

GEORGE H. HODGES: STATE SENATOR
AND GOVERNOR OF KANSAS, 1905-1914

A Thesis
Presented to
the Division of Social Sciences
The Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
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August 1967

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

George H. Hodges was the first Democratic governor of Kansas in the twentieth century and only the second Democrat up to that time to hold that office in the history of Kansas. His political career was contemporary with the tempestuous period of the progressive era in Kansas. This is a study of his life, his political career, and his achievements as a Kansas state senator and governor. It is an attempt to bring together information available on Hodges in newspapers, books, encyclopedias, state records, and the Hodges' manuscripts in the Kansas State Historical Society. As far as the author has been able to determine no comprehensive study on Governor Hodges exists. About half a dozen master's degree theses have been written on the progressive era in Kansas. They adroitly analyzed the Republican Party's role and that of its leadership. Since the state's Democratic Party had been so frail, the leadership of George Hodges during that era has been somewhat relegated to minor consideration. With the importance of the progressives already well established by other writers, this study will seek to insert the role of a unique Kansas Democrat into the limelight of the state's progressive era.

Primarily sources for this study came from the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka; The Kansas Library, Capitol Building, Topeka; the Washburn University Library, Topeka; and the William Allen White Library, Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia. The writer wishes to acknowledge and thank the state archivist, his assistants, and the librarians at each of these places for their accommodation to make this study possible; to Dr. Zimmerman for his guidance as the thesis advisor; and a special word of appreciation to my wife, Betty, and children, Shelly and Steve, for their ministration and patience during the thesis preparation.

CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The life of George Hartshorn Hodges, the nineteenth governor of Kansas, had many characteristics that would classify it in the Horatio Alger category. His is the history of a man, fatherless from an early age, who made good financially and politically. He was born on February 6, 1866, in Orion, Richland County, Wisconsin.¹ He was the second of three children born to William Wesley and Lydia Ann Hartshorn Hodges. Frank, the eldest child was born in 1863 at Boscobel, Wisconsin.² The youngest child, a daughter, Eunice Daniels was born in 1882, after the family had moved to Olathe, Kansas.³

Paternally, George Hodges traces from the Hodges of Liberty Hall, Maryland.⁴ They were apparently descendants

¹Sara M. Baldwin and Robert M. Baldwin (ed.), Illustriana Kansas (Hebron, Nebraska: Illustriana Inc., 1933), p. 536.

²Ibid., p. 535.

³Rollo C. Speer, Some Scions of The Spear Family Prominent In Kansas Life and Affairs (/n.n./ /n.p./ 1933), p. 5.

⁴Baldwin and Baldwin, Illustriana Kansas, p. 535.

of William Hodges, an early American colonist, a member of the Church of England, born at Kent, England, who had come to Virginia; later, in 1665, he moved to Kent County, Maryland. He died in 1697, leaving three sons; Robert, William, and John. From Maryland two of the sons, John and William, went to settle in what now is Halifax County, Virginia.⁵ William Wesley Hodges, the father of the ex-governor was born in 1829 in Virginia. He became an educator and at times was a businessman.⁶

Maternally, Hodges came from the prominent Hartshorn and Spear families. These were families of wide attainment. Hodges was the ninth generation descendant of George Speere who had come to America in the early 1640's. Speere had become a freeman [freedman] on May 29, 1644, in Boston, Massachusetts, and thereafter settled on some land in Braintree, near Boston. By May of 1688, he had moved to New Dartmouth, Maine, now known as Pemaquid, in Cornwall

⁵Wirt J. Carrington, A History of Halifax County (Virginia) (Richmond: Appeals Press, Inc., 1924), p. 204; Almon D. Hodges, Jr., Genealogical Record of The Hodges Family of New England (Boston: Printed for the family by Frank H. Hodges, 1896), p. 8; George A. Hanson, Old Kent: The Eastern Shore of Maryland (Baltimore: John P. Des Forges, 1876), p. 309.

⁶Speer, Some Scions of The Spear Family, p. 5.

County. Tradition has it that Speere was killed in one of the numerous Indian raids in the area.⁷

The Spears were of Anglo-Saxon origin. Apparently they early lived in Scotland, but because of unfavorable agricultural and religious conditions they moved to Ireland and then to England. George Spear probably came from Yarmouth, England where, it is thought, he was born about 1620. From England the Spear family emigrated to Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1642.⁸

Some of George Speere's descendants settled in areas of Maine and Connecticut. A Reverend Elijah Spear from Suffield, Connecticut, participated in the Revolutionary War. His son Elijah [Jr.] fought in the War of 1812, serving with the 25th Regiment Battery of New York. He later moved to Seville, Ohio, where he was a blacksmith and also served as a Justice of the Peace. Elijah Spear's [Jr.] daughter, Betsey, married a Reverend George Hartshorn, M.D., a Methodist minister and doctor. The Hartshorn's daughter, Lydia Ann, who was born in Ohio in 1837, married William Wesley Hodges.⁹

⁷Ibid., p. 1; the spelling of the name Spear has been modified several times.

⁸Ibid., pp. 4-5.

⁹Ibid., p. 5; Baldwin and Baldwin, Illustriana Kansas, p. 535.

George Hodges was related to two governors of other states who were in office only a few years prior to Hodges' term in Kansas. They were John M. Pattison, the forty-third governor of Ohio elected to office in 1905, the only Democrat to win on his state's ticket. The other man was William Hodges Mann, Democrat, the forty-third governor of Virginia elected in 1909.¹⁰

William Wesley and Lydia Ann Hodges came to Johnson County, Kansas, in August of 1869 in a wagon train of prairie schooners. The Hodges chose to settle in the village of Olathe where they rented a little cottage. The family was greeted by grasshoppers which literally had filled the roadway, eaten much of what was green, and for a time eclipsed the sun.¹¹

Hodges' father, William Wesley, taught in the early school houses around Olathe. The family tried to save some money each month toward the purchase of a house and in a

¹⁰ Speer, Scions of The Spear Family, p. 5; The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, XIV (New York: James T. White and Company, 1910), pp. 104, 444.

¹¹ Kansas City Journal, December 1, 1912; The Life Story of George H. Hodges (/n.n./ /n.p./ /Democratic State Central Committee, an interview with Hodges' mother in 1910/), p. 2.

year they had saved about one hundred dollars. The family continued to add to their savings and sometime after the father's death in 1883, purchased a three-room house.¹²

The fatherless boys, Frank and George, in order to help support their mother and sister, went to work. Their first job was herding the town cows; they tended as many as forty cows and were paid one dollar a month per cow. Later the boys learned the lathing trade which involved the nailing of wood strips on a house. They averaged about three dollars a day while they worked on hundreds of houses in Johnson County.¹³ In the evenings George Hodges studied bookkeeping and copybooks which he had purchased shortly after his father's death. He soon became skillful as a penman and an accurate bookkeeper. Hodges obtained his formal education in the Olathe Public Schools.¹⁴ He liked outdoor sports and was considered a very good ball player.

Hodges gave great support to his widowed mother and family. She said of him, "He was a bundle of energy and

¹²Speer, Some Scions of The Spear Family, p. 5; The Life Story of George Hodges, p. 3.

¹³Ed Blair, History of Johnson County, Kansas (Lawrence, Kansas: Standard Publishing Company, 1915), p. 411.

¹⁴Baldwin and Baldwin, Illustriana Kansas, p. 536.

ambition. . . . He was always the first one of the family up in the morning and he was on the go until bedtime."¹⁵

At the age of twenty, Hodges obtained a job in a local lumberyard as a day laborer piling fence boards, two by fours, and flooring. Soon he advanced to the position of bookkeeper and traveling salesman for the lumberyard, covering areas in Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, and Arkansas. Within a three year span he had been promoted to the position of manager.¹⁶

In 1889, after he had worked for the G. B. Shaw and F. R. Lanter lumberyards, Hodges decided to go into business for himself. He contacted W. H. Betts, a cashier at the Patron's Cooperative Bank in Olathe who had known Hodges from his youth, and requested a two thousand five hundred dollar loan. This was granted, whereupon Hodges bought out the Charles Pettigrew Lumberyard. It was located just west of the Santa Fe railroad tracks on Elm Street in Olathe.¹⁷

¹⁵The Life Story of George H. Hodges, p. 4.

¹⁶Topeka Journal, February 11, 1905; William E. Connelley, History of Kansas, III (New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1928), p. 1218; Blair, History of Johnson County, Kansas, p. 411.

¹⁷Arrows to Atoms (Olathe, Kansas: Olathe Centennial, Inc., 1957), p. 46.

After the first three weeks in business for himself, Hodges had receipts of twenty-five cents. He made his first deliveries on foot since he could not afford a wagon and a team of horses. During the dull winter months Hodges hauled rock to the lumberyard alleys where he crushed it with a hammer to make a hard-surface roadway. In 1891 his brother Frank, who had been teaching school, joined the newly formed lumber firm and it was known as Hodges Brothers Lumber Company. This firm prospered and by 1933 the original lumberyard had expanded to include fourteen lumber businesses in surrounding towns of Johnson and adjoining counties.¹⁸

In his youth Hodges developed an interest in civic and political affairs. He was elected to the Olathe City Council in 1887 at the age of twenty-one, serving on that body for two years. During this time the city obtained its first electric lights.¹⁹ Hodges' progressiveness continued to make itself known in Olathe, partly as a result of the death of his only sister, Eunice Daniels, of typhoid fever in the late 1890's. Since Olathe had no city water or

¹⁸Topeka Journal, February 11, 1905; Johnson County Democrat, October 9, 1947; Arrows to Atoms, pp. 32, 46; Kansas City Times, August 11, 1933.

¹⁹Blair, History of Johnson County, Kansas, p. 411.

sewage system at that time, the Hodges brothers decided after a local epidemic of typhoid and meningitis in 1899, that the city urgently needed to get these systems installed to prevent further outbreaks of the disease that had killed their sister. They decided that Frank Hodges was to run for mayor [as a Democrat] of Olathe on this dual health platform. He was elected in 1899, winning by two hundred votes in a Republican town. As the incumbent in the next election, he was re-elected for a second term. During his two terms in office, Olathe built a sewage system, a waterworks plant, and hard-surfaced streets. Hodges' brother, Frank, was known as the mayor who took Olathe "out of the mud."²⁰

In 1904 George R. Hodges was elected to the Kansas Senate from the Sixth District encompassing Johnson and Miami County. He was the first Democrat to be elected from this district. Hodges was re-elected in 1908 for a second term. He ran as the Democratic nominee for governor in 1910, but he was defeated by the Republican incumbent, Walter R. Stubbs. In 1912, though, Hodges, in a contested election,

²⁰ Kansas City Journal, August 28, 1910; Kansas City Times, February 6, 1962; Arrows to Atoms, p. 46.

narrowly defeated Arthur Capper for the highest political office in Kansas. Hodges suffered defeat in his gubernatorial re-election bid in 1914 from Arthur Capper, the Republican publisher. His political life, according to numerous observers, had many progressive features. The achievements of his senatorial and gubernatorial tenure will be discussed in more detail later in this paper.

In his post-gubernatorial career, Hodges was a popular lecturer on the Chautauqua circuit. He was considered to be an authority on the commission form of city government and the unicameral form of legislature.²¹ His stand for prohibition accentuated the demand for his lecture appearances. In 1915 it was announced that he should tour Australia in 1917 to make speeches for this cause.²²

In 1920 Hodges was the Democratic nominee for the U. S. Senate seat from Kansas, but in the general election he was defeated by Republican Charles Curtis. Hodges' political

²¹Connelley, History of Kansas, III, p. 1218; Johnson County Democrat, February 13, 1947; Blair, History of Johnson County, Kansas, pp. 412-413.

²²Blair, History of Johnson County, Kansas, p. 412; Topeka State Journal, April 2, 1915.

activity and career were cut short because of serious illness before the election.²³ In the next several years the family, in the interest of Hodges' health, traveled between Florida, for the winters, and Minnesota, for the summers. Thereafter his only active political activity was serving as a member of the Kansas State Board of Regents for almost two years before he resigned on account of his poor health.²⁴

Hodges was married to Ora May Murray of Olathe on March 8, 1899, in a quiet little ceremony in the home of the bride's father before a few relatives. Ordinarily this event in Olathe would have been a gala affair, in view of the political and economic prominence locally of the Hodges family; but the recent death of Hodges' sister was the reason for the choice of this type of ceremony.²⁵

Ora May Murray, the daughter of Arnold and Mattie Ferree Murray, Kansas pioneers, was born on her parents farm near Olathe on January 19, 1873.²⁶ Miss Murray's

²³Arrows to Atoms, p. 32.

²⁴Kansas City Star, July 7, 1925; Kansas City Star, June 27, 1927.

²⁵The Olathe Register, March 10, 1899.

²⁶Spear, Scions of The Spear Family, p. 5; Woman's Kansas Day Club, Sketches of The First Ladies of Kansas ([n.n.] [n.p.] 1959), p. 26.

mother died when the daughter was eight years of age. The widower, Mr. Murray, sent his daughter to live with relatives in Rushville, Indiana, where she obtained her formal education, graduating from high school as valedictorian of the class in 1890. She continued her educational training at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana, majoring in domestic science. She was a member of the Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority. After graduation in 1894, Miss Murray returned to Olathe to keep house for her father.²⁷

Mrs. Ora Hodges was fond of literary work. She was an officer of one of the literary clubs in Olathe. She served as a director of the Olathe Public Library.²⁸

When she was the first lady of Kansas, Mrs. Hodges started a project to collect the pictures and portraits of all past Kansas first ladies so that they could be reproduced in similar size and hung in the governor's mansion. The project was later completed by Mrs. Andrew F. Schoeppel, 1943-47.²⁹

²⁷Sketches of The First Ladies of Kansas, p. 26; Kansas City Journal, December 1, 1912.

²⁸Kansas City Journal, December 1, 1912.

²⁹Sketches of The First Ladies of Kansas, p. 26.

Mr. and Mrs. George Hodges had two children, both born in Olathe. A daughter, Georgia Ferree, was born April 7, 1905. A son, Murray Hartshorn, was born May 28, 1910.³⁰

During the period of World War I, Hodges was a civilian officer in the American Red Cross at Camp Funston in the 89th Division, with the rank of major.³¹ Under Governor Humphrey [1888], Hodges had been an Adjutant, First Regiment of the Kansas National Guard.³²

In the years after the World War I, Hodges kept himself busy with business interests. In 1921 the Hodges brothers, Frank and George, founded a newspaper in Olathe, The Johnson County Democrat.³³ During his business career, Hodges was associated with the following businesses: director and owner of the controlling interest in the First National Bank in Olathe; president of Olathe Building and Loan Company; director of the City National Bank and Trust Company, Kansas City; director of The State Bank, Stanley,

³⁰Spear, Scions of The Spear Family, p. 5.

³¹Connelley, History of Kansas, III, p. 1218; Kansas City Star, July 7, 1925.

³²Baldwin and Baldwin, Illustriana Kansas, p. 536.

³³Kansas City Times, February 6, 1962.

Kansas; director of the Overland Park Savings and Loan Association; president of the Olathe Register Company [Register Publishing Company]; owner of several farms in Johnson County.³⁴

Hodges was a member of the following organizations: The Christian Church in Olathe; Knights of Pythias, Independent Order of Odd Fellows; Thirty-third degree Scottish Rite Mason; charter member of Olathe Commandery; charter member of Kansas City, Kansas, Consistory; and the Abdullah Shrine in Leavenworth, Kansas.³⁵

George Hodges died at the age of 81 in Menorah Hospital, Kansas City, Missouri, on October 7, 1947, of a heart attack after he became ill while attending a directors meeting of the City National Bank and Trust Company in Kansas City. Funeral services were held at the Christian Church in Olathe. He was buried in the Olathe cemetery.³⁶

³⁴Johnson County Democrat, October 9, 1947; Kansas City Times, October 9, 1947; Blair, History of Johnson County, Kansas, p. 412.

³⁵Blair, History of Johnson County, Kansas, p. 412; Connelley, History of Kansas, III, p. 1218.

³⁶Kansas City Times, October 8-9, 1947; Johnson County Democrat, October 9, 1947.

CHAPTER III

STATE SENATOR HODGES

George H. Hodges became more deeply involved in professional political activity in 1904, when he ran for the Kansas State Senate from the Sixth District. His only previous "official" political office had been in 1887 on the Clathe City Council for a two-year term.

Hodges, now a successful lumberman, and his wife had traveled in Europe from March through August in 1904. Upon their return home they found intense reform agitation brewing in the "political stew" of the district.¹ This corresponded with the general political status of Kansas at this time. In the decade after the turn of the century, there had been much political stress and strain throughout the state. Most of it had occurred in the Republican Party. One critic said of the period, "It was a hectic decade, intra-party."³ Since the Republican Party was dominant,

¹Topeka State Journal, February 11, 1905.

²John D. Bright (ed.), Kansas: The First Century, II (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1956), p. 9.

³Ibid., p. 9.

most people in the state became aware of the "new awakening" through the "boss-busting" movement led by Walter R. Stubbs.⁴ Nationally, Theodore Roosevelt had become Kansans' idol. Roosevelt reciprocated the feeling in a speech at Wichita in 1900, when he declared that he was, " . . . a Kansas man by adoption."⁵ William Allen White of the Emporia Gazette continually kept Kansans editorially informed of the virtues of this great man of the people who was out fighting " . . . syndicates and plunderers. . . . "⁶

On the surface local Republicans seemed to have matters well in hand; furthermore both legislative representatives were Republican incumbents. Within the Republican Party, though, in the district as well as state-wide, much unrest was continuing to rise to the surface.

At the Republican Second District Congressional Convention in Garnett early in 1904, the party had a nomination controversy involving J. D. Bowersock and Henry J. Allen of Ottawa. Allen had the majority of delegates, but Bowersock secured the nomination because the contested Wyandotte and Miami County "rump" delegations were seated.⁷

⁴Ibid., p. 10.

⁵Ibid., p. 5.

⁶Ibid., pp. 8-9.

⁷Olathe Mirror, April 21, 1904.

Miami County joined Johnson County to form the Sixth State Senate District, therefore, this Republican factional fight seemed to greatly enhance the chances for the Democrats to win that particular seat in the fall election. Furthermore, the Republican incumbent, Frank M. Sponable, was directly linked to the forces which had been accused of "stealing" the Second District Congressional nomination for Bowersock. Sponable and Bowersock were close friends of State Treasurer Tom F. Kelly of Miami County, whose political career at the time appeared to be in jeopardy. Kansas newspapers had exposed Kelly's manipulation of funds while in office. He was accused of being unable to account for \$1,402.50 during his term in office. The funds involved bond coupons that were missing from the school fund, because Kelly had allegedly cashed them.⁸ In addition, Sponable and Kelly were accused of improper manipulations in a Commanche County bond issue.⁹ Kelly's integrity was further questioned when the Devlin State Bank failed. Previous to the failure the state treasurer had illegally deposited half a million dollars of

⁸Editorial in the Olathe Register, October 14, 1904; editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, October 28, 1904.

⁹Editorial in the Olathe Register, October 14, 1904.

state funds in the bank. This action had come before the state had a banking measure regulating statute designation of state fund deposits.¹⁰

Two Democratic Party papers in the district, the Olathe Register and the Paola Western Spirit had been exploiting local political discontent to the fullest and each was seeking to supply a suitable Democratic candidate for the senate race. Barney Sheridan, editor of the Paola newspaper, asserted that it was Miami County's turn to run a candidate. The Olathe Register's answer was that a suitable candidate couldn't be found in Miami County and then suggested that George Hodges was the man who could get votes, would be an honor to the district, and would get Sponable's "scalp."¹¹

William Sapp, chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, had suggested in a letter to Hodges in early September that the Olathean should get into the senate race against Sponable.¹² Before Hodges ever committed himself for the race, his proposed candidacy became an issue in an

¹⁰Topeka Daily Capital, March 9, 1907.

¹¹Editorial in the Olathe Register, September 16, 1904.

¹²William Sapp to George Hodges, September 7, 1904, George Hodges MSS.

intra-party struggle among the Sixth District Democrats. Barney Sheridan, a Democratic power in the Miami County area opposed George Hodges for various personal reasons. In a letter in early October to Sam Seaton of Olathe, Sheridan said that Hodges personally was "against him." Furthermore, as evidence he disclosed that Hodges had never subscribed to the Western Spirit. He said that he would reluctantly support Hodges because they were both Democrats, but it would be a hard thing to do.¹³ Part of the problem may have been the result of a power struggle for newspaper influence in the district between Sheridan's Western Spirit and the Olathe Register which had groomed Hodges and repudiated Miami County's claim to "their turn" for a senate representative.

The Democrats of the Sixth District held their Senatorial Convention in Paola on September 22, 1904. It was a joint convention of Populists and Democrats who sent separate delegations, although they had earlier fused their political efforts. Sam Seaton, Olathe, later an editor of the Register, was the chairman of the convention. R. W. Holmes of Miami County nominated George Hodges after E. A. Gilbert, also of Miami County, withdrew from contention because his name had been submitted without his consent.

¹³Barney Sheriden to Sam Seaton, October 9, 1904, Hodges MSS.

The convention then accepted Hodges by unanimous approval, after having polled the Democratic and Populist delegates separately.¹⁴

Hodges, in a brief acceptance speech, thanked the convention for the nomination and indicated that he would support the district Democratic platform. It consisted of four main points:

- (1) it gave full support to the state Democratic ticket;
- (2) it pledged an honest and incorrupt state administration through the nominee of the district;
- (3) it pledged to seek state aid for Kaw Valley flood victims of 1903-04 and prevention of area floods;
- (4) it instructed the senate nominee to vote for a bill that would give the state the interest from money deposited by the state treasurer in various banks.

Furthermore, Hodges said that many Republicans, tired of boss rule, unfair primaries, and dishonest conventions, had given him the assurance that he would get their vote and thus they intended to repudiate their party's questionable practices at

¹⁴Olathe Register, September 30, 1904.

the November 8 election. Hodges promised to " . . . serve all people, Democrats, People's Party, Republicans, and Socialists alike . . . [so that] no man who voted for Hodges would ever regret it."¹⁵

Hodges' opponent, Frank W. Sponable was the Republican incumbent. He had been born in Miami County, but had since moved to Gardner in Johnson County, where he was a banker. Sponable was thirty years of age and was said to be " . . . shrewd, efficient, energetic and a good mixer . . . quite influential in this part of the state."¹⁶

The campaign was a struggle between the contrasting political backgrounds of the two candidates. Sponable stressed that it would be folly for the voters to send a minority party man to the state legislature, especially since the district had two state institutions [Osawatomie State Hospital and the School for the Deaf in Olathe] that would need special attention and appropriations which a freshman minority senator would find difficult to obtain from the majority party. Sponable reminded the voters that his influence had given Olathe a new building for the School

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Olathe Mirror, October 27, 1904.

for the Deaf.¹⁷ The Olathe Mirror emphasized the fact that Sponable was familiar with public affairs and legislative methods. He was praised as a senator who sought to comply with " . . . the requests of his friends . . . keeping in mind the best interests of the district."¹⁸

Hodges' supporters emphasized their candidate's business experience and integrity, noting that he was a " . . . self-made man, who . . . is neither a political boss, nor owned by any syndicate of political thimble riggers."¹⁹ The Hodges' forces hit hard at the issue of corruption during the campaign. The Olathe Register continually hammered away at Sponable as an errand boy for the Republican political bosses. It quoted from various "boss-buster" newspapers across the state which gave the legislative record of the machine and Sponable specifically. Claims were made that the last legislature's expenditures had resulted in a twenty-five per cent increase in state taxes by such excesses as three to four hundred legislative employees, when fifty could have accomplished the task; it was also alleged that

¹⁸ Editorial in ibid., October 20, 1904.

¹⁹ Olathe Register, October 7, 1904.

vouchers had been forged by legislators to open the till to state funds.²⁰ The Register quoted a Topeka Daily Capital editorial of October 28, 1904, in which that paper abandoned Tom Kelly because of his improper activities as state treasurer. Sponable was pictured as the tool Kelly used to help smother a senate bill which would have made designated depositories for state fund. The interest the state would have saved might have ranged anywhere from eighteen to thirty-six thousand dollars.²¹

The people in the district appeared to be in a reform mood, especially in Miami County, Kelly's home, because his infamous activities were spread across the printed pages of some Kansas newspapers. W. T. Johnston, a Paola attorney, in a letter to Hodges late in October said that the people in Miami County wanted some medicine for fraud.²² L. S. Harvey, Miami County attorney, in a letter to Hodges a day later said that Republicans were openly working for and supporting Hodges.²³ W. T. Johnston in another letter to

²⁰Olathe Register, November 4, 1904.

²¹Ibid.

²²W. T. Johnston to George Hodges, October 28, 1904, Hodges MSS.

²³L. S. Harvey to George Hodges, October 29, 1904, Hodges MSS.

Hodges on the last day of October said that Tom Kelly was the source of all the Republican backlash, and Sponable was considered to be the orderly.²⁴ The Olathe Register encouraged people to be independent voters, abandon party lines, examine each candidate's qualifications, and in conclusion urged " . . . house cleaning . . . in Johnson County."²⁵

Ironically, while Hodges was receiving much Republican support, Barney Sheridan and his Democratic Western Spirit were trying to defeat Hodges for reasons of personal vengeance which included monetary campaign contributions and perhaps bitterness over the nomination. Sheridan alleged Hodges had not paid more than twenty dollars to the Democratic Party for his own campaign. Hodges received quite a few letters from Democratic friends urging him to soft pedal or ignore Sheridan because Hodges could afford to do so since he had great Republican support. This contention appeared to be substantiated when Sponable's best friends admitted things looked bleak for their candidate.²⁶

²⁴W. T. Johnston to George Hodges, October 31, 1904, Hodges MSS.

²⁵Editorial in the Olathe Register, October 7, 1904.

²⁶E. A. Gilbert to George Hodges, October 29, 1904, Hodges MSS; Robert O'Conner to George Hodges, October 31, 1904, Hodges MSS; W. T. Johnston to Dr. John J. Parker, November 7, 1904, Hodges MSS.

The Olathe Mirror, after predicting in September that Republicans would win, spoke only in general terms throughout the campaign about the senate race, warning against party apathy. After several pleas for Republican party votes, in early November, it cautioned that the Democrats might resort to fraud or trickery in order to win.²⁷

Hodges countered the usual Republican election day victories with a personal conquest in his race with Sponable. Hodges' margin of victory in the Sixth District was six hundred and sixty-nine votes. He had gathered 4,481 votes to his opponent's 3,812.²⁸ This was a significant Democratic Party feat, since the Republican presidential candidate, Theodore Roosevelt, carried the district by 2,600 votes.²⁹ The Olathe Mirror's post-mortem was, "We were hit hard by democrats [sic] as to county matters on election day."³⁰ The Olathe Register rejoiced that the "yellow dog was dead" in Johnson County since seven Democrats had picked up victories along with Hodges.³¹ For some Democrats, Hodges' victory was

²⁷Olathe Mirror, November 3, 1904.

²⁸Fourteenth Biennial Report of the Secretary of State of the State of Kansas, 1903-1904 (Topeka: George A. Clark, State Printer, 1904).

²⁹Topeka State Journal, February 11, 1905.

³⁰Editorial in the Olathe Mirror, November 17, 1904.

³¹Olathe Register, November 14, 1904.

especially gratifying, since Sheridan's Western Spirit had failed to control the district's Democratic policies. W. T. Johnston, Paola attorney, wrote to Hodges that " . . . you had the red hot opposition of Barney, because you refused to ask any favor of him."³² Campaign wounds seemed to heal quickly and the Republican Olathe Mirror, in summary, said that Senator-elect Hodges was in a good position to do some effective work for his district.³³ Congressman Charles Curtis, among others, sent his congratulations to Hodges on the victory.

Many reform candidates swept to victory in the 1904 election in Kansas. Theodore Roosevelt led the way when he obtained sixty-six per cent of the state's vote for the presidency; Ed Hoch won in his race for governor with a "campaign of and for purity."³⁴ George Hodges' victory allowed him to enjoy the voters' response to the crusade for a renewal of conscience in politics. The Olathe Register quoted a warning from the Ottawa Republic to the newly elected officials across the state. It reminded them they were on trial and that the jurors, the people, would

³²W. T. Johnston to George Hodges, November 14, 1904, Hodges MSS.

³³Editorial in the Olathe Mirror, January 19, 1905.

³⁴Bright, Kansas: The First Century, II, pp. 1, 23.

carefully scrutinize their actions. If they would disregard the wishes of the populace, the voters would retire them in two years. The Republic continued saying, "A spirit of intelligent independence is growing so rapidly in Kansas that public servants in the future will have to do their duty or walk the plank."³⁵

During the legislative sessions Senator Hodges stayed at the Throop Hotel in Topeka, which served as the State Democratic headquarters. As a freshman senator he had many instructions from various constituents in his district, who now expected him to initiate some immediate legislative action to justify their trust in him. W. D. Greason, editor of the Miami Republican wrote Hodges just before the 1904⁵ legislature convened, indicating he thought the lawmaking body would be a working one. He also said, "I think you will be able to cut off a lot of graft from the state treasurer's office and the Topeka boodle crowd in general. If this can be accomplished Kansas will have something to congratulate herself upon."³⁶ W. T. Johnston, from Paola, advised Hodges if he would work with the dominant party, he could do much

³⁵Clathe Register, December 2, 1904.

³⁶W. D. Greason to George Hodges, January 4, 1905, Hodges MSS.

good.³⁷ Hodges discovered that there were only two other Democrats in the Senate so the advice appeared to be appropo.³⁸

Governor Hoch, in his message to the 1905 Republican controlled legislature, called for a "New Deal" in Kansas. He advocated many progressive reforms, asking for \$10,000 to investigate and overhaul state departments.³⁹ Among specific reforms requested were: (1) a direct primary law; (2) suffrage for women; (3) a state oil refinery; (4) a state depository; and (5) railroad legislation.

The main battles in the 1905 legislature developed as a result of attempts to control trusts and corporations. The oil producers of southeast Kansas wanted relief from the Standard Oil monopoly in their area. The Kansas City Star led the newspaper fight and called for action from the legislators against the "octopus." It called such warfare a second John Brown movement against enslavement.⁴⁰ The Star

³⁷W. T. Johnston to George Hodges, December 24, 1904, Hodges MSS.

³⁸Topeka Daily Capital, January 5, 1905.

³⁹Ibid., January 11, 1905.

⁴⁰Editorial in the Kansas City Star, February 3, 1905.

was a strong, independent voice for reform throughout this decade. Although it was printed in Missouri, it had a large circulation in Kansas and was considered one of the most powerful newspapers in the Sunflower state politics.⁴¹

A state convict-operated oil refinery bill was introduced by Senator Porter of Montgomery County in the Senate as a first line attempt to combat Standard's practice of discrimination among the oil producers in the state. It was one of four laws desired by the producers to control their alleged tormentor. Standard Oil was accused by Senator F. Dumont Smith of falsely encouraging local producers to develop oil fields. After area companies had opened a new field, Standard Oil would drop the price of crude oil, discourage the producers, and finally obtain control when the local producers could no longer remain solvent.⁴²

Hodges lent his legislative assistance to the producers. His speech in the Senate on the proposed state oil refinery was widely circulated in the state. The oration said in part, "It will cost the people of Kansas thirty cents per capita to establish the proposed refinery. It may not be successful, but it will stand for all time as

⁴¹Bright, Kansas: The First Century, II, p. 385.

⁴²Topeka Daily Capital, February 12, 1905.

an enduring monument to the effort of the people of a free state to strangle an unfair monopoly."⁴³ The refinery bill drew much debate and intense lobbying. Various people labeled the proposed refinery plan as radical and socialistic, but the newspapers leading the fight recalled that although a state-owned plant might be unorthodox, drastic steps were necessary at the time to solve the problem.⁴⁴

Standard Oil retaliated by taking no more oil from Kansas fields because of the "agitation" against them, and threatened to move all of their business out of the state. Immediately they were accused of blacklisting Kansas products in order to coerce the legislature into defeating the state oil refinery bill. They were also accused of having an alliance with the railroads to fix rates on crude oil shipments. The disclosure of the Company's latest actions greatly aroused public sentiment. The general public now believed that the state government's honor was at stake, and that its existence must supersede a defiant trust. For the

⁴³ Legislative Record of Senator George Hodges Democratic Candidate for Governor (n.n./ n.p./ Democratic State Central Committee/ 1912), p. 3.

⁴⁴ Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, February 8, 1905; editorial in the Kansas City Star, February 8, 1905.

voters the refinery bill became a symbolic struggle for integrity and majority will. The oil producers intensified their appeals to the public, urging them to request immediate legislative action against "treachery by the betrayer."⁴⁵

Both houses of the legislature passed the state oil refinery bill early in February, and Governor Hoch signed it into law by the middle of the month. At the apex of the fight, the oil producers had also appealed to President Theodore Roosevelt for assistance. The President responded by ordering a probe of Standard Oil practices in Kansas. This occurred the very day that the state oil refinery bill was signed into law. National attention focused on Kansas during this titanic struggle; much favorable comment for the bill came from major newspapers. The Kansas City Star summarized the defeat of the oil "octopus" by saying, "Kansas has compelled admiration by its firm position . . . its great semi-public corporations shall not bunco the people and subject them to tyrannous depredations."⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Editorial in the Kansas City Star, February 11, 1905; Topeka Daily Capital, February 14, 1905.

⁴⁶ Editorial in the Kansas City Star, February 20, 1905; also see editorial in *ibid.*, February 17, 1905; Topeka Daily Capital, February 17, 1905.

The Kansas Supreme Court, later in the summer of 1905, declared the state oil refinery unconstitutional. But it seemed to matter little to Kansans, who felt vindicated by a report by Ida M. Tarbell which had been released toward the end of February, 1905. The author gave the results of a four year study on Standard Oil Company procedures and practices; it concluded that Standard was guilty of trust actions. Later when the federal government also took anti-trust action against Standard Oil, Kansans maintained that their initiation of the struggle had been well compensated.⁴⁷

In addition to the state oil refinery bill, the legislature passed several other bills to control the trusts: pipelines were made common carriers and placed under the jurisdiction of the Railroad Commissioners; maximum freight rates were established for oil; discrimination was prohibited between localities in selling any product.⁴⁸

Senator Hodges consistently aligned himself with the progressives on the major legislative issues. He had voted for the state oil refinery, the state printing plant, and corporation regulation.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Kansas City Star, February 23, 1905.

⁴⁸Ibid., March 1, 1905.

⁴⁹Senate Journal: Proceedings of The Senate of the State of Kansas, Fourteenth Biennial Session, Topeka, January 10 to March 10, 1905 (Topeka: State Printing Office, 1905), pp. 203, 224, 230.

Hodges' most important Standing Committee assignment in 1905 session was the one on railroads. It was with this committee that he gained public attention for his work. He introduced a bill to compel railroads to weigh their open coal cars before and after loading. Its intent was to prevent mine operators and railroads from shortchanging the dealers. Heretofore coal cars had been weighed once a year to determine the empty weight which was then stenciled on the side of the railroad car. Dust, debris, snow, and ice in winter, would accumulate in the cars after a while until an empty car would accumulate up to a seven per cent weight increase (at times as high as six thousand pounds). This would result in a lesser amount of coal in the load, but the purchaser still paid for the full weight, debris, coal and all.

G. W. Scott, a dealer from Edgerton, had furnished some details and had requested aid from Hodges regarding this matter.⁵⁰ The legislature passed the weight bill, accepting the affidavit evidence that Senator Hodges had compiled from numerous dealers. This evidence revealed that if the Hodges bill were passed, the people of Kansas would save about \$850,000 per year.⁵¹ In reaction to Hodges' efforts to

⁵⁰G. W. Scott to George Hodges, January 5, 1905, Hodges MSS.

⁵¹Olathe Register, February 24, 1905.

secure passage of this bill, a Topeka Daily Capital article was quoted by the Olathe Register in which Hodges was classified as a man who stood for the people, over against another group of legislators who stood for the railroads.⁵² The rival Olathe Mirror in an editorial comment said this was a good law Senator Hodges had secured; it would save Kansans about three-quarters of a million dollars annually.⁵³

Hodges continued to distinguish himself with his work in the Railroad Committee. On a bill before the committee to extend the authority of the Board of Railroad Commissioners, the Republican majority wanted to report it unfavorably; but Hodges, in a minority report, brought the question before the whole Senate where public sentiment forced the Republicans to bow to the Hodges led fight. The bill extended the authority of the Railroad Commissioners to regulate and establish freight and passenger rates for the railroads.⁵⁴

Hodges also helped to design the Reciprocal Demurrage bill which would compel the railroads to pay a fine for every day, after 48 hours that they were unable to furnish a

⁵²Ibid., March 3, 1905.

⁵³Editorial in the Olathe Mirror, March 9, 1905.

⁵⁴Topeka Daily Capital, February 24, 1905.

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shipper with cars. The railroads had been accused of discriminating in this fashion against "uncooperative" shippers. The Committee chairman opposed the bill and had it stricken from the calendar, but Hodges immediately demanded that the bill be reinstated, which it was, eventually passing the Senate and House to become a part of the state statutes.⁵⁵

In the Agriculture Committee, Hodges helped to defeat a beet sugar subsidy bill. He presented U. S. Department of Agriculture figures which indicated that sugar raisers earned more without a subsidy than did the average farmer in the other parts of the state. Hodges arguments helped to kill the bill.⁵⁶

Hodges was jointly responsible for amendments to the Australian ballot law. Paradoxically, the amendments in part would later determine, in his favor, the disputed ballot controversy in the 1912 gubernatorial race, which resulted in a contested victory for him. Senator Young and Senator Hodges guided the ballot amendment to triumph. It

⁵⁵Senate Journal, State of Kansas, 1905, p. 548;
Legislative Record of Senator Hodges, p. 2.

⁵⁶Glathe Register, January 27, 1905.

allowed the voter to cast a split ticket ballot in the general election without being voided.⁵⁷

The full weight railroad bill was the only one of the half dozen bills Senator Hodges personally introduced that passed, but he had shown himself to be an effective member of the legislature by fighting for progressive bills. He forced the majority to hear minority views in spite of the gag rule, which the Republicans had invoked upon the three Senate Democrats at the beginning of the session by changing the demand for roll call vote from three to five votes.⁵⁸ The Topeka Daily Capital and the Topeka State Journal were quoted as saying that Senator Hodges was a legislator who did things for the people. He was especially commended for forcing the Republicans to take positive action on railroad legislation.⁵⁹ He had been so effective that a Kansas City Star quote mentioned him for the 1906 Congressional race from the Second District.⁶⁰

After the legislature had adjourned, Governor Hoch called it the greatest such body in Kansas history. Walter

⁵⁷ Ibid., February 10, June 30, 1905; Senate Journal, State of Kansas, 1905, pp. 427-428.

⁵⁸ Topeka Daily Capital, January 12, 1905.

⁵⁹ Olathe Register, March 3, 1905.

⁶⁰ Ibid., December 15, 1905.

T. Stubbs, Speaker of the House and the "boss-busting" leader, also praised the legislature for making good on eight of eleven reform campaign pledges. The legislature had passed bills to:

- (1) protect the oil industry;
- (2) give more effective railroad regulation;
- (3) designate depositories for state funds at a fixed interest rate;
- (4) establish a state printing plant;
- (5) build better roads;
- (6) reform management of state institutions;
- (7) establish some Civil Service provisions;
- (8) reapportion Congressional districts.

They had enacted 535 bills into law and readied three constitutional amendments for submission to the voters, while spending only \$65,000 in the process. This was the least amount a legislative session had cost in a dozen years. The legislature had appropriated a little over five million dollars in funds, which was about a half million dollars less than the 1903 session allotted. Among the 1905 allocations were: \$210,000 for the convict-operated oil refinery; \$60,000 for the state printing plant; and \$10,000 for investigations regarding alleged improper state government practices.⁶¹ A

⁶¹Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, March 5, 1907; ibid., March 8, 11, 12, 1907; William F. Zornow, Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), p. 211.

Topeka Daily Capital editorial called the legislature a reformer in fact as well as in promise.⁶² The Kansas City Star also gave editorial praise to the 1905 session for the "Square Deal" work it had accomplished.⁶³ The legislature had failed, however, to enact remedies for a few of the major issues of the day, namely reforms in taxation and a direct primary law.⁶⁴

The year of 1906 had brought new political alignments to Kansas politics. The "railroad wing" of the Republican Party had managed to gain control of the state convention; had written the platform; and had deposed Walter R. Stubbs as chairman of the State Republican Central Committee. Only three non-machine candidates managed to survive the nomination session at the convention: Ed Hoch, the incumbent for governor; the attorney general; and a railroad commissioner. The new machine was headed by men like David Mulvane, Cyrus Leland, Tom Kelly, C. Y. Morgan, and Morton Albaugh. The railroads had become a major irritant in the state; therefore, a group of reformers, including Tom Murdock and Walter Stubbs, met in mid-year to form an organization to combat the menace.

⁶²Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, March 5, 1905.

⁶³Editorial in the Kansas City Star, March 10, 1905.

⁶⁴Zornow, Kansas, p. 212.

This group became known as the Kansas Republican League. It proposed a "Square Deal" for the state on a four-point platform consisting of equitable taxes; reduction of railroad fare to two cents a mile; an anti-pass law; and a direct primary law.⁶⁵

Governor Hoch, after his narrow win in 1906 over the Democratic candidate William A. Harris, urged the 1907 legislature to enact a "Square Deal" program which included such major items as: (1) a direct primary; (2) an anti-pass law railroad regulation that would compel them to treat the public with respect; and (3) stricter prohibition enforcement measures.⁶⁶ A Topeka Daily Capital editorial a day before had noted that the anti-pass and direct primary issues were the most important ones facing the legislature, for these two laws would give the voters the power to politically protect themselves.⁶⁷ The legislature had many progressive members. Sixty Republican representatives in the House were known to be "Square Deal" advocates. The House Democrats publicly

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 212-213; Kansas City Star, January 8, 1907.

⁶⁶Topeka Daily Capital, January 9, 1907.

⁶⁷Ibid., January 8, 1907; editorial in ibid., January 8, 1907.

indicated where they stood when they en masse refused to accept free passes.⁶⁸

In his legislative message Governor Hoch had proposed that the Supreme Court justices be given a salary increase. The public immediately reacted adversely with the accusation that this was a salary grab proposal, especially since the bill was one of the first issues the legislature considered. The House was for the bill while the Senate opposed it. Senator Hodges worked hard to defeat the bill, but the only thing he managed to get was a compromise reduction of the proposed salary increase. One reason for Hodges' opposition to the bill was that the railroad lobby was trying to push the salary increase measure through the legislature in three or four days. His emphatic efforts did help to reduce the salary increase by one thousand dollars a year instead of granting the original proposal of two thousand dollar increase. Previous to the salary increase, the Supreme Court justices were receiving three thousand dollars a year. Hodges voted against the bill when the Senate, in a roll call, accepted the final House version of the judiciary salary proposal. The bill had been pushed through the legislature in one week.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Ibid., January 18, 1907.

⁶⁹Kansas City Star, January 10-11, 1907; editorial in the Olathe Register, January 17, 1907.

Early in the 1907 session Hodges introduced a concurrent resolution to instruct the Kansas U. S. Senators and request its Congressmen to vote for placing lumber on the tariff-free list. The legislature passed the resolution by the end of January. It was estimated that tariff-free lumber would save dealers an average of thirty-five dollars a carload. The Topeka Daily Capital commended Hodges for this resolution, noting in headline print that the Kansas Senate was after the "octopus."⁷⁰

The anti-pass issue as predicted, created a tremendous struggle in the legislature. Various newspapers were leading the crusade against the free passes. Among the more notable were the Topeka Daily Capital, the Kansas City Star, and William Allen White's Emporia Gazette.

Newspapers had been in the practice of running advertisements and notices free in exchange for favors. The railroads granted free passage as part of the reciprocity system. "Partly through the favor of the press the railroads dominated party conventions and state legislatures which named U. S. Senators and threw a hefty political weight."⁷¹

⁷⁰Topeka Daily Capital, January 17, 1907; editorial in the Olathe Register, January 24, 31, 1907.

⁷¹Bright, Kansas: The First Century, II, p. 384.

Hodges and the other members of the Railroad Committee were kept in the limelight during much of the 1907 session. The bill to establish two-cent railroad passenger fare and the bill to allow a tax commission to evaluate railroad property were involved in an immense struggle. Public attention was focused daily on these bills through the journalist efforts of the "Square Deal" newspapers. The Senate, unlike the House, was thought by progressives to be the roadblock for the proposed legislation. After the House adopted their version of an anti-pass bill, Kansans waited expectantly for Senate reactions. Senator Hodges and Senator Getty of Wyandotte County revised the House anti-pass bill and by the first of February, the Senate Railroad Committee, by a vote of eight to three, recommended the two-cent fare bill and the anti-pass bill for passage. Hodges had helped to procure the majority action of the committee. The ease of the committee's action surprised most "Square Dealers", and especially the railroad lobby. The Topeka Daily Capital said the railroad lobby was dumbfounded at their apparent loss of control.⁷² Since the railroads appeared to be engulfed by a swell of unfavorable public sentiment on the

⁷²Topeka Daily Capital, February 1-2, 1907; editorial in ibid., February 3, 1907.

anti-pass and two-cent fare issues, they decided to concentrate their efforts on preventing the direct primary and tax assessment bills from becoming law. After the Senate had passed the anti-pass bill, Hodges used his influence to get twenty-nine House Democrats to combine with thirty-five Republicans for acceptance of the Conference Committee Report on the anti-pass bill. He was particularly pleased with this achievement, in as much as the House Democrats had marshalled twenty-nine out of thirty-three party votes, while the ninety-two Republicans only had thirty-five of their number who voted to make the anti-pass bill a legal statute. The passage of the first major "Square Deal" measure, in this session, had not come until the sixth of March. The law did not eliminate all passes, but a major portion of them were now abolished. The public was grateful that an anti-railroad beachhead had been established.⁷³

Although the anti-pass bill, the two-cent fare bill, the direct primary bill, and the Tax Commission bill were all almost simultaneously under legislative consideration and railroad opposition, the Tax Commission bill debate drew the most spectacular public notice and reaction. The Kansas City

⁷³Editorials in ibid., March 4, 6, 1907; also see Legislative Record of Senator Hodges, p. 3.

Star, among many others, accused the railroads of evading taxes in the state on their personal property by gross underevaluation. The paper charged that in Wyandotte County, for example, the railroads had property worth fifty million dollars and yet its assessed value was only a fraction over two million dollars. This was considered to be a good example of what was allegedly a state-wide practice by railroads.⁷⁴ Fred Bullene, the Star's Senate correspondent, was barred from the Senate on February 15 for labeling them a Senate "lodge" controlled by the railroads. Senator Balie Waggener, Democrat, and a Missouri Pacific Railroad attorney from Atchison, had led the Senate opposition to the House proposal for the establishment of a Tax Commission to evaluate railroad property. Waggener's bill proposed that a Railroad Commission assess railroad property. This bill brought a charge from the Star's correspondent that the Senate, in the main, was a railroad puppet.⁷⁵ The Senate responded with a twenty-four to thirteen vote of expulsion for the writer. Hodges was absent during the morning when the vote was taken. He was greatly disturbed when he discovered the action of his cohorts and said, "I am sorry that I was delayed this

⁷⁴Kansas City Star, February 17, 1907.

⁷⁵Kansas City Star, February 15, 1907.

morning so as to not be present when the resolution came up as I should have voted against it. I believe in free speech whether in print or orally."⁷⁶

The reaction to the expulsion brought one of the greatest newspaper crusades in Kansas against the alleged injustice which the journalists were certain was railroad inspired. The newspapers indicated that the Senate's allegiance had been under suspicion, but this action confirmed the Star's indictment. J. L. Bristow's editorial in the Salina Journal was quoted saying, " . . . The senate is controlled by railroads."⁷⁷ William Allen White's editorial on "The Conspiracy of the Senate" was quoted saying, " . . . [the] Senate is the seat of a definite plot to turn government of this state over to railroads and corporate interests for two more years."⁷⁸ Senator Waggener reacted by introducing a resolution which called for the Senate to investigate itself on these charges. The Star again quoted Bristow of the Salina Journal as calling the investigation

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid., February 16, 1907; editorial in ibid., February 16, 1907.

⁷⁸Ibid., February 16, 1907.

resolution a " . . . legislative dodge . . . even more foolish than the resolution to bar the Star's correspondent. . . . It is full of spots, yellow spots."⁷⁹ Since the direct primary and Tax Commission bill were also under the same type of Senate roadblock, the newspapers barred no holds in appealing for public sentiment to swell and thus break down the Senate resistance to these "Square Deal" measures. The fight intensified when Senator Waggener inferred that the "Square Deal" movement was the brain child of Walter R. Stubbs and William A. White, and not the people in general. The Topeka Daily Capital and the Kansas City Star led the attack with daily headlines disgustingly decrying the actions of the Senate. Protests began to pour into these papers supporting the tax bill and especially the direct primary bill. A number of counties and hundreds of people sent petitions and protests to their senators, demanding they either vote for progressive legislation, or resign and return home immediately.⁸⁰ Public pressure prevailed at last on the taxation bill when the Senate yielded on its adamant opposition to the progressive House version and accepted the lower house bill which provided for a three-man Tax Commission

⁷⁹Editorial in ibid., February 19, 1907.

⁸⁰Ibid., February 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 1907; Topeka Daily Capital, February 22, 23, 24, 25, 1907.

with liberal powers to assess public service corporations in the same manner as private property. County assessors were another major feature of this compromise bill.⁸¹

The direct primary bill, though, did not fare as well in the Senate, in spite of the mass public demand for passage of such a measure. The House passed by a vote of one hundred and one to ten the Stubbs sponsored direct primary bill, which would allow the voters to nominate by direct vote all township, county, and state officers, as well as congressmen and U. S. Senators. The Senate drafted a bill by Senator Fitzpatrick, a Standard Oil attorney, which provided for direct vote nomination of only county and state officials; furthermore, it required a majority vote accumulation for the candidate to be nominated. Then if a majority was not received, state conventions would select the candidates. Hodges voted against this hybrid Senate primary bill, although it passed in spite of his efforts by a twenty-four to sixteen margin.⁸² The Kansas City Star called for the people to throw out the robots saying, "It's much too early for anybody to forget the Populist movement in Kansas--and the cause which brought it about."⁸³ Governor

⁸¹Zornow, Kansas, p. 214; Kansas City Star, February 22, 1907.

⁸²Topeka Daily Capital, February 13, 15, 22, 1907.

⁸³Editorial in the Kansas City Star, February 21, 1907.

Hoch urged the legislature to get busy with enactments of all "Square Deal" legislation. The Senate reacted adversely to the governor's plea, especially in view of the fact that the House had already passed the two-cent fare; the anti-pass bill; maximum freight rate bill; a tax commission bill; and the direct primary bill; while the Senate was smarting under the microscopic examination by the public through the newspapers. The House refused to concede to Senate demands in the Conference Committee for a less stringent compromise primary bill. The adamant position of the House was strengthened when Senator Fitzpatrick made a biting verbal onslaught on the person of Representative Stubbs. Thus the direct primary bill was dead for the 1907 session. In a personal appearance the governor had appealed to the legislature to accept the compromise bill, but the House refused to accept the hybrid version of the Senate. Walter R. Stubbs called the firm House rejection of the Senate version a victory for the people. Senator F. Dumont Smith, of Kinsley, who had abandoned the Senate "lodge" after the Star's expulsion, said as a result of the failure of the primary bill, Stubbs would sweep the state in the 1908 election.⁸⁴

⁸⁴Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, March 10, 1907; ibid., March 12-13, 1907.

On the two-cent fare bill, the House reluctantly accepted a modified Senate bill which allowed railroads to sell mileage books varying from a minimum distance of five hundred miles to two thousand miles. The five hundred mile books sold for ten dollars; the two thousand mile book sold for fifty dollars. The House charged that this bill discriminated against those who would travel less than five hundred miles, since their fare would still be three cents per mile, but they accepted the compromise bill on the consensus that it was at least a partial move in the right direction.⁸⁵

When the legislature adjourned on March 14, the members had thoroughly crystalized public sentiment in a little over two months concerning their allegiance by their actions or often by their inaction. The Kansas City Star in an editorial summarized the public sentiment when it said, "It is doubtful if public opinion in Kansas was ever so awakened as it has been by the action of the present legislature. . . .Twenty-four State Senators, ruled by a few railroad attorneys . . . have defied public demand. . . ." ⁸⁶ The same paper, though, commended twelve senators, " . . . who

⁸⁵Ibid., March 12, 1907.

⁸⁶Editorial in the Kansas City Star, March 7, 1907.

like Job of old, maintained their integrity, and who withstood all arguments and temptations to turn traitor to the people."⁸⁷ Hodges was placed on this "white list" as it was dubbed by the Star.

Thus Hodges had continued to distinguish himself as a friend of the public interest in this session of the legislature, although the only major legislation that had become law which he solely sponsored, was the bill for an excise tax on express companies. His resolution which concerned tariff-free lumber instructions for the Washington delegation from Kansas had been passed. Most of the time in the session Hodges was working behind the scenes. The Olathe Register quoted from the Stafford County Republican when it mentioned Hodges as one of the bright, intelligent members of the Senate. The article continued saying, "Hodges comes from Olathe and is a Democrat . . . while he talks but little, where he does, it is to the point and he has something to say."⁸⁸ Joseph L. Bristow of the Salina Journal in an editorial comment was quoted as saying of Hodges, "No republican [sic] can be elected governor of Kansas who stands for the policies advocated by a majority of the state

⁸⁷ Editorial in ibid., March 13, 1907.

⁸⁸ Editorial in the Olathe Register, January 31, 1907.

senate during the last legislature. A democrat [sic] like Senator Hodges . . . would defeat a republican [sic] like Fitzpatrick . . . for governor in this state."⁸⁹ The Lawrence Journal was also quoted in a similar comment about Senator Hodges, calling him "a Kansas man who will bear watching. . . .He is a man of the people. His record is good, his standing at home cannot be called in question."⁹⁰ A Topeka State Journal quote, while boosting him for Congress or governor said of Senator Hodges, " . . . he went through the fiery [sic] trying ordeal of the last session without a blemish, without a sear."⁹¹

While Hodges had achieved a fine record and public mention for greater things, the legislature had done rather well in passing "Square Deal" measures, in spite of the Senate "lodge." The following are some of the major legislative accomplishments:

- (1) a state tax commission to systematize assessment and taxation;
- (2) the Board of Railroad Commissioners were given greater power and finances;

⁸⁹Editorial in ibid., May 9, 1907.

⁹⁰Editorial in ibid., June 6, 1907.

⁹¹Editorial in ibid., September 5, 1907.

- (3) the anti-pass law;
- (4) a new accounting system for the state, thus standardizing all county business procedures;
- (5) grain freight rates were horizontally reduced by fifteen per cent;
- (6) a constitutional amendment for voter approval which specified a legislator's salary of five hundred dollars for two years instead of the three dollars a day limit to a maximum of fifty days;
- (7) reduced longer mileage railroad passenger fare;
- (8) established juvenile courts;
- (9) a pure food and drug law;
- (10) a law allowing first and second class municipalities to establish the commission form of government.⁹²

The deposit bill, like the direct primary bill, had failed to pass in the 1907 session. The governor, like some of the major newspapers, felt the Senate had relented in the face of public pressure from its previous adamant position on at least the direct primary bill. The governor indicated that intense public pressure from all areas of the state

⁹²Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, March 10, 1907; Kirke Mechem (ed.), Annals of Kansas, I (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1954), p. 454; Zornow, Kansas, p. 214.

compelled him to call the legislators to a special session. Governor Hoch called for a special session of the legislature to convene on January 16, 1908. It was a rare occasion for the state since there had been only four previous special legislative sessions.⁹³ In his message the governor urged the legislators to pass four main measures. They were: (1) a direct primary; (2) a guaranty deposit law; (3) abolishment of the mileage books and adoption of a flat two-cent fare for railroad passengers; and (4) amendments to the prohibition law which would make it more "leakproof." The former two were considered to be of greater importance.

Between moments of idealistic anticipation and retreats into the more realistic feelings which expected the usual, the public watched the special session draw up its battle lines. Representative Stubbs in the House and Senator Young in the Senate introduced the administration's direct primary bill. The newspapers felt slightly vindicated by their last session direct primary crusade, when Senator Fitzpatrick, a Standard Oil attorney, now said he favored a primary. The House quickly accepted the Stubbs bill by an overwhelming margin; but the Senate voted for an amended weaker version by a roll call vote of twenty-two to eighteen. Hodges opposed the

⁹³Topeka Daily Capital, January 8, 1908.

anti-administration Senate decision. As the wrangling between the two houses on the primary bill became more intense, so did public pressure in demands for its passage. The Senate finally yielded on some amendments and accepted the Conference Committee report on a roll call vote with only two dissenters. Senators Waggener and Benson dissented, because they believed the primary would cost the state too much money. They predicted a three to four hundred thousand dollar expense for each primary.⁹⁴ The newspapers gleefully quoted the various swan songs from the Senate "lodge." They generally specified that personally the senators opposed the primary bill, but since the people demanded it, they would vote for the measure and let the people suffer the consequences. Some members of the Senate "lodge" called the direct primary a provision that, " . . . strikes at the foundations of Republican government."⁹⁵ The Olathe Mirror countered, by declaring that, "Kansas republicanism is done with the rule of bosses. It demands that the people be given back to them what has been taken from them."⁹⁶ The Topeka Daily Capital added in an editorial comment that the Senate "lodge"

⁹⁴Ibid., January 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 1908.

⁹⁵Ibid., January 29, 1908.

⁹⁶Editorial in the Olathe Mirror, February 6, 1908.

members should not be re-elected, now that people had a primary law.⁹⁷ The new primary law provided for the nomination of all candidates for the general election. Congressmen and U. S. Senate candidates had to get a plurality in a majority of counties to receive their party's nomination. This amendment to the administration's original version was a concession to the western part of the state. Mandatory primaries had to be held in cities with a population of more than five thousand persons. The general primary would be held on the first Tuesday in August, 1908, and thereafter biennially. City primaries would be held annually, the first Tuesday in March.⁹⁸

The special legislative session of 1908 adjourned on January 30, after it had passed: (1) a direct primary bill; (2) amendments to the tax law; (3) amendments to the prohibition law; and (4) substituted a bill for insurance of bank deposits instead of the guaranty deposit bill. Again the two-cent fare like the guaranty deposit bill, had failed to pass.⁹⁹

⁹⁷Topeka Daily Capital, February 2, 1908.

⁹⁸Mechem, Annals of Kansas, I, p. 480; Zornow, Kansas, p. 214.

⁹⁹Topeka Daily Capital, January 31, 1908.

Kansas waited expectantly to try the direct primary system for the first time in August of 1908. Therefore after the special legislative session the politicians concentrated on mending political fences.

Hodges had continued to make his way up to the higher echelons of the Democratic Party structure. In February, 1908, he was the toastmaster at the party's annual Washington Day banquet, where William Jennings Bryan, the main speaker, praised Hodges for his work and his oratory skills. In his speech Hodges firmly declared that resubmission of the prohibition statute to the voters was a dead issue and that he personally was opposed to bothering the voters with it again. Hodges indicated that although the Democrats had been labeled as "wet", this was no longer true and he praised them as being a progressive party of reform. He said that William A. Harris had lost his gubernatorial bid in the 1906 election because he was for reform and enforcement of all laws in the state.¹⁰⁰ Before 1906 the Democratic platforms had favored resubmission.

During and after the 1907 legislative session Hodges was being mentioned for a congressional race or even a gubernatorial bid. The Republican paper in his home town,

¹⁰⁰Olathe Register, February 27, 1908.

the Olathe Mirror, said that Hodges, a Democrat, was an honorable business man with a proud record in the Senate. It continued by saying that the Democrats, " . . . surely could not find any one more to their credit than Senator Hodges."¹⁰¹ The Southwest Kansas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church meeting at Wellington in April, 1907, also commended Hodges for the work he had done " . . . in the interest of morals. . . . "¹⁰² The Topeka State Journal was quoted in September, 1907, suggesting the Johnson County senator for a congressional seat or the governor's chair.¹⁰³

After the 1908 session the gubernatorial mention of Hodges continued to gain impetus. The Topeka Daily Capital said Hodges, " . . . would make a strong candidate, and if elected, a good governor, judging by his record in the Senate."¹⁰⁴ Hodges, though, refused to accept these overtures from the various people inside and outside of his party. In May, 1908, Senator Hodges announced his candidacy for

¹⁰¹ Editorial in the Olathe Mirror, February 28, 1907.

¹⁰² Olathe Register, April 11, 1907.

¹⁰³ Editorial in ibid., September 5, 1907.

¹⁰⁴ Topeka Daily Capital, April 25, 1908; also see Olathe Mirror, April 30, 1908.

re-election to the Sixth District Seat, subject to the will of the Democratic and Populist voters.

J. B. Remington, a Civil War Veteran at the time from Osawatomie, also a farmer and lumber dealer, opposed Hodges in the race. He had been a representative in the House from Miami County for the last ten years, serving several times as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. The campaign had the then familiar elements of the machine backed Republican versus the progressive, in this case, a Democrat. The Republicans in the district were stressing unity after their factionalism had cost them the seat four years ago. Even in the first primary in the district, the Democratic vote was apathetic. Remington garnered almost twice as many votes as Hodges. In a comparison of votes in the twenty-six wards of Johnson County, Hodges had a plurality in only three of them, although he ran as well as the rest of the Democratic ticket in the county.¹⁰⁵

The campaign for the general election became intense after the primary. The Kansas City Star was quoted to have discovered a "plot" of the Kansas railroads to defeat the Republican ticket. The Olathe Register's editor commented that this scheme to defeat Hodges appeared to be similar to one that had been used in Michigan, when the brewers endorsed

¹⁰⁵Olathe Mirror, August 13, 1908.

a Prohibitionist candidate and thus defeated him. Senator Hodges, the editor said, is the last man the railroads want returned to Topeka, in view of the fact that the Topeka Daily Capital had credited Hodges with being the leader of the anti-railroad minority in the last several sessions of the Senate.¹⁰⁶

Remington continually pleaded for straight ticket Republican Party voting, knowing that Johnson County normally gave the Republican Party a three hundred and fifty vote majority.¹⁰⁷ Hodges emphasized the Democratic State Platform which called for: (1) a bank guaranty law; (2) simplification of the direct primary system; (3) greater railroad regulation; (4) the present wage standard to be maintained; (5) appropriation of money to evaluate the railroad's property. The independent voter, again, as in the 1904 election, appeared to hold the key to the outcome of this race. Senator Hodges had said in the 1907 Senate debate on the primary bill that as a member of the minority he had been elected by Republican votes because they wanted a direct primary.¹⁰⁸ Hodges ostensibly could calculate again to receive those votes,

¹⁰⁶ Editorial in the Olathe Register, September 10, 1908.

¹⁰⁷ Kansas City Star, July 28, 1909.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., February 21, 1907.

since he had successfully fought to bring the primary law into being earlier in that election year.

The voters decided on November 3 to return Hodges to the Senate from the Sixth District for a second four year term. Whereas in the primary he had lost all but three wards, he now won all but three of the twenty-six wards in Johnson County, while accumulating a eight hundred and seventy two vote majority in the county, while Taft got two hundred and twenty-two and Stubbs for governor got a three hundred thirteen vote majority.¹⁰⁹ In the overall totals of the district, Miami County added a three hundred and eighty-four vote majority to his total. The final vote count showed Senator Hodges the winner over J. B. Remington, Republican, by a total of 5,192-3,936 votes.¹¹⁰ Again the district voters had split their ticket in helping Hodges win re-election. With this commendation from the district, Hodges was ready to continue the fight for progressivism.

Senator Hodges, after having increased his margin of victory in the last election by two-hundred votes over that of the 1904 race, returned to Topeka for the 1909 legislative

¹⁰⁹Olathe Register, November 4, 1908.

¹¹⁰Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Secretary of State of the State of Kansas, 1907-1908 (Topeka: State Printing Office, 1908), p. 114.

session to assume the minority party leadership. He was elected chairman of the Democratic Party Steering Committee of legislature. He was also the Democratic candidate for the President Pro Tem in the Senate, which of course, as a minority member, he did not win. The Topeka State Journal was quoted by the Olathe Register in extolling the leadership of Hodges, saying that although he is a Democrat in politics, he always works for legislation in the interest of the people, whether the bill is Republican or Democratic in origin. The Topeka paper quotation concluded that anything Hodges approves is worthy to be considered.¹¹¹

The voters, in their first opportunity to try the direct primary system, had expressed themselves very clearly by selecting many new candidates for the legislature. The newspaper crusade during the last session against the machine-politicians had borne fruit. The Topeka Daily Capital in an editorial said that not since Populist times had there been such a change over and appearance of new faces in the legislature. It gave credit to the "Square Deal" for the new talent in the capital city.¹¹² The Kansas City Star's editor commented that the old Republican throngs were no longer in evidence at the

¹¹¹Olathe Register, January 21, 1909.

¹¹²Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, January 22, 1909.

party's headquarters in the Copeland Hotel in Topeka. He called it a "new deal" for Kansas and gave much of the credit to the recently inaugurated anti-pass and direct primary laws.¹¹³ The Democrats had forty members in the House, while the Republicans had eighty-four, and there was one Independent. In the Senate, Hodges had five colleagues, while Republicans had thirty-four seats.¹¹⁴ As earlier noted, William Allen White had predicted after the 1907 session that Stubbs and the "Square Deal" would sweep the state. It was now a tangible reality.

Governor Stubbs in his legislative message was very concise and to the point. In one of the state's shortest gubernatorial legislative addresses he asked for action regarding: (1) public utilities; (2) good roads; (3) banking and corporations; (4) passenger rates; (5) school books.¹¹⁵ Earlier the Attorney General, Fred S. Jackson, had recommended legislative action to strengthen anti-trust laws. He requested: (1) a Public Utilities Commission with power to fix rates on trust goods; (2) penalties when trust indictments were proved; (3) easier methods to obtain anti-trust evidence.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Editorial in the Kansas City Star, January 9, 1909.

¹¹⁴ Zornow, Kansas, pp. 215-216.

¹¹⁵ Topeka Daily Capital, January 13, 1909.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., January 8, 1909.

Hodges introduced a good roads bill early in the session which had convened on January 12, 1909. This bill became known as the "Hodges Rock Roads." bill, fashioned along the line that the Stubbs administration had requested. In a comment about the measure, Hodges said, " . . . this bill was prepared especially with the idea of making the property owner . . . benefited by the road improvement pay for most of the work."¹¹⁷ The Kansas City Star worked intensely hard throughout the session to secure success in the legislative battle for good roads. Other newspapers too supported good roads, but not to the degree as did the Star which mentioned the value of good roads almost every day during the legislative session. The paper reasoned that the people had helped build the railroads, but they don't own them, therefore these are just toll roads; Kansas now needed free roads built for farmers, which would result in savings of millions of dollars a year.¹¹⁸ A U. S. Agricultural Department report contended that hauling on American roads averaged twenty-five cents a ton per mile, while the cost on Europe's highways averaged only twelve cents a ton per mile.

¹¹⁷Ibid., January 14, 1909.

¹¹⁸Editorial in the Kansas City Star, January 8, 1909.

Thus if American roads were as good as those the French had, for instance, U. S. farmers would save \$1.23 on each ton hauled, calculated on an average American haul which was 9.4 miles.¹¹⁹ The proponents of good roads had the federal government's top road expert, L. W. Page, come and speak to a joint session of the legislature. He urged a systematic state roads plan, since ninety per cent of traffic was passing over four per cent of the roads. This situation, he said demanded macadam roads, because the dirt roads could not stand immense useage. Page urged that a state engineer's office be created to carry out a good roads program.¹²⁰ The Hodges' road bill was redrafted to conform with Page's recommendations after the speech before the legislature. The Senate Committee of the Whole recommended Hodges' road bill, after the author successfully fought off attempts to make automobile owners pay for the road. Hodges argued that the petition provision whereby a majority of landowners could appeal to the county commissioners for a rock road would not work any hardships in procedure or taxation. The House and Senate both passed the "Hodges Rock Road" bill on February 18. In the House it gained approval without a fight, but in

¹¹⁹Editorial in ibid., January 20, 1909.

¹²⁰Topeka Daily Capital, February 3, 1909.

the Senate there were loud protests and amendment attempts to invalidate the bill. Hodges defended the cost of his bill as being reasonable, saying that rock roads built under his plan would cost approximately \$1,800 a mile. This construction cost would be less than a dollar an acre on both sides of the road. Adjacent property owners would pay for three-fourths of the construction costs, while the township paid for the other one-fourth. Bridges and culverts would be paid for by the county. The "Hodges Rock Roads" bill applied to roads costing a thousand dollars or more per mile in construction expense. The Senate finally passed the bill by a vote of twenty-six to ten. Some newspapers now noted that Kansas had given firm assurance that it was a progressive state by leading the way on good roads.¹²¹

The public utilities bill, the anti-lobby bill, and the depositors' guaranty bill occupied most of the legislatures attention. Hodges, again on the Railroad Committee, was able to help secure passage of the anti-lobby bill. The opponents of the bill in the Senate sought to sidetrack it by cleverly disguised amendments, but Hodges exploded the plot and led the bill to Senate acceptance. Speaker Dolley of the House was very pleased when that body finally concurred with the Senate

¹²¹Ibid., February 12, 18, 1909; editorials in the Kansas City Star, February 13, 18, March 1, 1909.

action. The bill gained the governor's signature and became effective on February 18. This bill required lobbyists to register and disclose their pay. Many hoped that this statute would provide the necessary protection for, and guarantee passage for the other major legislation under consideration.¹²²

Toward the end of February the public utilities bill and the depositor's guaranty bill were still under legislative scrutiny and the resulting deadlock in that body drew intense fire from the journalists and the public across the state. Ironically, support for the public utilities bill came from the railroads on the theory that the establishment of a Utilities Commission would get the railroads out of the limelight and thus perhaps into better favor with the public. The newspapers urged Kansas to line up with Wisconsin and New York in passage of a public utility law as such was already in effect in the other two states. Legislators were warned, if the public utilities bill did not pass, they could expect a similar fate as befell the Senate "lodge" two years ago. The corporations opposed the utilities bill contending that it would mean confiscation of their property. This was refuted by the "Square Deal" proponents as being

¹²²Topeka Daily Capital, January 20, 23, February 18-19, 1909.

the traditional argument to all anti-progressive legislation.¹²³ The corporations furthermore feared that the utilities bill's passage would help the "Square Dealer", Governor Stubbs, build a machine which would lead to a U. S. Senate seat in four years. This warning was advanced to get the Long and Curtis men in the Senate to defeat the utilities measure.¹²⁴ William Allen White was quoted by the Kansas City Star warning that the utilities fight had just begun and the progressives would win the struggle in the end.¹²⁵ This reaction came after much filibuster activity and powerful lobbyist action in the legislature had caused the Senate to succumb and defeat the administration's public utilities bill. The newspapers continued their intensive campaign for the measure, but the House killed the bill a few days later. Governor Stubbs promised that this would be a campaign issue in 1910 indicating to the public that the public utilities bill would be enacted in 1911. The newspapers lent ample support by calling for voter awareness and care in selection of representatives for the 1911 session of the legislature, if they wanted

¹²³Editorials in the Kansas City Star, January 19, 20, 23, 1909.

¹²⁴Ibid., February 24, 1909.

¹²⁵Editorial in ibid., February 25, 1909.

progressivism to continue. The Topeka Daily Capital reminded the legislators a day before adjournment that only one Republican Party pledge had been passed--the anti-lobby bill. It pointed out that the Republican platform adopted the previous August had indicated to the voters the sacredness of party pledges. The paper continued by quoting from the platform, "The only safe way to judge what a party will do in the future is what it has done in the past. The history of our party proves that a Republican party pledge is a sacred obligation."¹²⁶ The paper reminded the members that the public would not forget the legislature's failure to keep good faith with the voters. Governor Stubbs in a statement assented to this declaration by the Topeka paper. The Kansas City Star chided the legislature for having saved grown men from cigarettes, by the prohibition of tobacco sales to minors, but forgetting to protect them from the utilities corporations.¹²⁷

The legislature enacted a Depositors' Guaranty bill on March 4, accepting a second Conference Committee report. The big fight on the bill had come because the Senate opposed the House and Administration's demands that interest-bearing deposits also be covered by the law. Hodges opposed the

¹²⁶Topeka Daily Capital, March 2, 1909.

¹²⁷Editorial in the Kansas City Star, March 11, 1909.

inclusion of these time deposits. He had polled his constituents on the bill and a great majority of them did not want it to pass in the original form. The banking lobby especially had successfully blocked the bill in the Senate on this point until finally in the Conference Committee the Administration's bill prevailed point by point.¹²⁸

William Allen White was a lobbyist for the Massachusetts Ballot bill, which Hodges tried to save from defeat before the legislature adjourned, but his efforts were to no avail. He moved that the bill be taken out of the committee that had "pigeon-holed" it, and that it be placed on the calendar, but this motion was defeated. The bill would have provided for an office-group ballot instead of the party-column ballot. Hodges, like William Allen White, saw this change as a progressive measure, especially in light of the election results in Hodges' district where the independent voters had carried the latter to victory. Some Republicans opposed the bill because they claimed it would be a disruption of party organization.¹²⁹

The inertia of the legislature, especially the Senate, frustrated the administration's requests and few were passed

¹²⁸Topeka Daily Capital, March 4, 1909.

¹²⁹Editorial in the Olathe Mirror, March 18, 1909.

during the session. This prompted the Topeka Daily Capital to bare the facts on an investigation it had conducted to determine the source of the roadblock to legislative success in the Senate. Lieutenant Governor Fitzgerald was an opponent of Governor Stubbs and Attorney General Jackson. Fitzpatrick as the Senate's presiding officer had appointed himself to be chairman of the Judiciary Committee. He also had referred many more bills to this committee than appeared to be justifiable. Out of six hundred and fifty-six bills introduced in the Senate, two hundred and forty-five bills had been referred to his committee--thirty-nine per cent of the total. Of these two hundred and forty-five, one hundred and eighty-eight were either reported unfavorably or held in committee--seventy-six per cent. Fifty of ninety-nine bills messaged from the House to the Senate were assigned to the Judiciary Committee, of these, sixty-one per cent were held or reported unfavorably. This committee held the public utilities bill for seven weeks while the public demanded action. The newspaper concluded that the Senate Judiciary Committee has earned "the warmest gratitude of the Standard Oil and Harvester lobby. . . ." ¹³⁰ It was a situation

¹³⁰ Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, March 4, 1909.

parallel to Speaker Cannon's "graveyard committee" in the U. S. House of Representatives.

The legislature adjourned on March 12, after getting a number of progressive measures passed in the last few days once the fight over the public utilities bill had ceased.

The following were among the major legislative items passed:

- (1) a depositor' guaranty fund;
- (2) the "Hodges Rock Road Law" and some dirt road provisions;
- (3) the reduction of maximum freight rate from ten to twenty-five per cent;
- (4) an anti-lobby law;
- (5) an anti-cigarette law prohibiting the sale or use of them for those under eighteen years of age;
- (6) the regulation of child labor;
- (7) the adoption of the U. S. standard of weights and measures;
- (8) certain liquor permits were abolished thus making the Prohibition law absolute;
- (9) an enabling act for all cities to adopt the commission form of government;
- (10) a Memorial Hall to be built in Topeka to house the G. A. R. and the State Historical Society in the honor of soldiers;

- (11) authorization for the state to name receivers for trusts and combines which abuse their power;
- (12) the issuance of railroad stock was placed under the control of the State Board of Railroad Commissioners;
- (13) a Textbook Commission was established.¹³¹

The legislature had appropriated about seven million dollars which was about one hundred thousand dollars less than the 1907 session allotted. About one-third of the appropriations were for education and charitable organizations. Many observers felt state education had been treated well by the legislators.

The legislature had failed to pass such major items as: (1) the initiative and referendum (the House passed them); (2) a public utilities bill; (3) a straight two-cent passenger fare; (4) woman suffrage. The Topeka Daily Capital said that overall the legislative session had not been cooperative with administration requests. It blamed the Democrats as a body for frustrating the people's will in this session, whereas two and four years ago, they had stood for everything the people wanted the paper concluded by blaming them for playing politics.¹³²

¹³¹Ibid., March 7, 1909; Annals of Kansas, I, p. 496.

¹³²Topeka Daily Capital, March 14, 1909.

Hodges had again been an important figure and force in the legislature. The Olathe Mirror said that the Senate had been short of leaders, but Senator Hodges had been the exception by being an " . . . effective orator."¹³³ The Kansas City Star said Hodges and William A. Harris were men who are " . . . Democratic leaders of the state who have . . . progressive ideas and decent politics. . . . "¹³⁴ The same newspaper recalled that although the last session had generally been a fizzle, and there had been very few leaders, a peculiar situation had existed in relation to a certain minority party member, "Senator Hodges, a Democrat is really more of a floor leader for the entire House than any member of the majority. He has worked earnestly for good roads and every other good bill whether in the Republican platform or his own party's."¹³⁵

Hodges' road bill and a law to regulate the safety of railroad frogs and switches were the only major items passed which he introduced, but the former bill continued to bring him state-wide attention. According to a quote taken from the Paola Western Spirit the railroads favored the good

¹³³Editorial in the Olathe Mirror, March 11, 1909.

¹³⁴Editorial in the Kansas City Star, March 5, 1909.

¹³⁵Ibid., February 16, 1909.

road provisions of the last legislation, because this would enable farm crops to be brought in more quickly and therefore reduce delays and idle waiting by the railroads.¹³⁶

With the election year fast approaching and with a rise of "insurgency," Hodges had fast become the one Democrat to whom many looked as the man who could successfully challenge Governor Stubbs. Barney Sheridan of the Paola Western Spirit had now changed his views about Hodges and said that the Olathe senator was just the man to run against Stubbs, since the former was also a progressive this would take votes from Stubbs and give them to Hodges if the latter should consent to run.¹³⁷ The gubernatorial race, which Hodges did enter, will be discussed more fully in another chapter of this paper.

After Stubbs had defeated Hodges by 16,000 votes in the 1910 gubernatorial race, Hodges prepared to once again lead the minority in the state legislative session during 1911. The oft changing political climate and alignments in the state's majority party had generally become a contest between the machine, now called Standpatters, and the "Square Dealers," who were also known as Insurgents. The former were conservatives who were also at times labeled as reactionaries. Hodges had consistently identified himself with progressive legislation

¹³⁶Olathe Register, June 8, 1909.

¹³⁷Olathe Register, December 9, 1909.

in the past, but there were those who thought Hodges might just combine with the Standpatters to frustrate and discredit Governor Stubbs and thus strengthen another gubernatorial bid for himself in 1912, with the help of the conservative Republican support.

Hodges was once again on the Railroad Committee as well as several other major ones, like the Banking Committee and the Ways and Means Committee. He served as the party's minority leader in the Senate, as well as the House for he had been the party's gubernatorial standard bearer who had run a fairly close race with Stubbs, and was well respected by both parties.

Governor Stubbs in his legislative message requested:

- (1) the establishment of a Public Utilities Commission;
- (2) initiative, referendum, and recall provisions;
- (3) direct election of U. S. Senators;
- (4) increased educational opportunities for the youth of the state;
- (5) delegates for presidential conventions to be placed on the primary ballot.¹³⁸

The legislature had convened on January 10 in Topeka. Immediately attempts were made in both houses to reduce the powers of the Speaker and the Lieutenant Governor. It was called a fight against "Cannonism," while the administration

¹³⁸Topeka Daily Capital, January 11, 1911.

labeled it a coalition attempt of the Standpat Republicans and the Democrats, both of whom simply wanted to defy the voters selection of Governor Stubbs and Lieutenant Governor Hopkins. Hodges said the Democrats were only trying to help fulfill campaign pledges to reduce the presiding officer's dictatorial powers. In the past these powers had often allowed one individual to send bills to the graveyard as had been shown in the 1909 session, especially the Senate's Judiciary Committee.¹³⁹ Speaker Buckman successfully resisted the House efforts to deprive him of appointment powers. In the Senate, though, thirteen Standpat Republicans bolted from the party's caucus decision and combined with Democrats in a rules change which striped Lieutenant Governor Hopkins of his committee appointment powers. A Committee on Committees was created to perform the task in the upper house. The machine Standpatters also managed to select a "lodge" holdover, E. F. Porter from Pittsburg in the ninth district, as the President Pro Tem. The Topeka Daily Capital bemoaned the Senate happenings and predicted that a standpat and Democratic coalition could, if it worked, control the Senate and weaken or halt any administration bills from passing the upper house. It furthermore accused the Committee on Committees

¹³⁹Editorials in ibid., March 4, 1909, January 11, 1911; Legislative Record of Senator Hodges, p. 7.

of arranging all the Senate Standing Committees with membership so that the "Square Deal" or Insurgent Republicans and the Democrats together were in the minority on each one.¹⁴⁰ Hodges in answer said, "The railroad committee is really an excellent one, I do not believe there is a man on the committee who can be controlled by the railroads."¹⁴¹ Hodges also said the Democratic platform favored good railroad legislation and he intended to see that it got passed. He said the Democrats and the right Republicans (progressives) were in the majority on the Railroad Committee.¹⁴² The Kansas City Star concluded that if the Standpat-Democratic coalition in the Senate would function as a block throughout the session, it would greatly favor the progressives, because the people would react against roadblocks as they had done in the past.¹⁴³

Hodges became involved in a physical struggle with a colleague in the Senate as a result of the continued debate in the Senate to "dehorn" the Lieutenant Governor of some more powers. During the debate between the progressives and the Standpat-Democrat coalition, Hodges reminded the

¹⁴⁰ Editorial in the Popeka Daily Capital, January 12, 1911; ibid., January 13, 1907.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., January 13, 1911.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Editorial in the Kansas City Star, January 12, 1911.

Republicans of the situation in Congress concerning the revolt against Cannon and Aldrich reminding them that " . . . what was sauce for the goose was wormwood and gall for the gander."¹⁴⁴ This was in reference to the Republican senators who had opposed the Committee on Committees. Senator Ganse, from Emporia, then proceeded to accuse Senator Hodges of misstatements in the 1910 Gubernatorial campaign, in which the latter had alleged that the governor was using some of his contingent fund monies for \$2,000 worth of groceries. Hodges immediately reacted to the charge by branding Ganse a liar. The Chair forced Hodges to yield the floor after the outburst, and in the resulting emotionally charged scene, the Republicans and Democrats berated each other for playing politics. Hodges apologized to the Lieutenant Governor after the day's session for the language he had used on the floor. In a joint meeting of the House and Senate Ways and Means Committee that evening, of which both Ganse and Hodges were members, physical combat occurred between the two Senators. Hodges was already seated in the room when Ganse entered and walked over to Hodges and slapped him in the face after he had told Hodges that his language on the Senate floor had been ungentlemanly. Hodges slapped back;

¹⁴⁴Topeka Daily Capital, January 24, 1911.

the two then clinched, fell to the floor and rolled over several times before the other Committee members separated the two. Friends tried to get a reconciliatory handshake between the two after the meeting but both refused to do so. Hodges later declared this had been a disgraceful action, but when he was struck from behind he had to do something about it. The Kansas City Star gave the decision to Hodges.¹⁴⁵

Senator Hodges also gained public attention in other ways during this session. He introduced a public utilities bill that he and Judge C. F. Foley, a former Democratic House member and now a member of the Regents Board for Kansas University since his appointment by Governor Stubbs, had drafted. It gave enlarged powers to the Board of Railroad Commissioners. The bill applied only to companies that operated in at least two counties, thus municipal and publically owned services were not included in these supervision provisions. Telephone and telegraph companies which operated in four or more counties would also be under the Board of Railroad Commissioners. The administration's utilities bill which was introduced by Speaker Buckman, was a more detailed bill. Since the Hodges bill was more simplified, the newspapers felt it would be the better one.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.; Kansas City Star, January 24, 1911.

They saw only one weakness in it; the provision for the election of all of the board's commissioners. The railroads declared the administration's bill was unjust because it provided for greater control of rates and stock issuance. They supported the Hodges utilities bill since they had already tolerated the Board of Commissioners for several years and generally knew what to expect from the board.¹⁴⁶ Hodges successfully guided the utilities bill through the Senate, which adopted it by a roll call vote of thirty-two to three on February 22.¹⁴⁷ The Senate and the public waited expectantly for the House to act on the public utilities issue; the lower house passed a weaker version of the public utilities bill. Progressive leaders, like Hodges, believed that a compromise with the House bill would only produce a meaningless measure. The first Conference Committee results on the bill produced a stalemate. The Senate refused to accept the report of the committee and the House refused to appoint new conferees. The governor, on March 6, threatened to call a special session of the legislature if the public utilities bill didn't pass, since its passage was a party pledge to the people. The House membership relented a day later and accepted a second

¹⁴⁶Kansas City Star, January 18, 1911; Topeka Daily Capital, January 28, 1911.

¹⁴⁷Topeka Daily Capital, February 22, 1911.

Conference Committee and sent new conferees from the House. Hodges was successful in defending the stronger Senate version of the bill and, in fact, he got the committee to strengthen its provisions. Both houses of the legislature accepted the second Conference Committee report by overwhelming majorities on March 8, giving Kansas a public utilities law after a four year struggle.¹⁴⁸ The bill provided for a Utilities Commission to be appointed by the governor. Its powers included: (1) regulation of rates and tolls of all public utility companies; (2) revaluation of the companies' property; (3) the control of company issuance of stocks and bonds; (4) the Commission could initiate rate proceedings; (5) the utility companies had the right of court appeal, but the Commissions decisions were in force until the case in question was decided by the judiciary.¹⁴⁹

March 8 was a significant day since the inertia of the legislature seemed to dissipate all at once. A "blue sky" bill passed the House that day, after Hodges had helped to get the Senate's previous approval. This law was to protect investors from fake stock investment schemes.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸Ibid., March 6-9, 1911; editorial in the Kansas City Star, March 6, 1911; ibid., March 4, 7-8, 1911.

¹⁴⁹Kansas City Star, March 8, 1911.

¹⁵⁰Topeka Daily Capital, March 8, 1911.

Senator Hodges led a fight to secure initiative, referendum, recall, and woman suffrage provisions to the state constitution for voter approval; this had been a Democratic Party platform promise in 1910. His influence helped to guide the former three bills through the House, but they were defeated in the Senate where the progressive Republicans and Democrats could not muster the necessary two-thirds vote.¹⁵¹ The woman suffrage bill, though, passed the House first, in full view of a gallery packed by suffragettes, by an easy ninety-four to twenty-eight roll call. Previously in the session the House had allowed the suffragette lobby to pick all the committee members for this bill's consideration. The Senate concurred with the House on the woman's suffrage bill, when it passed the measure by a roll call vote of twenty-seven to twelve. It was a close call for the Hodges' supported bill, as its passage came by the bare minimum of a two-thirds vote.¹⁵² Some of those who opposed woman suffrage explained their negative vote by the reason that they did not want to bring women "down" to the level of men and this would happen if they were given suffrage equality with men.

¹⁵¹Ibid., January 13, February 1, 1911; Legislative Record of Senator Hodges, p. 7.

¹⁵²Topeka Daily Capital, February 7-9, 1911.

The legislative session produced many verbal battles between the executive department and the legislature. The governor's contingent fund continued to be called extravagant; the charges came often, so Governor Stubbs invited the legislature to investigate his whole department. The legislature refused his prescribed plan and instead made another allegation, this time concerning the governor's friend, Attorney General Fred S. Jackson. The latter was accused of having made a fortune during his past term from the collection of fees for prohibition violation prosecutions.¹⁵³ Since the legislature refused the suggested investigation plan, the governor conducted his own and sent a special message to the legislature giving them an itemized statement showing how he spent his contingent fund during the time in question. Charges and counter-charges were the order of the day as hostility continued to crescendo between the legislature and the executive department.

When Dave Leahy, the governor's private secretary, charged in a Wichita speech that crookedness was rampant in the legislature and especially in the Senate, it ignited political fireworks that almost produced another Senate exclusion vote like the one that occurred in 1907. It did,

¹⁵³Ibid., January 21, 1911.

though, cause another titanic struggle between some of the major newspaper men and the legislature. Leahy had also charged that the Standpat Republicans used every possible means to defeat the administration's bills.¹⁵⁴

The Senate called Dave Leahy to the legislative bar to answer the charges he had made. Leahy revealed, before the Senate, that he had been approached by J. T. Moore of the Pittsburg Headlight with a scheme to falsify House records for a Pittsburg waterworks bill. After much confusion and debate, several senators demanded permanent exclusion for Leahy, but Hodges argued for a twenty-four hour postponement to let emotions cool. Senator Stillings of Leavenworth, who had voted for the exclusion of the Kansas City Star's correspondent four years before, cautioned the Senate against a repeat of such an exclusion act. He said that the previous action had made the Senate look foolish and it had backfired on them by the mass public reaction against the upper house.¹⁵⁵ The Senate relented, after reflecting on the specter of what public opinion had done to that body in the 1908 elections.

William Allen White on February 15 dared the senators to take the witness stand on "pork barrel" issues. He

¹⁵⁴Ibid., February 15, 1911.

¹⁵⁵Kansas City Star, February 15, 1911.

indicated that Standpatters would not even dare go on the witness stand. White added that while some legislators may be bribed by "pork barrel" measures, the voters would respond differently. White also charged that a \$100,000 asylum was put up for votes to get a majority of the Senate to vote for appropriation reductions to create with the surplus a "pork barrel." White asserted that the Leahy public charge in Wichita had foiled the plot.¹⁵⁶

White was invited to Topeka the next day to testify before the Senate. In his own way White kept the Senate in good humor while he exposed some things that he knew about the "pork barrel" dealings. He explained that a senator had personally revealed to him that the legislator was offered the insane asylum in his town in exchange for the proper vote on the state fair location. The Senate insisted White name the senator in question, but the Emporia journalist refused to do so. White indicated he was glad he was a newspaper man and not a legislator since it would be hard to resist such "political bribery," but he called for the legislature to always be sensitive to the will of the people.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

¹⁵⁷Topeka Daily Capital, February 17, 1911.

White's charges were substantiated a few days later when Senator Quincy said in Salina that he had been offered the asylum for that town if he would vote for the state fair to be given to Hutchinson. He went on to say that no doubt the "pork barrel" was created to get Hutchinson the fair and various other cities were to get Normal schools. The senator concluded by a call to the voters for the election of a more progressive legislature, since this one had killed initiative and referendum bills.¹⁵⁸ Hodges fought against the state fair bill and the Normal school bill, which would have given ten cities such schools; but the Senate passed the fair bill and approved a reduced number of Normal school establishments. It remained for the House to kill these measures which had so greatly figured in William Allen White's day before the Senate.¹⁵⁹

The legislature adjourned on March 15, after having passed measures which included:

- (1) a public utilities bill;
- (2) the women suffrage amendment to be submitted for voter ratification;

¹⁵⁸Ibid., February 19, 1911.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., February 10, 28, 1911; House Journal: Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas, Seventeenth Biennial Session, Topeka, January 10 to March 15, 1911 (Topeka: State Printing Office, 1911), p. 425; Senate Journal: Proceedings of the Senate of the State of Kansas, Seventeenth Biennial Session, Topeka, January 10 to March 15, 1911 (Topeka: State Printing Office, 1911), pp. 265, 646.

- (3) state aid for weak school districts;
- (4) instituted popular vote for U. S. Senators--the Oregon plan;
- (5) established state registration of births and deaths;
- (6) free tuition for high school students;
- (7) a revised fish and game department;
- (8) establishment of automatic workers compensation;
- (9) establishment of a TB sanitorium;
- (10) establishment of a hospital for the dangerously insane;
- (11) the "blue sky" bill;
- (12) establishment of teacher pension;
- (13) a raised school term minimum from five to seven months;
- (14) the ratification of the Sixteenth Amendment (Income tax).¹⁶⁰

While only nine of the seventeen Republican platform pledges had been adopted, the Democrats could claim six of their major pledges had been fulfilled. The legislature had appropriated a shade over eight million dollars, which was about seven hundred thousand more than the 1909 session

¹⁶⁰ Mechem, Annals of Kansas, II, p. 5; Topeka Daily Capital, March 12, 1911.

appropriated. The Topeka Daily Capital said the latest session had not been one of reckless spending, perhaps because the "pork barrel" plot was punctured. . . . "161 The Kansas City Star attacked the reactionary (standpat) newspapers of Kansas who had called the past legislative session one of the best ever. "It was by all odds the most, reactionary legislature elected in Kansas since the days of machine rule . . . particularly . . . the house. . . . "162

Senator Hodges had again clearly demonstrated that he was sensitive to the wishes of the people by his fight for progressive legislation in the upper house. J. L. Brady, Lawrence publisher and legislator, had said before the re-election of Hodges, " . . . he was more valuable than one-half the Republican members. . . . "163 Hodges had continued to live up to this commendation during his second senatorial term. The Olathe Register quoted an editorial from the Independence Times which said, "It is generally believed that had Senator George Hodges been elected governor the main demands of the last republican and democrats platforms would now be a part of the legislation of this state."164

161 Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, March 17, 1911.

162 Editorial in the Kansas City Star, March 17, 1911.

163 Legislative Record of Senator Hodges, p. 8.

164 Editorial in the Olathe Register, June 1, 1911.

In a postscript to the legislative session, Hodges called for the establishment of a unicameral legislature in Kansas with a membership of about thirty to forty men. He proposed that this would give the state efficiency at a greatly reduced cost.¹⁶⁵

Senator Hodges had completed successfully two terms in the Kansas Senate, rising from political obscurity to the limelight as a Democratic progressive who had gained the respect of the leaders of both parties, and more important, the people of Kansas. While the newspapers were calling for him to try another gubernatorial bid, he would have to decide how he best could serve the people of the state since he personally was interested in a U. S. Senate seat.

¹⁶⁵Kansas City Star, March 18, 1911; editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, March 14, 1911.

CHAPTER IV

GOVERNOR HODGES

Insurgency was on the crescendo in Kansas politics in 1910, especially in the Republican Party where many fierce battles were fought between Insurgents and Standpatters (conservative regulars). This activity followed the national pattern which had come to be symbolized by the 1909-10 congressional fight in the House to deprive Speaker Cannon of his dictatorial powers.¹

In Kansas the Standpat Republicans were anxious to defeat Governor Stubbs, an activist in the state's insurgency movement and a thorn in their flesh since he successfully led the "boss-busting" campaign in 1904. The Democrats were very hopeful that this Republican factionalism would allow them to win the gubernatorial seat for the first time in the Twentieth Century.

After the 1909 legislative session Hodges continued to receive commendation for his progressive leadership in the state senate during the last six years and for his tireless

¹John D. Bright, Kansas: The First Century, II (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1956), p. 36; William F. Zornow, Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), pp. 216-217.

efforts in rebuilding the Democratic Party. At a party meeting in his honor in Abilene on November 9, 1909, Hodges, the featured speaker, denounced the tariff of the Taft administration. The speech drew much favorable insurgent comment and was widely circulated throughout the state. The Paola Western Spirit was quoted in declaring for Hodges to run for governor, because the chances were even that he would win. Since he was so much like Stubbs it would take votes from the latter and give them to the former.² The Olathe Mirror, a Republican paper, quoted from a Topeka Daily Capital comment regarding Hodges for governor, by saying, "He would make a strong candidate and if elected, a good governor, judging by his record in the Senate."³

Although many sources, Republican and Democrat, had urged him to run, Hodges was reluctant to get into the gubernatorial race for several reasons. First, he wanted to serve out his second senate term, and secondly, he had privately expressed great doubts whether Stubbs, the incumbent, could be defeated. Eventually he consented to run for the sake of the progressive wing of the Democratic Party.⁴ The task of selecting the party's candidate might

²Olathe Register, December 9, 1909.

³Olathe Mirror, April 30, 1908.

⁴George Hodges to D. O. McCray, January 7, 1910, George Hodges MSS.

have been simplified if former U. S. Senator William A. Harris had not died late in 1909. He had been the leader of the progressive wing in the Democratic Party and had very nearly become governor in 1906 when he lost to Governor Hoch by about two thousand votes. A Democratic relapse, though, occurred when the 1908 gubernatorial candidate, J. D. Botkin, lost to Stubbs by 34,000 votes; therefore, the Democrats were looking for a strong resurgence with a well-known and well-qualified candidate.⁵ Botkin, in a letter early in January, 1910, urged Hodges to run because, he said, the senator was the strongest candidate the Democrats could find.⁶ Not all of the party leaders were in support of Hodges. W. D. Ryan, the 1906 Democratic State Chairman, defected and was supporting Stubbs, for he alleged that the Republican governor was carrying on the traditions of the Harris platform.⁷ Ryan's opinion was not considered valid within the party because he had just lost in the race for national committee man to William Sapp. Furthermore, he

⁵Bright, Kansas: The First Century, II, pp. 33, 385.

⁶J. D. Botkin to George Hodges, January 31, 1910, Hodges MSS.

⁷George Hodges to W. A. Morgan, February 25, 1910, Hodges MSS.

had just been fired as a director of a Girard bank, and a Kansas bank was planning to prosecute him for embezzlement.⁸ The public attention given the Ryan defection by the Republican press in hopes of discrediting Hodges' chances was viewed with alarm by the Democrats. Hodges hoped to counter Ryan's argument by releasing to the press the information from private letters that he had personally been picked by W. A. Harris. W. A. Morgan, a party leader, varified that he had personal correspondence from Harris to this effect.⁹ Since the Kansas City Star had supported Harris, it was hoped that Hodges would also get their powerful and influencial support for the gubernatorial race since the Democrats had no major daily to counter the powerful Republican press.

In the primary contest Hodges faced Russell J. Harrison, a conservative Democrat, who was against prohibition and wanted to get it repealed. Governor Stubbs faced the challenge of the Standpatters in the person of Thomas E. Wagstaff. The Republican fight was as lively as the Democrats' was sedate. The Standpatters attacked Governor

⁸John E. Wagner to D. O. McCray, March 16, 1910, Hodges MSS.

⁹George Hodges to George Marble, May 31, 1910, Hodges MSS.

Stubbs in the primary on his integrity and his extravagance in taxes, state employees, and his over-all "grandstanding." The Democrats tried to take advantage of the Wagstaff-Stubbs primary feud by suggesting to the Insurgents and the regulars that they should therefore vote for a "square deal" Democrat whose integrity had not been questioned by either party throughout his public career. Furthermore, they emphasized that the pending national Democratic sweep would be another incentive for Kansans to line up with the national fervor and favor.¹⁰ The Democrats faced an internal problem, though, in that many in their party felt that Stubbs was more of a Democrat than were most of the party faithful; therefore every potential voter would have to be informed that Hodges' record was not held in question by either party, and that he could win if Democratic party members would not bolt the ticket.

Hodges campaigned on a platform which included pledges:

- (1) to repeal the inheritance tax;
- (2) to provide better roads;
- (3) to enforce all the laws so as to effectively control prohibition;
- (4) to provide better elementary schools;

¹⁰Id. to J. D. Botkin, June 8, 1910, Hodges MSS.

- (5) to reduce state expenditures consistent with adequate educational and charitable institutions;
- (6) to secure equitable railroad rates;
- (7) to give integrity in politics with a business-like administration;
- (8) to secure congressional tariff reductions to prevent trusts.¹¹

Hodges handily won the primary nomination for his party while Stubbs surprised many with the ease of his primary victory for the Republican nomination. Hodges hadn't made an active primary campaign, except for a three weeks speaking tour in the western part of the state, because the opposition of Harrison was considered insignificant. Hodges was well-known throughout the state because the Republican press had often mentioned his anti-machine and pro-progressive efforts in the state senate. The Democrats were keenly handicapped throughout this era because they had no major daily newspaper to counter the majority party's press. Hodges and others contemplated purchasing one for the party, but none could be found for sale.¹²

¹¹Campaign literature, 1910, Hodges MSS.

¹²George Hodges to Norman Rapalee, February 7, 1910, Hodges MSS.

After his primary victory several major newspapers gave Hodges favorable comment. The Lawrence Journal said, "George Hodges, who has been nominated on the Democratic ticket, is a man of steadfast purpose and genuine principles. He has made a good record, and never plays politics. He is an earnest, honest, decent man, and his nomination shows that Democracy is thoroughly reformed."¹³ Hodges personally keynoted his whole campaign around the theme that a man's neighbors are the best judge of his integrity for political office. The Topeka State Journal noted that Hodges had carried his district in 1908 by 1,258 votes while Taft's majority over Bryan was only 449, and Stubbs had defeated Botkin by only 277 votes.¹⁴ Thus the trust and support of his most critical audience, it was claimed, had rendered proof that Hodges was qualified to be governor. Hodges said in a Hutchinson speech that, "honesty in politics is as much of a political asset as honesty in business is a business asset. A candidate's statements and implied political promises should be as sacred as his business promises. There is no difference between political, business

¹³Campaign literature, 1910, Hodges MSS.

¹⁴Ibid.

and personal honesty."¹⁵ The campaign was allegedly a contest between an honest progressive Democratic candidate and that of an unscrupulous Republican politician who pretended to be a progressive by taking credit for the opposition's legislative successes.

The Kansas City Star viewed the general election as one in which the survival of progressivism and insurgency was at stake in Kansas. It said that the national importance of the 1910 election in Kansas compared to that of the 1856 and 1858 campaigns. It warned that Stubbs, the Insurgent's leader, must not be defeated because he had become a national figure for progressivism by such things as his speeches in Chicago and St. Louis for the cause of prohibition and by his strong promotion of Theodore Roosevelt for the presidential candidacy two years hence. The paper said the gubernatorial race was not one between Republicans and Democrats but one between progressives and reactionaries.¹⁶ Progressives were cautioned to not be apathetic and thus face certain defeat, but to turn out in great numbers for

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Editorials in the Kansas City Star, September 21, 26, November 3, 1910.

a majority which would give national assurance of Kansas' continued insurgent leadership.¹⁷

The general election campaign was a lively one in which both sides charged the other with aberrations and distortions. The Democrats charged that Stubbs had for a long time before his formal announcement sought to keep Hodges from running by various devious methods. It was revealed that in 1909 Charles Sessions, a news reporter, had published an alleged statement of Hodges' in the Kansas City Star which had said that Stubbs could not be beaten and therefore the senator would not run in view of Stubbs' 35,000 vote majority.¹⁸ This "interview" was exposed in early 1910 by a report in the St. Louis Republic which disclosed that this had been part of a plot by Stubbs to keep Hodges out of the gubernatorial race.¹⁹ Although, at the time, Hodges publicly denied his fear of running against Stubbs, his private correspondence to various Democratic leaders had many times indicated that he felt it

¹⁷ Editorial in ibid., November 7, 1910.

¹⁸ Ibid., July 28, 1909.

¹⁹ St. Louis Republic, January 16, 1910.

was a hopeless task to try and beat Stubbs that particular year.²⁰

Hodges also attacked Stubbs with many of the Wagstaff accusations of the primary battle. The Topeka Daily Capital then accused Hodges of appealing to the Standpat vote with the same type of speeches that the regular Republicans had earlier used against Stubbs. The paper accused him of playing politics in attacking Stubbs' progressivism, when the senator had personally fought for such measures in the last three sessions of the legislature.²¹ It did appear as if the senator were riding the fence in order to gain the Standpat Republican vote as well as retain the Democratic vote.

Senator Hodges said in an Emporia speech that the insurgent movement would not last for six weeks; but in a letter to T. A. McNeal, Topeka, in May, 1910, he said that " . . . the square deal laws are here to stay. The day is past when machines of either political faith will rule the state."²² Yet in a speech at Concordia on September 28, 1910,

²⁰George Hodges to D. O. McCray, January 7, 1910, Hodges MSS; id. to Jesse F. Todd, March 19, 1910, Hodges MSS; id. to Norman Rapalee, February 7, 1910, Hodges MSS.

²¹Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, September 28, 1910.

²²George Hodges to T. A. McNeal, May 12, 1910, Hodges MSS.

he attacked new nationalism and the insurgent ideas of Teddy Roosevelt and his followers like Stubbs. Hodges said, "We cannot correct the great abuse . . . in an hour or a day, nor will its correction be permanent or lasting if brought about by radical enactments or fanatical ideals."²³ During the following week, Hodges continued on this theme saying, "The unsettling tendency of what we might term 'new nationalism' appeals more directly to the spirit of unrest, dissatisfaction and prejudice than it does to a calm dispassionate view of the genuine teachings of Democracy or the principle of Republicanism."²⁴ The Topeka Daily Capital pointed out that a Kansas City Star editorial had forsaken Hodges because of his reactionary campaign speeches, whereas heretofore they had only praised him as a good progressive legislator.²⁵ The senator dropped this attack after the Republican press continued to point out that he had been a progressive in the legislature. Furthermore, William Jennings Bryan, a progressive, was campaigning in Kansas for Hodges; therefore how could the senator reconcile his attacks on things he had, by his very actions, fought for in the legislature.

²³Campaign literature, 1910, Hodges MSS.

²⁴Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, September 29, 1910.

²⁵Editorials in ibid., September 29, October 4, 11, 1910.

Stubbs, too, had his problems with campaign statements backfiring. The Democrats pointed out that Stubbs had in a Marysville speech said that "a dishonest Republican was almost as bad as a Democrat."²⁶ The publisher of the Marysville Advocate-Democrat varified that he and Fred Bullene of the Kansas City Star had stenographic notes to prove that this had been said.²⁷ Stubbs denied that statement and said that he had called for dishonest members of both parties to be prosecuted.

As the campaign became more heated, the Democrats charged the Republicans with much moral laxness. For instance, prohibition enforcement was not mentioned in the Republican platform and furthermore Stubbs allegedly allowed drinking in his own road construction work camps. The Democrats said he had also installed "wet" judges in places favorable to the liquor interests.²⁸ The Stubbs administration was accused of excessively increasing state taxes. This included the inheritance tax which was labeled as double taxation. The Republican sponsored insurance law also came under attack

²⁶ Harry M. Brodrick to George Hodges, June 27, 1910, Hodges MSS.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Frank Hodges to Eugene Abbott, November 3, 1910, Hodges MSS.

with the charge that it created a trust among these companies in rate fixation. Allegedly this favored Stubbs since he had much personal stock in insurance companies. The governor's contingent fund was attacked as excessive, with the suggestion that \$2,000 of it had been used for personal groceries; the bank commissioner's office expenditures were questioned as perhaps going for some personal gain; the governor's personal wealth, which was estimated to be well over a million dollars, was said to have been obtained in questionable ventures like railroad contracts arranged by his favored railroad friends.²⁹

Stubbs retaliated with a charge that the Hodges Brothers Lumber Company was part of a trust which regulated prices in Johnson County through membership in the Southwestern Lumbermans Association. Hodges denied the charge saying they had dropped membership in the association in question three years ago and that the state attorney general had investigated and no truth was found in the allegation.³⁰ Stubbs again defended his administration in an Olathe speech a few days before the election in which he tried to refute the allegations

²⁹Campaign literature, 1910, Hodges MSS; George Hodges to D. O. McCray, June 2, 18, 1910, Hodges MSS; Frank Hodges to Emmett Keith, October 18, 1910, Hodges MSS.

³⁰George Hodges to D. O. McCray, February 17, 1910, Hodges MSS.

of his opponent. First, Stubbs said that the state auditor had verified that expenses during the fiscal year of 1909-10 were down \$68,000 from the previous year, thus spending was not up, he claimed as Hodges insisted. Furthermore, Hodges had voted for all the major appropriations in the state senate. Secondly, Stubbs denied that a \$2,000 expenditure had come from the contingent fund for groceries. Thirdly, the governor tried to clarify his statement about dishonest Republicans, saying that any wrong doing either party should be punished. He concluded by appealing to the voters to reject the inconsistent campaign charges of Hodges, for he said a vacillating governor would not be in the best interests of Kansas.³¹

Governor Stubbs defeated Senator Hodges on November 8 by a 162,181 to 146,014 vote. The Socialist candidate had picked 15,384 votes, almost enough for Hodges to win if he could have obtained these votes as well as the 2,372 votes the Prohibitionist candidate received.³² The senator had cut a 35,000 Republican majority from two years previous to one of 16,000.

³¹Topeka Daily Capital, November 4, 7, 1910.

³²Seventeenth Biennial Report of the Secretary of State, Kansas, 1909-1910 (Topeka: State Printing Office, 1910), pp. 125-126.

Hodges blamed his defeat mainly on the defection of many Democrats because of newspapers unfriendly to the senator. The Democratic leaders had keenly felt the sting of a press mainly controlled by the Republicans in Kansas, while the major force in Kansas politics, the Kansas City Star, an independent paper, had chosen to support Stubbs. Hodges summarized his defeat as a result of several factors. First, Stubbs was the incumbent and voters tended to not favor a change after one term. Secondly, the Kansas City Star had advocated that insurgency could only survive if Stubbs were re-elected and to achieve this most noble cause, progressive Democrats had the responsibility to vote for the governor. Thirdly, the senator said patronage had caused two thousand some appointees of Stubbs to vote for a continuation of their jobs, many of whom, Hodges said, were Democrats. Stubbs had been generously bipartisan in his appointments during his first term. Fourthly, Democrat J. B. Billard of Topeka had announced his candidacy for mayor of that city on the resubmission platform only a few weeks before the general state election. He had done this contrary to the wishes of the Democratic leadership, ostensibly to embarrass such a "dry" as Hodges. The progressive dry voters thus tended to view any Democrat with suspicion. Finally, Hodges blamed his opponent for

" . . . redflaming, glittering generalities and all kinds of pynotechnics [sic]."³³

Hodges had campaigned in one hundred and one out of the one hundred and five counties in Kansas. He made from one to five speeches a day in a seventeen week campaign. Only one other man had helped make campaign speeches for the state ticket. Democrats had not financially supported the gubernatorial campaign. Hodges had personally paid for his campaign in the amount of three thousand dollars. The lack of tangible support from the State Central Committee and the absence of a major Democratic daily newspaper all combined to frustrate the senator's gubernatorial bid. Hodges had been the sacrifice for the sake of keeping the party unified.³⁴ His state wide campaign travels, though, would prove to be an asset two years hence because he now quite clearly sensed the mood of the Kansas voters, and he had organized, on his own, a grass roots movement that would reach successful fruition.

The election year in 1912 brought to Kansas, as well as to the nation, another re-alignment of political forces.

³³George Hodges to James D. Johnston, November 23, 1910, Hodges MSS.

³⁴Id. to Lon Sanders, November 18, 1910, Hodges MSS; id. W. R. Waggoner, December 30, 1910, Hodges MSS.

The Insurgents in Kansas of two years ago had become the Progressives. The name change was an effort to give a better connotation to the movement. The main political shiftings were seen in the Republican Party where the Insurgent and Standpat elements parted company over the national policies of Taft. The reform leadership in the state Republican Party under Governor Stubbs' administration had promoted the policies and candidacy of Theodore Roosevelt. Several governors from other states had joined Stubbs early in 1912, in securing Roosevelt's consent to run again. At the Kansas State Republican Central Committee meeting, the Roosevelt forces were outmaneuvered by the Standpat Taft supporters in securing the convention method of selection for national convention delegates instead of the primary election method. As a result the Kansas Republican factions were, for 1912, beyond reconciliation.³⁵

The Democrats were enthusiastic about the extraordinary opportunity to win the gubernatorial seat for the first time since 1882. Although the minority party seemed reasonably assured of a victory with a unified effort and a strong candidate, the Democratic Party, too, was not without strife as was evident in the discord in selecting candidates, especially in the primary for the gubernatorial race.

³⁵Zornow, Kansas, p. 219.

Hodges, who had made a good race in 1910 against Stubbs, appeared again to be the most logical gubernatorial choice, since Stubbs was running for the U. S. Senate. Although many Democrats had mentioned him for the U. S. Senate race, the party rather endorsed him for the gubernatorial bid at their annual banquet in Topeka on February 22, 1911, with the declaration that the party needed his leadership on the state ticket in 1912.³⁶ Hodges personally was more interested in the U. S. Senate race for 1912. His chances to defeat the victor of the Charles Curtis-Walter Stubbs primary contest were considered to be excellent, especially in light of the Republican Standpat-Insurgent feud. When Mayor J. B. Billard of Topeka announced his candidacy for governor on the Democratic ticket with resubmission of the prohibition issue as his main plank, the progressive wing of the party swiftly reacted by urging Hodges to make the race again to keep the party unified and prevent it from committing political suicide. The U. S. Senate race opportunity continued to grow dim when Hodges was informed that the Kansas City Star wanted to support Stubbs for that race. Furthermore, the Kansas City newspaper favored Woodrow Wilson for the presidency and wanted to support Hodges for the Kansas governorship. The

³⁶Topeka Daily Capital, February 23, 1911.

Star believed that Hodges could win by 25,000 votes. In view of this offer for support, and the fact of Billard's candidacy, Hodges decided to get into the governors race.³⁷

Hodges saw the election as a struggle for the survival of progressivism which should not be allowed to perish, since the political machine combinations in Kansas had been broken up by the movement during the last decade. He wanted to secure even more progressive legislation for Kansas like: (1) the initiative, (2) the referendum, (3) the recall, (4) the Massachusetts ballot, (5) better roads, (6) better schools, (7) more agricultural experiment stations, and (8) soil conservation. This, he determined, could only be achieved if he remained in state politics for the time being. Assured of the support of a powerful daily newspaper, Hodges was confident that the gubernatorial bid would not elude him this time. Hodges also believed that in his strong support of Wilson for the presidency, he could best serve both interests by leading the state ticket in Kansas.³⁸

After the 1912 state political speculations had become more crystalized, the presidential election year of

³⁷D. O. McCray to George Hodges, June 10, 1911, Hodges MSS.

³⁸George Hodges to Fred Trigg, June 27, 1911, Hodges MSS; id. to Frank Stockbridge, August 21, 1911, Hodges MSS; id. to Henderson Martin, August 29, 1911, Hodges MSS.

1912 brought added turbulence to Kansas politics. The race was on for the presidential hopefuls to secure delegates to the national convention. The Kansas Democrats were divided in their support between Champ Clark of Missouri and Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey. Hodges was an early advocate for the New Jersey governor because, he said, Wilson could " . . . carry a greater independent vote . . . than any other man. . . . "39 This stand brought a confrontation in the party between the Wilson-Hodges proponents and those members who were supporting William H. Thompson of Garden City as the party's U. S. Senate candidate. The latter strongly advocated Champ Clark's candidacy. The Wilson-Hodges forces appeared to early have the greater strength; but when Hodges was forced to leave the state during February to allow his wife and son to recuperate in Florida, the Thompson-Clark forces organized the party to such a degree that Champ Clark was selected by the State Democratic Convention, in Hutchinson, to receive the support of the Kansas delegation at the party's national convention in Baltimore. The Clark forces sought to discredit Hodges by insinuating that his Florida trip had come to save face when he discovered that Wilson would fail to get the support of the convention at Hutchinson. Hodges hotly denied this,

³⁹Id. to Frank Thomas, January 12, 1912, Hodges MSS.

reasserting that the trip had been for health reasons only.⁴⁰ The secrecy of the trip itself had lent a suspicious air to Hodges whereabouts in February, for only a few party leaders knew beforehand why he was leaving. Hodges had hoped that the secrecy would prevent the Wilson forces from losing ground, but he had underestimated the Thompson-Clark forces. The breach in leadership between Hodges and Thompson would continue to grow in the next decade as each would continue to lead rival factions in the Democratic party in Kansas. After Wilson finally received the presidential nomination in Baltimore, the political fortunes of Hodges rose considerably in Kansas.

In the primary battle, Hodges not only faced Billard, but also Judge A. W. Jackson, of Winfield, the choice of the Clark forces, who after their defeat at Baltimore had entered him in the gubernatorial race. Hodges early welcomed the candidacy of Jackson for he believed that it would take three votes from Billard for every one vote Hodges might lose to Jackson. Billard campaigned solely for resubmission of the prohibition question to the voters. He, through private sources, informed Hodges that the only reason he was making the race was to show the sham of prohibition enforcement during the Stubbs administration and to prove that the

⁴⁰Id. to Frank MacLennan, March 11, 1912, Hodges MSS.

Republican Party really had a large element that favored open saloons. Furthermore, Billard promised to support Hodges if he would lose to Hodges in the primary.⁴¹ Hodges, however, believed that the Stubbs-Capper forces had induced Billard to run for the purpose of trying to sidetrack his second gubernatorial bid in the primary. This belief was based on information Hodges had gained from special news correspondent, D. O. McCray of Topeka, which indicated that Capper feared Hodges as an opponent. The strategy of placing Billard's name before the public as a "wet" Democrat had been a major factor in Hodges' loss in the 1910 race. Hodges was convinced the Republicans were going for an encore.⁴²

Jackson campaigned against the extravagance of the Stubbs administration and labeled Hodges as being the same kind of politician as Stubbs because Hodges had supported every one of Stubbs' legislative proposals. Jackson also accused Hodges of being too progressive. The Jackson campaign was notably silent on resubmission. Hodges indicated that it was because Jackson practiced what Billard promulgated.⁴³

⁴¹D. O. McCray to George Hodges, September 16, 1911, Hodges MSS.

⁴²Id. to id., July 4, 1911, Hodges MSS; George Hodges to J. Will Kelly, August 18, 1911, Hodges MSS.

⁴³Id. to Alston M. McCarty, May 29, 1912, Hodges MSS; Kansas City Star, July 28, 1912.

Senator Hodges' primary campaign called for a repudiation of the resubmission issue. He declared that ninety per cent of Kansas Democrats were against resubmission. He warned that if Billard won, it would mean political suicide for the party in Kansas because the progressives would bolt the ticket. The Democratic newspapers in Kansas were almost unanimous in support of Hodges, but still Hodges remained uneasy over the chances for victory because numerous political factions in the Democratic party like the bourbon, the standpat, and the anti-Bryan forces were trying to defeat him. Hodges summarized the campaign as a struggle for survival between the progressive wing and the bourbon wing in the party. In comparing the three Democratic candidates on the major issue of prohibition, William A. White noted that, "The Democratic situation in Kansas is about this: Hodges has a dry platform, Jackson has a damp platform, and Billard's is wet."⁴⁴

Hodges won the primary election, when Democratic voters rejected the resubmission issue. Hodges received 29,592 votes, while Billard had 20,505, and Jackson had 10,701. The Democratic ticket, though, had run far behind the total votes compiled in the Republican struggle, where Arthur

⁴⁴Ralph M. Malin, "The Election of 1912 in Kansas," (Master's thesis, Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, 1966), p. 123.

Capper defeated Frank J. Ryan, a railroad commissioner from Leavenworth, in an easy contest 81,554-34,216.⁴⁵

After the primary, Hodges guided the Democrats in drafting a progressive party platform for the general election. Hodges was firmly committed to those ideals, for he said, "I am a progressive, heart and soul. I believe in the progressive policies and progressive measures. As a member of the state senate I have had a part in the enactment of the progressive laws now on the statute books and if I am elected I will do all I can to help keep Kansas in the front rank of progressive states."⁴⁶ His platform included the following pledges:

- (1) a recording mortgage tax;
- (2) a graduated income tax;
- (3) the Massachusetts ballot (short ballot);
- (4) the repeal of the state inheritance tax;
- (5) the initiative, referendum, and recall;
- (6) the reduction of excessive state offices;
- (7) a consolidation procedure for rural schools to facilitate educational improvement;
- (8) the state publication of free textbooks;

⁴⁵Eighteenth Biennial Report of the Secretary of State, Kansas, 1911-1912, pp. 32-33.

⁴⁶Kansas City Star, July 28, 1912.

- (9) the full enforcement of prohibition laws;
- (10) a single educational administrative board;
- (11) the direct election of all public officials;
- (12) a reduction of the governor's contingent fund from \$10,000 to \$5,000;
- (13) a tariff on luxuries for revenue only;
- (14) the improvement of public highways.⁴⁷

Thus the Democrats had a positive program for a continuation of progressive government in the state.

Capper faced a delicate situation with the bolt of Roosevelt from the Republican Party and the subsequent formation of the national Progressive Party. Capper had tried early in the Taft-Roosevelt struggle to remain neutral, while pressing for continued reform with his news publications. He had resisted efforts which were promoting him for the governor's race. Eventually when he decided to make the gubernatorial race, he was promoted as the candidate who could unite the feuding Republican factions; but his close association with William Allen White, Walter R. Stubbs, and Victor Murdock gave notice by early 1912 that he was in sympathy with Roosevelt's Progressive Party.⁴⁸ Capper ran on a platform

⁴⁷ Olathe Register, May 5, 1912; Malin, "The Election of 1912", pp. 124-125.

⁴⁸ Homer E. Socolofsky, Arthur Capper: Publisher, Politician, Philanthropist (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1962), pp. 75-76.

which gave the following pledges:

- (1) a business-like administration;
- (2) reduction of taxes in proper ratio with efficient government;
- (3) reduction in excessive state offices;
- (4) initiative, referendum, and recall;
- (5) textbooks distributed at cost;
- (6) revisions in the inheritance tax to give greater exemptions to lower income groups;
- (7) direct election of U. S. Senators;
- (8) an administration of justice and economy.⁴⁹

Jay House characterized the two candidates saying that Hodges was, "a 'pleasant, agreeable man, a good citizen, a good neighbor, a good business man and a good politician of average candle power' while Capper was described as 'singularly inexpert in the part of blowing his personal horn,' and 'so modest and self effacing' that he did not look like a political campaigner at all."⁵⁰

The opposition to Capper portrayed him as the "evil" of Stubbs. Charles Anderson, secretary to State Senator Hunter of Sumner County wrote Hodges a letter verifying that he had

⁴⁹Malin, "The Election of 1912", p. 128; editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, July 21, 1912.

⁵⁰Socolofsky, Arthur Capper, p. 77.

personal knowledge to the fact that William A. White and Walter Stubbs had hand picked Capper for the gubernatorial race.⁵¹ Some rumors even said that Stubbs had invested in Capper's publications. Capper denied the rumor and attempted to refute the inference that he was a puppet of Stubbs.⁵²

A Republican League had been organized to defeat all "Bull Moose" candidates. J. S. Dean, president of the League denounced Capper as " . . . an artful dodger."⁵³ Dean alleged that Capper was a "Bull Mooser" in action, while in his publications he professed to be a Republican.⁵⁴ The Republican League maintained that Capper was in a conspiracy with Stubbs and others to destroy the Republican Party in the state. In his denial Capper stated that he believed in the popular control of the party where the rank and file selected the nominees. He concluded by saying that he was of the party of Abe Lincoln.⁵⁵

The main charges by the Democrats against Capper were that he had amassed a huge fortune through indecent advertising

⁵¹Charles Anderson to George Hodges, August 23, 1912, Hodges MSS.

⁵²Socolofsky, Arthur Capper, pp. 77-78.

⁵³Olathe Register, October 17, 1912.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., October 24, 1912; editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1912.

in his publications, and that he had cooperated with the mail order houses to deprive local merchants of business. As proof of the mail order charge, various sources testified that phrases were found in the Capper advertisements which read, "Don't be robbed by your home merchant any longer. Buy your goods of us. . . ."⁵⁶ The immoral advertisements were said to offer whiskey sales and other indecent materials that would be offensive to women as well as gentlemen. W. R. Waggoner of the Hutchinson Gazette said that the local feminine population was actively urging Capper's defeat for reason of content in his advertisements. Jerry D. Botkin, the 1908 Democrat gubernatorial candidate and circuit riding elder, traveled about Kansas holding "men only" and "women only" meetings in churches to organize reaction against Capper's advertising program.⁵⁷ Marco Morrow, Capper's advertisement manager, denied the charges by reporting that Capper declined about \$40,000 annually in questionable advertisements. He maintained this had been the policy since January 1, 1908.⁵⁸ Henry J. Allen of the Wichita Beacon rejected the denial and

⁵⁶Frank Hodges to J. A. McRae, October 23, 1912, Hodges MSS.

⁵⁷W. R. Waggoner to Frank Hodges, October 26, 1912, Hodges MSS; Topeka State Journal, October 16, 1947.

⁵⁸Socolofsky, Arthur Capper, p. 78; Malin, "The Election of 1912", pp. 129-130.

labeled Capper a "human vampire" who had grown rich on vile advertising.⁵⁹

The Republicans accused Hodges of holding membership in a "lumber trust." The Topeka Daily Capital said the Southwestern Lumbermans Association had been prosecuted in the state of Missouri for anti-trust violations. The Hodges Brothers' Lumberyard was supposedly a member of this organization which allegedly had conspired to form a dealers combine in order to regulate prices and restrict competition.⁶⁰ Hodges immediately denied the charges with an assertion that their lumber firm was not a member of the association in question since they had resigned from it eight years before. Hodges was greatly concerned about the effect the "trust" charge would have in western Kansas where the farmers, in the main, were informed solely by Capper's publications. Hodges' brother Frank arranged to deny these charges through a rival to the Capper publications, the Kansas Farmer.⁶¹

The second main attack on Hodges by the Capper forces centered on alleged Hodges' incongruities in his speeches

⁵⁹Olathe Register, October 24, 1912.

⁶⁰Topeka Daily Capital, October 30, 1912; Socolofsky, Arthur Capper, p. 79; Malin, "The Election of 1912," p. 131.

⁶¹Frank Hodges to Henderson Martin, October 13, 1912, Hodges MSS.

and activities. They labeled the Democratic charge of excessive taxation in the Stubbs administration as demagoguery, saying that Hodges was talking economy, when yet he had voted for all of the state appropriations except the memorial building, and those funds had come, in the main, from Washington, while serving as a member of the Senate's Ways and Means Committee. He was accused by the Topeka Daily Capital of thus making a bid for the Standpat vote by "trimming" on the issues of the day and of being a bigot along party lines by accusing various administrative departments of excessive expenditures. Capper added that it seemed to be a characteristic now of Hodges that progressivism "cost too much."⁶² Privately Hodges had been promised much support from the standpat Republicans, many who again were going to vote for him as they had done in the 1910 election.⁶³

Capper sent a letter to Hodges asking that both of them make a public statement pledging that the one who was elected would use his full influence to get the legislature to abide by the people's choice for U. S. Senator.⁶⁴ The

⁶²Editorials in the Topeka Daily Capital, September 27, October 19, 22, 1912.

⁶³William O. Fraser to George Hodges, September 2, 1912, Hodges MSS; Malin, "The Election of 1912," pp. 132-133.

⁶⁴Arthur Capper to George Hodges, October 29, 1912, Hodges MSS.

Democratic leadership decided that Hodges should ignore the Capper plea, for an affirmative answer would give the implication that the governor's office would be a political machine that planned to control the legislature. Finally, though, Hodges in a letter to William A. White did pledge to use his efforts, if elected, to support the people's choice for the U. S. Senate seat. Hodges indicated that he had been hesitant to answer Capper because he now did not trust any agreements that the publisher might make as evidenced by Capper's unfair news coverage, when earlier he had promised to be fair.⁶⁵

In the main Capper conducted his campaign through his publications since he was not a good public speaker, although he did appear in a debate with Hodges at Eldorado in late October of 1912 on the issues of taxation and misrepresentations. Hodges campaigned throughout the state as he had done in 1910. He was able to use his oratory skills developed in the legislature to a great advantage, but he admitted that speeches were no match for the newspaper coverage that Capper possessed. Therefore he hoped for a unified Democratic effort and for a large Republican voter defection to pull him through to victory.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, November 3, 1912; Arthur Capper to George Hodges, June 6, 1912, Hodges MSS; George Hodges to Arthur Capper, June 7, 1912, Hodges MSS.

⁶⁶Olathe Register, October 24, 1912; George Hodges to William McComb, September 12, 1912, Hodges MSS.

The gubernatorial election results were not officially known until three weeks after election day. The pending results and intermediate court action appeared almost as confusing as the many factions had been in the campaign. Determination of the winner vacillated as returns and amended reports came in from various counties and cities. The Kansas City Star declared on November 7, 1912, two days after the election, that Hodges was elected since he was ahead by 786 votes with only two counties out,⁶⁷ while on the same day the Topeka Daily Capital declared Capper to be the victor.⁶⁸ On November 14 the Olathe Register said the Hodges forces claimed to have a lead of 25 votes, while the Capper forces claimed a 26 vote margin in their favor.⁶⁹

The problem in ascertaining the victor was complicated by a dispute over some ballots that allegedly had been marked "improperly." Kansas was using the party-column ballot where a voter could mark a cross X in the circle at the top of a column thus voting a straight-party ticket. This election statute had been amended by the 1905 legislature to permit a voter to mark an "X" in the circle at the top and to also vote

⁶⁷Kansas City Star, November 7, 1912.

⁶⁸Topeka Daily Capital, November 7, 1912.

⁶⁹Olathe Register, November 14, 1912.

for any other individuals if he so desired by marking an "X" in the square to the right of any candidate in another party's column. Ironically, Hodges had been the joint author of this law which now was a major point of contention in his gubernatorial bid. Many voters had marked the circle at the top of the Republican column, but had also marked for the Independent Roosevelt electors, thereby cancelling out the Taft electors. At the same time many had voted for Hodges instead of Capper in the same manner. Some misinformed election judges threw out ballots marked in such a manner, thinking they were illegal.⁷⁰ Several newspapers, among them the Topeka Daily Capital, had cautioned voters to not mark their ballots in such a fashion for they would be void.⁷¹ A week after the election, Attorney General Dawson ruled that the ballots in question were valid,⁷² but it was too late to change the vote count, unless a court injunction could be secured ordering canvassing boards to reconvene. Since Hodges had a narrow lead, his attorneys decided to wait on the action of the Capper forces, although they had information that as many as one hundred Roosevelt-Hodges ballots in various

⁷⁰ Socolofsky, Arthur Capper, p. 80; Malin, "The Election of 1912," pp. 134-135.

⁷¹ Topeka Daily Capital, November 5, 1912.

⁷² Ibid., November 12, 1912.

counties across the state had been voided by the Republican dominated election boards.⁷³ Hodges feared that a recount might negate the victories of some of the numerous Democrats who had been swept into office with him.

Capper's attorneys filed a suit against the Wabaunsee County canvassing board to compel them to reconvene and count the invalidated ballots. They held that there were 124 voided ballots in this county alone, and that across the state between two and three thousand such ballots had been invalidated by erring election boards. The Supreme Court moved quickly and rendered an opinion on the case by December 7, 1912. In a five to two decision, the Supreme Court said that "the ballots in question 'were in fact valid',. . . . But the court could not compel the county canvassing board to 'reconvene and count ballots,' since it had passed out of existence and can not be revived by its own action or by that of a court.'" ⁷⁴

After the litigation was over, Attorney General Dawson wrote Hodges a letter congratulating him on his victory.⁷⁵

⁷³Fred Robertson to Henderson Martin, November 13, 1912, Hodges MSS; Dr. Wilson Priest to George Hodges, November 27, 1912, Hodges MSS.

⁷⁴Socolofsky, Arthur Capper, p. 80; Malin, "The Election of 1912," pp. 135-136.

⁷⁵John Dawson to George Hodges, November 30, 1912, Hodges MSS.

On December 1, 1912, the State Canvassing Board officially declared that Hodges had a plurality of twenty-nine votes over Capper, and that Secretary of State Charles Sessions would issue the certificate of election to George Hodges.⁷⁶ He gained the victory by receiving 167,437 votes to 167,408 votes for Arthur Capper.⁷⁷ It had been the closest race for the gubernatorial office in the state's history.

Capper had only one constitutional recourse left after the Supreme Court refused to intervene; he could appeal his election dispute to the state senate after the legislature convened in 1913. Since the Democrats had won control of the legislature for the first time in Kansas history, and because Hodges would already have been inaugurated by the time of the legislative session, Capper decided not to contest the election by an appeal to a partisan legislative board. He rather chose to rest his case with the people. Capper believed that Hodges would have a golden opportunity to do much good for Kansas since the legislature would be of the same political party as the governor. Capper said, "Mr. Hodges, working with a legislature of his own political faith, will have an ideal opportunity to serve Kansas. I

⁷⁶Topeka Daily Capital, December 1, 1912.

⁷⁷Eighteenth Biennial Report of the Secretary of State, Kansas, 1911-1912, pp. 78-79.

feel it is now for the best interests of the state that Mr. Hodges, and the party he represents be given that opportunity."⁷⁸

The governor-elect could credit his victory to the following reasons: (1) a good political record which had helped to give more popularity to the Democrats; (2) the support of the Kansas City Star which gave the party the news coverage they had lacked in the past; (3) the split in the Republican Party which had given Hodges the support of the Republican League; and (4) the ballot controversy which had been determined in his favor by the state supreme court to culminate a hard-fought campaign.

Governor-elect Hodges now awaited his inauguration, while "starved" Democratic office seekers flooded him with requests. The governor-elect announced that he would choose the best suited individuals for the respective state offices and would seek to fulfill the party's pledges to the people because he had no ambitions to build for himself a political machine.⁷⁹

George H. Hodges was inaugurated on January 13, 1913, as the nineteenth governor of Kansas. He was the first Democrat to occupy the office since Governor Glick took the helm for one term in 1883, and only the second Democrat to

⁷⁸Socolofsky, Arthur Capper, p. 81.

⁷⁹Editorial in the Olathe Register, December 5, 1912.

be selected as chief executive of the Sunflower state. The other state officials who also took their oath were Republicans. The Democrats, however, won five congressional seats and the people had selected the Democratic candidate, William A. Thompson, for a U. S. Senate seat. The latter now awaited confirmation by the legislature which for the first time in Kansas history was controlled by the Democrats. There were twenty-one Democrats in the Senate and seventy-two in the House.⁸⁰

Kansans waited expectantly to see what a political rarity like Democratic control of the executive and legislative departments would bring to the traditional Republican state. Woodrow Wilson had swept in on his coattails many state Democratic candidates across the nation. The party of Jefferson had scored nationwide success. In Kansas William Allen White, a "Bull Mooser", commented on the impending new political arrangements saying, "Hodges and Wilson talk right; they are starting out right. So long as they plow a straight furrow to the progressive platform, they will have undivided progressive support."⁸¹

⁸⁰Zornow, Kansas, p. 221; Kirke Mechem (ed.), The Annals of Kansas, II (Topeka: The Kansas State Historical Society, 1956), p. 58; Kansas City Star, January 13, 1913; Topeka Daily Capital, January 13, 1913.

⁸¹Editorial in the Clathe Register, January 9, 1913.

Governor Hodges' inaugural address and his message to the legislature which followed the next day were almost identical, although the latter was in greater detail. The governor, in the main, used the party's platform as an outline. He asked for: (1) action by the legislators to give the state strong prohibition enforcement; (2) the initiative, referendum, and recall; (3) revision and recodification of all state laws; (4) the Massachusetts ballot; (5) a reduction in taxes and needless expenditures; (6) the building of good roads and water storage reservoirs; (7) the consolidation of numerous state offices; (8) the promotion of the industrial and agricultural development; (9) the governor concluded by declaring that Kansas needed more business and less politics, reminding the legislators of the importance of fulfilling campaign pledges, saying they " . . . are solemn contracts with the people and should be as sacredly performed as any contract the performance of which is demanded by law and business honor."⁸² Arthur Capper complimented the governor's message as being good, precise, and if the legislature passed it, would be redemptive of the party's pledges.⁸³ The Kansas City Star added that

⁸²Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, January 14, 1913; Glathe Register, January 16, 1913; Mechem, Annals of Kansas, II, p. 58.

⁸³Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, January 15, 1913.

while Hodges was a progressive, the Democrats were on trial and they must not fail in fulfilling their pledges.⁸⁴ It was noteworthy that strong isolationist feelings in Kansas were reflected in the governor's two messages. Nowhere was any mention made that war might soon engulf the state and the nation as a result of the conflict in Europe.⁸⁵

The legislature reacted positively to the governor's requests with amazing speed as legislatures go. They with an almost unanimous vote ratified the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution which made provision for the direct election of U. S. Senators; they repealed the state's inheritance tax and tackled the problem of minimum pay and maximum hours for women laborers. The Topeka Daily Capital, after the first two weeks, declared the legislature had a good work record.⁸⁶ Several days later, the Massachusetts ballot bill which abolished the party-column ballot with its animal symbols was passed. Democratic House Speaker "Ironjaw" (W. L.) Brown, an ex-populist, said that the "poultry year" was now gone from the voting process.⁸⁷ The

⁸⁴Kansas City Star, January 13, 1913.

⁸⁵Bright, Kansas: The First Century, II, p. 49.

⁸⁶Topeka Daily Capital, February 2, 1913.

⁸⁷Ibid., February 7, 1913.

Kansas City Star added that the "picture ballot" was gone and with its demise would come the importance of the intelligent independent voter. It concluded that the "yellow dog" of partisanship was now dead.³⁸ The legislature continued to function with such efficiency that Arthur Capper in a mid-February editorial comment said Kansas had never had a finer legislative body. The writer credited this to the governor's persuasive influence over both houses in the legislature. Governor Hodges' leadership was not only getting results from the Democrats, but Capper noted that some Republican senators were considered to be as good as the Democrats in support of the administration. Capper concluded that there was closer harmony between the executive and the legislative departments than ever before in the state's history.³⁹ At the end of February, near the close of the legislative session, the Kansas City Star concluded that the Kansas legislature had attained an unusually good record in that state's legislative history. The reason for these extraordinary circumstances, the Star declared, was the governor's effective leadership in pushing the theme that legislative pledges are a trust which must

³⁸ Editorials in the Kansas City Star, February 6, 14, 1913.

³⁹ Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, February 14, 1913.

be redeemed to the people.⁹⁰ The Kansas Senate, long the object of the Star's wrath, was even commended for its progressiveness. The House Republicans were blamed for blocking or trying to "water down" the initiative, referendum and recall amendment proposals to the state's constitution. The Democrats, generally, were said to have used a rational approach in the session and especially in the solution to the appropriations for the state's educational institutions.⁹¹

The progressives throughout the state were gratified at the governor's firm stand for the strict enforcement of prohibition. He had stated that he would hold local officials responsible for plugging any leaks in liquor consumption or sales. Hodges promised full cooperation with Attorney General Dawson to make Kansas a model for the dry forces. The legislature aided the cause when it restricted the shipments of liquor into Kansas by the Mahin law. This statute in three weeks time reduced by fifty per cent the flow of liquor into the state. The law required railroads and express companies to file statements with the county clerks of such goods in transit.⁹²

⁹⁰Editorial in the Kansas City Star, February 28, 1913.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Mechem, Annals of Kansas, II, p. 65.

Just prior to the legislature's adjournment, the governor sent a special message to the body advocating an amendment to the state's constitution authorizing the establishment of a unicameral legislature. He proposed the system, not for immediate action, but for consideration by a future legislative body as the result of public pressure for such a plan. He called for a small continuous legislative body, because it would be more responsive to the people and would have more time to deliberate which would result in better laws.⁹³ The governor called the bicameral system for states, " . . . clumsy, antiquated and inefficient."⁹⁴ The major newspapers of Kansas and many throughout the nation hailed the governor's proposals as the answer to long overdue reform in state government structure.

After the legislature adjourned on March 17, Hodges evaluated their accomplishments and failures. He commended them for their progressive work in redeeming thirteen campaign pledges. The Democratic controlled legislature had enacted the following bills:

- (1) ratified the Seventeenth Amendment;
- (2) repealed the inheritance tax;

⁹³Governor Hodges was considered an authority on unicameralism. This will be discussed in Chapter V.

⁹⁴Kansas City Star, March 10, 1913.

- (3) placed educational institutions under one board;
- (4) adopted the Massachusetts ballot;
- (5) enlarged workmen's compensation benefits;
- (6) consolidated the labor bureau with enlarged power;
- (7) passed safety laws for mines;
- (8) prohibited injunctions in labor disputes unless notice was given;
- (9) created small debtors courts;
- (10) the recall amendment would be submitted for voter ratification;
- (11) established a non-partisan judiciary;
- (12) made available convict labor for road work;
- (13) state publication of free school text books.⁹⁵

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The legislature, though, had failed to pass the initiative and referendum proposals because the House Republicans refused to accept the Democratic sponsored bills. The Democrats managed to easily get a majority vote, but they failed to get the necessary two-thirds margin on these constitutional amendments. The stalemate developed because the Republicans wanted mandatory judicial review for initiative legislation, while the progressive Democrats

⁹⁵Kansas Legislative Handbook: Record of the 1913 Session (Hutchinson: Brown & Sorenson, Printers, 1913), p. 3.

maintained that this was unnecessary because such legislation would reflect the will of the people, which was in essence what the judicial department was protecting from encroachment.

Hodges also expressed disappointment that several other pledges had not been passed. These included the grain inspection bill, the mortgage registration tax, and the administration's inheritance tax.⁹⁶ The Topeka Daily Capital said the overall record of the legislature was a mixed one; organized corruption had been conspicuously absent, but the Capital asserted that too much stress had been placed on economy, especially when the final 1913 appropriations were slightly higher than those of the 1911 session.⁹⁷ The Kansas City Star, though, chided the legislature for not spending enough money on education. It said the increased margin of appropriations over the 1911 session were justifiable because of the population growth in the state. This growth had placed a greater financial stress on the educational facilities. The Star observed that the most important bill passed by the 1913 session was the one which established a single Educational Administrative Board for all of the state's institutions.⁹⁸ In view of the pressures for

⁹⁶Topeka Daily Capital, March 14, 1913.

⁹⁷Editorial in ibid.

⁹⁸Editorials in the Kansas City Star, March 11, 15, 1913.

economy, the legislature had at least held its own on educational appropriation. Governor Hodges had informed Chancellor Frank Strong of Kansas University that, "It is my intention to deal fairly with all of the educational institutions of the state. You know there is a great demand for curtailment of state expenses."⁹⁹

Overall Kansas had witnessed an oddity in that its legislature had passed many bills in the early weeks of the session instead of trying to break the usual log jam in the last week of the session. William Allen White's editorial comment was later quoted in an evaluation of the session, when he asserted that the Democratic 1913 legislature had performed well and had done a commendable work.¹⁰⁰

During the post-legislative session in 1913, Governor Hodges performed routine executive duties. Also he periodically visited the state institutions; he urged farmers during the summer drought to hold their stock instead of rushing it to market; he urged the farmers to build ponds and conserve surface water; he toured and spoke for good roads; he worked on a program of prison reform, making practical application of the parole system by releasing many

⁹⁹George Hodges to Chancellor Frank Strong, January 7, 1913, Hodges MSS.

¹⁰⁰Editorial in the Olathe Register, August 20, 1914.

old and sickly prisoners, who had served for fifteen to twenty-five years, so they could live their last few years in freedom; the governor authorized a University of Kansas sociologist, Professor Dean Blackmar to make a study of the penal system to correct abuses and institute reforms.¹⁰¹

Throughout the year the Topeka Daily Capital carried on a running feud with the governor. In the main the issue was the half million dollars more which the 1913 legislature had appropriated than the 1911 legislature. The Capital charged the legislature and governor with misrepresentation because they had been elected on a platform of economy and yet they had allotted more in appropriations than any previous legislature.¹⁰² The Olathe Register retaliated with denials and counter-charges which said that the Stubbs administration had left to the Hodges administration a deficit of \$337,000 by taking 1913 tax money, collected late in December of 1912, to pay for the extravagances of the Stubbs machine. In addition, the Register said, Stubbs had left a \$115,000 deficit for the Hodges administration to pay. Furthermore, the antiquated prison facilities and the ignored legislative mandates to build the Larned State Hospital and the Norton

¹⁰¹ Editorials in ibid., January 1, 22, 1914.

¹⁰² Topeka Daily Capital, March 13, 1913.

Tuberculosis Sanitorium by the Stubbs administration had cost the Hodges administration unforeseen funds.¹⁰³ The 1909 and 1911 legislatures had appropriated funds for the two state hospitals; the funds had been spent but the facilities had not been built until the Hodges administration completed the structures. Other allegations were also made as the constant bickering between the Capper forces and the Hodges administration continued.

Prohibition enforcement and his victory over Willard brought Hodges national attention. He was actively sought by the Anti-Saloon League as a speaker to show other states the great financial and moral rewards of prohibition. A speech which he made in Columbus, Ohio, on November 12, 1913, brought him national recognition, but he aroused the displeasure of the Capper forces and their publications by labeling them in his speech as being guilty of misrepresentation. They professed support for prohibition and yet ran liquor advertisements in their publications. Hodges had cleverly labeled his speech "How Prohibition Ruined Kansas." In it he also declared that the 1912 campaign in Kansas had been based on moral issues. The governor asserted that he had defeated Arthur Capper because the publications of the latter

¹⁰³ Editorials in the Olathe Register, June 6, July 23, September 18, October 10, 30, November 20, 1913.

had carried whiskey advertisements. Hodges speech continued, "These same papers carried lewd, indecent advertisements for the prevention of motherhood, powders that would make you irresistible to your sweetheart, marked decks, love charms, etc. So vile had they been that an editor of national renown had branded my opponent as 'a human vampire.'"¹⁰⁴

The governor's speech also gave numerous statistics on how Kansas had reduced its prison population. The speech was highly praised by the reform advocates of national prohibition. It drew so much attention that it was printed and in two years over a million and a half copies had been distributed.¹⁰⁵ But in Kansas the speech drew negative reactions, not only from Capper's publications, but also from some members of Hodges' own party who resented his efforts to help obtain national prohibition.¹⁰⁶ The Topeka Daily Capital charged him with misrepresentations on prohibition in his oration. It claimed that the "wet" vote had elected him in 1912 and had collected money from jointists in Leavenworth to pay

¹⁰⁴ Editorial in ibid., December 25, 1913.

¹⁰⁵ George Hodges to W. E. Johnson, February 27, 1918, Hodges MSS.

¹⁰⁶ The effects of this speech on Governor Hodges' political career will be discussed in the 1914 campaign and in Chapter VI.

the expenses of defending his title to office, after the ballot dispute left a possibility of court action. The Olathe Register's rebuttal stated that Hodges had invited Attorney General Dawson to investigate these charges. The attorney general's findings concluded that the charge was a lie, but he did not press the investigation against Capper publications because his office had no legal powers to subpoena for the purpose of uncovering a falsehood. While Hodges let that particular incident rest, he continued to declare in speeches that prohibition was stronger than ever in Kansas, while the Capper forces claimed there was much laxness in its enforcement.¹⁰⁷ The Olathe Register then charged that the Capper publication advertisements were illegal, saying, "this is not a question of ethics . . . it amounts to plain violation of the law."¹⁰⁸ Capper, in defense, had editorially stated in the February 8, 1914, issue of the Capital that no whiskey and other questionable advertisements were being used, but the Olathe Register said that page nine of the January 28, 1914, issue of the Capital had an advertisement for an extract to make whiskies and liquor.¹⁰⁹ These and other allegations continued

¹⁰⁷Editorial in the Olathe Register, November 27, 1913; Topeka Daily Capital, October 9, November 14, 1913.

¹⁰⁸Editorial in the Olathe Register, December 4, 1913.

¹⁰⁹Editorial in ibid., February 19, 1914; Topeka Daily Capital, January 28, February 8, 1914.

between the Capper forces and the Hodges administration until they were finally reduced in intensity by the election results in November of 1914.

Hodges made the news headlines in a spectacular way when a \$2,310 damage suit was filed against him by Mrs. Luella West of Wichita.¹¹⁰ The plaintiff alleged the governor assaulted, bruised, and beat her while she was in his private office in the state house on April 8, 1914, to seek a parole for a Frank Sullivan of Wichita. The governor's counsel contended that the chief executive had "mildly and gently" resisted the efforts of Mrs. West to take from his office desk certain documents which she was not entitled to have.¹¹¹ The ensuing trial lasted about one week. The attorneys for the governor attempted to show that Mrs. West was an unreliable person who had conspired to politically embarrass the governor. Mrs. West claimed to be a member of the Wichita W.C.T.U. and gave indications that she had the support of the organization in seeking a parole for Frank Sullivan. The defense produced a witness, Mary Dobbs, secretary of the Wichita W.C.T.U., who refuted Mrs. West's membership claim and testified that she had

¹¹⁰Topeka Daily Capital, June 2, 1914.

¹¹¹Ibid.

written to the governor in behalf of the organization, requesting that Sullivan's parole be denied. The governor's adjutant general, Charles Martin, testified that he had witnessed the whole episode in question in the governor's office. Martin said that Mrs. West attempted to take some papers from the governor's desk, whereupon the governor placed his hand on the papers trying to restrain her. When the governor saw that some documents were being torn, he released them and told the ladies they were prejudicing their case by such actions.¹¹² The jury, comprised of eleven Republicans and one Democrat, exonerated Hodges in sixty seconds.¹¹³ The Topeka Daily Capital summed up the feelings of the Kansas press by saying that it was fair and proper that the governor had been vindicated. It concluded that this had been an attempted "frame up."¹¹⁴ Governor Hodges in a letter to Mary Dobbs concurred that the suit had been an attempt to politically embarrass him when he said, "The whole thing was a political blackmailing frame-up."¹¹⁵ The Topeka State Journal concluded that it

¹¹²Ibid., June 5, 1914.

¹¹³Ibid., June 2, 7, 1914.

¹¹⁴Editorial in ibid., June 8, 1914.

¹¹⁵George Hodges to Mary Dobbs, June 16, 1914, Hodges MSS.

was disgraceful that the governor had to become a defendant in such a suit, but that he had come out the gainer in the eyes of the constituents.¹¹⁶ Hodges received hundreds of telegrams, letters, and calls from all over the state and the nation, congratulating him on his vindication.

The Topeka Daily Capital had rallied to the governor's defense in the West case, but thereafter political feuding resumed and grew more intense as the fall election approached. Governor Hodges had announced in January of 1914 that he would run for re-election. Some friends had tried to persuade him to run for the U. S. Senate seat held by the Progressive, J. L. Bristow, but the governor rather wanted to complete his progressive program for Kansas. Hodges said he would run on his record of economy; he pointed out that the state's tax levy had not increased in this year, which made it one of the few times that this had occurred in the state.¹¹⁷

Arthur Capper announced in February of 1914 that he would again seek the gubernatorial nomination, which had barely eluded him two years ago. In his statement he said, "I am firmly convinced that the third party movement

¹¹⁶ Editorial in the Topeka State Journal, June 8, 1914.

¹¹⁷ Olathe Register, January 29, 1914.

recently begun in this state is a serious mistake because it can accomplish nothing except possibly the perpetuation of Democratic misrule in Kansas. There is wide-spread belief that a majority of legal votes cast for governor at the election of 1912 were in my favor. But a technicality of law considered binding by a majority of the supreme court defeated the plainly expressed will of the people."¹¹⁸ Capper also spoke for civil service reform and indicated that he would not make any wild-eyed statements about tax reductions. Capper, though, was not the unanimous choice of the party leadership. A unity movement in the Republican party had been launched in early 1913, but it had failed to bring agreement among the various Progressive and Standpat leaders. William Allen White refused to support Capper. In a letter to Hodges, White said that, " . . . Capper is wobbling and vacillating so now that the people have lost respect for him. No man can campaign with Curtis and hold the respect of the Kansas people."¹¹⁹ Many charged Capper with again straddling the fence trying to please both the Progressive and Standpat elements. The Kansas City Star charged that two years ago Capper, in a Montgomery County speech, had said he was a Progressive and he would never go back to the Republican

¹¹⁸Socolofsky, Arthur Capper, p. 84.

¹¹⁹William Allen White to George Hodges, September 7, 1914, Hodges MSS.

Party. Now he was accused of again having joined the regular Republicans as indicated by his statement when he entered the gubernatorial race. The Star concluded that Capper was on a zig zag political course for expediency.¹²⁰

While the Republicans were in an upheaval over a third party movement, the Democratic candidate too was facing some challenges inside his party. Hodges' administration had gone along rather smoothly, party-wise, and his program had, for the most part, sailed through the legislature. But he brought himself the wrath of some liberals in the party by his speech in Columbus, Ohio, on November 12, 1913. The governor was an ardent champion of prohibition without claiming a personal career of total abstinence. In his Ohio speech he made a plea for national prohibition which gained him nationwide attention, because he was a Democrat whose party, in the past, had the connotation of being "wet." It was considered highly unusual for a Democrat to propose such legislation, for this might tend to alienate the urban voters, who were assumed to be the stronghold of the Democratic Party. Hodges received national acclaim from progressives, but he " . . . came home to jeers and catcalls and denunciation and repudiation by liberal members of his party."¹²¹

¹²⁰Editorial in the Kansas City Star, October 5, 1914.

¹²¹Editorial in the Topeka State Journal, October 16, 1947.

Although both candidates didn't have unanimous party support they were unopposed in the primary. The opposition to both candidates instead chose to run on separate tickets. Henry Allen of the Wichita Beacon ran on the Progressive ticket. J. B. Billard entered the race after the primary as an Independent favoring resubmission. Relatively little campaigning occurred until after the primary election. The primary election results gave Capper 105,800 votes; Hodges received 72,736 and Allen obtained 12,666.¹²² The Republicans had received fifty-two per cent of the total vote, while the Democrats had thirty-eight per cent and the Progressives received six per cent.¹²³ It was an ominous sign of things to come for the governor.

He again in 1914 offered a progressive platform. It included the following pledges:

- (1) national prohibition;
- (2) home rule for cities;
- (3) initiative and referendum;
- (4) a grain inspection law;
- (5) three-fourths jury verdicts in civil cases;
- (6) child welfare code;

¹²²Nineteenth Biennial Report of the Secretary of State, Kansas, 1913-1914, pp. 20-21.

¹²³Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, August 16, 1914.

- (7) national farm loan legislation;
- (8) a constitutional amendment for classification of property for purposes of taxation;
- (9) greater powers for the Public Utilities Commission;
- (10) an indeterminate franchise law.¹²⁴

The campaign in many respects was much like the previous contest between the two major candidates, for the main issues were again many of the allegations which had been made two years ago. Capper was again attacked for his advertising policy. The questionable advertisements were portrayed as revolting to the newly enfranchised women in the state. The governor also charged that the Topeka Daily Capital had not given his administration objective coverage. Capper was charged with perfidy in his publications and that his columns were closed to the governor.¹²⁵ He rejected the allegation by tabulating for his readers the number of columns which had given coverage to the administration, it included three hundred and forty-two items over various speeches and press releases by the governor and his department. Capper again offered his columns to Hodges.¹²⁶ This came shortly

¹²⁴Olathe Register, September 3, 1914.

¹²⁵Editorial in ibid., October 1, 1914.

¹²⁶Topeka Daily Capital, July 22, 1914.

after the governor had issued a challenge to Capper for a newspaper debate, since Capper had refused public debates. The debates were to be on the comparative merits of the Stubbs' and Hodges' administrations. The governor concluded that if Capper refused him equal space in his papers, it then would be fair to assume that Capper believed in withholding information from his readers that did not serve the best interests of the publisher.¹²⁷ The debates never occurred, although Hodges did publish a full page advertisement in the Topeka Daily Capital. The Olathe Register, though, charged that the perfidy of the Capital had been very evident with the treatment given the Hodges advertisement, as compared to other materials. It accused Capper of consistently guaranteeing the truthfulness of all the materials advertised in his papers, including the obscene literature, but when Hodges advertisement was run, the Capital on that day noted that it did not guarantee the truthfulness of the advertisement on page six (the one sponsored by Hodges).¹²⁸

Hodges stressed the effectiveness of his administration, while maintaining economy. This issue had been under constant

¹²⁷Topeka State Journal, July 16, 1914.

¹²⁸Editorial in the Olathe Register, October 1, 1914.

attack by Capper's papers. The governor indicated that he had not found the executive office on a cash basis when he assumed control after Stubbs, and even though he had been a state senator, he had not realized how muddled the state affairs had been; but now under his guidance the state had achieved numerous frugal milestones. The Hodges administration had paid off \$160,000 of the state debt, which thus almost liquidated it; it had built the Norton Tuberculosis Sanitorium and the Larned State Hospital; it had refinished the penitentiary and twine plant after a disastrous fire during the Stubbs administration; its appointees had saved the state \$33,000 as compared to Stubbs' personnel it had given twenty-three state board jobs to women whereas the Republicans had only one woman in office after thirty-five years.¹²⁹ The last statement was obviously intended to woo the newly enfranchised women voters of the state.

Hodges viewed the Billard candidacy as a Republican plot to defeat him in his re-election bid. The Kansas City Star was quoted to this effect, stating, "The Republicans are not depending upon their platform or their candidates to win for them this year. They are counting upon the 'smooth trick' of bringing . . . Billard into the race in order to

¹²⁹Ibid., October 29, 1914.

defeat Governor Hodges."¹³⁰ The Topeka Daily Capital declared this was a slanderous charge inspired by the Democrats. The Capital chided Hodges for worrying about losing the "wet" vote, if he had the moral support of Kansans as he had so dramatically asserted in his Columbus, Ohio, speech in late 1913.¹³¹ While Hodges viewed Billard as a Republican puppet, the Republicans accused Hodges of encouraging the Progressive Party candidacy of Henry Allen to cause Capper's defeat. Capper accused the Kansas City Star of being the propaganda organ for this scheme.¹³² The Star gave only tacit support to Hodges though, while pushing Henry Allen's candidacy with vigor.

Capper's platform also offered progressive pledges.

They included:

- (1) national prohibition;
- (2) national suffrage;
- (3) presidential primaries;
- (4) initiative and referendum;
- (5) humanitarian legislation;
- (6) more liberal workmen's compensation;

¹³⁰Ibid., September 24, 1914.

¹³¹Editorial in the Topeka Daily Capital, August 29, 1914.

¹³²Editorials in ibid., September 30, October 20, 1914.

- (7) better rural schools;
- (8) codification of school laws;
- (9) a protective tariff arranged by a non-partisan committee;
- (10) removal of state and local education from political control.¹³³

The Topeka publisher saw the main issue in the campaign as the record of the Hodges administration which he considered had been overly extravagant with the establishment of an apparent spoils system by the creation of too many unnecessary boards; furthermore it had raised appropriations \$700,000 when Hodges had promised in 1912 to reduce spending by twenty-five per cent.¹³⁴ Capper also criticized Hodges for being too liberal with paroles and pardons, and concluded that the administration had been one of disorganization.¹³⁵ The Kansas City Star defended the Hodges' term as one having a good record, but it said the governor had just been unfortunate in overestimating his ability to reduce unforeseen costs.¹³⁶

The voters turned out in record numbers on November 3, 1914. Women exercised their first opportunity in the state

¹³³Ibid., August 26, 1914.

¹³⁴Ibid., September 21, 1914.

¹³⁵Socolofsky, Arthur Capper, p. 84.

¹³⁶Kansas City Star, September 21, 1914.

to cast a ballot in a general election. In a Republican landslide, Arthur Capper defeated George Hodges by 209,543 votes to 161,696 for the incumbent. Henry Allen the Progressive Party candidate received 84,060 votes, while J. B. Billard, the Independent candidate, received 47,201.¹³⁷

Hodges forces blamed their defeat on his firm stand for national prohibition and law enforcement. Billard was also blamed as having achieved his objective in gaining a sufficient number of votes to defeat the governor.¹³⁸ Capper concluded that Hodges would have obtained more votes if he hadn't been so personal in his speeches and so "sassy" to all who opposed him. He added that Billard's showing proved that resubmission was dead and would never be heard from again.¹³⁹

The governor performed one more notable function before he left office, for which he received international attention. On November 11, 1914, the governor, in an appeal to Kansas farmers, asked them to contribute one-half per cent of their wheat and corn crops from 1914 for Belgian relief. Contributions were to be handled by county clerks through

¹³⁷Nineteenth Biennial Report of the Secretary of State, Kansas, 1913-1914, pp. 49-50.

¹³⁸Editorial in the Olathe Register, December 3, 1914.

¹³⁹Editorials in the Topeka Daily Capital, November 4-5, 1914.

the Red Cross.¹⁴⁰ Kansans responded so generously that by the first of December enough grain had been donated to fill a fifty-thousand barrel ship. The relief drive continued and more than one hundred railroad carloads of wheat left Kansas for New York by mid-December. The project was completed by Governor Capper when early in January, 1915, the U. S. S. Hannah, the "Kansas food ship", sailed from New York City with a cargo of 6,500,000 pounds of Kansas flour for Belgium.¹⁴¹ Within ninety days of the call for relief, the Hodges administered project had reached a successful conclusion. For his efforts, Hodges was decorated by King Albert of Belgium in February of 1925. George Hodges was made an officer of the Crown, "an order founded by King Leopard, and bestowed in token unusual services to Belgium and the People of Belgium."¹⁴²

Upon leaving office, Hodges personally reviewed his administration. The governor said that upon his accession to office after the Stubbs administration he had found one-fourth of the 1913 taxes amounting to \$832,000 drawn in advance and spent, in the main, to liquidate 1912 bills.

¹⁴⁰ Mechem, Annals of Kansas, II, p. 107.

¹⁴¹ Bright, Kansas: The First Century, II, p. 50.

¹⁴² William E. Connelly, History of Kansas, III (New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1928), p. 1218.

His administration had inherited a state penitentiary whose effectiveness had been reduced by a fire and a \$19,000 deficit. The Hodges administration had rebuilt it so that it was in the best physical and moral condition ever with a twine plant and an adequate supply of filtered water. The Norton Tuberculosis Sanitorium, the Larned State Hospital, and the Memorial Hall in Topeka had all been completed, although the previous governor had failed to follow a legislative mandate to build the two former ones, while the latter had been left half completed. Facilities that were needed at various state institutions had been built, like adequate water supplies, fireproof, rat-free food storage buildings, and cold storage plants. The various legislative created boards were functioning above reproach, like the Educational Administration Board which handled well the increased state school enrollments and costs; the grain department was now an asset; the fire marshal's efficiency resulted in almost a million dollars less loss from fire annually; the Oil Inspection Department had brought \$35,000 more annual revenue than previously; the Parole Board had made four hundred paroles to men who had now served minimum sentence. Seventy of these were paroled because they were old, paralyzed or crippled. Of the two hundred executive paroles only twenty-seven had violated their trust. The governor fired a shot at the critics of his parole and pardon

policy saying, "that devices and sundry rumors have been set afloat in opposing papers saying we had been overstepping the bounds of reason in the matter of paroles, but we do not feel that we have."¹⁴³

The governor also pointed out that the women in Kansas had been given recognition by his administration. This was a first in Kansas history. He had appointed twenty-three of them to important state posts, including one to the Education Administrative Board, which he considered the most important board in the state. He also recommended a continued emphasis on efficiency and economy as he had achieved in his administration by decreasing the maintenance cost of state institutions from two years ago. The governor again recommended a unicameral commission form legislature for the state. In a concluding statement he said, "I bespeak for my successors from the democratic papers of the State, that which has been denied me by the republican press--the truth."¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³Ibid., II, p. 743.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

CHAPTER V

POST-GUBERNATORIAL ACTIVITIES

After his gubernatorial re-election bid had failed and he had successfully launched the Belgian Relief Fund grain drive, ex-governor Hodges had petitions sent to his friend, President Wilson, appealing for a federal government job. Congress had just recently created the Federal Trade Commission; therefore, the Wilson administration was in the process of screening applicants for the board. Hodges did not personally contact the President, but numerous friends like Colonel Nelson, owner of the Kansas City Star, Congressman Guy Helvering, Congressman Dudley Doolittle, Congressman Joseph Taggart, the past vice-governor of the Philippine Islands, Henderson Martin, and J. W. Perry, wealthy Kansas banker, all urged the President to appoint Hodges to the newly created board. His credentials were excellent in that he had established an outstanding business in his lumber firm, he had just completed a competent business-like administration as Kansas' chief executive, and he had been an early proponent for Wilson's presidential candidacy in 1912. The President indicated that he was very fond of Hodges, but he thought that all of the Federal Trade Commission Board members should be individuals who had not been in politics.

The President wanted a non-partisan board because it would be less likely to frighten the nation's business community.¹ After this indication from the President, Hodges' friends intensified their lobbying for his nomination by seeking the active aid of Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, who was known to favor Hodges for the post.² One of the few Kansas Democratic leaders who failed to support Hodges was U. S. Senator William Thompson. Many thought that he was trying to repay Hodges for personal animosities which had arisen between the two in the pre-convention presidential election conflict of 1912, when the Hodges forces supported Wilson's candidacy and the Thompson forces supported Champ Clark for president. Ironically in spite of all the efforts for Hodges, President Wilson extended senatorial courtesy to Thompson and Hodges did not get the nomination.³

Hodges was recruited early in 1915 by the Anti-Saloon League to speak in the eastern part of the country in behalf of prohibition. He left on February 15 for three

¹Congressman Guy T. Helvering to E. E. Murphy, December 10, 1914, George Hodges MSS.

²E. E. Murphy to George Hodges, December 29, 1914, Hodges MSS.

³Frank Cumisky to Secretary of the Treasury William G. McAdoo, June 24, 1915, Hodges MSS.

weeks of speeches in the Philadelphia area where he spoke at sixteen meetings proposing national prohibition. In late March and early April, Hodges made a Michigan tour, giving a dozen speeches in various cities continuing to urge other states to adopt prohibition as Kansas had done. Hodges received from \$200-\$250 a week, plus expenses, from the Anti-Saloon League for his orations.⁴

The success of the Anti-Saloon League speeches brought Hodges in contact with the Chautauqua Circuit. Hodges was in demand not only because he was an ardent prohibitionist and an ex-governor of Kansas, but also because he could hold the attention of a large audience on the issues of the day. Hodges, in a letter to S. M. Holliday of Des Moines, Iowa, made a personal evaluation of his oratory skills by saying he had once spoken to a crowd of 8,000 in Wichita, holding their attention for an hour before William Jennings Bryan spoke. The carrying power of his voice had been as severely tested by the poor accoustics of the Wichita hall as any place in the state. The audience response to Hodges' speech had been every bit as good as to the "great commoner's" speech.⁵

⁴Topeka Daily Capital, February 16, 1915; also see George Hodges to various States' Anti-Saloon League organizations, December 12, 1914, Hodges MSS.

⁵George Hodges to S. M. Holliday, January 7, 1915, Hodges MSS.

Hodges spent the summer of 1915 on the Chautauqua Circuit making speeches about the merits of the commission form (unicameral) state legislatures. This was an area of his expertise and he had gained national attention by being the first political leader to recommend such a legislative body for state government by asking Kansas to adopt the plan.⁶

Immediately after the 1911 legislative session had adjourned, Hodges, then a state senator, had proposed a unicameral legislature for Kansas composed of fifteen to twenty members. This suggestion drew national attention from the press. The Chicago Record-Herald's reactions were quoted as being highly favorable to the plan, since the system would be more efficient, business-like, and economical. Since the plan had worked well in city government, the newspaper concluded it should be equally successful on the state level. The senator was credited for being the first to publically advocate such a plan for state government.⁷ Hodges had proposed a legislature of about thirty members to be elected from thirty state districts. This compact group would be under check of the initiative, referendum, and recall. These thirty members, in effect state commissioners,

⁶Id. to William I. Crane, May 25, 1915, Hodges MSS.

⁷Olathe Register, June 22, 1911.

would each also be put in charge of a specific area of responsibility in the administrative department. Hodges said this plan should bring, "a government that really governs efficiently and economically."⁸

After Hodges became governor he continued to work for legislative reform. In a special message to the 1913 legislature, Hodges had recommended the commission form of government for Kansas. Although the legislature took no action, he had called national attention to the inefficiency of state government by his request for corrective measures. He had amplified on his specific proposals several times in 1913, before a Governors' Conference in Colorado, after leaving office by Chautauqua speeches, and in two articles in the Saturday Evening Post.

In a letter to the editor of the Bristow Record in Bristow, Oklahoma, Hodges had reiterated his reasons for pushing legislative reform. Hodges indicated that business methods had changed, science had changed the mode of living by such feats as the wireless telephone and telegraph, and a fifty-hour flight by plane from New York to San Francisco. He declared that everything was more efficient but the " . . . enactment of laws has stumbled on in the same old cumbersome

⁸Ibid.

way that was adopted by the people of this state 52 years ago."⁹ The Saturday Evening Post concurred that state legislative systems were antiquated. Furthermore, until George Hodges had spoken up, no one else had officially proposed a remedy for the " . . . burdensome absurdity. . . . "¹⁰

The traditional state legislative system had many facets which contributed to its pathetic condition according to the Hodges-inspired Post articles. First of all, most of the states' legislators were underpaid. The job attracted potential members mainly because they sought it as a novel experience or they were intent upon getting an appropriation for a special interest. Therefore most state legislatures experienced a two-thirds turnover of members after every term, especially in the House of Representatives. As a result the majority of legislators were inexperienced men who were easy prey for hardened legislative lobbyists. Because legislators generally were determined to protect the special interests of their locality, state interests, as a whole, took second place, if they even ranked that high.

Secondly, short biennial legislative sessions lent themselves to ill-considered legislation. It was impossible for a legislator to carefully read each one of the multiplicity of bills that had been introduced. Therefore lobbyists found

⁹George Hodges to L. A. Nichols, May 5, 1913, Hodges MSS.

¹⁰Will Payne, "Common Sense For A State," The Saturday Evening Post, CLXXXIII (May 24, 1913), 18.

it rather easy to get jokers inserted in many of the bills which nullified or reduced the effectiveness of the inexperienced legislator's intended legislation.

Thirdly, unimportant local bills often took precedence on the legislative calendar. Some examples, from various states, of trivial bills that have occupied legislators' time are: a bill to require chickens to retire between six and seven o'clock; a bill to prevent the eating of snakes in public; a bill to prevent gossip; and a bill to prevent women under forty-five from using face powder, rouge, perfume, or false hair for the purpose of creating a false impression. With the first part of the session then often consumed largely by talk about trivial matters, a wild rush resulted in the last few days or hours before adjournment to get important bills passed--these not being worthy but scant attention. "It is like the progress of that prairie stagecoach which Dickens described: it sticks in the mud; the driver frantically belabors the horses, screams, grows pop-eyed and purple-faced; the horses strain to the utmost; presently they get the coach started and the next instant it is off at a gallop, throwing passengers from their seats, grazing trees--all but wrecking itself. And by the time the

driver has the galloping horses in hand the coach has stuck in the mud again."¹¹

Hodges in his suggestion for corrective methods called for the establishment of the commission form in state government. He proposed that the bicameral state legislatures be abolished and replaced with a single small legislative body of non-partisan members. They would be elected for four or six year terms on a rotation basis of expiration. The membership would be elected from the congressional districts in the state with one or a maximum of two members from each district. They would receive an adequate salary and the sessions would meet periodically throughout the year or at the demand of the constituents.¹²

The only other elected state officials, besides the legislative members, would be the governor, the secretary of state and the state auditor. The governor, in Hodges' plan, would be an ex-officio member of the legislature serving as the presiding officer without veto power. The office of lieutenant governor would be abolished. The governor would have the power to choose his attorney general, but the other

¹¹Ibid.; George H. Hodges, "Common Sense for Commonwealths", The Saturday Evening Post, CLXXXVII (June, 12, 1915), pp. 3-5.

¹²Kansas City Star, March 10, 1913; Payne, "Common Sense for a State", 18-19, 53; Hodges, "Common Sense for Commonwealths", pp. 3-5, 35.

state officers would be selected from the legislature with each member having a specific area of responsibility such as: state treasurer; labor commissioner; superintendent of public instruction, to mention but a few.¹³

Hodges, in a letter declared that he knew of only one argument against his proposed system and that was the claim that it was not representative. The bicameral system he said, had not been very responsive to the people, while the commission form had functioned so well in the cities that had adopted it. Why not then expand the latter type to the state level?¹⁴ The major argument for bicameralism, he said, was that one house checked the other, but since both memberships were elected by the same group of voters, why should there be hostility and jealousy between the two houses. Bicameralism in essence said one house was to vote for what the constitution wanted, while the other was to veto it! Therefore, Hodges reasoned that efficiency was frustrated. Efficiency did not require mass action for the judiciary to function. A state supreme court like the one in Kansas needed only four of seven members to determine the validity of a law in question. He advocated that the same principle of using well trained men

¹³Kansas City Star, March 10, 1913; Payne, "Common Sense For A State," 18-19, 53; Hodges "Common Sense for Commonwealths", pp. 3-5, 35.

¹⁴George Hodges to E. C. Pocock, May 14, 1913, Hodges MSS.

by the judiciary be applied to a small legislative body.¹⁵ Hodges also said, "Anything is democratic that can be used as a medium to express more easily the will of the public; but we are fast drifting from the old-fashioned idea that nothing is genuinely democratic unless everybody has a hand in it."¹⁶ Hodges summarized his plan as one that would bring greater economy, greater efficiency, better laws, a hastened response to popular sentiment and direct responsibility for acts or omissions.¹⁷

During 1916 Hodges again was kept busy speaking for the Anti-Saloon League and various Chautauqua groups. On the 1916 Chautauqua tour, Hodges' subjects were prohibition and equal suffrage. Everywhere he went for speeches he was enthusiastically received; he had to refuse many requests for speaking dates. His 1916 lecture tours took him into South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, Missouri, Kentucky, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and California.¹⁸ Hodges was paid three hundred dollars a week plus all his expenses for his oratory

¹⁵Hodges, "Common Sense for Commonwealths", p. 5.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁷Kansas City Star, March 10, 1913.

¹⁸George Hodges to A. J. Barton, September 11, 1916, Hodges MSS; id. to Rev. George Safford, September 19, 1916, Hodges MSS; id. to S. M. Holliday, September 30, 1916, Hodges MSS.

work, giving one speech a day and two on Sundays. He gave his reactions of the effectiveness of such speeches as his in a letter to Rev. Milo Kelser of Westerville, Ohio, by saying, " . . . if I am not badly mistaken this country will be dry within less than six years."¹⁹ He had quite accurately forecast the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment.

Once the United States became officially involved in World War I, Hodges sought to get an appointment to some kind of government work. His friends again appealed to President Wilson, but one of Hodges' Democratic colleagues from Kansas, U. S. Senator Thompson, a political foe of the ex-governor, again helped to negate any offer of a federal position. Hodges, though, received a state job in 1918 when he was appointed to the Kansas Priorities Commission which assisted the national War Industries Board.²⁰ Hodges also did much speaking for the bond drive and served as the chairman of the District Allied War Drive. The Hodges' lumber firm aided the bond drive by announcing in late 1917, that the company would accept Liberty bonds up to \$50,000 in payment of debt or purchases. Hodges personally

¹⁹Id. to Rev. Milo Kelser, September 14, 1917, Hodges MSS.

²⁰Arthur Capper to George Hodges, August 19, 1918, Hodges MSS.

believed that the Democrats had to work hard in some type of war work if they hoped to win in the 1920 state and national elections.²¹ In order to do his part for the party, Hodges also performed other public service during World War I, serving as a major with the American Red Cross. Hodges also served on the civilian officers staff of Major General Leonard Wood at Camp Funston with the 89th Division.²²

The Kansas Democrats were very concerned toward the end of the war about the anti-Wilson sentiment that had been generated throughout the nation and especially in Kansas. The President had told the nation that it would not go to war and then after he was re-elected in 1916 the United States became involved. Hodges said, during his Chautauqua tours, he had discovered that the public was anti-war and they had then favored Wilson, but now they thought that the President should have been candid with them in 1916 and warned the people about involvement possibilities rather than only stress the campaign "he keeps us out of war" theme.²³ Therefore Hodges was convinced that as much activity as possible was immediately

²¹George Hodges to Congressman Dudley Doolittle, August 10, 1918, Hodges MSS.

²²Kansas City Star, July 7, 1925.

²³Henderson Martin to George Hodges, January 27, 1918, Hodges MSS; George Hodges to Congressman Dudley Doolittle, August 10, 1918, Hodges MSS.

necessary by state leaders to shore up the Wilson administration's sagging fortunes.²⁴ Hodges concluded that the Kansas anti-Wilson sentiment was due to the President's ignoring Kansas Democrats, like Hodges, who had been for him, and instead listening to the advice of those who had early fought against him. This was an obvious reference to U. S. Senator William P. Thompson, who now had a strong influence with Wilson, yet he had been for the Champ Clark's candidacy in 1912 and had fought against Wilson. A candid opinion about such Kansas happenings was expressed by Hodges in a letter in early 1918 to William Jennings Bryan. Hodges said that many similar incidents had become the typical reason why the President was losing touch with the people throughout the country. Those who had been faithful to him from the beginning of his presidential drive often had not been rewarded by the President's trust and confidence.²⁵

Hodges would have like to run for a U. S. Senate seat in 1918, but because of the anti-Wilson sentiment and his personal early association with the President before the latter took office, Hodges thought he did not have a good chance to win in the off-year election for he foresaw many

²⁴George Hodges to Henderson Martin, January 28, 1918, Hodges MSS.

²⁵Id. to William Jennings Bryan, January 23, 1918, Hodges MSS.

Republican gains. If the Kansas Democrats had been in possession of a major newspaper, he would have made the race in spite of the anti-Wilson sentiment but since much was not the case, he declared to O. N. Davison of Kansas City that to fight alone in the campaign was too long a road to hoe.²⁶

As early as 1907 the Kansas press had boosted Hodges as a good congressional candidate, but he had not seriously considered it until after his 1910 gubernatorial bid had failed. In 1911 Kansas Democrats, as well as U. S. Senator Thomas Gore of Oklahoma, had urged him to run for a congressional seat. He was intent upon doing so until J. B. Billard announced his plan to work for resubmission in Kansas. Then the party requested Hodges to lead the fight against this issue by again being its gubernatorial candidate.²⁷ After his gubernatorial term Hodges in a letter to Frank Hettinger in June, 1915, said that he still intended to become a candidate for the U. S. Senate at some opportune time, but when that would be he could not yet say.²⁸ At the time Hodges was being pressured by many of his friends

²⁶Id. to O. N. Davison, February 6, 1918, Hodges MSS.

²⁷Topeka Daily Capital, February 1, 1911; Olathe Register, September 5, 1907, May 11, 1911; Senator Thomas Gore to George Hodges, July 8, 1911, Hodges MSS.

²⁸George Hodges to Frank Hettinger, June 21, 1915, Hodges MSS.

to run against incumbent Democratic U. S. Senator Thompson in the 1918 Democratic primary. Until the Chautauqua tour of 1916 had given him the premonition that President Wilson would be in trouble if the U. S. would become involved in war, Hodges had been intent upon getting into the intra-party struggle for the U. S. Senate seat. He had written Henderson Martin in late 1916 that he would announce for the U. S. Senate in a few days,²⁹ but he kept on procrastinating because he thought that the opinion tide was continually growing less favorable for the President. In October, 1917, Hodges told A. L. Shultz of the Topeka State Journal that he doubted if Arthur Capper could be beaten in 1918, otherwise Hodges would get into the 1918 primary against Thompson.³⁰ When the polls in early January 1918, confirmed that Capper was ahead of both Hodges and Thompson as the preference for the U. S. Senate, Hodges carefully sounded out various party leaders on what would be the best thing for him to do in the interest of the party. Even though the Democratic National Committee was trying to sidetrack Thompson, Hodges became progressively more reluctant to get into the race. In mid-year, 1918, he finally decided to wait two years to get into the

²⁹Id. to Henderson Martin, November 14, 1916, Hodges MSS.

³⁰Id. to A. L. Shultz, October 15, 1917, Hodges MSS.

U. S. Senate race. In a letter to Governor Hadley of Colorado, Hodges said that even though he could have beaten Thompson in the primary four to one, things would work out better two years hence for his personal U. S. Senate bid.³¹ Senator Thompson thanked Hodges for leaving the race for the sake of party unity.³² Hodges in a letter in August to Henderson Martin rationalized his leaving the Senate race by declaring that Capper would beat Thompson by 75,000 votes because it was not a Democratic year in Kansas, or across the nation.³³

Hodges was occupied with his prosperous lumber business while waiting for the election year of 1920. In late April of 1920, Hodges was chosen to lead Johnson County's delegation to the State Democratic Convention at Wichita. At the Wichita Convention, the state delegates chose Hodges to be one of the Big Four at-large delegates to represent Kansas at the Democratic National Convention in San Francisco to be held in late June. The State Convention decided not to instruct its delegation for a

³²Senator W. H. Thompson to George Hodges, May 26, 1918, Hodges MSS.

³³George Hodges to Henderson Martin, August 8, 1918, Hodges MSS.

presidential preference, but unofficially the delegation favored William McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury under President Wilson, as the Democratic presidential standard-bearer. Since McAdoo was an easterner, plans were worked out in Wichita by the state's Democrats to enter George Hodges as the vice-presidential candidate if McAdoo should receive the nomination, to balance the national ticket with a "dry" mid-westerner.³⁴ At the San Francisco National Convention Hodges was selected to serve on a nine-member sub-committee which wrote the Democratic National Platform. William Allen White, covering the Convention, said, "'Governor Hodges is one of the five strong men on the Platform Committee' of strong convictions."³⁵ Hodges helped to write a liberal platform which received the full endorsement of President Wilson.

After Cox and Roosevelt instead of McAdoo and perhaps Hodges were selected for the Democratic national ticket, Hodges returned to Kansas where his name was later placed on the ballot for the U. S. Senate race, although he was in ill health.³⁶ This greatly handicapped Hodges because his

³⁴Topeka State Journal, April 29, 1920; Olathe Register, April 29, 1920.

³⁵Editorial in the Olathe Register, October 28, 1920.

³⁶Ibid.

Republican opponent was the incumbent Senator Charles Curtis. Hodges, unable to make an active campaign in person, had a few small newspaper articles printed promoting his candidacy and platform. Hodges opposed a tariff because he believed it aided big business and hurt the farmers; he favored a bonus bill for World War I veterans; he opposed the repeal of the war-time excess profit tax; he opposed cancellation of the Allies' war debts to this country; he " . . . urged the immediate ratification of the Peace treaty and adoption of the League of Nations Covenant, but without reservations that will destroy its vitality."³⁷ Senator Curtis deplored the fact that Hodges could not take an active part in the senatorial campaign for health reasons. In an Olathe speech on October 22, the incumbent praised Hodges as a worthy foe for whom Curtis had great esteem and regard.³⁸ Unfortunately for Hodges, not only did his personal health fail at a most inopportune time, but he was also caught in the national shift toward "normalcy" from Wilson's internationalism, as Senator Curtis defeated him on November 2, 1920, by a vote of 327,072 to 170,443.³⁹ The national reaction and the

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Olathe Mirror, October 28, 1920.

³⁹William Zornow, Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), p. 237.

lack of an active campaign had caused Hodges' fortunes to dip so much that he even lost his home county by 1,200 votes, where heretofore he had always had a majority in every political race that he had entered.⁴⁰

Hodges' health grew worse and a month after the election setback, on the morning of December 7, 1920, he suffered a light stroke resembling apoplexy. It was " . . . caused by vegetable matter in the heart, lodging in the brain and forming a temporary blood clot, when his heart stopped beating for a very short time. . . . "⁴¹ For almost a week Hodges lingered dangerously near to death. He rallied enough to sit up for a few minutes a day by the end of the month. Complete recovery was a slow process which lasted for four years while Hodges and his family spent the winters in Florida and the summers in Minnesota. His political career, though, was ended for all practical purposes as his only other public service hereafter was a two-year tenure on the Kansas Board of Regents to which he was appointed in 1925. He was forced to resign in June of 1927 from this position because his health could not cope with the demands of the educational board duties.⁴² Thereafter George Hodges devoted his activities to his business interests until his death on October 7, 1947.

⁴⁰Olathe Mirror, November 18, 1920.

⁴¹Ibid., December 9, 1920.

⁴²Kansas City Star, July 7, 1925; ibid., June 27, 1927.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

George H. Hodges spent over two decades in a public service career in Kansas. It began with one term on the Olathe City Council in 1897 and it ended abruptly by a stroke after his 1920 U. S. Senatorial candidacy had failed, partly because of an illness which prevented an active campaign.

Hodges' political career spanned the period between two wars, the Spanish-American War and World War I. It was a period in which the isolationist feelings of the nation permitted reformers to press for abolition of domestic inequities. It was known as the Progressive Era in which moral, humanitarian, and economic co-factors gave sophistication to the more crude remnants of Populism. In Kansas the period came in with flamboyance but in less than two decades it faded out like a shooting star. One critic labeled this period of state history as the "Progressive Lurch."¹

In Kansas the progressive leaders were insurgent members of the Republican Party like William Allen White.

¹John D. Bright (ed.), Kansas: The First Century. II (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1956), p. 31.

Walter Stubbs, Victor Murdock and Joseph L. Bristow, while on the national scene Republicans Theodore Roosevelt and Robert M. LaFollette were co-starred with Democrats William Jennings Bryan and Woodrow Wilson.²

Hodges' rise as a progressive in the Kansas Democratic Party was unique. The party had only been an anemic factor in state politics since the Populist era and it was vastly overshadowed by the Republican Party and its progressives. This was particularly so until Hodges quietly moved to the forefront of the state's political drama. He almost single-handedly in eight years took his party from oblivion to the crest of power. When he first ran for the state senate in 1904, there were two other Democrats in the upper house, but when he won the gubernatorial race in 1912, he carried with him to victory a Democratic majority in both houses of the legislature. This 1912 event was the first time that the Democrats had controlled the state's legislature and only the second time for the gubernatorial office. This had all been accomplished without the aid of a major Democratic daily newspaper in contrast to the multiplicity of newspapers which supported the Republican Party.

His state senatorial career was a distinguished one. "During his eight years of service in the senate he was in

²Ibid.

the forefront of every fight for the enactment of progressive measures, and the soundness and practicability of the many reform laws enacted during that period are largely due to the wisdom of his counsel and his uncompromising attitude in support of progressive principle."³ While the Republican reformers were quarreling, Hodges continued through five legislative sessions to add impetus to his role as the challenger for state leadership. His ascension to the role of chief executive in Kansas was almost as unusual as was his rise as a progressive while a member of the state's Democratic Party. His first gubernatorial bid failed mainly because there was a lack of Democratic Party cohesion. His second gubernatorial bid was aided by the Bull Moose split which resulted in the formation of the State Republican League for the purpose of purging all candidates favorable to Theodore Roosevelt, to whom Capper had given some support. The election was culminated by a ballot controversy which finally left Hodges a twenty-nine vote winner over Arthur Capper.

The Hodges administration was judged by critics, both contemporary and later, as a continuation of strong executive leadership for the period between the wars. Such

³The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, XV (New York: James T. White & Company, 1916), p. 292.

a period of leadership has been unmatched in the state's history. Dr. John Bright wrote that, "The Hodges term was generally credited as a good business administration. William Allen White gives him a strong pat of approval, calling him a fine 'progressive Democrat.'"⁴ A. L. Shultz, political writer for the Topeka State Journal, concurred in praise for Hodges saying that the governor had been a sound thinker, who had achieved color and glamour in his political career. He also declared that Hodges had performed well as the state's chief executive in spite of the handicap that came with his party's being suddenly cast into power.⁵ *few of kind*

Governor Hodges faced two main difficulties as Kansas chief executive. First of all, the petty criticism from partisan newspapers, which had failed to catch the vision of what the governor was seeking to accomplish, were a constant deterrent to bi-partisan support such as Hodges had in the main given to the Republicans when he was a state senator. Secondly, the intra-party strife among the Democrats, who were disappointed that Hodges did not use his term for the purpose of establishing a Democratic machine, caused a schism that again brought the

⁵ Editorial in the Topeka State Journal, October 16, 1947.

decline of the state party, for some time after the Hodges administration, into a languid minority political factor.⁶

The personal political demise of Hodges gained rapid momentum after he gave a speech in Columbus, Ohio, on November 12, 1913, advocating national prohibition. Nationally he was hailed, but he came home to face a group of already dissentient party members who now were even more determined to derail the governor after his first term because they did not share his progressive vision. The "wets" used Democrat J. B. Billard's candidacy as an Independent to cause Hodges to be cast aside after one term, when he lost to Capper in the 1914 Republican landslide. Hodges had forced the prohibition issue in Kansas by subduing the "wets" in his party, but his energetic support of national prohibition in particular, and progressive ideas in general, had cost him his political life.

Although for all practical purposes his political career had ended, Hodges gained national recognition for his Anti-Saloon League speeches and for his Chautauqua tour lectures on equal suffrage and the commission form of state government. Partly as a result of his efforts in twenty-two states, the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Amendments were ratified

⁶Editorial in the Kansas City Star, November 9, 1914.

and added to the Constitution, while Nebraska later adopted a unicameral legislative system.

Unfortunately an illness combined with an American desire for "a return to normalcy", which in essence meant the abrogation of self-denial and reform, cut short Hodges' political comeback. Hodges had shown himself to be a strong progressive who rose out of an anemic state political party to gain the state's top political office and then to also receive national recognition for his proposed reforms. The Kansas City Star concluded that "the history of Kansas will accord him a high rank with the state's chief executives."⁷ George H. Hodges had given dignity to minority party membership in Kansas, and had achieved for his party and for progressive ideals prominent for a brief period of time in the state's history.

⁷ Editorial in the Kansas City Star, November 9, 1914.

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