalty. (7) Interestingly, this was the same man who felt equally comfortable sitting around a campfire with his Mexican friends. His close personal friend, Clifford McCarthy, would later emphasize the importance of music in Cutting's life; like his literature, it provided an emotional release for an often reclusive, and unhappy, personality. (8)

Such diversions allowed Cutting to avoid the traditional social cliques he so despised. As Brian Bonne wrote after Cutting's death:

My friend was bored to tears by members of the so-called leading families . . . When he had to meet these people, he acted like a man at a funeral. His eyes grew dull, there was never a smile to illuminate a face that was almost perpetually wreathed in smiles during a party of jolly western men . . . it was evident he suffered from mental agony. (9)
Sometimes Cutting felt his political life cut too greatly into his personal pleasures. During a later campaign he remarked that "it will be over in three weeks or so, and then, maybe, there will be time for Shakespeare and [music]. I think I shall really be much happier if not elected . . . (10)

Yet Cutting, nonetheless, assumed an active and quite distinguished role in the Senate. From the beginning, he spoke for states rights and the rights of the individual in democracy. When his colleagues were preventing the seating of Illinois Senator Frank Smith on grounds of alleged campaign corruption, Cutting declared in his maiden speech to the Senate:

There has been a lot of talk about State rights. . . I do believe that if there is one right that a State holds more sacred than any other, it is the right to select its own representatives in the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States. . . I submit we have no right to say to any State: "Elect anyone you want, send him here, and then we will decide whether he is good enough to sit or not. (11)

Cutting continued:

If I were a citizen of Illinois, I should spend every moment of my leisure opposing the election of Mr. Smith. But, Mr. President, I am not a citizen of Illinois. Eight hundred thousand of the voters of Illinois voted for Mr. Smith. They knew all the facts about him, and I am very reluctant to vote to establish any doctrine which will impose on the Senate of the United States the duty of overriding the citizens of [any] State. (12)

Even though he agreed with the allegations against Smith, Cutting felt the decision of the voters more valuable than his own. He believed the precedent set by denying Smith a seat would cause jeopardy to the power of individual choice in a democratic society.
Cutting's maiden speech earned high acclaim. One constituent wrote: "Only men of your calibre and thorough knowledge as you possess are capable of such."(13) The Smith case helped motivate Cutting to propose landmark legislation for electoral reform. Speaking to the Senate, he argued:

For thirty years there has been a continuous agitation about the high cost of election campaigns. Nevertheless, nothing concrete . . . has been done about it. The clearest proof of this is that up to the present no individual has yet been convicted . . . by a court or expelled from either House of Congress for violation of any Federal corrupt practices act. This is either a sign of universal virtue or it means that our laws have no teeth.(14)

Cutting believed the latter to be true. Soon, he proposed a remedy to the problem: he introduced before Congress a constitutional amendment that would give the House and Senate power "to legislate concerning the nomination or election of any candidate for [Congress] and to prevent fraud and corrupt practices in the nomination of [such members]."(15) Such an amendment, Cutting admitted, would be difficult to obtain:

I realize how difficult it is to change the constitution and . . . that people deplore the occasional need to do so . . . [Yet] this particular issue of the use of money in politics presents a problem . . . 'as deep and vital as representative democracy itself.' It must be solved, regardless of the means which we may have to apply.(16)

To enforce such a law Cutting proposed three separate pieces of legislation: (1) the formation of a Commission on Elections; (2) limits on campaign expenditures; and (3) campaign disclosure laws. Initiating the proposed commission would be the first hurdle. Despite the apparent need for such reforms, Cutting's legislative initiatives died in committee. It
is interesting that it took the impact of Watergate forty-five years later to push Congress in the direction Bronson Cutting had been going in 1928.

Early in his first term, Cutting was still to many an elusive figure when he began to reveal his true liberal persuasion by supporting to strike section 305 from the Hawley-Smoot tariff bill. The clause made it illegal to import publications that incited treason and which included "immoral" pictures or publications. Dating back to the tariff of 1894, the law was seen as both ambiguous and absurd to Cutting; anything deemed as "indecent" or "obscene" could be banned from entering the United States by the decision of a customs clerk who would inevitably superimpose his own personal prejudices. Cutting argued to his colleagues:

> It is quite obvious that the average customs clerk could ... decide the difference between a decent and an indecent postcard, drawing, photograph, or any other so-called work of art .... Many [works] of highly moral tendency would be excluded if a man's attention were confined [to only one aspect of the material]. (17)

Such esteemed works were, indeed, excluded from entering the United States. A professor at John Hopkins University was prevented from receiving a copy of Ovid's Metamorphoses. Works of Tolstoi and Swedenborg were banned. And Cutting could not understand why the United States government continued to restrict All Quiet on the Western Front and Lady Chatterly's Lover from entering the country, as well as Greek and Latin classics that had survived for over 2000 years— that is, until meeting righteous customs clerks. (19)

During the ongoing debate, Cutting became involved in a heated, and quite memorable, exchange with Senator Reed Smoot, a staunch supporter of the censorship provisions. Smoot declared that American customs agents
were as able judges as could be found to bar volumes that he did not believe could actually exist in the world, "books lower than the beasts." (20) "If I were a custom agent," he shouted, "they would be admitted over my dead body."(21)

The flamboyant Senator then brought to the Senate chamber an armful of reading materials which were all conspicuously marked at the "obscene" passages. Snoot argued: "The reading of these books would so disgust Senators that they would never dream of agreeing to the amendment of the Senator from New Mexico. You need only read a page or two to know how damnable they are."(22)

As Senators from both sides of the aisle came up to Snoot to select a volume, Cutting dived into his counterattack: "It is some advance to have ended rejection based on consideration of certain pages only, earmarked by the customs officials at every improper and indecent word and sentence, so that one may skip easily, as Senators are doing here, from one obscenity to another like Eliza crossing the ice."(23)

Cutting then accused his distinguished colleague of creating a classic of Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by talking about it so much. In his typical fashion, Cutting declared: "[The Lawrence work] appears now to be the senator's favorite work. He has brought it into the chamber with him after giving it nation-wide advertising and he has been going around reading passages from it to Senators on the floor."(24)

Snoot was outraged. "I suppose the Senator is judging himself. I haven't spent ten minutes on that book, outside of just looking at the opening pages. After the speech the Senator has made today, I would hesitate even to think of reading anything he would recommend."(25)
"I was just going to refer to the Bible," Cutting slyly retorted. (26)

Smoot could not withhold his frustration any longer. "Oh, if the Senator will read the Bible altogether he will not stand on this floor defending any such rotten stuff as he appears to be defending." (27)

"That is exactly the point," Cutting replied. "Anyone who will read the Bible altogether will be entirely in favor of the Bible, but there are certain passages in the Old Testament which can be misconstrued. All books have to be read as a whole." (28)

At this point Smoot lost all manner of control. While shaking his finger at a copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* Senator Copeland was nothing, Smoot pounded his fist on his desk and shouted: "I deny it with all the force at my command. That book there hasn't anything in it but the rottenest kind of stuff that can be thought of by a human being! That book was written by a man with a soul so black that he would even obscure the darkness of hell! It would corrupt anybody!" (29)

The Senate galleries roared. As Smoot continued screaming denunciation after denunciation, Cutting deftly placed his shots with the precision of a sharp-shooter. (30) It appeared like a memorable episode of Punch-and-Judy. (31) No matter; the young insurgent was making his point quite clear.

After Smoot left the floor, perhaps for a much needed breath of air, Cutting pointed out another absurdity: of 739 books blacklisted by the United States government, only 114 were in English. The majority were written in Spanish. He argued:

I speak of [this list] to show the depths of absurdity... bureaucratic government may go. Is it conceivable that there are as many books written in
Spanish as in all other languages put together which might corrupt the morals of our people, when we consider what a small proportion of the population are able to read books in Spanish? (emphasis added) (32)

Cutting mentioned the case of the French classic, Madame de Maupin, by Gautier which was permitted to enter the United States in its English translation, yet forbidden in Spanish. In biting sarcasm, he declared: "... after [a book] has been translated into Spanish it has apparently a peculiarly deleterious effect on the morals of our people." (33)

At the core of the problem, Cutting believed, was the reluctance of the American people to accept any political opinion or general way of thinking alien from their own. He stated that it was quite conceivable for "any postal clerk [to] exclude the work of any man who would agitate a reform of any kind... or argued in such a way that the public spirit of unrest might be aroused." (34) Moreover, he added:

The Declaration of Independence would certainly be excluded... If there was ever a treasonable utterance toward the government which was in power at the time it certainly was [this]. [If] treason means not treason against the government of the United States but against any government, how could we admit the words of Tom Paine or Patrick Henry? If the law might be interpreted to exclude the works of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, it would certainly exclude most of the thinkers of [today]. (35)

Despite such an argument, Cutting's plea to strike section 305 from the Hawley-Smoot tariff bill proved unsuccessful. In his frustration he asked his colleagues: "Is the foundation of the American government so feeble that it cannot withstand subversive opinions of a few foreign
Theorists? (36) His plea proved to have no avail.

Such a philosophy directed Cutting's approach to foreign policy. He accepted the virtue of learning from Russia's recent revolutionary experiment and was willing to accept her as a member of the international community. Unlike many Americans who were terrified of the supposed "Red Scare", Cutting viewed the Bolshevik revolution as nothing to be abhorred; in fact, he sympathized with its cause of searching for a true national identity, be it political, social, or economic.

Many forgotten by many Americans were the revolutionary leaders who helped place the United States on the map. Was not America itself a bastion of revolutionary fervor in 1776? Was it not Jefferson himself who admitted the desire to rather see a third of the world perish before forfeiting the right of revolution? Lincoln, moreover, stated an equally condemnable proposition by most Americans of the time, and even of today: "This country with its institutions belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of existing government they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it." (emphasis added) (37)

Cutting carried in his wallet a collection of memorable quotations from Jefferson and Lincoln, each dealing with the rights of the individual in democracy. (38) Emphasized was the right of revolution. Jefferson, in fact, supported a revolution every twenty years to make certain power continued to remain with the people. Had America lost sight of the enunciations of its Founding Fathers? Cutting inquired. In a land founded by revolution, why was it now so despised and rejected?

After touring the Soviet Union with an appointed Senate delegation in
the summer of 1930, Cutting became convinced that the revolutionary experiment the Russians fought for was "one of the fundamental events in world history."(39) Speaking before an American Legion group, he declared that the seeds of social unrest, like those generated in Russia before the revolution, were also being sown in the United States: "American people are the most conservative in the world. They have clung for 150 years to principles of the constitution, but unless the eight million unemployed are cared for, communism threatens..."(40) Cutting ominously added: "Eight million are not going to let their children starve...It will be starvation against change and there can be only one outcome."(41)

Like Senator Borah, Cutting deplored the American non-recognition policy towards the Soviet Union. He believed the Russian experiment had a good chance of succeeding.(42) Moreover, the United States could actually learn from it. Remembering the "de facto" theory Jefferson used in promoting recognition of the revolutionary French government in 1793, Cutting believed any nation was deserving of recognition if formed by the will of its people.(43) He refused to accept the Wilsonian view that ideological considerations should provide the central impetus of American recognition policy:

It has always seemed strange thing to me that those who are most sure of the correctness of their point of view apt to be those who will least tolerate any discussion of it. It ought to be natural for one who is sure of himself to welcome every chance to present his point of view in an open argument against the opponents. That was the theory of Jefferson and Lincoln ... (44)

Cutting did admit the Soviet Union's weaknesses, especially those concerning the suppression of individual liberties. Yet, were they simply
to be ignored? He thought not: "I believe that the time has come when we can settle [the problems] by negotiation ... we cannot cope with [them] through lack of recognition."(45) Cutting added that relations with the Soviet Union could eventually be settled as they were fifteen years earlier under the "illegitimate" Huerta government in Mexico.(46)

It is clear Cutting desired a more active role for the United States in foreign affairs, disavowing the isolationism that had long been a part of the American mindset. He empathized with those nations struggling with social, economic, and psychological unrest, and believed the American people should take notice. One such nation was the Philippines, a nation fighting for its sovereignty in a domineering and imperialistic world.

One of the most controversial issues Cutting found himself embroiled in during his first term concerned the right of independence for the islands. With Congressional hearings beginning in 1930, a bill in part sponsored by Cutting which supported independence for the Philippines traveled through three years of stormy debate before ultimately being passed as the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act.(47)

Cutting believed the United States should abide by what it had pledged to do in the Jones Act, a directive promising the Filipinos their sovereignty once they had formed a stable government.(48) Despite such a promise, the Senate was reluctant to act due to pressures from the domestic sugar lobby and the Hoover administration. The sugar lobby feared escalating imports from the Philippines once independence had been achieved, while the administration thought more of geopolitics: a Japanese predominance in the Far East at a time of escalating difficulties was feared. Secretary Stimson called the islands "a physical and
He added that granting independence to the Philippines without more consideration would be an "irreparable blow" to United States interests. (50)

Cutting was less concerned with Japanese intentions as he was with the plight of the Filipinos. Speaking to the Senate he proclaimed:

For the first time in history . . . a great nation . . . is proposing to give freedom to a people whose domain has formed an integral part of its territory. For the first time in history . . . a people numbering 13,000,000 is acquiring liberty, not through physical violence and bloodshed, but by the vote of the legislature of the controlling party in harmony with the desires of the people who have been subordinate. (51)

Cutting argued not for geopolitical considerations emphasized in the corridors of the State Department, but rather for the individual Filipinos thousands of miles away fighting not only for self-government, but for a sense of personal, sovereign identity. His approach to the problem is a keen example of how much emphasis he did, in fact, place on individual rights, even in crucial matters of foreign policy.

After President Hoover stamped his veto on the independence bill, Cutting led a successful fight for its override. Senator Henry Ashurst described Cutting as a "scholarly and opulent" senator who had the ambition to admit America's limits in the world. (52) Despite all of Cutting's efforts, though, the bill fell far short of granting the independence Filipinos desired. Under the influence of Manuel Quezou, the Philippine Legislature rejected the bill and sent it back to Washington.

Cutting did not give up. Even though his name would not appear on the final bill granting independence, it took an additional year of political maneuvering under the Roosevelt administration before a measure could be
passed acceptable to both nations. On March 24, 1934, President Roosevelt signed into law the Tydings-McDuffie Act, a bill which not only removed some of the previous differences concerning naval and military installations, but also contained provisions for a review of the trade restrictions imposed on the islands.(53)

However interested Cutting was in the Philippines issue and America's recognition policy of the Soviet Union, his interest did not extend so enthusiastically to other foreign policy concerns. Despite his vote in favor of the 1930 London Treaty limiting naval armaments, he did not take an active part in the debate. And later, when controversy brewed concerning President Hoover's reluctance to release important papers to the Senate committee conducting hearings on the Treaty, he again remained silent.(54)

Cutting was much more interested in devoting his energies to America's rising economic problem. He was instrumental in calling attention to the plight of the poor when many of his colleagues devoted their energies towards achieving a balanced budget. In biting fashion, Cutting declared:

I was much interested to hear the enlightened disclosure of the Senator from Illinois, especially that part in which he referred to the 'balancing of the Budget,' that sacred phrase to which apparently we must subordinate every other consideration, including the health and life of our people.(55)

He added that "there were two other 'b's' ... more important than balancing the budget: ... 'bread and butter.'" (56)

In 1932, Cutting introduced legislation to "provide a fund for Federal public works in times of business depression to stabilize business and to provide work for the unemployed." (57) He believed that for too long the
federal government had been approaching the problem of economic relief from the wrong angle: instead of pouring money "in at the top", funds should be invested "at the bottom", thus helping produce circulating purchasing power. (58) Cutting offered a hypothetical example: if the federal government would agree to his proposal of appropriating $5 billion towards road construction projects, two million men could be directly employed earning five dollars per day for an entire year, while six million other men and women could be indirectly employed in preparing and transporting the materials for the construction. (59)

Here, Cutting argued, was a reasonable way the government could help create needed purchasing power in the private sector. This was a superior course of action compared to the alternatives he believed the Hoover administration was offering: starvation and revolt. (60)

Concerning veterans' issues Cutting consistently stood tall. He believed he owed them "a duty more sacred than that concerned with any personal affection or political loyalty." (61) Although much of his activity with veterans legislation occurred during Roosevelt's administration, he earlier proposed increased compensation for those veterans suffering from tuberculosis. When Hoover vetoed a bill increasing veterans benefits in 1930, Cutting accused the president of approaching the problem with the point of view that there were more taxpayers than veterans. (62) Later in his first Senate term, Cutting led the fight for a successful override against Hoover's veto of the veterans' right to borrow up to fifty per cent of his bonus coming due in 1945. (63)

As Cutting became more comfortable with his Washington surroundings, he increasingly became involved with his fellow Progressive
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colleagues, most notably Robert LaFollette of Wisconsin, George Norris of Nebraska, William Borah of Idaho, and Hiram Johnson of California. In the spring of 1931, he joined a group at a conference in Washington to discuss progressive issues for the upcoming congressional term. In addition, they also debated the chances of electing a more liberal president in the upcoming national election. (64) Senator Norris argued that it would be impossible for the country to benefit from progressive legislation until it had a progressive president. In a bit of foreshadowing, Norris offered Theodore Roosevelt as the type of leader the country needed. (65)

At the conference Cutting was appointed chairman of the Committee on Representative Government. (66) He spoke out against what he saw as the continuing usurpation of congressional power and the ridiculousness of lengthy lame-duck sessions. He and the committee also called for a constitutional amendment to abolish the electoral college. Speaking to the group, Cutting proclaimed:

Let them call us radicals so long as we remember we are one group ... trying to preserve at least the spirit which animated the founders of the Republic. No one would call the makers of our constitution radicals; those men had the courage to meet the immediate situation which confronted them and to trust to posterity to meet the entirely different situation with which they would be confronted. (67)

After the gathering in Washington, Cutting became, like his fellow Progressives, increasingly disillusioned with the Republican president and his rather impotent economic policies. Writing to his mother, Cutting lamented: "The Republican situation is pretty complicated, largely [rising] to [my] antipathy to the President." (68) Later he would
remark to her: "I am glad you agree that Hoover is impossible." (69)

In the summer of 1932, Cutting came out in enthusiastic support for the Democratic nominee, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He went on national radio to denounce the doomed policies of President Hoover while describing the vision and promise of Roosevelt. Like himself, Roosevelt grew up in New York and was a graduate of Groton and Harvard. Cutting had high hopes for his election, as did an increasing amount of dissatisfied Americans. Hoover warned the electorate, however, to be suspicious of "[these types] of leaders campaigning for the Democratic ticket . . . . if [the reforms they are proposing] are brought about, this will not be the America which we have known in the past." (70)

Hoover's forecast did not much matter to the American electorate, for the Democratic candidate was elected by a landslide. The Progressives, along with many Americans, had high hopes for the president-elect. They saw Roosevelt as a believer in the liberal tradition, a man who would attempt new directions in the fight against the country's increasing economic and social decay.

Cutting shared in such sentiment. Yet, it would not be long until he would become disillusioned.
PART III: THE SENATE YEARS, 1933-1935

By the time Franklin Roosevelt was inaugurated as President in 1932, Bronson Cutting was swiftly growing weary of political life. Early in the year, he was rumoured to have had suffered a nervous breakdown. Writing to a friend, the Senator remarked that the benefits of holding office were few:

I don't suppose one has any right to expect gratitude in public life . . . Public service is its own reward—and a measly bitter little reward it seems at times . . . If you don't care much about the job, you can view its loss with a great deal of philosophy.

And how nice it is to live in Santa Fe . . . and let others move about the vast corridors of Washington . . . I've never learned to be a politician . . .

Despite his growing antipathy to public service, Cutting increasingly became known as one of the Senate's finest members; in fact, one newspaper labeled him the body's "most astonishing man." Douglas Gilbert, a reporter for The New York World-Telegram, described Cutting as the most cultured man in the Senate with his intelligence as sympathetic and his knowledge encompassing a gracious eclecticism. Cutting was found to have a tempered enthusiasm, unostentatious tastes, and a humane and tolerant attitude which was void of any patronizing air. He was "nothing less than amazing."

Partly due to such a reputation, President-elect Roosevelt invited Cutting to Warm Springs in early 1932 to offer him the cabinet position of Interior secretary. Such a move was both a political payback for the Senator's fervent support in the presidential campaign and an early
goodwill gesture towards the entire Progressive bloc.

Roosevelt instructed his good friend and advisor, Raymond Moley, to persuade Cutting into joining the new administration. While discussing the cabinet position with the Senator, Moley was struck with Cutting’s uniqueness:

[Cutting] was a man of deep passions and great daring, but outwardly so taciturn, so inarticulate, that there was none of the easy conversational give and take that characterizes most practical politicians. One had the sense that he had an aesthete’s rather than a nob’s disdain for the first-name-calling-on-first-meeting, the hand-jumping and backslapping that are the devaluated currency of political intercourse. (5)

Supporters from New Mexico pushed Cutting to accept the offer. (6) Senator Norris argued that if he, and other Progressives invited to join the administration, did accept, the body would be losing its most productive members. (7) Cutting delayed his decision for an entire month. Shortly before the President was to announce his cabinet lineup, Cutting declined the position, suddenly leaving Roosevelt in an unfortunate situation: now he was forced to find an Interior secretary at the last minute. (8) Harold Ickes, a popular Illinois senator, was finally chosen.

An explanation for Cutting’s decision is not very clear. Raymond Moley stated later that underlying the decision was a lack of confidence in the President’s progressive leadership. (9) Perhaps he took Norris’ advice. When understanding Cutting’s antipathy towards public life, though, his verdict becomes clearer. It is inevitable that along with a White House position follows an increase in public exposure and expected gregariousness. Cutting surely desired neither. He was becoming
disillusioned enough holding a Senate seat, a position in the White House would not make matters better.

Yet above all else, Cutting did not wish to forfeit the secluded lifestyle he had grown accustomed to. He was, indeed, a private man, an individual who had no desire for the fast-paced life of a high-ranking government official. He was content to be at his villa with Shakespeare and Vivaldi. He wanted his peace.

Politically, it did not take long for Cutting to become disenchanted with the new President. (10) Within weeks of Roosevelt's swearing in, he wrote his mother in New York: "I have no enthusiasm for the Roosevelt program, so far as I have been able to discover what it is." (11)

Although Cutting voted in favor of the 1933 Emergency Banking Bill, he would state later that its passage "broke his heart" due to the President's unwillingness to go far enough in nationalizing the American banking structure. (12) Yet at the time of the vote Congressional sentiment for nationalization was negligible. (13) Of the only seven dissenting votes against the bill, five included Cutting's fellow progressive senators, Borah (who helped lead the fight against the Act), Costigan, LaFollette, Nye, and Shipstead. (14)

Cutting was equally unenthusiastic over the National Industrial Recovery Act, although he did approve of the Act's public works provisions. (15) Similar to other progressives, he believed the N.R.A. would tend to protect monopolies while independent industries and small businesses would practically be destroyed. (16) In addition, he was alarmed at the apparent usurpation of Congressional power inherent in the measure. As the Supreme Court would later rule, the Act unlawfully delegated too
Cutting also clashed with the President over the future of the Civil Works Administration. When Harry Hopkins journeyed up Capitol Hill to inform lawmakers of the gradual termination of the agency, Cutting, along with his fellow progressives, grew outraged. Where would the laid off workers go? How would they support themselves?

Hopkins informed them that the President was increasingly growing concerned that the CWA was creating a "permanent class of relievers whom he might never get off the government payroll." In early April 1933, he followed Roosevelt's orders and began to lay off workers, first in those southern regions not suffering from harsh winter conditions. "No one would starve in good weather" was the administration's thinking.

Cutting adamantly disagreed. He loudly protested the dismanteling of federal programs which assisted the more vulnerable in society:

The destitute and the hungry and the unemployed are going to have to be dealt with more and more by the only branch of our government which has sufficient power to translate the inherent wealth of this country into terms of credit to the average man who is without it.

Cutting continued:

What is [a] government? In a democracy surely the government is merely the citizens of a country coming together as a unit to take care of the common welfare. This is not a gratuity ... members of Congress are showering upon the starving and the destitute. It is not ... a matter of graciousness or generosity.

It is a matter of duty.
To assist those individuals released from the CWA rolls, Cutting offered an amendment to increase federal help from $9.5 million to $2.5 billion. The Democratic congress killed the proposal. Senator LaFollette later endorsed a compromise, increasing the appropriation to only $1.5 billion. This, too, was soundly defeated.

After Congress passed the administration sponsored "Economy Act" in 1933, Cutting promised to fight against any provisions promising to slash veterans benefits. The Act granted enormous power to the President: "Roosevelt was authorized to reduce, by executive order, the benefits of every veteran in the United States who had seen military service since 1865." (25)

In reply to the Economy Act, Cutting proposed an amendment that would prohibit the President from slashing veterans benefits more than twenty-five per cent. The amendment passed the Senate by a close vote, 43-42.

Emotions ran high during Cutting's fight against Roosevelt's veterans policies. He declared the administration's measures were producing wide-spread personal suffering and financial distress. Moreover, as veterans groups throughout the country became increasingly outraged, they decided to take their complaints to the head man himself. Their plan proved successful. For example, one night at the White House President Roosevelt felt compelled to meet personally with a legless veteran whose pension had been reduced.
Cutting played his part well, too. At his own expense, he had Peter Reno fly to the Capitol from the Fort Bayard Veterans' Hospital in New Mexico where he was suffering from an advanced case of tuberculosis. (29) A point of controversy during the debate was whether certain ailments suffered by veterans were actual consequences of military involvement; referring to Reno in a stirring speech on the Senate floor, Cutting declared:

He cannot prove that his disability was due to any particular incident in the war, although he served in five major engagements, was decorated for gallantry, and was gassed at the Battle of Marne . . . [Reno] was sent here . . . so that Senators could look with their own eyes on a living example of what the Economy Act is doing. (30)

Reno stood before the Senate membership while Cutting circulated a graphic picture of the wound on the man's back. Cutting described how one could reach into the wound and feel Reno's heart beating less than one eighth of an inch away. (31) Two medical doctors, Senator Hatfield and Copeland, examined the veteran and testified that the wound was, indeed, caused by involvement in military service. (32)

After superbly creating an emotional scene in the Senate chamber, Cutting then asked:

Mr. President, this man received a medal of gallantry in action the first week in May, and the very next week [his benefits were] cut down from $100 a month to $20 a month. He has a wife, and [she] has to dress that wound three times a day . . . (33)

Cutting ended his speech by declaring that Peter Reno was not an isolated case; in fact, there are hundreds of thousands of veterans like
him in equally bad shape. He finished: "[This] is exactly typical of what is being done to the veterans of this country." (34)

Cutting continued his battle. Calling the Economy Act "the most infamous act ever passed by the Congress of the United States," he began to join efforts with Oregon Senator Steiwar. (35) Together they proposed amendments to legislation that would guarantee regular compensation for ex-service men. (36)

Back in the White House, President Roosevelt was becoming increasingly enmeshed in anger over Cutting's persistent fight against his veterans legislation. In fact, it was the stubborn Senator who prompted the president's only outburst of anger during the entire Hundred Days. (37) The President was willing to forgive other Progressives for their "bad taste" in supporting increased expenditures for veterans, but found it inexcusable on the part of a man who had been to Groton and Harvard. (38)

Roosevelt's reasoning for this cannot be easily explained. Perhaps he felt Cutting was simply succumbing to political pressures from veterans back in New Mexico. It really did not matter to Cutting. His arduous fight had just begun.

Once the second session began, Cutting was once again in the forefront promoting a better life for the veteran. Early in the term, he announced to his colleagues that Peter Reno had been subsequently removed from all government pension rolls, supposedly with the explanation of "official misconduct." (39) Cutting suggested otherwise: Peter Reno was being punished for his involvement in the earlier Senate debate. (40)

Cutting became increasingly impatient with the conference committee that was debating proposed veterans legislation. Instead of supporting the
Senate approved 100 per cent restoration plan for veterans benefits, the committee succumbed to political pressures and supported only a 75 per cent plan. The committee realized that the 100 per cent plan could never gain Roosevelt's support; the 75 per cent plan was, thus, better than nothing.

The New Mexican was outraged. He believed Congress was acting with complete irresponsibility; should not a legislative body assume its duty of acting on the intrinsic merits of a situation, rather than what is politically right or wrong? Indeed, the idealist on Capitol Hill often finds himself to be a rather lonely character.

Cutting ultimately voted against the 75 per cent compromise; if he had voted in the affirmative, he, thus, would have gone on record as favoring a cut in veterans' pensions. Nevertheless, the measure passed both houses and was sent up Pennsylvania Avenue.

It quickly found an enthusiastic presidential veto. Roosevelt declared that he was "wholly and irrevocably opposed to the principle of a general service pension" which would add $117 million to the budget. The Progressives, with Cutting in the forefront, declared this thinking wholly and irrevocably irresponsible.

Cutting concerned himself more with the veteran than a balanced budget. Leading the debate in favor of an override, he took a determined stand:

[The] responsibility for what [happens to the veteran] lies squarely on the shoulders of the two Houses of the Congress of the United States. These men took two years of their life away from their ordinary occupations. Even if they were not wounded or disabled, they were still at a handicap . . . compared with their fellow citizens.
[We] took a generation of American manhood and put them at a permanent handicap as against the generations before them and the generations to come. (45)

In an interview before the vote, Cutting stated that justice for the veteran could only be obtained by a two-thirds vote in both houses; the upcoming vote, he felt, would be a true test. (46)

Congress passed with high marks; the House voted 310-72 in favor of the override, while the Senate came through, 63-27. (47) Despite only obtaining 75 per cent restoration benefits for the veteran, Cutting reconciled his support of the bill knowing that 29,000 World War veterans would now be able to enjoy support that had been slashed by the Economy Act. Perhaps he, too, began to admit the realities of political nuance: some support is, indeed, better than none.

It was a bright day not only for United States veterans, but for Bronson Cutting. For over a year he had assiduously labored to reverse the damage done by the Economy Act; for months he battled the president himself; a battle that transcended politics, a fight which went deep into personal animosities and, perhaps, even jealousies. Cutting accused Roosevelt of not really caring for the sick and disabled, a charge not taken lightly by a man who had seen himself as devoting his life to the downtrodden, a man who saw himself as being formed in the liberal tradition. Roosevelt clearly did not take such remarks lightly. At least he felt he could do something about it; it was 1934 and Bronson Cutting was up for reelection.

Instead of concentrating on the election he faced at the end of the year, the prospects of which he had not even decided upon, Cutting chose to focus on his legislative duties. In many respects, he began to outshine
even the New Dealers in his positions on liberal social programs.

In the spring of 1934, Cutting sponsored potentially far-reaching legislation; his bill called for the federal government to "provide the necessities of life for those citizens of the United States who through the disability of age and the mischances of a complicated industrial civilization have lost their power to support themselves." (48)

Anyone age 65 or older would be eligible for an annual pension of $480 if not already earning the same amount each year or having a close family member earning over $2400 per year. (49) Cutting decided that the revenue needed for such a plan would be obtained from a special tax on excess corporate profits. After being assigned to committee, the proposal quickly perished. It is noteworthy that Cutting endorsed such a plan an entire year before Roosevelt persuaded Congress to pass the Social Security Act.

Later in the session, Cutting supported legislation that would drastically alter the American banking structure. Written by the economics faculty of the University of Chicago, the bill proposed the creation of a Federal Monetary Authority to provide an "adequate and stable monetary system"; to prevent bank failures; to prevent uncontrolled inflation; to prevent depressions; and to restore normal prosperity and assure its continuance. (50)

Months earlier in an article published in Liberty Magazine, Cutting outlined the legislation's major point of transferring the ability to create purchasing power from the private sector to the federal government. (51) Such thinking was not socialistic, Cutting insisted, but logical, especially when considering the amount of influence the American bankers had on the future direction of the country. (52)
In his article, Cutting stated:

[The American banker] exercises an uncontrolled and capricious power over credit that may be beneficial if he be lucky, but that is more apt to be destructive. Most ... do not realize just how great [his] power is. [He] controls the major part of our financial system, yet works absolutely isolated from his co-bankers and under little public control. (53)

Cutting believed the only way to obtain sound national economic planning was through government control of credit. He saw the depression as partly resulting from a lack of such control.

To wrestle the control of credit away from the private sector would not be an easy task. Cutting admitted the power of the banker "as without equal in the [United States]:" (54)

Knowing this is why I think back to the events of March 4, 1933, with a sick heart. For then, with even the bankers thinking the whole economic system had crashed to ruin, the nationalization of banks by ... Roosevelt could have been accomplished without a word of protest. It was [the President's] great mistake. Now the bankers will make a mighty struggle. (55)

Congress apparently was not one to struggle with Cutting's proposals, for they traveled to committee and quickly died.

During the last weeks of the seventy-third Congress, Cutting became involved in a variety of issues. He introduced legislation that would enable the United States to enter the International Copyright Union, thus protecting American authors when their works were published abroad. (56)

He introduced legislation that would benefit his New Mexican constituents: the creation of a Federal Land Bank District; economic assistance to the Mescalero Indian Reservation; and extensions of time of oil and gas prospecting permits. (57) All bills died in committee.
Legislative duties were not the only concerns dominating Bronson Cutting's thoughts in 1934; a decision whether or not to seek re-election still had to be made. As late as July, he had not yet made up his mind. There was talk circulating that his desire was to leave the Senate and return home to New Mexico; one Democrat welcomed such a move, and even predicted that Cutting was already “whipped” if he did decide to run. (58)

During an August trip to Alaska that involved both Congressional business and pleasure, Cutting finally made the decision to run, a choice far from being enthusiastic: "I won't say that I am particularly looking forward to the mud-slinging campaign the Democrats have decided on, but I expect it is all in a life-time." (59)

Back in New Mexico, Cutting had another important choice to make: should he return to the "Republican fold" or run as a Progressive in a state with a strong two-party tradition? (60) He decided on the former; Republican leaders were informed, though, that he would not run on their ticket if they refused to accept a liberal platform at the convention. (61) The Republicans consented.

Dennis Chavez, a popular Democratic congressman, was nominated to run against Cutting. Despite the Senator's state-wide personal popularity, Chavez was seen as having a good chance of ousting him. The reason? Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

The President had been immensely displeased with the Independent Republican for quite some time. He was unquestionably fed up with Cutting's statements accusing him of being insensitive towards the poor. Now that the Senator was up for reelection, he was in an advantageous position to do something about it.
Early in 1934, Roosevelt called James Farley, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, into the Oval Office to discuss ways in "[sending] Bronson Cutting down the long road to defeat."(62) With Dennis Chavez enjoying the support of both the administration and the New Mexican Old Guard, Cutting was seen as a sure loser.(63)

Roosevelt remained furious with Cutting over his determined fight against the administration's veterans legislation. He was also unhappy with the Senator's stands on its economic legislation. But were not such positions true of most progressives? In fact, Senator Borah afforded the President more problems with its legislative agenda than Cutting ever did. Why, then, did Roosevelt single out Cutting for defeat while he supported all the other progressives up for reelection?

One important explanation involves the influence of political realities: the President was becoming afraid of Cutting's increasing notoriety with the nation's liberal bloc. Early in 1934, the Santa Fe New Mexican reported:

"To them it is not what Senator Cutting has done for President Roosevelt and the New Deal, it is what he might do to them if he continues to grow in the imagination of the [liberals] should Mr. Roosevelt swing away from those ideals within the next two years."

(64)

In addition, there was already discussion of "just what Cutting might do": one journalist wrote that the Senator would be a strong presidential candidate in 1940, and, very possibly, as early as 1934. (65) The President was acutely aware of this. In a letter to Edward M. House dated February 16, 1935, Roosevelt revealed his fear of the Progressive Republican bloc: "Progressive Republicans like LaFollette, Cutting, Nyo,
etc., who are flirting with the idea of a third ticket... with the knowledge that [although it] would be beaten, it would defeat us [by helping] elect a conservative Republican and cause a complete swing far to the Left before 1940." (66)

Another possible explanation for Roosevelt's animosity transcended politics, for it involved an element of personal envy. Both he and the Senator were cut from the same mold; they grew up in affluent New York surroundings, attended the very same schools, and later achieved immense political popularity in their respective states. In addition, both had fought successful battles against personal disease. (67)

Yet, Cutting had continually shown the ability to invade the President's political turf by outshining Roosevelt himself in the fight for social and economic justice. Unlike Roosevelt, national political considerations did not plague him. While the President was constantly needing to be on guard towards both the Left and Right, Cutting largely enjoyed a personal popularity in New Mexico that transcended party affiliation and which would help him in the upcoming campaign.

Even though Cutting was very well liked by many New Mexicans, he did, though, have a few who intensely disliked him, especially those still affiliated with the Old Guard. On different occasions during the 1934 campaign, one New Mexico newspaper bestowed upon him such niceties as "fat boy," "jackass," "traitor," and "damned Progressive." (68) The newspaper even described him as "a political butcher... dripping with blood." (69)

The Tucumcari American charged Cutting as being a "menace to the righteousness of political action [that should be] smashed." (70) And one man even boasted he had concrete evidence that Cutting was a regular
contributor to the Communist party. (71) This last charge practically incensed Cutting. Writing to a friend, he argued:

... I am really not a communist. Nor am I interested in Strachey as either man or writer. ... It is perfectly clear that a man can believe in the Marxian theory of surplus value or even in economic determination of history (I don't happen to) without believing in or advocating force or violence in blowing up the White House or its occupant. (72)

Apparently, Cutting did not mind slingling a bit of mud himself. Early in the 1934 campaign, he accused Chavez of doing nothing in Congress except "[sitting] in his seat and [voting]." (73) Early in the contest, the Cutting forces released charges of Chavez padding the welfare rolls with his relatives. In addition, Chavez was accused of using welfare funds for political purposes. (74) Speaking to a high-spirited campaign rally, Cutting cried:

Has [Chavez] ever spoken for anything that had to do with the New Deal? Has he ever spoken on any measures of national importance? ... Has he ever made a speech in favor of the veterans? Let him tell the people of New Mexico about it if he has. (75)

Cutting was assisted in the campaign by enthusiastic support from Progressive leaders throughout the country, including Hiram Johnson, Ed Costigan, Bob LaFollette, George Norris, and Harold Ickes. (76) The group was outraged by Roosevelt's ambivalence towards their colleague. Cutting was the only Progressive that Roosevelt was not supporting in the election. Ickes told Roosevelt that "the opposition of the Administration to Cutting ... had created a bad feeling among the Progressives in the
West." (77) Hiram Johnson of California was quite distraught over the whole affair. Ickes added that the administration should have supported Cutting as enthusiastically as it did LaFollette. Responding to even sharper criticism from Senator Norris, the president wrote:

Dear George:

I wish you would speak to me some day about Bronson Cutting. As you know, I am personally mighty fond of him and have known him since he was a boy. I do not want anything to hurt him, but a lot of Bronson's retainers in New Mexico are not considered very fine citizens. (78)

Cutting quickly grew disgusted with the campaign. One observer has noted that it was one of the "dirtiest" political battles in New Mexico up to that time. (79) There was even a rumour that Roosevelt said: "The best part of the joke is that Bronson will be beaten by a half-breed." (80)

Writing to his mother, Cutting lamented:

Personally, I am glad this rather melancholy seven year's episode in my life is drawing to a speedy close. Perhaps I may take a trip around the world, which I have always wanted to do. (81)

Despite Cutting's wish to depart from his "melancholy" in Washington, he was re-elected for another seven years. Not surprisingly, his bastion of support came from the Mexican-American and veteran districts. (82)

Carrying the election with a little more than a thousand votes, though, the victory was far from overwhelming. Cutting later admitted to his mother how lucky he was that he won by that much, considering he had both Roosevelt and the Republican Old Guard against him. (83)

Before his victory could be officially certified, Dennis Chavez
quickly filed a motion to contest the election. He charged that up to twenty per cent of the votes in seventy-seven precincts were not legally registered. (84)

After two investigations were concluded by the state board of elections, Chavez seemingly had nothing more to contest: Cutting's margin of victory was found to have actually increased. This did not stop the congressman. He then filed a petition with a Senate committee to investigate Cutting's alleged excessive use of funds during the campaign, despite the fact that before the election a senate investigator, at the request of the New Mexico Democratic State Chairman, found nothing to warrant such action. (85)

Chavez furthered his complaint by accusing Cutting of illegally obtaining votes. (86) Due to the extent of Cutting's enormous wealth, many decided to take notice of this charge. Since he entered politics, his opponents had continually accused him of "buying influence", rather than actually earning it. Now it was their chance to see their suspicions proved. With the President on Dennis Chavez' side, the Senate decided to call for a thorough investigation.

The administration's handling of the Cutting affair left a poor taste, at best, in many a mouth. Roosevelt's approach seemed actually to be backfiring. In a letter to Mrs. Cutting from H. H. Dorman, a prominent New Mexican politician, the rising sentiment against what was being done to Bronson was described: "Your little boy Bronson is rapidly becoming a national figure. The utterly unfair fight being carried on against him by the administration will gain him sympathy of the whole country. He is taking it all in his usually calm manner." (87)
Needless to say, the entanglement did not bolster Cutting's attitude towards Washington life. His last session in Congress was completely dominated by the investigation. Writing to a friend, he admitted: "[It] may be another six months before we shall know who is to hold [the] . . . seat. I don't really care how it is decided, but I would like to see an end to all this petty bickering." (88) He complained later: "Every second of time is taken up with this wretched contest, which as a consumer of time and money is the ghastliest episode in my life." (89)

Cutting, though, did find time for a few legislative preoccupations. He supported a bill providing an additional four billion dollars in relief to the unemployed, while supporting a controversial amendment that allowed striking workers to obtain aid. (90) Cutting argued that the sole condition for relief should be that the unemployed person is in actual need. (91) The amendment died in a voice vote.

Later, he proposed a more successful amendment that would add $40 million to a bill supporting public education. Notwithstanding criticism from senators that states should run their own school systems, Cutting's amendment prevailed. (92)

Despite his attempts at legislative duties, Cutting devoted much of his energies to clearing his name of any wrongdoing in the past campaign. In April, the committee did dismiss charges of unlawful campaign expenditures, but continued their investigation of possible vote fraud. (93)

To collect evidence in support of his case, Cutting returned home to New Mexico in early May. While there, he learned of an important vote concerning veterans legislation to be taken May 6 back in Washington. He
decided to leave as soon as possible. He began his return trip the evening of May 5 on TWA flight six from Albuquerque. The inclement weather out east did not promise a very smooth flight.
"Oh Lord, who art our guide even unto death grant us. I pray thee grace to follow thee wither-so-ever thou goest. In little daily duties to which thou callest us bow down our wills to simple obedience, patience under pain or provocation, strict truthfulness of word and manner, humility, kindness. Great acts of duty or of affection, if thou shouldst call us to them, uplift us to self-sacrifice, heroic courage, laying down of life for thy truth's sake or for a brother. Amen."

Bronson M. Cutting's Prayer
Cutting Papers,
Library of Congress

The day after Bronson Cutting's death, his bronze, flag-draped casket was placed aboard a Burlington train on route to Washington from Kansas City. Accompanying the Senator's body was Clifford McCarthy.(1)

Official Washington was in a state of mourning. Senator Hiram Johnson was greatly distressed by the news: "Bronson was like a son to me ... Aside from my respect and admiration for him, I had a great personal affection and I am terribly shocked."(2) Representative Wright Pattman, whose veterans bonus bill Cutting was returning to vote on at the time of his death, lamented: "Progressives of the country have lost a true friend, and I have lost a loyal supporter."(3) Senator Key Pittman of Nevada commented: "I am shocked and grieved beyond expression at the tragic death
of my friend . . . I had the honor of serving with him on committees and I realized his ability and conscientious service to his high ideals. The government has lost an able and good man."(4)

On May 10, 1935, the Senator was laid to rest in New York City. While the funeral proceedings were being conducted at St. James Church, a simultaneous memorial service was being held in Santa Fe. Offering the eulogy was Santa Fe mayor Charles Barker:

So is inevitable with every strong character, Senator Cutting enjoyed the intense loyalty of his friends and suffered the equally strong hatred of his enemies. But, my friend, today with his lips closed in death, there is not one, friend or foe, who will not do honor to his memory, in recognition of the great qualities of mind and heart he possessed. (5)

In an eulogy delivered later by Senator George Norris, the Nebraskan declared:

When Senator Cutting passed into the limitless realm of Eternity, struggling millions of the toilers of humanity lost an outstanding leader, a brave defender, and a courageous advocate. A man of wealth, his great heart beat in unison with the downtrodden and the oppressed, and those who toil for their daily bread. All along the pathway of his life, there are emblems of his charity, his generosity, his justice, and his mercy . . . In all the struggles of his career, honesty was his shield, wisdom was his weapon, and justice was his goal. (6)

Honesty, wisdom, and justice: these were the hallmarks of Bronson Cutting's drive. Despite his tendency to remove himself from others around
him, he quickly fostered a following both in New Mexico and the United States Senate that earned him the deepest of respect and honor. In his home state he became something of a myth: this strange Anglo from the east, seemingly present for such a very brief time, fighting for their rights so long ignored.

Compassion for the weak and downtrodden was Bronson Cutting's strength. As a child, he acquired such a trait by observing the accomplishments of both his father and uncle in the fight for social and economic reform. Throughout his life, he never lost sight of these ideals.

The Senator's progressive impulse can also be traced to his personal sense of melancholy and marginality. Not only did he consistently find emotional solace in the company of those individuals less fortunate than himself, both socially and financially, he found it among those who were in socially marginal positions. He was a man more comfortable sitting around a campfire among his close Mexican friends than he was at a Washington party talking with supposed influential, "high society" people.

Bronson Cutting was, indeed, a misunderstood individual, a man of inherent contradiction. No one quite knew how to describe him. He was an Ivy League graduate with a thick "Harvard accent"; a finished musician; a deep student of history, philosophy, the arts, economics, and government; a man widely traveled in many lands, speaking numerous languages.(7) As one put it; he had all the background for a snob. Yet at the same time, though, here was a man who felt more comfortable among the poorest natives of the southwest. How could this be explained?

Even though he became deeply respected and admired by many Washington leaders, Cutting never ceased to abhor public life. Longed for were the
days of solitude back in Santa Fe. Quite significantly, this was the only place he ever mentioned as desiring to return to after his tenure in public life was complete. Such a desire is understandable, for it conforms to the pattern of his personality: Bronson Cutting found comfort in "distance".

As a growing young man, he remained a recluse from the other boys at school. When he became ill, he decided to separate himself as best he could from the people and society of the east he so despised. When his father died in 1917, he sustained the distance by deciding not to attend his funeral. As an United States Senator, he removed himself from the rituals of the Congressional playground. And even in his apparent most personal relationships, such as the one he shared with Clifford McCarthy, he desired more distance than his friend did.

Despite the separation Bronson Cutting placed between himself and others, he nonetheless became a champion of the American Insurgent Movement. He would even be looked upon as a very possible candidate to lead the country out from its economic and social despair. The New Mexican people later erected a monument in the memory of their Senator. The epitath read:

His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him that nature might stand up and say to all the world: "This was a Man."

---Shakespeare

Bronson Cutting was an individual who touched the lives of many. His progressivism was a monument to justice, his life a testimony to unyielding compassion. It is, indeed, an overlooked tragedy in the voluminous history of United States politics that this man left the world so prematurely.
NOTES

INTRODUCTION

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 196.

PROLOGUE

1. Information concerning Bronson Cutting on board the craft contained in "Memorandum in regard to accident," Olivia James Cutting, May 22, 1935, Bronson M. Cutting Papers, Container 91, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Hereafter, all references to Bronson M. Cutting will be noted as BMC; all references to Bronson M. Cutting Papers will be noted as BMC Papers)

PART 1: THE EARLY YEARS

1. All genealogical information taken from a letter to Mr. Jonathon Cunningham from Olivia Bayard Cutting, January 26, 1938, BMC Papers, Container 92.
3. Article, Santa Fe New Mexican, September 22, 1934, p. 11.

7. Ibid.


9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.


12. For a look at BMC's academic records and achievements, see BMC Papers, Containers 2 and 3.


15. For a fascinating look at Mrs. Cutting's correspondence with BMC during this period, see BMC Papers.


17. Seligmann, p. 45.


19. Letter, "Dan" to BMC, March 13, 1930, BMC Papers. These revealing letters from Dan can be found in the container marked "Fragmented and Undated Correspondence" (Number 12). It seems these letters were either completely overlooked, or possibly discounted, by other students of Cutting.

20. Letter, Dan to BMC, undated, BMC Papers, Container 12.


22. Letter, Dan to BMC, undated, BMC Papers, Container 12.

23. Letter, Dan to BMC, undated, BMC Papers, Container 12.

24. Letter, Clifford to BMC, October 9, 1932, BMC Papers, Container 12; it should be remembered that after 1930 McCarthy began to sign his name Clifford instead of Dan.


27. Letter, Clifford to BMC, undated, BMC Papers, Container 12.


30. Ibid.

31. For an intriguing look at BMC's attitudes towards women, see "Personal Recollections of A Friend," vol. II; over one-half of the second volume is devoted to the subject.

32. For a good chronology of BMC's earliest political stirrings in New Mexico, see Seligmann, chapter 2.

33. Letter, William Bayard Cutting to Governor Herbert J. Hagerman, April 10, 1911, BMC Papers, Container 2.

34. Ibid.

35. Letter, William Bayard Cutting to BMC, April 7, 1911, BMC Papers, Container 2. For a complete account of William Cutting's financial involvement in the newspaper, see BMC Papers, Containers 2 and 3.

36. Seligmann, p. 32.

37. Ibid., p. 31. See Proceedings of the New Mexico Progressive Party Convention of 1912 for an interesting account of BMC's early political involvement, BMC Papers.

38. See BMC Papers for a selection of letters from Roosevelt; while a few are written to Mrs. Cutting, usually in gratitude for her hospitalities, most are in reference to BMC's involvement in the 1912 campaign.

39. For a thorough description of the investigation, and the subsequent libel case against BMC, see BMC Papers, Containers 15 and 16.

40. Ibid.

41. Interestingly, BMC did not discuss much of his experience in the war through correspondence; for a look at a few letters, see BMC Papers.

42. Seligmann, p. 50.

43. Ibid., p. 46.
44. Ibid., p. 65. Also see Thomas G. Donnelly, *Rocky Mountain Politics* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940), p. 250.

45. Seligmann, p. 65.

46. Ibid., p. 66.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.


50. Seligmann, p. 45.


PART II: THE SENATE YEARS, 1928-1932

1. Article by Douglas Gilbert, *Santa Fe New Mexican*

2. Ibid.


4. Ibid., p. 199.


12. 70th Congress, 1st Session, *Congressional Record*, v. 69, p. 1711.


15. 70th Congress, 1st Session, *Congressional Record*, v. 69, p. 6737.


17. 71st Congress, 1st Session, *Congressional Record*, v. 72, p. 4433.
18. Ibid., p. 4434.

19. Ibid., p. 4435.


21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., p. 4434.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., p. 4450.

35. Ibid., pp. 4450-4451.

36. Ibid., p. 4445.

37. Ibid., pp. 4450-4451.

38. For a look at the material Cutting usually had with him, see Container 87, BMC Papers.

39. Statement to Congress, BMC Papers. There are many of these in the collection that appear either as drafts for speeches or as position papers. Unfortunately, none are dated.

40. Santa Fe New Mexican, clipping, BMC Papers.

41. Ibid.

43. Statement to Congress, BMC Papers.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Seligmann, pp. 146-147.

48. 72nd Congress, 2nd Session, Congressional Record, v. 76, p. 1911.


50. Ibid.

51. 72nd Congress, 2nd Session, Congressional Record, v. 76, p. 1865.


53. Seligmann, p. 149.

54. Seligmann, p. 131.

55. 71st Congress, 2nd Session, Congressional Record, v. 72, p. 10919.

56. Ibid.

57. Senate Resolution 4739, 71st Congress, 2nd Session, Congressional Record.

58. Statement to Congress, BMC Papers.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. 71st Congress, 2nd Session, Congressional Record, v. 72, p.11760.

62. Ibid., p. 11759.


65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Letter, BMC to Mother, August 17, 1932, Container 10, BMC Papers.

69. Letter, BMC to Mother, October 31, 1932, Container 10, BMC Papers.


PART III: THE SENATE YEARS, 1933-1935


6. See, for example, J. D. Atwood's letter to BMC, January 30, 1933 and George Amijo's letter, January 22, 1933, both in Container 10, BMC Papers.


8. Freidel, p. 166.


10. Seligmann, p. 171.


14. Ibid. Also see 73rd Congress, 1st Session, Congressional Record, v. 77, p. 67.

15. Seligmann, p. 171.


17. Lief, Democracy's Norris, p. 450.

18. Seligmann, p. 171. See also 73rd Congress, 1st Session, Congressional Record, v. 77, pp. 5243-5245.


20. 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, Congressional Record, v. 77, p. 2166.

21. Ibid., p. 2167.

22. Ibid., p. 2162.

23. Ibid., p. 2197.


26. 73rd Congress, 1st Session, Congressional Record, v. 77, p. 6014.

27. Seligmann, p. 178.


29. Ibid., p. 179.

30. 73rd Congress, 1st Session, Congressional Record, v. 77, p. 5375.

31. Ibid., p. 5736.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid., p. 4825.

36. Ibid., p. 6014.
37. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

38. Ibid.

39. 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, Congressional Record, v. 79, p. 2737.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., p. 5391.

42. Ibid., p. 5395.

43. Seligmann, p. 192.

44. Ibid.

45. 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, Congressional Record, v. 79, p. 5575.

46. Santa Fe New Mexican, clipping, BMC Papers.

47. 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, Congressional Record, v. 79, p. 5544.

48. Senate Resolution 3803, 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, Congressional Record.

49. Ibid.

50. Seligmann, p. 196. Specific information can be obtained in Senate Resolution 3744.

51. Bronson Cutting, "Is Private Banking Doomed?" Liberty Magazine, March 31, 1934. The article was actually written by Frederick Painton using Cutting's ideas. A copy of the article can be found in BMC Papers.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.


57. Ibid., p. 209. See also Senate Resolutions 2131, 2772, and 2998.

58. Santa Fe New Mexican, July 28, 1934, BMC Papers.


60. Seligmann, p. 215.
61. Ibid., p. 217.


63. Ibid.

64. Santa Fe New Mexican, clipping, BMC Papers.


68. Seligmann, p. 221. Also see Albuquerque Journal, October 23, 1934.

69. Ibid.

70. Santa Fe New Mexican, September 28, 1934.

71. Seligmann, p. 224.


73. Santa Fe New Mexican, October 11, 1934.

74. Seligmann, p. 224.

75. Santa Fe New Mexican, October 11, 1934.

76. Seligmann, p. 222.


78. Seligmann, p. 223. See also FDR's Personal File, FDR Library, Hyde Park, New York.


80. Brian Bonne threatened to mail a letter, dated December 10, 1934, mentioning the rumour to Roosevelt. He wrote: "I am writing in the hope that you can make a repudiation of this alleged remark, because, if you cannot, it will be evident that lack of breeding has its major source in the White House." The letter, which can be found in BMC Papers, was never sent.

81. Letter, BMC to Mother, Container 11, BMC Papers.
82. Seligmann, pp. 223-228.

83. Letter, BMC to Mother, Container 11, BMC Papers.

84. Seligmann, p. 227.

85. Ibid., pp. 227-228.

86. Ibid.


90. Seligmann, pp. 243-244.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid., p. 246.

93. Ibid., p. 244.

**EPILOGUE**

1. Santa Fe New Mexican, May 9, 1935.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Santa Fe New Mexican, May 10, 1935.

6. Eulogy given by Senator Norris on March 8, 1937, at the Rialto Theater in Washington, D. C. A copy can be found in BMC Papers.

7. Santa Fe New Mexican, May 9, 1935.
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