A History of the Rules Committee of the House of Representatives

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A HISTORY OF THE RULES COMMITTEE OF
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
The University of Tennessee

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

by
Edward Martin Allen, Jr.
August 1964
INTRODUCTION

Where the power lies in the House of Representatives is not fully understood by the American people. The average citizen will probably conclude that his representative has as much power as the next, other than the fact that the latter has more experience and thereby "knows the ropes a little better." When reading the popular press and even the outline to the procedure of the House of Representatives, one gathers that this institution is the most democratic of all governmental bodies—certainly not the place for a concentration of power in a small group of individuals. However, this is certainly not the case, for within this body lie places of immense power. These places of power are largely occupied by a few committees. If our average citizen would attend a meeting of these committees, he could see how they can decide the fate, not only of a particular piece of legislation, but also the entire session of the House of Representatives.

The question arises: Did the writers of the Constitution envision such powerful committees? Of course, the answer is no. The power of these committees grew little by little until they reached a size out of proportion to their original framers' intent, but out of love for the tradition of the House and because of the complexities of legislation, the power of these committees has not been diminished, but rather power has grown by accretion.
Where then does the greatest concentration of power lie? Does it lie with the Speaker of the House, the Foreign Relations Committee, the Armed Services Committee, the Ways and Means Committee, the Minority Leader, the conservative coalition, or John Smith, Representative from the Twelfth Congressional District of North Carolina? The greatest power of the House is not found in these mentioned above. The most powerful force in the House is the Committee on Rules.

The House Committee on Rules probably would be the last place that one would look for great power. Rules are generally connected by the layman as a place for stodginess, technicalities, grumbling over whereases, etc. It is generally associated as a nice little committee on which lawyers would like to serve. This assumption could not be further from the truth. The House Rules Committee holds life or death over any piece of legislation, no matter how great or small it may be. These men can decide the fate of a nation in one of their committee meetings.

Does the average citizen know the names of the members of the Committee on Rules; what political party they represent; if they have liberal, conservative, or moderate political views? The answer is probably no. However, one should know these facts. In this committee lies the fate of all legislation in the House of Representatives.

The purpose of this thesis is to point out these pertinent facts, the history of the committee, its growth to unprecedented power, its function in the House, the power and rules it makes in carrying out the business of the House, its personalities, critics, supporters, its
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6. Until 1939 the Rules Committee of the House of Representatives

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— The chairmen of the House Rules Committee can be defeated

• The rules committee could function as a Committee

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7. Each year the Rules Committee blocks a tremendous amount of legislation in each session of Congress.

8. The members of the House would like to see the Committee on Rules abolished or seriously weakened, because the individual representative has never been in gratitude to this committee.

9. In the past the Rules Committee may have served a purpose, but in the Atomic Age it is an anachronism.

10. All Presidential administrations have trouble with this committee and desire to see it abolished.

11. The Rules Committee has always been a bastion of strength for the Southern Democrats.

12. In the history of the House of Representatives the Rules Committee has been used more for the advantage of the minority party than in aiding the majority party.

The writer of this paper will test these assumptions along with several others in the history of the House Rules Committee from 1789 to the present.

In the concluding chapter of the thesis another objective will be presented. This objective is my own evaluation of the role of the Committee on Rules.
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CHAPTER I

THE RULES COMMITTEE FROM 1789 TO 1835

The history of legislative systems in all countries will of necessity point out the importance of the committee in enacting legislation. It can be said that all life functions around the committee, and this is especially true in regard to legislative committees.

The standing committee did not originate in the colonial assemblies but in the British House of Commons. The first standing committee on record was the one on privileges and elections established in 1592. The standing committee's subsequent decline and disappearance as an active factor in legislative work was due probably to the rise of the Cabinet. This type of committee was a model for later American committees.1

In the colonial assemblies standing committees were found in many of the legislatures. Most of these committees had to do with privileges and elections. Besides the standing committees, select committees were appointed. These committees were often dissolved after one session of the legislature. They were never to function again, unless under some other name. The Provincial Assembly of Pennsylvania had a Committee on Rules.2 Perhaps this is where the


representatives in 1789 got the idea for such a committee.

The committees that functioned in the Articles of Confederation government were as ineffectual as the whole of the Congress of the Confederation.

During the Constitutional Convention, committees played a great role. In these committees went on much of the work of the convention. 3

Prior to 1789 committees had played a small role in the enacting of legislation, but in the following years they began to play an even greater role in the work of the Congress.

The Congress had been called to meet on the fourth of March, 1789, but the non-appearance of a quorum made rules unnecessary. The account in the House Journal indicates that there was little debate on the subject of rules. 4 On April 2, a committee of eleven members was appointed by order of the House to prepare and report standing rules and rules of procedure. 5 The Journal account reads: "Ordered, that a committee be appointed to prepare and report such standing rules and orders of Proceedings as may be proper to be preserved in this House." 6


A committee was appointed that consisted of Mr. Nicholas Gilman of New Hampshire, Mr. Eldridge Gerry of Massachusetts, Mr. Jeremiah Wadsworth of Connecticut, Mr. Elias Boudinot of New Jersey, Mr. Thomas Hartley of Pennsylvania, Mr. William Smith of South Carolina, Mr. Richard Lee of Virginia, Mr. Thomas Tucker of South Carolina, Mr. James Madison of Virginia, Mr. Roger Sherman of Connecticut, and Mr. Benjamin Goodhue of Massachusetts.7

James Madison, Elias Boudinot, and Roger Sherman were some of the leading figures in the First Congress. Boudinot had been President of the Continental Congress and he was made chairman of the committee.8 The composition of the first Rules Committee is interesting: two came from Virginia, two came from Massachusetts, two from Connecticut, two from New Jersey, and one each from the states of New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania. New England had five on the committee, giving that section of the country a dominant role.9

Five days later the Committee on Rules made a report by its chairman, Mr. Boudinot. It was brief and consisted of only fifteen hundred words arranged under four different headings.10 "The Speaker

7Ibid.
shall appoint committees unless it be determined by the House that the committees shall consist of more than three members in which case the appointment shall be by ballot of the House.11

However, the above clause was rescinded by the House on Wednesday, January 13, 1790, and it was provided by the House that hereafter all committees shall be appointed by the Speaker unless directed otherwise by the House, in which case they would be chosen by ballot.12

The first Committee on Rules report concerned itself with four topics: the duties of the Speaker, decorum and debate, bill procedure, and the Committee of the Whole House.13 The duties assigned to the Speaker were like the duties of the Speaker of the House of Commons in England. He was to preside, to preserve decorum and order, decide points of order, announce results, appoint committees, and vote in all decisions of the House.14 The second rule governing decorum and debate was interesting. A member was not allowed to talk, read a paper, or walk about while another was speaking.15 No member could speak more than twice, unless the House granted him permission. No member could vote on a bill if he had an interest in the bill. Every member had to

12House Journal, First and Second Congress, p. 140.
13Galloway, Western Political Quarterly, p. 456.
vote when the question was put, unless excused by the House.16 The fourth rule adopted on April 7, 1789, described the operation of the Committee of the Whole House.17

On April 13 the House debated and adopted additional rules as reported by the same committee. The rules related to committee service, leaves of absence, and an appointment of a standing committee on elections. A resolution relating to joint rules with the Senate was laid on the table.18

On April 14 a supplementary rule was approved by the House for the appointment of a Sergeant at Arms. This rule included his fee and his symbol of authority, the mace.19

For all intent and purposes this finished the work of the Committee on Rules; however, two happenings need to be noted. The standing rules of the House were twice amended on June 9, 1789. Without reference to any committee the House changed the rules regarding division and adopted a different procedure.20 On January 12, 1791, the House ordered that the rule directing that no bill amended by the Senate be committed was rescinded.21

16Galloway, History of the House of Representatives, p. 11.
17House Journal, First and Second Congress, p. 9.
18Galloway, Western Political Quarterly, p. 456.
19House Journal, First and Second Congress, p. 353.
21House Journal, First and Second Congress, p. 353.
On Monday, October 21, 1791, the day of the opening of the Second Congress, the ex-speaker, Mr. Frederick Muhlenburg of Pennsylvania, was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Rules, setting a precedent that would be followed later.\textsuperscript{22} The same day other action was taken in regard to the Committee on Rules.

Ordered, that the Speaker do appoint committees until the House shall otherwise determine.

Ordered, that a committee shall be appointed to prepare and report such standing rules and orders of proceeding as may be proper to be observed in this House.\textsuperscript{23}

A committee was appointed that consisted of Mr. Frederick Muhlenburg, Mr. Tucker, Mr. Hugh Williamson of North Carolina, Mr. Fisher Ames of Massachusetts, and Mr. Jeremiah Smith of New Hampshire.\textsuperscript{24}

Two days later the following resolution was adopted: "Resolved, that the rules and orders of proceedings established by the House of Representatives, shall be deemed and taken to be the rules and orders of proceedings, to be observed in the House, until the House decides otherwise."\textsuperscript{25}

At the opening of the Third Congress (1793-94), an identical resolution of that introduced in the Second Congress (1791-92) was

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{22}]{\textit{Ind.}, p. 435.}
  \item[\textsuperscript{23}]{\textit{Ind.}, p. 10.}
  \item[\textsuperscript{24}]{\textit{Ind.}, pp. 434-35.}
  \item[\textsuperscript{25}]{\textit{Ind.}, p. 353.}
\end{itemize}
approved. It provided for an appointment of a Committee on Rules and for the temporary adoption of the rules of the last House of Repre-
sentatives. Mr. Frederick Muhlenburg was elected Speaker, a position which he held in the First Congress (1789-90). His predecessor, Mr. Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut, was appointed Chairman of the Com-
mittee on Rules.26 The report of the Committee on Rules was delayed from time to time until November 13, 1794, a date that was in the second session. At this time a comparatively set of elaborate rules was adopted.27

In the Fourth Congress (1795-96) a departure from the usual wording of the resolution for the appointment of the Committee on Rules occurred. The names of the members beginning with that of Mr. Frederick Muhlenburg, the retiring speaker, were included in the reso-
lution.28

In the House of Representatives between the First and Fourth Congress (1789-96) a change in political outlook from supporters of Federalism and Anti-Federalism to supporters of Jefferson and Hamilton became apparent. Each group and each individual used the rules of the House to his greatest advantage. Between 1795 and 1805 filibustering was used quite extensively. John Randolph of Virginia was perhaps the

26House Journal, Third and Fourth Congress, p. 5.

27Ibid., pp. 227-30.

28Atkinson, op. cit., p. 10.
greatest filibusterer. 29

The need for a clearer definition of rules was seen by Jefferson when he said, "It is very material that order, decency, and regularity be preserved in a dignified public body." 30

The abuse of the rules of the House stemmed not only from the rules, but also the partisan objectives of the Federalists and Republicans. Some of the members of the House did try to use the rules for personal enhancement. However, this did not play as large a role in the abuses as did partisan politics and the rules themselves.

In 1811 steps were taken to limit the filibuster. Under the influence of Henry Clay, a Republican from Kentucky, the House approved and strengthened the so-called motion of the Previous Question. The rule as then adopted cut off debate when approved and brought the House to vote on the Main Question. 31 The first use of this process came under Speaker Clay. The issue involved was whether to declare war on Great Britain. The Federalists in the House were opposed, but the Democrats used the Previous Question to break the filibuster and declared war on Great Britain. Although there was praise for the rule, the majority of the House agreed with John Randolph, a Republican from Virginia, who called it a "gag rule." 32 Clay in defending the rule

29MacNeil, op. cit., p. 45.


32MacNeil, op. cit., p. 47.
said, "It is nothing more than a declaration of the House that it had heard enough and was ready to vote." 33

During the Thirteenth Congress (1813-14) under the speakership of Clay, there was apparently a good deal of satisfaction with the Committee on Rules, and it was not until January 27, 1814, that the following resolution was adopted: "Resolved, that a committee be appointed to revise the standing rules and orders of proceedings and report such alternatives and amendments as they may think proper and necessary if in their opinion, any be required." 34

On February 10, 1814, concluding that their predecessors' work needed no corrections, Mr. Jonathan Roberts, a Republican from Pennsylvania, the Chairman moved: "Ordered, that the committee appointed to inquire whether any amendments are necessary to be made to the standing rules and orders of the House, be discharged from further consideration of the subject." 35

The development of the Previous Question was the first step in the accretion of power in the Committee on Rules. If this had not been developed, many important measures would not have passed, and the history of our country may have been altered greatly. The Annals of Congress from 1809-10 shows the terrible misuse of extended debate.

33 Alexander, op. cit., p. 187.


In the Fifteenth (1817-18), Sixteenth (1819-20), Eighteenth (1823-24), Nineteenth (1825-26), and Twentieth (1827-28) Congresses, the Speaker neglected to appoint a Committee on Rules. The reports of the Rules Committee when it was appointed were constantly tabled. One difficulty that beset these reports was the fact that a two-thirds vote was necessary for making changes in the rules and this was applied on reports coming from the Committee on Rules.

Beginning in the early 1820's, there was great dissatisfaction over the rules of the House. Filibustering was so long and rambling that on many occasions the members often forgot what the subject was. The longest-winded speaker was Alexander Smyth, a Democrat of Virginia. In the midst of a long speech he looked directly at Clay and said:

"You sir, speak for the present generation, but I speak for posterity."

"Yes," agreed Clay wearily, "and you seem resolved to speak until the arrival of your audience."

As the business in the legislature became more complex, attempts were made to limit members to one hour in debating a question. This was brought about by John Randolph's long harangue concerning the Missouri Compromise. Many members let their wrath fall upon this proposal.

36 Alexander, op. cit., p. 182.
37 Atkinson, op. cit., p. 12.
38 MacNeil, op. cit., p. 147.
40 MacNeil, op. cit., p. 147.
One of them declared, "No gentleman can acquit himself well in debate, whether physically or intellectually while confined in a strait jacket."

The rules were being attacked from all sides. John Randolph, the noted filibusterer from Virginia, denounced the rules in 1828 as complicated and extremely unparliamentary.

By the mid 1830's the rules of the House of Representatives consisted mainly of the primitive rules of the First Congress. There were only a few additions made to the rules of the House from 1789 to 1835. During this time there was only one strong rule added, and that was of the procedure invoking the Previous Question. Until the 1830's the Rules Committee in the House of Representatives had been a committee with very little significance. However, this committee after 1835 would take on a role of growing importance in the affairs of the House of Representatives.

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12 Alexander, op. cit., p. 183.
CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF THE SPEAKER TO A POSITION
OF POWER ON THE RULES COMMITTEE

During the late thirties and early forties, the Rules Committee took on a new role. This role changed it from an insignificant committee to one of growing importance.

The Abuse of House Rules

In 1832, as a freshman member of the House, John Quincy Adams, a Democrat from Massachusetts, set a precedent that was to be followed by others. Adams refused as a matter of conscience to vote on a pending bill. The House threatened him with formal censure for this violation of House rules, but Adams persisted in his refusal. This altered proceedings in the House for a half-century.\(^1\) Minority members on an issue would refuse to vote; thereby, even if the vote would pass, there would be no quorum; thus, this killed the legislation. Under the Constitution the House could not transact its business without a quorum of its members, and a quorum was defined as half the members of the House plus one. The filibustering technique developed from Adams' obstinacy was simple enough; members of the minority party simply refused to vote. In a narrowly divided House the majority usually

discovered that although they had overwhelmingly passed the bill, a majority of the House had not voted. Some of their own members were invariably absent, sick, forgetful, or back home campaigning for re-election. A quorum call was automatically required to summon the "absent" members, and the minority members then answered to their names as called by the House clerk. A quorum promptly reappeared. Then the vote on the bill was repeated and again the minority members sat in silence. A quorum of the House was not recorded on the vote— it had technically disappeared again.

Again and again this procedure would be followed: a roll-call vote, followed by a quorum call. The worse example was in 1854, when there were 101 roll-call votes on a single day. This was used on many occasions by the minority, and not until the speakership of Reed did this practice cease.² This course of action led many to believe that something had to be done to the rules of the House.

The Rules Committee was thwarted in the Twenty-Fourth Congress (1835-36) as it attempted to report to the House. On February 24, 1836, Mr. Abijah Mann, Democrat from New York, made a motion: that the rule prescribing the order of business be suspended and that the House hear the report of the Committee on Rules. The vote was 101 to 103. Since there was not a two-thirds vote, the measure lost.³

In the Twenty-sixth Congress (1839-40), the Speaker cast the

²Ibid., pp. 50-51.
³Congressional Globe, Twenty-Fourth Congress, First Session, p. 151.
deciding vote on December 17, 1839, to lay on the table the proposal that would have adopted the last House rules. However, on December 21, the rules of the last House were adopted for ten days, and a Committee on Rules was appointed. On December 27, 1839, the rules of the last House were adopted until the tenth of the next month. On the sixteenth of January, 1840, the rules were adopted until Thursday, the twenty-third. It was not until January 24, 1840, that they were adopted until otherwise ordered.

By the use of the rules of the House the party that used them more effectively, for example, the filibuster, could work its will on substantial matters that were before the House. The majority party with the use of the rules and the reports from the Committee on Rules could pass legislation that it desired to pass, and could also block opposing bills. On the other hand, the minority could use the rules of the House to thwart legislation of the majority and even to block routine reports from committees. The period from 1830-1841 is the best illustration of these occurrences.

The slavery question was behind the defeats of the reports from the Committee on Rules. John Quincy Adams personifies this when in the


5 Ibid., p. 72.

6 Ibid., p. 126.

7 Ibid., p. 143.
second session of the Twenty-sixth Congress on December 9, 1840, he introduced the following resolution:

Resolved, that the standing rule of the House numbered twenty-one, adopted on the 24th of January last, in the following words, "No petition, memorial, resolution, or other paper praying the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, or any states or territories of the United States in which it now exists shall be received by this House, or entertained in any way whatever, be and the same is hereby rescinded."

This resolution was laid on the table by a vote of 82 to 58.9

At this time the slavery question was a controversial matter. Both sides used the reports from the Rules Committee and the rules of the last House to their advantage. Although minor items had been foreclosed from debate by a rule, slavery was the first major subject. The reason for the defeat was due to the intense feeling many members had concerning Adam's proposal.

In the Twenty-seventh Congress (1841-42) an attempt was made to adopt rules for ten days and to appoint a committee of nine to revise the rules of the House of Representatives. This was blocked by adjournment of the House, mainly because of Adam's persistency with the twenty-first rule.10

The dilatory acts displayed during this period stem from a number of causes: obstinacy on the part of some individuals, minority party strategy, unpopularity of some members, fear that a change in

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8Congressional Globe, Twenty-sixth Congress, Second Session, p. 11.
9Ibid., p. 12.
rules may create something more unpleasant than what they experience at this time, ingrained conservatism of some older members, and fear of an all-powerful Speaker. The rationale behind the delaying tactics was the hope that in some manner by the use of dilatory action bills that were distasteful to the minority could be prevented until the majority changed their minds.

On June 3, 1841, practically the same resolution and amendments were offered, and the House postponed action upon them.\(^{11}\) On June 7, 1841, the House passed a resolution providing for the appointment of a committee of nine members to revise the rules, and for the adoption of the rules of the last House except the Twenty-first, until the committee made its report.\(^{12}\) Efforts were made on the ninth and tenth of June to reconsider the vote by which the amendment was adopted. The House finally refused to do so by a vote of 113 to 107.\(^{13}\) The consideration of a motion to reconsider the vote on the resolution was stopped by adjournment. The resolution again came up on June 12. It was postponed until the meeting on June 14, but the House did not consider the resolution on that day.\(^{14}\) On June 15, the reconsideration vote was killed by a vote of 110 nays to 106 yeas.\(^{15}\) For two weeks,

\(^{11}\)Congressional Globe, Twenty-seventh Congress, First Session, p. 15.

\(^{12}\)House Journal, Twenty-seventh Congress, First Session, p. 47.

\(^{13}\)Ibid., pp. 74-82.

\(^{14}\)Ibid., p. 126.

\(^{15}\)Ibid., pp. 138-39.
because of the flight, the House had accomplished nothing. On June 16, the Whig majority made a valiant effort to clear up the disorganized House. Such expressions as "perpetual debates," "eight-hour discussions," "odious tyranny," "hypocritical wretches," give an idea of the mood of the House. In the course of debate on June 16, 1841, Mr. Caleb Cushing, a Whig of Massachusetts, said:

The time must and will come when another Napoleon will say as Napoleon did say to Le Peure, in the line of the French Directory, "Join with me in saving our country," and when the reply will be as that of Le Peure was, "Yes, let us throw these advocates into the river," for it is words, words, and nothing but words in this House.

One representative complained that the time that was being taken had accomplished nothing—but delay, and words of scorn heaped upon the head of each other. He said that assaults and batteries had occurred in the House under the nose of the Speaker, who refused to do anything about it. The resolution adopted at the end of this debate by a vote of 119 to 103 decided in the favor of the negative. The resolution said:

Resolved that all rules and orders of the last House of Representatives not superseded by any rule or resolution adopted at the session now in force, be and the same present are hereby adopted for the regulation of the House at the present session and that the select committee upon the rules, heretofore raised, proceed to revise and amend the rules

16 Congressional Globe, Twenty-seventh Congress, First Session, pp. 57, 62.

17 Ibid., p. 62.

18 Ibid., p. 15.
hereby adopted, and that they have leave to report at all
times.19

The right to report at any time gave the Rules Committee a prerogative
it had not held before. This gave the Rules Committee an important
additional power.

Speaker John White's Ruling

The first report of the Committee on Rules on June 18, 1841, set
a most important precedent in the House. Speaker John White, a Whig
from Kentucky, ruled that a majority of the members, and not two-
thirds, was required to adopt reports that made changes in the rules
of the House of Representatives. An appeal of the decision was taken,
but the Speaker was sustained by the members of the House.20 At this
time the right to report "piecemeal" was challenged by Mr. Nathan Clif-
ford, a Democrat from Maine, but no formal appeal was taken.21 However,
on July 6, 1841, the debate continued. Mr. William Calhoun, a Whig
from Massachusetts, Chairman of the Rules Committee, reported to the
House, and he was challenged by Mr. William Medill, a Democrat from
Delaware. Mr. Medill rejected the right of the committee to make re-
ports "piecemeal" to the members of the House. The Speaker decided in

19 House Journal, Twenty-seventh Congress, First Session, p. 204.
20 Congressional Globe, Twenty-seventh Congress, First Session, p. 73.
21 Ibid., pp. 72-73.
favor of the committee. Mr. Medill appealed to the House, and the
Speaker's decision was upheld by a vote of 127 to 88.22

The vulnerable spot in the resolution was again attacked in
September at the close of the session, and also on December 10, 1841,
early in the second session. On the former day, Mr. Calhoun made a
final report which was laid on the table.23 On the latter, his report
which had been made a special order for that day met with like fate.24

The controversial One-Hour Rule was adopted by the House during
this session. This limited a speaker to only one hour per bill. This
rule was attacked vehemently. Thomas Hart Benton called it an “injustice
done to the freedom of debate.”25

In the Twenty-eighth Congress (1843-44), the House on January 2,
1844, refused to make the report of the Committee on Rules a special
order for the following Tuesday.26 John Quincy Adams was in charge
of the report. It was considered at length during this session, and
finally on February 28, 1844, the whole report of rules was laid on
the table by a vote of 88 to 87.27 It was such an experience as this
that caused Mr. Schenck of Ohio to offer the following resolution:

22House Journal, Twenty-seventh Congress, First Session, p. 204.
23Ibid., p. 516.
24Ibid., p. 30.
25Thomas Hart Benton, Thirty Years in the United States Senate
26Charles R. Atkinson, The Committee on Rules and the Overthrow
Resolved, that the rules of the House having relation to
the arrangement and order of business, be, and they are here-
by abolished, and that the business of the House hereafter be
conducted according to the principles and usages of parlia-
mentary law.28

The Twenty-ninth, Thirtieth, Thirty-first, and Thirty-second
Congresses (1845-1852) are characterised by inactivity on the part of
the Committee.

The amendment, "which committee as usual shall never report,"
was moved to the usual resolution for a Committee on Rules in the
Thirty-first Congress (1849-50).29 The situation was summed up by
Mr. Schemok:

The gentleman from Mississippi was right in saying that
the majority in the House could control its action. Time and
again, occasions have arisen and would arise when the majority
is conquered by its own rules. Suppose the committee when raised
reported, the report then goes on the calendar, where gentlemen
it can never be resolved. I do not believe that one calendar
could be found of one single session in the last six years, at
least upon which there had not been at the time of adjournment
some report upon rules pended and unacted upon.30

The Rules Committee of the House of Representatives was changed
in 1849 from a select committee to a standing committee. This procedure
was to remain until 1853, whenupon the Committee on Rules was changed
back into a select committee.31 This step in 1849 was one of the

29 Atkinson, op. cit., p. 19.
78.
31 George Galloway, The Legislative Process in Congress (New York:
earlier steps to power that the Rules Committee would take.

Abuses of the One-Hour Rule

One rule, passed in the House during the 1850's that was to have great significance must be explained at this point. Although the one-hour rule had cut down on needless debate, there were still parliamentary tricks devised to get around this procedure. One of the most effective of these was to offer, and then endlessly discuss immeasurable amendments to the bill under consideration. To cut down on this the House passed the Five-Minute Rule. This rule limited members of the House to five minutes to explain the provision in his bill. This hindered the procedure in the House. To evade this rule the members would offer a score of amendments and then use five minutes to explain each amendment. In 1850 to check this growing evil, the House modified the Five-Minute Rule by denying the right of any member to withdraw amendments. Until this time dilatory action could take place as a legislator would offer amendments and then withdraw them. Then another member would follow the same procedure delaying action on the pending measure. The change, however, was only partially successful. In 1854 in attempting to act on the controversial Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the House spent five months processing an endless stream of amendments before Alexander Stephens, a Democrat of Georgia, devised a clever parliamentary tactic to bring the filibuster to a close. Stephen's tactic, a technical use of a motion to strike out the enacting
clause of the bill, brought the bill itself to a vote by the House. Not until 1860, however, did the House finally halt the practice of filibustering with amendments. It was then that a majority of the House could prohibit all debate on amendments.\textsuperscript{32} The clamping down on unlimited debate can be taken as an indication that the complexities of the issues involved were much greater as the years passed, and the House could not afford the time for long harangues.

In the first session of the Thirty-third Congress (1853-54) meeting on December 5, 1853, the following resolution was agreed to after a spirited debate.

Resolved that the rules of the last House of Representatives be adopted as the rules of the House until otherwise ordered: Provided, however, that there shall be appointed a committee of five members to revise said rules, which committee shall have the power to report at any time, and their report shall be acted upon by the House until disposed of to the exclusion of all other business, anything in the rules hereby temporarily adopted to the contrary notwithstanding.\textsuperscript{33}

Mr. Lewis Campbell, a Whig of Ohio, and Mr. David Macy, a Democrat of Indiana, who later would be members of the House Rules Committee, made remarks concerning the faults of too much speaking and inefficient organisation. Mr. Macy said that he was very disgusted when the members of the House went into the Committee of the Whole, because nothing was done but Buncombe speeches.\textsuperscript{34} Mr. Campbell also

\textsuperscript{32}McCullough, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

\textsuperscript{33}Congressional Globe, Thirty-third Congress, First Session, Vol. XVIII, Part I, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., p. 214.
It is certainly evident to every man who knows anything about the matter that there are just grounds for complaint. You know there are Mr. Speaker. This House knows it. This is the only period of the session at which we can provide against the difficulties existing in the rules of the House. If the old rules are temporarily adopted without a provision looking to a revision and expeditious action, the very force of the rules themselves is such as to prevent any modification on amendments. I propose Mr. Speaker, not to introduce amendments in detail now but simply that this whole subject shall be referred to a committee that shall have power to report at any time, and that this House shall be compelled to act upon this report to the exclusion of anything else.\textsuperscript{35}

Mr. Campbell continued:

There is another reason which I desire to offer. The honorable gentleman from Virginia has adverted to the fact that the Democratic party has a overwhelming majority in the House. That is true. But I wish him to understand that although there are but a few Whigs here, yet these few and the country will hold the large Democratic powers in the House to a strict responsibility for their legislation. The Whigs are found in readiness to help sweep away the evils that have existed heretofore. We do not intend for you to go back to the country and complain of their program because of the rules of the House.\textsuperscript{36}

The fact that by this move they were establishing precedent to give the reports of the Committee on Rules the right of way in matters of legislation was realised by only a few, if any, members of the House. This can be seen from this debate on March 22, 1854.\textsuperscript{37}

\begin{quote}
Mr. John Millison: "I will remark that this is only a partial report of the Committee on Rules."
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{37}Atkinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 22.
Mr. John Taylor: "I rise to a question of order, I desire to know how this resolution comes before the House."

The Speaker: "At the commencement of the present session of Congress—a resolution was passed creating this Committee on Rules with authority to report at anytime."

Mr. Taylor: "Then I desire to inquire if this is a regular report of the Committee on Rules."

The Speaker: "It is a report offered by the gentleman from Virginia, as a member of the Committee on Rules."

Mr. Taylor: "If it does not come before us regularly at the time, I object to its reception."

Mr. Millison: "It is a report from the Committee on Rules and comes regularly before the House as such."

Mr. Taylor: "Then I desire to inquire of the Chair if the Committee on Rules has the right to report to the House at this time."

The Speaker: "It is in order for them to report at any time under express ruling of this House."38

The right to report at any time had been conferred on the Rules Committee in 1841, as we have seen, but this had proven so ineffective that it was thought necessary to make the reports privileged when presented to insure their consideration. The Committee on Rules was in a position now to command a respectful hearing. It did not, however, take advantage of this strong parliamentary position. It held but one meeting in the first four months of its existence, and made only two

reports during the conference, both very brief. The first related merely to permission to print proposed amendments. This was adopted without debate. The second concerned procedure in the Committee of the Whole. This was opposed, and the measure was laid upon the table.

There was no marked increase in the influence of the Committee on Rules until the Speaker became a member of that body in 1853. The revision of the rules in 1860 would be accomplished by a combination of the addition of his membership and the precedents established in 1841 and 1853.

On the first day of the Thirty-fifth Congress (1857-58), Mr. Thomas Clingman, a Democrat of North Carolina, secured an important amendment to the customary resolution concerning rules of the last House. At that time it had not become a standing rule of the House to refer all matters relating rules to the Rules Committee. Mr. Clingman's feat, although unusual, was not an impossible accomplishment. The resolution said that the Committee on Rules had never altered the rules since he had been in the House, and he had called on them to report but they never had reported. He proposed a resolution to appoint a Committee on Rules, and an objection was made to

39 Atkinson, op. cit., p. 22.
41 Ibid., p. 715.
42 Ibid., p. 23.
44 Congressional Globe, Thirty-fifth Congress, First Session, p. 3.
this. Then the House declined to take action on the measure for lack of a quorum.\(^{45}\) Mr. Clingman's action, though thwarted, pointed out two important things. First, an amendment could be tacked on to the customary resolution concerning the rules of the last House. The second was the fact that the majority of the House favored the action by the Committee on Rules, even though it had reported sparingly.

The Speaker Is Placed on the Rules Committee

The next greatest step in the accretion of power by the Committee on Rules came when the Speaker was placed on the Committee. On June 14, 1858, Mr. Warren Winslow (Democrat), the ex-speaker of the North Carolina Senate, secured the floor and said, "I ask unanimous consent of the House to introduce the following resolution, to which I hope there will be no opposition."\(^{46}\)

Resolved, that a committee be appointed consisting of the Speaker and four members to be named by him, whose duty it shall be to digest the rules of order, to suggest such alterations and amendments, as they may deem necessary and to report the same back to the House for its action at an early day in the next session.\(^{47}\)

There being no objection, the resolution was received. However, some discussion did follow this action.


\(^{46}\) Ibid.

\(^{47}\) Ibid.
Mr. Sherwood Clemens: Democrat from Virginia

"I move to amend by striking out that provision which provides that the members of the committee shall be named by the Speaker and insert, by the vote of the House."

Mr. Winslow:

"That amendment is not in order."

The Speaker:

"The Chair hopes the gentleman will be indulged in offering the amendment."

Mr. Benjamin Leite: Republican from Ohio

"Is it contemplated that the committee shall sit during the recess?"

Mr. Winslow:

"Certainly not. They are to report at an early date the next session."

Mr. Henry Phillips: Democrat from Pennsylvania

"I hope that the gentleman would not mind if such a committee met with a like committee from the Senate."

Mr. Winslow:

"I have no objection to that as an addition to my resolution."

The vote was on Mr. Clemens' amendment. It was defeated by a wide margin, and the resolution of Mr. Winslow was adopted.\(^48\)

It may be of interest to note later the difference in the exit and entry of the Speaker on the Committee on Rules. Also, it can be noted that in the Thirty-fifth Congress (1857-58) both the Speaker and Mr. Winslow were Democrats.\(^49\)

The House must have thought at this time that the Speaker's parliamentary experience would be of value to the committee. The Rules


\(^{49}\) Atkinson, op. cit., p. 28.
Committee consisting of Speaker James Orr, Democrat from South Carolina, Mr. Winslow, Mr. Caluska Crow, Republican from Pennsylvania, Mr. Robert Bocock, Democrat from Virginia, and Mr. Israel Washburn, Republican from Maine, made a report on December 20, 1858, which was ordered to be printed and recommitted to the said committee.

The addition of the Speaker to the Committee on Rules with the prerogative to appoint the members of the committee was an instrument of great power to the Speaker. It was a power that had been handed to him without any objection on the part of the members of the House.

Even though sweeping changes had been made in composition of the Rules Committee, the rules were left untouched. However, continued criticism in 1858 and 1859 kept pressure on the House to change its rules.

The Rules Revision of 1860

The resolution under which the committee acted that brought about the revision of 1860 embodied the principles developed in the Twenty-seventh (1841-42), Thirty-third (1853-54), and Thirty-Fifth (1852-53) Congresses, and it also contained a provision indicating that there was a suspicion in the House that the large powers might be abused.

52Atkinson, op. cit., p. 29.
Resolved, that a committee of five consisting of the Speaker and four members to be named by him be appointed, to whom shall be referred the rules of the House, and who shall have leave to report at anytime such amendments and revisions of the same, as they shall think proper, and such reports when made shall be considered as a special order, provided that when the Committee on Rules reports their function will cease.\footnote{Congressional Globe, Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, p. 655.}

The revision of the rules in 1860 came on a special order made on March 15, 1860. The lateness of this report was due to the extraordinary controversy that had been raging over the speakership.\footnote{Atkinson, op. cit., p. 29.}
The gentleman in charge of the report was Mr. Israel Washburn. During the debate,\footnote{Congressional Globe, Thirty-sixth Congress, First Session, Part II, pp. 1178-92, 1203-16.} he said, "The rules need to be amended."\footnote{Ibid., p. 1178.} They were approved after a three-day debate.\footnote{Ibid., p. 1237.}

As the Union was breaking up, the House made its greatest change in its rules since the first session of the First Congress. Many of the changes were technical in character. The changes corrected inconsistencies, combined related rules, and adjusted other existing practices.\footnote{George B. Galloway, History of the House of Representatives (New York: Thomas I. Crowell Company, 1921), p. 50.} All in all there were thirty-eight amendments to the rules.\footnote{DeAlva Stamean Alexander, History and Procedure of the House of Representatives (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916), p. 192.}
The changes that occurred, although technical, had great significance for the conduct of House business. Certain dilatory tactics were prevented by these changes. The House rules were altered to make the flow of business smoother and to strike out-dated procedure of the House that at times, as in the case of Speaker William Pennington, a Whig from New Jersey, had thrown the House into confusion, while the nation was on the verge of the Civil War. The election of Pennington was delayed several weeks because of dilatory tactics of the minority. To avoid the repetition of the riotous scenes preceding the election of Speaker Pennington, the rules of one House of Representatives were made binding upon its successor, unless otherwise ordered.60

Although parliamentarians generally held this rule invalid whenever seriously questioned, the rule held for thirty years.61

The ease with which the reforms in the rules were passed in the late 1840's, 1850's, and especially in 1860 was not due to the weak position of the minority party, which for the most part were the Whigs, but because both sides of the House believed that changes in the rules were necessary on account of the increased flow in House business.

Although in 1860 the Rules Committee did not have the power it would have in later Congresses, the committee was receiving power by accretion because of the need to run a more orderly and efficient House of Representatives.

60Galloway, History of the House of Representatives, loc. cit.
61Alexander, op. cit., pp. 192-93.
CHAPTER III

THE DOMINATION OF THE RULES COMMITTEE BY THE
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The change in the rules in 1860 was one of the chief highlights in the history of the Rules Committee. Although no very important changes occurred concerning the Rules Committee until 1880, there were certain events that need to be noted in this twenty-year period.

The Increase in Business by the House Places the Rules Committee in a More Prominent Position

With the postwar period came an increase in the size and business of the House of Representatives. This increase made the rules more stringent in regard to individual rights. This caused a great deal of dissatisfaction.¹ There were also some members who believed that the rules of the House should be revised. On May 24, 1872, the House agreed to the Banks Resolution providing for the appointment of a commission to revise the rules, and report such changes as would facilitate the presentation of reports of committees, enlarge the means of an intelligent transaction of general business, and secure to every member a proper opportunity to examine all legislative measures before

submitted for consideration and activity by the House. This com-
mission does not appear to have reported, but meanwhile more than forty
rules were added to the House Manual. Also many new precedents were
established.3

Between 1860 and 1880 the greater influence of the House Rules
Committee was shown by the number of matters referred to it for in-
vestigation, and in the activity displayed by the committee in the
reports made to the House by its members.4 In the Thirty-eighth Con-
gress (1863–64), ten important measures were submitted for its judg-
ment.5 These were substantive proposals, not procedural. This prac-
tice continued to be general until it developed into a fixed rule of
the House to take no action whatsoever in matters appropriate to this
committee without a report delivered by its chairman.6

The most noticeable tendency in this period was the increase
in the use of the dilatory measure to defeat legislation. These re-
marks will illustrate the point.

2Congressional Globe, Forty-second Congress, Second Session,
p. 3619.

3Halloway, op. cit., pp. 50–51.

4C. R. Atkinson, The Committee on Rules and the Overthrow of

5House Journal, Thirty-eighth Congress, First Session, pp. 67,
156, 319, 381.

6Atkinson, loc. cit.
Mr. James Garfield, a Republican from Ohio, said:

The experience of the last week has shown that a body of one-fifth of the House can say to the House, that there is a class of public measures which not only shall be voted on, but which shall not ever be taken up for consideration. This demand is intolerable and revolutionary.\(^7\)

Mr. William P. Frye, a Republican from Maine, in attempting to justify them said: "Suppose we did not resort to these dilatory motions, would we not be held responsible to our constituents and to the country at large."\(^8\)

Mr. Joe Hawley, a Democrat from North Carolina, countered by saying:

We have shown that a system of rules has slowly grown up here under which it is quite impossible for a clear and large majority of the House to carry out its will if resisted by a determined minority. Now that was not the original purpose of the rules.\(^9\)

During the Forty-sixth Congress (1879-80) the rules struggle took on an air of increased intensity. The Congress had been in session only a few months when the leaders of both political parties became convinced that a postponement could not be put off any longer.\(^10\)

The Democratic leader from Kentucky, Mr. Blackburn, summarized the feeling when he said, "In nineteen years the rules have become a piece

\(^7\)Congressional Record, Forty-third Congress, Second Session, Part 2, p. 893.

\(^8\)Ibid.

\(^9\)Ibid.

\(^10\)Atkinson, op. cit., p. 31.
of patchwork. On another occasion he referred to them as an "over-worked system in which we suffer."

Rules Revision in 1880

In response to continued criticism, the House in 1879 instructed a committee of able parliamentarians to sit during the recess in order to revise, codify, and simplify the clumsy accretion of 169 rules that had been accumulated since the revision of 1860. The committee consisted of Speaker Samuel Randall, Democrat of Pennsylvania; Alexander Stephens, Democrat of Georgia; Joseph Blackburn, Democrat of Kentucky; James Garfield, Republican of Ohio; and, William Frye, Republican of Maine. To show the good will of the committee toward one another Mr. Blackburn said: "In justice to the Republican members of the committee, I want to say that in the discussion that has led up to the adoption of this resolution there has been no disagreement among the members." Speaker Randall also said words of praise for the action of the members of the committee.

Twelve years later in discussing the revision of the rules in

11Congressional Record, Forty-sixth Congress, First Session, Part 2, p. 2329.

12Ibid., p. 2328.

13Calloway, op. cit., p. 51.


15Ibid.
1880, Speaker Reed said: "Business had been to shirk questions, not meet them. The revision of the rules as they were before the revision of 1880 was not worth the paper they were printed on."16

By this Speaker Reed was pointing out that to him all revisions prior to 1880 had been ineffective. The fact that at this session of Congress the committee had been changed back to a standing committee was probably due in measure to the high esteem in which Speaker Randall and Messrs. Blackburn, Frye, Garfield, and Stephens, were held.17

In making the report to the House, the Committee on Rules used skill and tact in keeping it clear of an unfavorable vote and hostile debate.18 The revision of the rules was accomplished with very little fanfare, and the members of the House seemed to agree that these rules were necessary.

The report rearranged and grouped the orders by subject into forty-five main rules, with the avowed object to secure accuracy in business, economy of time, order, uniformity, and impartiality. Thirty-two rules were dropped as obsolete or unnecessary; twelve remained intact; and 125 were condensed into thirty-two, making a total of forty-four, each subdivided into clauses.19

17 Atkinson, op. cit., p. 33.
18 Congressional Record, Forty-sixth Congress, Second Session, Parts 1 and 2, pp. 146-55, 452-61.
19 Callaway, op. cit., p. 51.
The new code had far-reaching effects on committee access to the floor, the distribution of appropriation bills, the privileges of reporting at any time, on suspension of the rules, and on special orders. The new rules also stopped voting after the second roll-call; it dropped the penalty system of absenteeism without leave. Under the penalty system a member of the House could be punished by censure or fine if there was not good cause for his absence. It authorized the clerk to announce "pairs" instead of members. Also abolished was the practice of changing a few words in a pending bill to make it gerrymander. This meant that a pending bill could not be submitted as an amendment at a later date by changing just a few words. It caused a motion to reconsider, made during the last six days of a session, to be disposed of at the time. It sent a bill, to which objection was made to its present consideration, to the Committee of the Whole or to the House Calendar to be taken up and disposed of in order; and it also provided that the previous question should bring the House to a direct vote upon an amendment or amendments, the effect being to carry the bill to its engrossment and third reading, and then, on a renewal of the motion, to its passage or rejection. But the revisers of 1880 left untouched such "disreputable practices" as "riders" on appropriation bills and the "disappearing quorum."  

20 Ibid.


22 Galloway, loc. cit.
The general practice of the House until 1880 was to provide for the appointment of the Committee on Rules by the Speaker early in the first session of each Congress, and to adopt, temporarily, the rules of the preceding Congress. When the Committee on Rules became a standing committee in 1880, the first of these resolutions became unnecessary, but attempts to bind the new Congress to adopt the rules of its predecessors were not successful. 23

The revision of the rules was technical and did not deal with the two most important weapons of the minority, the filibuster and the "no quorum present" tactic. The revision of 1880 was not fought by the minority because it had avoided any assault on the filibuster.

The revision in the rules in 1880 was a great step forward for the House of Representatives. Not only did it provide the House with a more streamlined procedure, but it also reflected the America of the 1880's, a more complex organization than that America of the pre-Civil War days. The respect given now to the Committee on Rules by the members of the House is seen in reading the record of that time. The committee was now coming into the limelight of power in the House of Representatives.

As we have seen previously, nothing had been done about the abused tactics that were used by the minority in the House, the filibustering, and the "no quorum present" tactic. Two examples of filibustering came about in the Fiftieth Congress (1887-88) on the bill to

23Atkinson, op. cit., p. 10.
The next major departure of the House Rules came in 1890 with...
function, and the duty of a legislature was to legislate. During the 1880's Mr. Reed became an expert in parliamentary strategy and tactics, biding his time until he should be in a position to overcome the techniques of minority rule. The need of reform in House procedure impressed him deeply, and he was convinced that the traditional practice must be changed. Minority rights, he felt, should not be allowed to override the rights of the majority.\textsuperscript{28}

When the Fifty-first Congress (1889-90) convened on December 2, 1889, the memory of the Oklahoma Bill was fresh in the minds of the Republican majority. Mr. Roger R. Mills, a Democrat from Texas, is reported to have said, "The minority did not intend for the Republican majority to pass a single measure without their consent." He concluded by saying, "The minority was strong enough to make them the virtual rulers of the House."\textsuperscript{29}

It was the clash of Speaker Reed and the majority party with Mr. Mills and his determined minority that brought about the so-called "Reed Rules."\textsuperscript{30}

As has previously been said, the revision of the rules of 1880 had not curbed the "no quorum present" tactic. The first attack on this abuse of the rules came on January 20, 1880, when Mr. Tom Acklen, Democrat from Louisiana, proposed an amendment, which made it a duty

\textsuperscript{28}\textit{Ibid.}.

\textsuperscript{29}\textit{Atkinson, op. cit., p. 37.}

\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Ibid., p. 38.}
of the clerk to cast those present and not voting as having voted in
the negative, and also to declare the results to the House. This
was opposed by the Republicans, especially by Mr. Reed. This plan
was then abandoned by the Democrats. In withdrawing the amendment,
a prominent Democrat said: "I offered on yesterday my amendment to
the report of the Committee on Rules, believing that it was in accord-
ance with the Constitution. I will not present the matter further."

The practice of making a quorum on record by counting recal-
citrant members was inaugurated by Speaker Reed on January 29, 1890,
in advance of any recommendation from the House. This tactic, members
present but not voting on a roll-call, had plagued the House for many
years. The move by the Speaker destroyed the "no quorum present"
tactic. Speaker Reed accomplished this in the following manner. The
House had not passed at this time the customary resolution for the
temporary adoption of the rules of the preceding House and was pro-
ceeding under general parliamentary law as it had done in several
other periods in history.

The House on January 29, 1890, was in the process of taking up
the election case of Smith v. Jackson, when the controversy began. In

31 Congressional Record, Forty-sixth Congress, Second Session,
32 Ibid., p. 575.
33 Ibid., pp. 603-4.
34 Atkinson, op. cit., p. 39.
Speaker reads:

After the Republ. side

Speaker, however, was still opposed to the shock the Democrats received

This minority Democratic of one of their most effective opponents. And

rooked members of the House of Representatives. For it deprived the

was devised to defeat the House. To prevent this
dephzation was determined to defeat the House's procedure. This determination

motion on the Chamber to announce that he would thereafter accept

practical motion to adjourn on the ground that it was a disgrace

At last day had been accepted. On that day read decried to accept a

verged back to the procedures on January 2, 1890. They may not have

the statements Speaker would make next. However, if they had read

members of the Democrats that were elected and not prepared for

of a Republican. After the vote, Mr. Crisp said, "The purpose of the

two years and nine months demanded, they forced the year 1890 and the House

were 76. The number required for a quorum in the Congress was 166.

that of concessionation. On taking the year were 76 and the House

they now. Charter of Grover, a Democrat of Georgia, read the case.
Mr. Crisp: "I appeal. I appeal the decision of the Chair." (Applause on the Democratic side.)

The Speaker: "Mr. Blanchard, Mr. Blount, Mr. Breckinridge."

Mr. Clifton Breckinridge: Democrat from Kentucky "I deny the power of the Speaker and denounce it as revolutionary." (Applause on the Democratic side.)

The Speaker: "The House will be in order."

Mr. James Blount: Democrat from Georgia "I am responsible to my constituents for the way I vote and not to the Speaker of the House." (Applause on the Democratic side.)

The Speaker continued to call off the names of the members present, but not voting, in spite of protests, appeals, and demonstrations, cries of order, and quotations from works on parliamentary procedure. The clerk continued to call off the names of those present and not voting. When forty-one of them had been called off, he announced that a quorum was present. Hearing the end of the roll-call, Mr. George Cooper, a Democrat of Indiana, demanded on what grounds did the Speaker make such a decision. In support of his decision Speaker Reed cited the practice of the English House of Commons, the rules and proceedings of the House of Representatives, and also the Federal Constitution. With


39 Atkinson, op. cit., p. 41.

these statements the Speaker declared the resolution passed.\(^1\) On an appeal of the decision the next day, the Speaker was sustained by a vote of 162 ayes, 0 nays, 167 not voting.\(^2\) The principle was finally incorporated into the rules of the House on February 14, 1890.\(^3\)

The Democratic minority was enraged with the ruling. For several days they stormed about the House floor, wildly denouncing the tyranny of the Speaker, damning him as a "scoundrel" and a "tsar."\(^4\) "What becomes to the rights of the minority?" one member demanded.

"The right of the minority," replied Reed, "is to draw its salaries and function to make a quorum."\(^5\) This statement sent members into the aisle in a frenzy of anger. One Kentucky representative, with parliamentary manual in hand, tried to debate with the Speaker: "I deny you right, Mr. Speaker, to count me present," he said. The Speaker: "The Chair is making a statement of fact that the gentleman from Kentucky is present. Does he deny it?"\(^6\)

Reed persisted in the ruling. His rule ended filibustering in the House. The Democrats still tried to resist the ruling. They even

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\(^{1}\)Galloway, *op. cit.*, p. 52.


\(^{3}\)Ibid., p. 1347.

\(^{4}\)Ibid., op. cit., p. 32.


accused Reed of counting, as part of a quorum, the members' hats hanging in the cloakroom. They tried to prevent being counted by dashing out of the Hall of the House before the doors of the House were closed and locked. One Texan, Constantine Kilgore (Democrat), once kicked down a locked door to make his escape, and he was afterward known as "Kicking-Buck Kilgore."

In addition to these major reforms, the Reed Rules also provided for a readjustment in the order of business, reduction of a quorum in the Committee of the Whole to one hundred, the relief of the morning hour by filing bills and reports with the clerk, and the adoption of special orders by a majority vote. The last was certainly a major change. Under the new system, the Speaker referred all public bills to the respective committees and was authorized to dispose of business on the Speaker's table without action by the House—except on House bills with Senate amendments, which would usually go to the Conference Committee without debate. Likewise, he minimized "unfinished business" by limiting its jurisdiction to business transacted in a special period. Under the revised "order of business," the House has since been able to move freely from one calendar to another and from the House to the Committee of the Whole.

\[\text{Footnotes:} 47 \text{Maxwell, op. cit., p. 52.} \\
48 \text{Galloway, op. cit., p. 53.}\]
With much regret the Speaker, and the Speaker in the Speaker's place, accordingly ruled that the motion was out of order. The Speaker said that the motion was out of order, and the Speaker adjourned.

If the Speaker so ordered, the motion of the Speaker could be allowed to the Speaker. This was inserted at the beginning of the Speaker's rule. The Speaker would refer to the Speaker's rule for the Speaker's rule and sometimes the Speaker's rule for the Speaker's rule. This rule de novo proposed a new concept of the Speaker's rule—the so-called "special rule." With need of rules Committee (Chairman), the committee would make the Speaker's rule. He did not say the possibilities of the Speaker's rule were.

Died what their cases were not worse than the disease.

Described alone with the Speaker and the Speaker's rules had been established by the Speaker and the Speaker's rules. The Speaker of the Speaker's rules had been referred to the Speaker of the Speaker's rules and also to the Speaker of the Speaker's rules, the Speaker of the Speaker's rules, and also to the Speaker of the Speaker's rules.

The House, Rules brought about a thirteen rule in the House.

Power through the Speaker's rules

The Speaker and the Majority Party are given organizational
Although some people believed that Speaker Reed was the innovator with his steering committee in the House of Representatives, one should notice that in the Fiftieth Congress (1887–88), Speaker John Carlisle, a Democrat from Kentucky, had appointed the Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, together with the Speaker to sit on the House Rules Committee.50

This was the procedure that Speaker Reed, William McKinley, Republican of Ohio, and Joseph Cannon of Illinois, completely dominated the two Democratic members, Mr. James Alcott of Georgia, and Mr. Benton McMillin, Democrat of Tennessee. On one occasion Mr. McMillin, being late, asked if he had missed anything. The Speaker said, "No, Joe, Mac, and I went along by ourselves."51

The Republican members of the Committee on Rules would decide in advance the details of the rules they wanted on the bill, and then Reed would inform the members of the Democratic minority of the decision.52 "Gentlemen," he would say, "we have decided to perpetuate the following outrage."53 On another occasion Reed said that the Rules

50 Congressional Record, Fiftieth Congress, First Session, p. 10h.
52 MacNeil, op. cit., p. 53.
Committee consisted of the Speaker and his two assistants. 54

Although the Democrats opposed the Speaker's rules in the
Fifty-first Congress (1889-90), they looked at them in a different
light in the Fifty-second (1891-92) and Fifty-third (1893-94) Con-
gresses. The elections of 1892 and 1894 gave the Democrats control
of the House of Representatives, and with this control they were able
to fashion the rules of the Fifty-second (1891-92) and Fifty-third
(1893-94) Congresses. When the Democrats secured the majority in the
Fifty-second Congress (1891-92), consistency required them to drop the
two rules which had been called the "Reed Rules." That was done in the
report of the Committee on Rules on January 21, 1892. 55 However, later
in amendments, the "Reed Rules" were adopted by the Democrats because
they feared the able Republican minority. 56 Referring to this rule,
a member of Congress said that under the speakerships of Mr. Reed and
Mr. Crisp the Rules Committee received its greatest enlargement of
function and importance. 57

Although the Democratic Fifty-second (1891-92) and Fifty-third
(1893-94) Congresses made use of the Rules Committee to further its
legislative program, they did not use the committee nearly as effectivELY

54Congressional Record, Fifty-third Congress, First Session, p. 1033.
56Ibid.
as it was used by the Republican majority.

There was a good deal of support for the Rules Committee in this country even though the Speaker had become very powerful. One prominent member of Congress said, "The members who do not like the rules must realize that if we did not have them there would be pandemonium."

Another asserted that if the rights of the individual were left unfettered, then the government would be without order. A leading legislator in this country told Lord Bryce that the rules were as near perfect as they could be.

However, there was some opposition to the Rules Committee. Most of this opposition was due to the small size of the committee. As early as the Fiftieth Congress (1887-88), a resolution was offered to increase the size of the Committee on Rules. The resolution wanted to increase the size of the committee to seven. The establishment of so small a ruling committee had led to the customary references to "Russia," "the autocrat," "three men ruling the House of Representatives." In the Fifty-second Congress (1891-92), moreover, the Democratic members were all from the South, and there was some complaint


*Congressional Record, Fiftieth Congress, First Session,* p. 124.
that the three men with the most power over the legislation of the United States came from one section of the country. 62

There were other proposals made concerning changing the Committee on Rules. It was proposed that it should consist of seven, of nine, and even of fifteen members. It was also suggested that it should include all the chairmen of the standing committees, about fifty in number, and that finally, it should consist of one member from each state or territory to be nominated by that state or territory. 63

There were three other rules given during this time that gave the Rules Committee additional power. These added to the "Reed Rules" made this committee a very powerful one. One of the rules gave a report from the Committee on Rules precedent over the reading of the House Journal. 64 The second gave the committee the right to retire at any time from the House, in order to report a rule that would silence a filibuster. 65 The last measure gave the Rules Committee the power to fix an hour for a final vote on a pending question. 66

63Congressional Record, Fifty-third Congress, First Session, pp. 1077-78, 1084-85.
64Congressional Record, Fifty-second Congress, First Session, pp. 1619-32.
65Fallett, op. cit., p. 214.
66Ibid.
Perhaps the most drastic power the committee had was the power of the special rule. The following rule was on an immigration bill in 1903.

Resolved, that immediately upon the adoption of this order the House shall resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole House for the consideration of this bill, to amend an act, entitled, "an act, to regulate immigration of aliens into the United States," approved March 3, 1903, and in the Committee of the Whole the amendment in the nature of a substitute report by the Committee on Immigration and Naturalisation, shall be read through, after which Section 1 of said amendment shall be considered for not longer than one hour, under the Five-Minute Rule for amendments, and at the end of Section 1, Section thirty-eight shall in the same way be considered for not longer than two hours, with the provision that amendments pending at the end of the two hours shall be voted on by the Committee of the Whole; and immediately after the vote on the said, "specific amendments" to Section thirty-eight, the Committee of the Whole shall rise and the Chairman will report the bill and substitute amendments, whereupon a vote shall be taken on the substitutes, and the bill, to the final passage without an intervening motion or appeal. General leave is given to be confined to a discussion of the bill within five legislative days from today.67

During the debate on this report the following discussion between the Speaker and Mr. John Gardner, Republican from New Jersey, author of the immigration bill, showed that the special rule affected all representatives in some way.

Mr. Gardner: "Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Chair if in his opinion this rule as drawn will permit a yea and nay vote at any stage, for instance, on the amendment striking out the educational test."

The Speaker: "In reply to the question of the gentleman from Massachusetts, which the Chairman will treat as a parliamentary inquiry, the Chair will say that this rule if adopted does not change the rules

of the House on the subject. The ordinary rules would evoke the Committee of the Whole House to perfect the substitute for the Senate Bill reported by the Committee and would be treated precisely in that respect as substantially all similar amendments have been treated here before."

Mr. Gardner: "Then I understand Mr. Speaker that no yea or nay vote would be possible at any stage of proceedings under that rule of the educational test."

The Speaker: "Amendments perfecting the substitute itself would be in order. This special rule if adopted leaves the uniform practice as it has been in Congress for a hundred years."

Mr. Gardner: "Then I ask that this rule shall be so amended as to permit at some stage in the proceedings—aye and nay vote on the educational test."

The Speaker: "The gentleman from Massachusetts asks unanimous consent as indicated. Is there any objection?"

Mr. Gardner: "Mr. Speaker, I have nothing more to say except that this rule is a very bad one indeed, and quite in violation of a great many understandings I have had with the people in this building, but I shall work for its adoption, because I do not believe this House is composed of men who will use the fact that they cannot be put on record to vote a different way from what they would if they were to be put on record."

Since the 1880's, the House Committee on Rules had been gaining power slowly but surely. By the time of Speaker Joseph Cannon, the House Rules Committee was being used as the instrument of the majority party. Because of this, the majority party could run the business of the House to their liking.

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68Ibid., p. 9153.
CHAPTER IV

THE OVERTHROW OF THE SPEAKER

Not only had the Speaker of the House of Representatives controlled the Committee on Rules, but under the operation of the "Reed Rules" he had developed far-reaching power. He was entitled to appoint the standing committees in the House, to designate their chairmen; and this in turn would determine the legislative opportunities of the individual. As Chairman of the Committee on Rules, he was able to determine what business the House should consider. Through the unlimited power of recognition, he could decide what matters would come before the House, and he could also discipline members who went against his wishes. After a long process of evolution, the Speaker of the House had become the second-most powerful man in the United States.

Cannon's Use of the Rules and Rules Committee

Joseph Cannon of Illinois inherited all the Speaker's arbitrary powers when he was chosen to lead the House. Cannon, however, added

3Galloway, loc. cit.
his own embellishments to the Speaker's power. This was a party hierarchy loyal to him that simply overawed the House. Cannon controlled the House in its entirety, and he made the House subservient to his will by the ruthless way he used his arbitrary power. No bill could be passed without his advance permission, and the appointment of every member of every House committee was his sole responsibility. Cannon controlled the avenues of promotion in the House, and the members shrank deeper into obscurity.4

A few contemporary remarks will show the power of the Speaker. One man wrote that, "An able and clever man owns the House of Representatives, body, soul, and conscience."5 Once when a constituent asked for a copy of the House rules and regulations, the member sent him a picture of Speaker Cannon.6 Another time a woman, shocked at seeing Cannon bowed in prayer in the House, called him an "old hypocrite."7 The attack on the Speaker was indirectly an attack on the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee and the Speaker were constantly under a barrage of criticism.

By 1908 it looked as if a showdown was to take place in the


6 MacNeil, op. cit., p. 79.

House between the Speaker and his cohort against a coalition of
Democrats and "insurgent" Republicans. This showdown had been in the
making since 1903. From 1903 to 1908 the nation's press had attacked
Cannon as having a position that was too powerful. Many Democratic
state platforms, beginning in the 1890's, attacked the Speaker and
the Committee on Rules, a specific example being that of California.
Republican platforms did not condemn; neither did they praise the Com-
mittee on Rules. The platform of the National Democratic Party in 1906
attacked the Speaker and the Committee on Rules.8

The Democratic press in the nation was against the Speaker and
the Rules Committee. The Republican press remained very silent on the
subject. The main accusation pointed at the Committee on Rules was it
had opposed the reforms of Roosevelt and Taft.9

Many of the leading periodicals were against the Speaker and his
committee. Among them were Colliers,10 Century,11 Outlook,12 Arena.13

8C. R. Atkinson, The Committee on Rules and the Overthrow of
Speaker Cannon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), pp. 71-
81.

9Ibid.
10Colliers, XLII (March 6, 1909), 15.
11Century, XLII (June, 1902), 169.
12Outlook, XCI (April 10, 1909), 807-9.
13Arena, XIII (May, 1908), 615-18.
An organized effort to break the power of the Speaker began in 1908. A meeting was held by Republican members who desired to curtail the power of the Speaker. This body of men met three times weekly. Committees were appointed on all subjects connected with the investigation. These men were in the main friendly toward Speaker Cannon and only wanted to take away his extraordinary power. They were later given rough treatment by Speaker Cannon. He denied fourteen Republicans their committee assignments. This treatment of the "insurgents" would come back to haunt Cannon.

Revolt in the House

"As the fight grew in intensity," said Representative George Norris of Nebraska, referring to the Speakership contest at the opening of the Sixty-first Congress (1909-10), "it increased in bitterness," and when the days of election came, it is doubtful if there

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14 Harpers Weekly, LII (February 29, 1908), 5.
15 North American Review, CXXXII (February, 1906), 233-34.
16 Cosmopolitan, XLVIII (April, 1910), 569-75.
17 Nation, DCCCVIII (September 17, 1908), 251-52.
18 Atkinson, op. cit., p. 95.
19 Manwell, op. cit., p. 111.
was a single insurgent who did not most devoutly hope that the Speaker might be defeated.\textsuperscript{20}

As a concession to the feeling that was developing, the Republican leaders, late in the Second Session of the Sixtieth Congress (1908-1909), had secured the adoption of a rule providing for a Calendar Wednesday. This was a day on which bills on the House Calendar, previously reported by a committee, could be called up for consideration without the customary clearing consultation with the Speaker and his Committee on Rules.\textsuperscript{21}

The "insurgent" Republicans did not like this concession. They wanted stricter controls on the power of the Speaker and his committee. To get their demands they decided that they would form a coalition with the Democrats. In the contest that followed, the insurrection in the majority party was countered by Cannon's friends in the minority party, led by Mr. Frank Fitzgibbon, Democrat from New York.\textsuperscript{22}

Thirty-one Republicans joined with the Democrats on the occasion in defeating Mr. John Dalsey's (Republican from Pennsylvania) motion, that the rules of the Sixtieth Congress (1907-8) be adopted for the governing of the Sixty-first (1909-10).

A motion then was offered by the Democratic leader for the adoption of the rules of the last Congress for use in the special

\textsuperscript{20}Current Literature, XLVIII (February, 1910), 127-31.

\textsuperscript{21}Atkinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 96.

\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid.}
session on which they were entering, but with some important exceptions. These called for the direct election by the House of its own Committee on Rules to consist of fifteen members, who were specifically named but did not include the Speaker. The motion further authorized the Speaker to appoint at once the Ways and Means Committee and a few minor ones, but not to appoint any other committee unless instructed by the House.\textsuperscript{23}

The defection of Fitzgerald in the minority party brought about the defeat of the Democratic and "insurgent" Republican coalition by a close vote.\textsuperscript{24} The House then adopted the Fitzgerald substitute. The substitute provided as concession to the minority that a two-thirds vote should be required to set aside Calendar Wednesday, and that the Rules Committee was specifically forbidden to report any rule interfering with the privileges of members when they had secured the floor.\textsuperscript{25}

The suppression of the Democrats and "insurgent" Republicans at the opening of the Sixty-first Congress (1909-10) was not looked upon by either side as a cessation of hostilities. The leading "regular" Republicans felt very secure. They believed that there was no disposition on the part of the Committee on Rules to report a reforming resolution, and they were confident that there was no power that could compel the committee to take such action. Doubtless they believed that the

\textsuperscript{23}\textit{Idid.}, p. 97.

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{Congressional Record}, Sixty-first Congress, First Session, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{25}Atkinson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 98.
concession of a Calendar Wednesday and the requirements of a two-thirds vote before it could be set aside would be sufficient to satisfy the demands of the opposition. This overconfidence may have lead to their downfall.26

However, the Calendar Wednesday, thought by the Republicans to be of little worry, came back to haunt them. It was on a Calendar Wednesday that the first assault on the Speaker occurred.27 On Wednesday, March 16, 1910, Speaker Cannon recognized Representative Edgar Cruspecker, Republican from Indiana, Chairman of the Committee on the Census, for the purpose of calling up for consideration a minor amendment to the census bill.28 This was a mistake in procedure, for there was no opposition to the proposed amendment, but the men who had fought for the introduction of Calendar Wednesday felt that the introducing of this measure, at this time, would create an objectionable precedent, tending to impair the value of the concession that they had gained.29 They believed that Calendar Wednesday might be turned into a day, not for bringing up legislation disapproved by the Speaker, but a day in which representatives might clutter the calendar with minor items.

A point of order was raised by Mr. Fitzgerald. The Speaker's


27Ibid.


29Atkinson and Beard, op. cit., p. 396.
ruling that the census amendment was in order as a matter of constitutional privilege was promptly challenged, and after a long discussion, the ruling of the Speaker was reversed by the House.30

Speaker Reed had said on January 28, 1892, that he had been in Congress for fifteen years and had never seen the Speaker overruled, and the members of the House would never see him overruled.31 Speaker Reed was proven wrong by the action of the House in overruling Speaker Cannon.

The next day an attempt to weaken further the effectiveness of Calendar Wednesday by the Speaker and his regulars was beaten down in the House by a vote of 201 to 72.32 Just before the House rendered its decision, Mr. Norris indicated his future line of attack against the regulars in the Republican ranks. He said:

Mr. George Norris: (Rep. of Nebraska)

"I want to ask the gentleman about the constitutional proposition. If his theory is right, would it not follow that this would be in order even though there were no report of a committee on the resolution? To make myself plain, if it is in order because the Constitution makes it in order, then the report of a Committee on the Census does not add anything to it. Would not that follow?"


Mr. Marlin Olmstead: "It has been so held in election cases, as to the right of a member. It was so ruled by Speaker Reed.

Mr. Norris: "Any member could come in with a bill that had not been printed and take up the time of the House on the question that it was an amendment to the census law."

It must be remembered that technicalities are great in the House, and that they are used to the utmost by members of the House. Asher Hinds wrote in 1907 that there were 7,356 technicalities against an individual in the House. 34

After the House had voted to give precedent to the Ormsby amendment to the census bill, Mr. Norris finally got the floor, taking a well-worn manuscript from his pocket. 35

Mr. Norris: "Mr. Speaker, I present a resolution made privileged by the Constitution."

Mr. Speaker: "If it is a resolution made privileged by the Constitution, the gentleman will present it."

The Clerk then read a resolution providing for a Committee on Rules to consist of fifteen members, geographically distributed; nine of whom should be from the Majority Party, excluding the Speaker from membership. 36

33 Ibid., p. 3285.
35 Ibid., p. 400.
The battle is now on between the Democratic and Republican party.

"You say that the Constitution makes it legal. But why, sir, do you think that the Constitution allows the destruction of property by these disordered parties? The Constitution was framed to make a very plain provision for the protection of one side and Speaker Cannon, and the Republican party."

Mr. DENTIST.

"No, Mr. Speaker; the House do not conspire to make the Constitution paper."

Mr. Speaker.

"Do you say that the House should be voted on?"

Mr. Speaker.

"You say the Constitution has not been made paper, because of the Constitution. My resolution can be taken the same way, because of the Constitution. My resolution can be taken the same way, because of the Constitution."

In committee that the Bill in order because it is not in order."

Mr. DENTIST.

"Speaker; the resolution by the Constitution..."
House in session all night. It was not until two o'clock in the afternoon of the eighteenth that a recess was taken until four o'clock. The recess was agreed to on the understanding that the Speaker would give his ruling at that time.39

When four o'clock came, the Speaker postponed the ruling until twelve of the next day.40

In the long hours that had preceded, disorder and abuse were common. For example, a Mr. Elisha Payne, Republican from New York, said, "The gentleman does not know a point of order from a hole in the ground."41

The Speaker's ruling was a clear statement of the precedents, saying that the motion by Mr. Norris was not in order. This was cheered by the Republican side of the House.42 Seventy-six pages of the Congressional Record are filled with speeches of the Speaker's supporters and his opponents.43

Mr. Norris finally appealed to the previous question, whereupon Mr. Dalsell tried to get the House to table Mr. Norris' motion, but he

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40 Atkinson and Beard, op. cit., pp. 402-3.
42 Ibid.
was defeated by a vote in the House of 182 to 162.\textsuperscript{44}

After an ineffectual attempt to agree upon the amount of time to be given to debate, Mr. Norris took the floor to present a substitute resolution. This resolution represented a crystallisation of the best thoughts of the allies. The allies presented this resolution because they believed that victory was close at hand. Mr. Norris said:

Mr. Speaker, while I personally prefer the resolution I offered the other day, and which is now before the House over the substitute which I am going to offer, yet my associates or a good many of them are of the opinion that the substitute which I intend to offer is better than the original resolution. Therefore I will support the substitute resolution.\textsuperscript{45}

The change in the resolution stated that there shall be a Rules Committee elected by the House consisting of ten members, six from the majority party, and that the Speaker will not be a member. The Committee on Rules was to elect its own chairman from among its own members. It was further resolved that after the adoption of the resolution, the Committee on Rules would be selected in ten days, and the present committee would be abolished.\textsuperscript{46} The debate lasted about an hour, and the remarks made by Mr. Clayton and Mr. Underwood speak for the viewpoint of the advocates of the Norris resolution.

Mr. Henry Clayton: "Mr. Speaker, this is a crisis in the legislative history of our country.


\textsuperscript{45} Atkinson and Beard, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 408.

"Those of us who favor the proposal advanced by the gentleman from Nebraska recognize that it may be revolutionary. This is necessary to overcome the arbitrary power of the Speaker."47

Mr. Oscar Underwood: Democrat from Alabama

"Mr. Reed adopted a system of rules that would allow the majority of the House to do business at any time. However, in doing so he lodged the power of the House in the Speaker, and there it has remained since that time. We are not fighting the personality of the Speaker. We are fighting the system."48

The Norris resolution was agreed on by the House by a vote of 193 to 153. The revolution had been a success.49

The Aftermath of the Overthrow of Speaker Cannon

As a sidelight, it is interesting to note that some of the Democrats during the Third Session of the Sixty-first Congress (1910) confessed that the Norris resolution had not been in order, but the time had come to take some action against the Speaker and the Committee on Rules.50

It is also interesting to note that in the new Rules Committee a complete triumph for the "insurgent" Republicans and Democrats did

47Ibid.
48Ibid., p. 3133.
49Ibid., p. 3136.
not occur. The reason for this was that in the party caucus all members of the Rules Committee were placed on the new one, with the exception of the Speaker. The new committee did not include any insurgents, nor did it include any high-ranking Democrats. On the face of it, one can say that the power on the Committee on Rules shifted from the Speaker to the friends of the Speaker.

The defeat of Mr. Cannon, however, was not cheered by everyone. One writer viewing the decision said, "As Mr. Cannon's gavel fell, an epoch in the long and brilliant history of the House of Representatives came to an end." Not only during this session had the Rules Committee been affected, but the Speaker had been made weaker in other respects. He was stripped of his power to appoint standing committees and their chairmen. The members of the House also restricted his former right to recognize, or refuse to recognize, designated members of the minority who were offering to recomit to its original committee any bill coming up for a House vote. The action of the House reflected the mood of the country, as a great many people had grown tired of and angry with arbitrary rule.

52 Atkinson and Beard, op. cit., p. 413.
54 HanNeil, op. cit., p. 76.
Two other reforms made during this session must be mentioned. The members established a Consent Calendar for handling minor bills. This took them away from the Speaker's control. The House of Representatives provided for a method known as the Discharge Petition. This could bring a measure to the floor at any time, if a certain number of names were signed on the petition. This was aimed at balk ing committees, especially the House Rules Committee.55

Speaker Cannon signified his recognition of the important precedents taken by the members of the House when he announced that he would resign and let the members of the House choose another Speaker. Such a motion was made, but it was defeated. The Republican "insurgents" were willing to form a coalition with the Democrats to revise the rules, but not to elect a Democratic speaker.56

The revolution of 1910 drastically changed not only the power of the Speaker, but also the nature of the conduct of House business. However, any one in reading the proceedings of the struggle cannot find anywhere that the power of the House Rules Committee was cut.

55Ibid., p. 54.
56Allaway, op. cit., pp. 54-55.
CHAPTER V

THE RULES COMMITTEE AS THE AGENT
OF THE MAJORITY PARTY

As we have seen, the House had given Speaker Cannon a blow from which the Speakership would never recover. However, as I have pointed out, the power of the Committee on Rules had not been diminished one iota.

The Rules Committee's Function Under the Democratic Party

When the Democrats captured control of the House, after being absent from power for sixteen years, they changed the rules of the House to a certain extent when they met for the opening of the Sixty-second Congress (1911-12) on April 4, 1911. After Champ Clark, a Democrat from Missouri, had been elected Speaker, the Democratic majority adopted a revised code of rules based on the Crisp rules of the Fifty-third Congress (1893-95). These rules incorporated all the changes affected by the Norris resolution. The rules of the Sixty-second Congress (1911-12) was the final blow to the traditional powers of the Speaker.1

These rules, as we have mentioned before, deprived the Speaker of his right to appoint standing committees, retain Calendar Wednesday,

and also to appoint the Consent Calendar on minor bills. The power shifted somewhat away from the Speaker in the Sixty-second Congress (1911-12), but his influence was still great.

In the Sixty-second Congress the Democratic party's strategy on legislation was to bypass the steering committee but to concentrate power in the caucus. Oscar Underwood, Democrat from Alabama, was placed as Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, to which the caucus gave the assignment to pick the members on the various committees, including the Committee on Rules. It was this combination of Floor Leader, Ways and Means Chairman, Rules Committee, and Speaker of the House that would form the ruling power in the House.

The Speaker, Mr. Clark, outlined the function of the Rules Committee by saying that its chief function was to expedite desirable or necessary legislation. It was also under the Speakership of Clark that the Rules Committee was changed to eleven, staying at that number until the Sixty-fifth Congress (1917-18) when the Committee on Rules membership was extended to thirteen.

The power of the Rules Committee to block legislation, which a majority of its members did not approve, was first brought to the

2Ibid.
3Ibid., p. 56.
public's attention during the campaign for women's suffrage. This was the second time the Committee on Rules acted as an obstruction to legislation. It would certainly not be the last. A constitutional amendment to grant the vote to women was reported without recommendation by the House Judiciary Committee in May, 1915. It had been introduced by the Republican floor leader, Representative Frank Mandell of Wyoming. A majority of the Democrats on the Rules Committee were conservatives from the South. Representative Robert Henry, a Democrat from Texas, Chairman of the Committee on Rules, refused to call the committee together for consideration of a special rule that would send the amendment to the floor. Delegations of women were told that their amendment was not on the administration's program, and the Rules Committee would stick with the program of the administration. It was not until President Wilson declared for the amendment in January, 1918, that it was allowed to come before the House on a vote.6

The Wilson Administration had no serious trouble with the Rules Committee during its eight years. From 1920 to 1932 the Republican administration had greater success in dealing with the House of Representatives than with the Senate. This was due to the fact that the Rules Committee supported the program of the Republican administration.7

6Richard M. Bocskel, "Reforms of the Rules Committee," Editorial Research Reports, II (December 9, 1948), 873.

7Ibid.
The Scope of Rules Committee Power in 1920

By 1920 the power of the Rules Committee had grown to one of tremendous importance. It had the sole power of letting bills come to the floor for a vote. It limited the time that the bill could be debated and provided for amendments on a bill. This was called an "open rule." It could also place a "closed rule" on a bill. This meant that amendments placed on a bill were forbidden by the Committee on Rules. It also had power over the legislative docket. The committee could decide what business would come before the House and what business would not come before that body. It also had the distinction over other committees of sitting in session at all times.

This committee was the only one whose reports had immediate consideration of the House, even before the reading of the House Journal. It could also sit and consider special orders to the House. Moreover, since the Rules Committee was the only channel through which major amendments of the rules could reach the House, it was able to prevent changes in the rules. In summing up, the House Committee on Rules was to a large degree the governing committee in the House.8

As I have stated before, the committee now would take a more active role because it was out from under total control of the Speaker. By controlling a majority of members on the Rules Committee, a majority that was generally two to one, the majority or floor leader could act

The new power of the Rules Committee can be seen as early as
that would be needed for the next party years.

Around the power tactics the House of Representatives
came under fire. The House Speaker, Mr. Henry Clay, of the
Sixty-third Congress (1811-12), where Mr. Henry Clay, chairman of the
Committee on Rules, told Mr. James Mann, Representative of Illinois,
that the House of the Sixty-third Congress can be seen as early as
the next party years.

The House of the Sixty-third Congress has been
meeting regularly about the power. The House of the Sixty-third Congress
has been meeting regularly about the power. The House of the Sixty-third Congress
has been meeting regularly about the power.

Besides their function of making time for the committee chair-
man, they also make moves to ensure the adoption of the Rules of the House Committee to
rule on rules. However, once the House
majority party gained control of the House,
the usefulness of the Rules Committee was not only to
the

proposa."10 This action by Mr. Henry was challenged by certain members of the House. According to the rules of the House, Mr. Henry was correct, because the Chairman of the Committee on Rules could or could not report a bill that had been passed by the Committee. He was under an obligation to do so, but could not be forced, even by the Speaker.11 In other words, the revolution of 1910 developed power in an independent and "elected" Chairman of the Committee on Rules, who had the power to veto a bill just by putting the bill in his pocket.12

It was thought by some that special orders would not be as numerous under the new Committee on Rules as they had been under "Czar" Cannon. During the Speakership of Mr. Cannon fifty-eight special rules were sent to the House. From the Sixty-second to the Sixty-fifth Congress (1911-1918) that number was exactly doubled, reaching 116. During the preceding Congresses the figure increased to 110. The largest number of special rules reported in one session under Mr. Cannon was only 17 in the Sixty-first Congress (1909-10). In comparison, in the Sixty-seventh Congress (1921-22), thirty rules were reported in one session.13 Interesting too is the fact that about half of the bills and resolutions reported for consideration under special order failed.

10 Congressional Record, Sixty-second Congress, Third Session, pp. 1586-87.
12 Chin, op. cit., p. 154.
13 Ibid.
passage, either in the House or in the Senate. A few of them were pocketed or vetoed by the President, and some of them died in the Conference Committee.\textsuperscript{14}

Two tables (Tables 1 and 2, pages 7\textsuperscript{4} and 75) will suffice to point out the differences between the Congresses when Mr. Cannon was Speaker and those Congresses that occurred after the revolution of 1910.

Of the fifty-eight special orders during the Speakership of Cannon, only twenty-eight bills and two resolutions succeeded in finding their places on the statute books. This number is certainly small in contrast with the 12,375 laws and resolutions enacted during the same period.\textsuperscript{15} This shows that the Speaker, and in this case, Mr. Cannon, had not the absolute control of the House with his Rules Committee.\textsuperscript{16}

As I have pointed out, the Chairman of the Committee on Rules had on occasion used his power to block measures during the Wilson Administration. It was not until 1920 that the Rules Committee Chairman became very arbitrary.

The Chairman of the Rules Committee Uses His Position to Accumulate Tremendous Power

The first arbitrary Chairman of the Rules Committee on Phillip Campbell, a Republican from Nebraska. The power of Mr. Campbell and

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 155.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., op. cit., p. 156.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 157.
TABLE 1

SPECIAL ORDERS FROM THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congress</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>First Session</th>
<th>Second Session</th>
<th>Third Session</th>
<th>Fourth Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bills and Resolutions Enacted into Law or Agreed to</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

the Floor Leader was shown in the Sixty-eighth Congress (1923-24) when a member of the House declared that a minority of two actually controlled the House.17

As one writer said, "The reforms had thrown out Mr. Cannon, who everyone could see had dictatorial powers, but now no one but the trained observer could actually tell who had control of the House.18

In the strict control of legislation by Mr. Campbell and the Floor Leader, Mr. Ray Woodruff, a Republican from Michigan, introduced a resolution that did not please the Chairman of the Rules Committee. After many days, knowing that his bill had been given a favorable report, he complained to members of the House that his bill was resting in the pocket of Mr. Campbell.19 To the House, Mr. Campbell replied that he was only answerable to his committee concerning the Woodruff resolution.20 He also told them that he had the resolution in his pocket, and he would keep it there.21 During this same session he roared at members that they all could go "to hell," because it made no difference what they thought or decided. If he disapproved of the

17Congressional Record, Sixty-ninth Congress, First Session, p. 1053.
20Ibid., p. 1745.
21Chiu, op. cit., p. 147.
The other bill that Mr. Campbell voiced was the Hughes-Shockey Bill. Excepting one or our own, the House Committee demanded the Hughes Committee to report the bill because the House wanted it passed on a straight order. The bill was passed under a straight order. The committee would accept the bill on a straight order. However, it was reported the bill would go to the committee on a straight order. The Hughes Committee on the Judiciary, having reported the bill to the House, at the committee on the judiciary under special order, sent the national resolution.

In the same Congress, Mr. Campbell refused to report the bills on the committee on a straight order; and I have absolute discretion to report these measures. It would not reach the floor of the House. He also said:}

"If you must not bring the measure forward.
bill. He did this by adjourning a meeting of the Rules Committee before the members could vote.25

One of the difficulties that has faced all Rules Committees is the difficulty of gathering a quorum on certain occasions. Mr. Campbell explained, on one occasion, that in a majority of cases the members were in other departments or doing other business and could not come to the meetings of the Rules Committee.26

Although criticised and praised by many, Mr. Campbell understood the power and responsibility of the Rules Committee. On one occasion he remarked:

The business now coming to the Committee on Rules practically covers the business of the House. Even the Committee on Ways and Means, the Committee on Appropriations, committees that report privileged business, now come to the Committee on Rules for a rule concerning the consideration of matters that they have reported out. Practically every resolution, every bill from every committee of the House, is referred to the Committee on Rules.27

During the 1920's several important additional powers were given the Rules Committee. In 1920 the Chair ruled that although the Committee on Rules is not permitted to do anything which directly dispenses with Calendar Wednesday or the motion to recommit, it can bring in a general rule, which indirectly produces that result as a minor

25Min, op. cit., p. 149.

26Congressional Record, Sixty-seventh Congress, First Session, pp. 974, 976, 979.

27Congressional Record, Sixty-seventh Congress, First Session, p. 8051.
part of the operation. In the same year Speaker Gillett ruled that the Committee on Rules may report a resolution providing for the consideration of a bill which has not yet been introduced.

In 1922 it was held that the Committee on Rules could originate a resolution for the consideration of a bill, regardless of whether the subject matter had been referred to it by the House, "because the Committee on Rules is the executive organ of the majority in the House." Later it was held that the Rules Committee could report a resolution authorising consideration of a bill on which suspension of the rules had been declared by the House.

Other important measures that affected the Committee on Rules and thereby the House of Representatives were passed during the 1920's. On July 1, 1920, an amendment to the rules of the House was passed by the Rules Committee that all general appropriations reports were to be placed in a Committee on Appropriations. Thus since 1920 the Appropriations Committee had the complete jurisdiction over all general appropriation bills.


29Ibid., No. 3380, cited in Galloway's History of the House of Representatives, p. 142.


31Ibid., No. 3392, cited in Galloway's History of the House of Representatives, p. 142.

32Galloway, History of the House of Representatives, p. 56.
Another important measure was passed in 1927. This report by the Chairman of the Committee on Rules abolished eleven separate committees combining them into a single committee. This committee was concerned with government operations. This was an important step by the Committee on Rules in streamlining the procedure in the House of Representatives. One observer had called these eleven committees the "ornamental barnacles on the ship of state."

During the 1920's there were some attempts to revise the power of the Rules Committee. These changes were not of a fundamental nature, but they were designed to curb somewhat the arbitrary power the Rules Committee was now showing.

On January 18, 1924, the House passed an amendment to the rules with the provision that "the Committee on Rules could not call up a report for consideration on the same day it is presented, unless otherwise decided by a two-thirds vote."

Speaking in a clarification on a point of order in regard to the action of the Rules Committee's creation of bills, Speaker Frederick Gillett, Republican from Massachusetts, made the following statement:

The Committee on Rules is an executive organ of the majority in the House of Representatives. If it were held that it could not act until the subject had been referred to it, then the

33Ibid., p. 57.


committee would find it impossible in the morning before a session, to make a decision and bring in a rule which is often necessary and desirable at the first meeting of the House.\footnote{Congressional Record, Sixty-seventh Congress, Second Session, pp. 5976-77.}

In the Sixty-seventh Congress (1921-22) Finis Garrett, Democrat of Tennessee, asserted that the Committee on Rules had never, within his experience, passed a resolution authorising, or directing a particular member of that committee to call up a resolution reported by the Committee on Rules.\footnote{Ibid., p. 6921.}

It was not until the Sixty-eighth Congress (1923-24) that the House passed an amendment to the rules, which provided that any member designated by the Committee on Rules may after a lapse of nine days call up for consideration a rule or order reported from the committee.\footnote{House Rules and Manual, Seventieth Congress, p. 315. Later amended, this rule declared that if the rule was not called up by the member making the report within seven legislative days, any member of the Committee on Rules could call up the rule as a matter of privilege.\footnote{Galloway, History of the House of Representatives, p. 143.}

The composition politically of the Rules Committee between 1910 and 1928 is of interest. The reconstruction of the committee in 1910 resulted in a shortening of the duration of the terms of its members. From 1890 to 1910 only nine Republicans and eleven Democrats were
members of this committee. Of these members the maximum of length of
service in the House was eighteen terms, and the minimum was five
terms. Without exception, all of those who had served on the com-
mittee were leaders in their respective parties. Examination also
shows that they had served an average of more than five and one-half
terms on other committees before their entrance to the Rules Committee.
From 1910 to 1928 there were fifteen Democrats and nineteen Republi-
cans. This length of service ranges from one to thirteen years. The
average duration of membership on the committee during this period was
less than four and one-half years. Most of these members that served
on the Committee on Rules were not well known to the general public.40

Another difference that needs to be mentioned is the fact that
before 1910 the Speaker, who was Chairman of the Committee on Rules,
never appeared on the floor to report a specific order from the Rules
Committee, nor did he ever call up a report from the committee for
consideration during the morning hour. The function then was usually
performed by the ranking majority member on the committee after 1910.
As you can see, the system was changed drastically.41

After Mr. Campbell lost his chairmanship on the committee, many
members believed that the new chairman of the committee would not use
the power of his predecessor in such an arbitrary manner. They were
mistaken. As Mr. Campbell passed off the scene, his place was taken

40Chiu, op. cit., p. 162.
41Ibid., p. 152.
The greatest attack on Mr. Smith came in 1921 when Representative
Mr. Smith was contributor those attacks repeated, and it is difficult
Representatives to take the paragraph that was forced upon me because I am the chairman
of the committee on Naturally, the attack on the behalf of the House, that Mr. Smith is not only ungewer in the House, but he is a member and
fallen on the predecessor, Mr. Campbell. On one occasion a member and
however, the House is given to fall on Chairman Smith as they had

tend to dictate the proceedings of the committee
and sentiment of the House. The attacks committee have put in
The attacks committee to read the papers, yet the attacks proceed and the attacks are put in the
House. In the House, as the attacks committee to
It is to get in so-and-so's position and have the people of the state.
the sentiment of the House. In the House of Representatives.
The attacks committee was to act in harmony with the.

To be continued.
Mr. Snell, the Chairman of the Committee on Rules, has more power than the President. His power is so far reaching that he can choke to death any piece of legislation before it can even get a chance of consideration on the floor of the House of Representatives. No member, no matter how charming his personality, should be vested with such vast power. Often now, I am wishing that, but for a moment I might have a tithe of the courage displayed by Andrew-Jackson when he spoke to Nicholas Biddle. In that moment I would look Snell square in the eye, and my Quaker lips would paraphrase the speech of Andrew Jackson long enough to make them say, "Chairman Snell, the power which under the House gag rule you exercise is too damned much power." ¹⁶⁵

One of the reasons that the members of the Rules Committee took such abuse was that they were carefully selected by their parties with the fact in mind that these men must have courage to kill bills that would be unpopular with pressure groups. In districts that were close, the Congressmen preferred to put the blame on the Rules Committee for not letting the legislation come to the floor, rather than risk a vote on the measure in the House that could prove unpopular with many of their constituents. ¹⁶⁶

When the Democrats took control of the House in December of 1931, the power of the Rules Committee that had been used to support and protect the Hoover administration was turned against the administration. This victory for the Democrats proved highly useful, because under the control of the Democratic party, several groups, including the Rules Committee, thwarted certain Hoover proposals, thereby setting up campaign issues that would be used in 1932. The Republicans, although

¹⁶⁵Congressional Record, Seventy-first Congress, Second Session, p. 5536.
¹⁶⁶MacNeil, op. cit., p. 102.
winning the election of 1930, lost their majority because of six deaths in their ranks. This gave the Democrats control of the House and also a glorious opportunity to harass the Hoover administration.\textsuperscript{67}

The Rules Committee from 1933 to 1937

The first Congress under the Roosevelt administration met on March 9, 1933, in the midst of the banking crisis and continued until June 16. During the period of the "100 days," emergency bills were put through the House Rules Committee and the Congress in rapid succession. This included such controversial measures as the Emergency Banking Act, the National Industrial Recovery Act, the Tennessee Valley Authority, etc. The urgency shown by the Committee on Rules and the Congress in adopting these measures can be summed up by former Rules Committee Chairman Bertrand Snell, when he said, "The House is burning down, and the President of the United States says, this is the way to put it out."\textsuperscript{68}

The Democrats had large majorities in both Houses, but the quick success of the President’s legislation was due to the fact that under "gag" rules, which forbade amendments, severe limitations were put on debate.\textsuperscript{69} Thus in the Seventy-third Congress (1933-34) all economy measures came to the floor under "closed rules."

\textsuperscript{67} Editorial Research Reports, p. 874.

\textsuperscript{68} Galloway, History of the House of Representatives, p. 260.

\textsuperscript{69} Editorial Research Reports, p. 874
Mr. Bankhead of Alabama justified this procedure by saying that "the Committee on Rules is the political and policy vehicle of the House of Representatives to effectuate the party program and party policy." 50

At the opening of the Second Session of the Seventy-third Congress, when there were signs of revolt against the drastic cuts in veterans' benefits and government salaries that had been made in the Economy Act of 1933, the Rules Committee brought forth a rule of unparalleled severity. It provided that there should be no amendments to this bill and no amendments to any appropriations during the remainder of the session that would conflict with the economy program of 1933. The Speaker, Mr. Lilvis Rainey, Democrat from Alabama, interpreted this rule as also prohibiting a motion to reconsider the bill with restrictions to change any of its provisions. 51

Majority Leader William Bankhead, Democrat from Alabama, made the intention of the Democratic leadership very clear. He said: "The purpose is to have the House deliberately determine for today and hereafter during the remainder of the session whether they are going to follow the President's recommendation or not." 52

Minority Leader M. N. Small replied:

I have never been opposed to special rules, but I always considered there was a responsibility on the Rules Committee

51Editorial Research Reports, pp. 874-75.
52Ibid.
to be fairly fair with the House. I say without hesitation and I do not think that anyone on the majority side will deny the statement that this is the most vicious, most far-reaching, special rule that has ever been brought to the floor of the American Congress. If any man can show me where any majority ever dared bring in a rule that not only hog-tied and prohibited the members from expressing themselves on the legislation in hand, but even extended through the entire Congress, I want him to tell me where it was done. Of course I know why you are doing it. You think it will be easier to hog-tie our men today than it will be in five months from today.53

The committee's rule was adopted by a vote of 19½ to 192, with all Republicans, eight-four Democrats, and five Farmer-Laborites, voting against the proposal.54

The House later got an opportunity to vote on liberalising the economy program in connection with Senate amendments to the Independent Offices bill. Later the House joined with the Senate in voting to override a veto of the bill, giving President Roosevelt his first defeat at the hands of Congress.55

During both the First and Second New Deal Congresses, the Rules Committee employed its power not only to assist and safeguard administration measures, but also to obstruct a series of bonus bills, a mandatory thirty-hour work-week bill, and various other measures opposed by the White House.56

53Congressional Record, Seventy-Fourth Congress, First Session, p. 485.
54Editorial Research Reports, p. 875.
55Ibid.
56Ibid.
The two other committees that were created were the Banking and the
Ways and Means Committee and a work load that it was capable of handling.

Ways and Means Committee, with the addition of three other committees, the
one very important rule that was established during the
House of Representatives the House of the Seventy-Ninth Congress (1935-36), the Ways and
Mean Committee. The House of the Seventy-Ninth Congress (1935-36) was an
invention of the House Leadership to control legislation
The record led House Leadership to conclude that the "rules com-
but one rule was adopted by the Congress during this period,
justified the appearance of the need for action in those times. The House Leadership
session and create during the second session. The House Leadership
the vote to accept or reject the special rules reported by the com-
very crucial test of party loyalty took place on
The role of the Rules Committee was explained to the House by its Chairman, Representative John O'Connor, Democrat from New York, when he said:

To some of you new members, I might state in advance that the Rules Committee is an arm of the leadership in the House. It is sometimes called an "arm" of the administration in power. Some people have also referred to it as the political committee or the committee which shapes or brings before the House the policies of the leadership of the House and the President.61

It is interesting to note that the Rules Committee was then regarded as the agent of both the House majority leadership and the administration. Doubtless it was with a view to strengthening party responsibility, as well as to protecting members from the pressures of organized interest groups, that the Discharge Rule was again amended in 1935, increasing the number of signatures to 218.62

The Discharge Rule was adopted during the Cannon revolution. It could force the Rules Committee to send a bill to the floor by getting a certain number of members to sign a petition releasing the bill.63 The Discharge Rule had been changed in 1924 to require 150 signatures to the petition.64

Thus, in 1935, with the additional signatures required on a Discharge Petition, the Rules Committee had even greater control over

61Congressional Record, Seventy-Fourth Congress, First Session, p. 13.
64Galloway, History of the House of Representatives, p. 144.
legislative procedure. Although provisions had been made to get stalled legislation out of the Committee on Rules, it must be pointed out that the Discharge Petition has worked only twice since its birth in 1910. The reason that it is not used more is the fact that it offends the House's love for orderly procedure. This has led many of the House members to have never signed a Discharge Petition, no matter how much they approved of the legislation involved.65

Thus the history of the Rules Committee in the 1920's and the early 1930's can be summed up by saying that the Rules Committee was the agent of the wishes of the majority party.

CHAPTER VI

THE RULES COMMITTEE AS THE CHIEF OBSTRUCTIVE AGENT FOR THE CONSERVATIVE COALITION

Beginning in 1937 the Rules Committee took on a different function in regard to the administration's program. The Rules Committee did not act any longer as the "party and policy" vehicle of the majority party, but became independent in the House under the control of a coalition of Southern Democrats and North Central Republicans.

The Role of the Southern Democrats from 1920 to 1937

In the 1920's the Southern Democrats were almost the only Democrats in the House. In 1921, for example, ninety-nine out of the House's 131 Democrats came from the South. In 1929 the Southern Democrats numbered 101 of the 190 Democrats in the House. Not only did they outnumber the non-Southern Democrats, but they also outranked them in seniority. Of the fourteen most important House committees in 1929, the ranking Democrat on no less than twelve of these committees came from the South. This gave the Southerners a tremendous influence in the House.1

These Southerners gave Franklin Roosevelt his earliest support. They helped nominate and elect him President in 1932. They also voted

for his bills in his first year as President. Many of these Southerners, like conservative John Rankin, Democrat of Mississippi, would boast of the earlier New Deal measures. Many of them, however, soon became upset over Roosevelt's domestic policy, his courting of the urban voter, labor unions, and minority blocs.2

The Reasons for the Southern Democrats

Break with Roosevelt

The actual break with the administration did not come until 1937, when the administration tried to enlarge the Supreme Court and also increase the minimum wage. In August, 1937, the Rules Committee voted ten to four against granting a rule for floor consideration of the wage-hour bill, which had passed the Senate in July by a two-to-one vote. Administration floor leaders used the Discharge Petition to get the measure before the House. In the end, the bill was sent back to the Labor Committee.3 The Rules Committee had made its first blow on behalf of the conservative coalition.

The leaders of the Democrats in the House, Speaker William Bankhead, and Floor Leader Sam Rayburn, Democrat from Texas, lost control of many votes in the defection of the Southerners. From 1937 on, this coalition would attempt to wreck the program of Roosevelt and Truman.

2Ibid.

3Editorial Research Reports, p. 876.
The coalition was formed around two men, Joseph Martin, Republican leader in the House, and Eugene Cox, leader of the Southern Democrats. Martin, writing in his autobiography about Cox, commented:

Cox was the real leader of the Southerners. He was a good speaker and wielded considerable influence. He and I came to Congress in 1925 and we became good friends when we were on the Rules Committee. After I was chosen Republican leader, he and I were the principal points of contact between the Southern Democrats and Northern Republicans.4

On the committee and destined to play a large role in the future were some of Cox's lieutenants: Martin Dyes of Texas, Howard Smith of Virginia, Bayard Clark of North Carolina, and William Driver of Arkansas.5

In 1938 a rule for the wage-hour bill was again refused by a vote of eight to six.6 This bill was opposed by the Southerners because of the forty-cent minimum wage that was to be given. Great pressure had been put on the Southerners from Southern textile and lumber manufacturers.7 Again this measure was brought to the floor of the House via the Discharge Petition. This time the House passed the bill by a vote of 314 to 77.8


6Editorial Research Reports, p. 876.

7Time, February 10, 1961, p. 11.

8Editorial Research Reports, p. 876.
Because of the opposition of John O'Connor, a Democrat from New York, Chairman of the Rules Committee, to this measure, Roosevelt succeeded in getting him purged in September by his New York constituency. Roosevelt, using his influence to support O'Connor's challenger, removed the Chairman of the Rules Committee. These moves by Roosevelt, plus the fact of his attempts to purge certain Southern leaders in the primary election of 1936, made the coalition all the more willing to join together.

The Conservative Coalition Dominates the Committee

The purging of O'Connor gave the chairmanship of the committee in the next Congress to an ardent New Dealer, Representative Adolph Sabath of Illinois. This move, however, did not alter the position of the conservative coalition in any way. On many occasions Sabath was more than once embarrassed by the action of his committee, at times having to speak for them, but in no way agreeing with the proposals of the majority of his committee.

It must be pointed out that the Rules Committee did not block all of the measures advocated by the administration. It concentrated

9Ibid.
10Ibid.
its fire on domestic legislation particularly concerned with labor and welfare.12

As the years passed, the Rules Committee was the spokesman of a bi-partisan majority or minority, asserting a power independent of party and almost without responsibility to any political institution.13

During the Seventy-sixth Congress (1939-40), the Rules Committee opposed the majority leadership in the House, not by denying major bills to the floor, but by making their admission depend upon its own terms, which were often distasteful to the leadership.14

It is interesting to note that during the Seventy-sixth Congress (1939-40) the Democratic party in the House of Representatives held two party caucuses to deal with the problem presented by coalition control of legislative action. At the first meeting held on February 11, 1939, the Democratic leaders, including Speaker Bankhead, Floor Leader Rayburn, Chairman of the Caucus McCormick, treated the problem as one of absenteeism rather than a split in the party. It urged members to co-operate with the President and threatened, if necessary, "to crack the whip" to compel Democrat members to attend


these sessions. When these efforts failed, a second caucus was held on July 28, 1939, at which time a resolution was adopted which censured the rebellious Democrats, who had not supported the Roosevelt administration.

It was also during this time that the House Committee on Rules issued a rule to embarrass the administration. It authorized an investigation of the National Labor Relations Board. This was the first, but certainly not the last of the investigations, authorized by the Committee on Rules to embarrass the administration. This power of the committee could be used both for sound and logical purposes or mainly to embarrass the President.

As we have explained before, the coalition did not function on every vote in the House Rules Committee and on the floor of the House, but it did join forces in a solid body on economic measures.

Martin, in telling how the coalition functioned, cited the general strategy he used. He would ask Cox in an informal way to see if he and John Rankin could not get him some votes against a certain measure that was distasteful to both the Republicans and the Southern Democrats. According to Martin, both sides would agree on the action.

15Ibid., p. 149.


17Editorial Research Reports, p. 876.

18MacNeil, op. cit., p. 283.
to be taken, and then they would let the Southern Democrats make the speeches and amendments. The reason for this, as Martin explained, was to get wavering Democrats to vote for a measure that was sponsored by the Democrats.19

During the early war years (1941-42) the split in the Democratic party was partly smoothed over as the legislature concentrated on defense and war legislation, while the Rules Committee for the most part co-operated with the President's and Majority Leader's desires.20

During the Seventy-eighth Congress (1943-44), however, when the party division in the House was very close, the bi-partisan coalition frequently succeeded in controlling the fate of legislation. Much of their success was due to the fact that they had the advantage of control of the House Rules Committee.21

The power to force a committee to amend its bill to which the Rules Committee would agree was in evidence in this session. In one instance, a rule that would have made it in order to consider a price control bill, which had been rejected by the Banking Committee, and had never been reported to the House, was forced to a showdown vote on the floor by the Rules Committee, because it had been sent to the Rules Committee, and they liked it.22

19Martin, op. cit., p. 85.
20Galloway, op. cit., p. 148.
22Galloway, op. cit., p. 146.
The Speaker, Representative Rayburn, denounced the Rules Committee from the floor and asked that the offending provision of the bill be deleted. Mr. Rayburn said, "The Rules Committee was never set up as a legislative committee, and I do not want to see the Committee on Rules take away the rights and privileges of other committees."23

Representative John Cochran, Democrat from Missouri, complained:

The Rules Committee requires a legislative committee to either strike out certain provisions of a bill or to agree to certain amendments before the rule will be granted. In other words, it has set itself up as a superduper committee assuming control over various committees of the House. I will say that if this practice continues, there will be a revolt.24

During the Seventy-ninth Congress (1945-46) the coalition consolidated its power in the control of the legislative process in the House. Lapham summed up the statement by saying that in 1945 the coalition on the Rules Committee had become so independent that they seemed responsible to no one.25

While the Committee on Rules failed to function during the decade as the instrument of majority party government, nevertheless, it did apparently reflect majority sentiment in the House, which may or may not have reflected majority sentiment in the country. The interesting question this raises is whether the House Committee on Rules

23Congressional Record, Seventy-eighth Congress, Second Session, p. 5471.
24Ibid., pp. 5469-70.
should function as the agent of the majority party, so as to enable
the party to carry out its platform pledges to the American people, or
as the instrument of a bi-partisan coalition, which can control a ma-
jority of votes in the House.26

The Conservative Coalition's Control Becomes Even
Stronger After the Second World War

The consolidation of the coalition both in Congress and in the
Rules Committee, especially after the war, led some observers to specu-
late that our political parties needed revamping. Arthur Krock of the
New York Times said:

Until the major political parties realign, and two parties
are formed in each of which there is a common set of political
views and principles, these occasional combinations will ap-
pear in the House. There is both oil and water in the bottle
that bears the label "Democrat" and attempts to mix them will
be less and less successful.27

It must be pointed out that the Rules Committee, although block-
ing many bills, did let quite a few come to the House for a vote. Be-
tween 1935 and 1946 Sam Rayburn, serving both in the capacity as Floor
Leader and as Speaker, used his influence and personality both on the
Republican members and especially on Eugene Cox, leader of the Southern
conservatives. Cox and Rayburn, although at odds politically, were
great friends. He frequently called in the Speaker's office to discuss

26Galloway, op. cit., p. 149.
legislation. When Rayburn needed help in getting a bill through the Rules Committee, he simply asked Cox for help, even though Cox opposed the bill. "Do you really need this?" Cox would ask Rayburn. When Rayburn said he did, Cox, if he could, would arrange for the bill to be cleared by the Rules Committee for a vote on the House floor.

Why did Cox help Rayburn? This was answered by Rayburn in an interview with Neil MacNeil of Time magazine. "He was an ornery fellow," said Rayburn. He continued, "He loved me; one time a newspaper reporter wrote a column about me that Cox didn't like, and Coxcornered the reporter and knocked him down."

The Rules Committee had proved very troublesome for Franklin Roosevelt. It was even more troublesome for Harry Truman. The composition of the Rules Committee in 1945 and 1946 (see Table 3) consisted of four members from the South, two from Illinois, and one each from New York, Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. This composition would look twice at any liberal legislation that was to be passed on by the committee.

President Truman met his first rebuff at the hands of the Rules Committee in May, 1945, when the committee refused clearance of a bill to establish a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission. In a

28MacNeil, op. cit., p. 106.
29Editorial Research Reports, p. 865.
TABLE 3

PARTY COMPOSITION OF THE RULES COMMITTEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congress</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Southern Democrats</th>
<th>Northern Democrats</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75th</td>
<td>1937-38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1941-42</td>
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<tr>
<td>78th</td>
<td>1943-44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79th</td>
<td>1945-46</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

public letter Truman asked the Rules Committee to adopt a rule permitting this legislation to be voted upon by members of the House as soon as possible. When the matter was brought up again, the vote was deadlocked at six to six. This deadlock continued to the termination of that session of Congress.31

In a radio fireside chat on January 3, 1946, the President said that the fair employment practices bill was being blocked by a "small handful of Congressmen in the Rules Committee, notwithstanding the fact that the overwhelming mass of our citizens favor this legislation and want their Congressman to vote on it."32

Advocates of the Fair Employment Practices Commission denounced the Rules Committee of the House of Representatives as being a bottleneck to progressive legislation. They said it was under the control of reactionary Southerners.33 The Rules Committee took no further action on the Fair Employment Practices Commission that session.

Administration appeals for a special rule that would send a bill increasing the minimum wage from forty cents to sixty-five cents received no better response.34

Mr. Truman battled the Rules Committee constantly. In 1946 he helped oppose successfully a Missouri member of the Rules Committee in

31 Editorial Research Reports, p. 876.
32 Ibid.
33 Galloway, Congress at the Crossroads, p. 114.
34 Editorial Research Reports, p. 877.
that state's Democratic primary. Representative Slaughter, member of the Rules Committee, was attacked on many occasions by Mr. Truman. The line of attack centered around his votes on the Rules Committee.35

The most glaring example of rebuff to Mr. Truman came in January, 1946, when the Rules Committee took the extraordinary step of substituting the Francis Case (Republican, South Dakota) labor relations bill for a bill which had been framed by the House Labor Committee. Instead of giving clearance to the bill from the Labor Committee, the Rules Committee reported a special rule for the Case bill, which had been introduced only two days before and had never been considered by the Labor Committee.36 The bill passed the House by a vote of 258 to 114.37

Action, such as this, caused a great deal of grumbling over the power of the Rules Committee. Chairman Sabath condemned the action of his committee as arbitrary and in violation of all the precedents in the House.38

Action such as this caused many members of Congress to criticize such action as the arbitrary use of power.39 Another member commented that the power of the Rules Committee was being used most of the time

35Ibid.

36Ibid.

37Congressional Record, Seventh-ninth Congress, Second Session, pp. 661-69.

38Editorial Research Reports, p. 877.

to block majority legislation.\textsuperscript{40}

Criticism of this committee and others brought about a change in the rules of the House in 1946. This act, the Legislative Reorganization Act, was a bi-partisan measure passed in the Senate and the House. The chief sponsors of this act were Congressmen Mike Monroney, Democrat, and Senator Robert LaFollette, Republican, Wisconsin. Representative Gerter, appearing before the Joint Committee, said that the Rules Committee should be required to grant requests for special orders on bills favorably reported by legislative committees within a specified amount of time.\textsuperscript{41}

The LaFollette-Monroney Committee considered all of the various proposals to change the Rules Committee, but in its final report there was no change in the committee, mainly due to the lack of agreement on what should be done.\textsuperscript{42}

The bi-partisan measure in both the House and the Senate made needed changes in the functional operations of Congress. Standing committees were reduced from forty-eight to nineteen in the House of Representatives. It frowned on the creation of special committees, clarified the duties of the standing committees, regularized the keeping of committee procedure, and banned certain private bills, to ease the work

\textsuperscript{40}Wayne Morse, "D-Day on Capitol Hill," \textit{Colliers}, June 15, 1946, p. 47.

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., p. 880.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., p. 881.
load of some of the members of the House.43 From 1937 to 1946 the Rules Committee had functioned as the chief agent of the conservative coalition in the House of Representatives. By 1946, there were many people who believed that the Committee on Rules with power had to be changed, because it was acting in an arbitrary role.

CHAPTER VII


In the election of 1946 the Republicans captured the House of Representatives and organised it along party lines. The Chairman of the Rules Committee was Leo Allen of Illinois. Serving with him on this committee were Republicans Clarence Brown of Ohio, James Wadsworth of New York, Forest Harnes of Indiana, Edgar Chennoweth of Colorado, Ross Rigley of Oklahoma, Christian Harter of Massachusetts, and Robert Rich of Pennsylvania. On the minority side the members were Adolph Sabath of Illinois, Eugene Cox of Georgia, Howard Smith of Virginia, and Bayard Clark of North Carolina. None of these men came from the West, North Central, East South Central, nor the Pacific Coast. Only Sabath came from an urban district. Two other members' districts, Harter and Wadsworth, took in parts of cities. The other men came from totally rural districts. These men in general represented conservative viewpoints; therefore they got along very well with Speaker of the House Joe Martin, who shared these same views.  

1 Editorial Research Reports, p. 867.

2 Ibid.

The Rules Committee in the Eightieth Congress (1947-48)

The Rules Committee during the Eightieth Congress returned to its traditional role as the agent of the majority party. In sharp contrast to its conduct during the preceding decade, the committee now co-operated with the party leaders to promote the majority party's program and to translate its campaign pledges into legislative action. ¹

Just as the Democrats had relied on closed rules to avoid internal dissension and expedite passage of their measures, so now in the Eightieth Congress the Republicans did likewise. The Rules Committee reported nine closed rules during the two years, five in the first session and four in the second. ⁵

The committee made frequent use of the rule waiving points of order on appropriations bill in order to clear the way for the elimination of "wasteful" governmental functions and bureaus. It also tabled rules for the consideration of bills for American membership in the World Health Organization and for selective service, not approving these measures until they were forced by the Republican leaders. ⁶

Other bills, including the Universal Military Training bill and the O'Mahoney-Kefauver bill, prohibiting the purchase of assets of


⁵Ibid.

⁶Editorial Research Reports, pp. 877-78.
come before the House only on the rarest of House Committee meetings. Members of the House were angry at the refusal of the House Committee to act on the proposal of the administration, to have read it in 1976. Many of the members of the House were angry at the refusal of the House Committee to act on the proposal of the administration, and the same outlook was held in the House of Representatives, but they did not control the House of Representatives. The Democrats by winning the election of 1976 obtained the right to make the House Committee from one of their party to the majority party to which the House Committee would be appointed. The next House Committee would be appointed by the majority party.
believed that there should be some reforms of the Rules Committee so a small minority could not block the program of the majority. 9

Representative Sabath and Representative Forand suggested that the Rules Committee be enlarged to fifteen members, and the additional members be men who would support the program of President Truman. This plan was not favored by many in the administration; so it was dropped. 10

At the opening of Congress on January 3, 1949, those that favored a change in the House rules won a vote over the coalition by a vote of 275 to 142. 11 Then the House adopted the so-called Twenty-one-Day Rule. Under this rule the chairman of a legislative committee which had favorably reported a bill could call it up for House consideration, if the Rules Committee reported adversely on it or failed to give it a "green light" to the House within twenty-one days. 12

It must be pointed out that although the Twenty-one-Day Rule was in effect, it did not necessarily weaken the strength of the coalition on the House Rules Committee. In June of 1949 Representative Sabath, then eighty-three years of age, wanted to lessen the committee's stanglehold on legislation. As usual, Gene Cox, now sixty-nine years old, saw no need for it. Chairman Sabath had succeeded in

9George Galloway, "Leadership in the House of Representatives," Western Political Quarterly, XII (June, 1959), 440.

10Editorial Research Reports, p. 869.


12Ibid.
committee members but Garrison's drum daubed off to denote medical aid.

were adjourned room and put him on the lastber couch. All the
members raised to save him and pour of them carried him to the
quarter.

was turned up shortening. My God, I've killed him. Committee

expressing onto the carpeted floor at Cox's feet.

Sabbath morning I was too late, but I'm glad that the
i had to leave. I'm glad that I had to leave.

No one, even if the question arose. Sabbath beared Cox not to be in

- it's imposible so that any committee member could call up Mr. Cox

on the committee, wanted to vote on a resolution to change the

this was not the last time the two arbitraters would have to

the benefit of the committee.

gettered, and sometimes later they were posted elsewhere and sent a letter and right to the floor of the Committee. Then they were

constating the passage to fall to the floor. Sabbath beared Cox, resolved,

they was the top. "You're, " shouted Cox, ontact of the Guardian's nose.

the feet, knowing that a larger debateation was necessary, when the Guardian

and the socialistit tendency instated. The very gentle debat was on

then made onto the floor. Cox demanded more time in debate to point

getting a houseing bill past the committee's anti-socialistation could.
Brown, still puffing from exertion, stood watch over the prostrate chairman. Sabath opened one eye and looked around the room. "Why you old rascal!" roared Brown. "There's nothing wrong with you."

"Well," said Sabath, "Mr. Cox didn't get his resolution, did he?"

The Twenty-one-Day Rule remained in effect throughout the Eighty-first Congress (1949-50), despite a determined effort to repeal it early in the Second Session. A coalition led by Congressman Cox of Georgia was defeated on January 20, 1950, by a vote of 236 to 183. Eighty-five Southern Democrats voted for the Cox repeal, while sixty-four Republicans sided with the administration against their own leadership. 15

During this session of Congress, the Twenty-one-Day Rule brought the anti-poll tax bill to the House for a successful vote and forced action on the minimum wage and housing bills. It also enabled the House to vote for other important legislation. Altogether during this Congress, eight measures were brought to the House under the Twenty-one-Day Rule. Because of this rule, the Committee on Rules was forced to bring other measures to the floor for a vote. 16

Although the Twenty-one-Day Rule stayed in effect throughout the Eighty-first Congress (1949-50), there was an increasing volume

14MacNeil, op. cit., p. 103.


of attack on the measure. In 1950 the ranking Republican on the
Rules Committee, Leo Allen of Illinois said:

If we do not rescind the Twenty-one-Day Rule we will go
into the red over 10 billion dollars. The issue is whether
or not the entire Truman socialistic-program will succeed or
be defeated. I refer especially to the socializing-of medi-
cine and the socialistic Brannan plan and about ten others. 17

Another criticism of the Twenty-one-Day Rule was that it by-
passed the Committee on Rules. This was in contrast to the love of
orderly procedure that was observed in the House. 18 Others defended
the plan by saying this measure gave the Rules Committee a leading
function in the formation of the administration's policy. 19 Republi-
cans' gains in the election of 1950 helped those that favored the
abolition of the Twenty-one-Day Rule. 20

In the election in January of 1951, the Cox resolution, re-
sinding the Twenty-one-Day Rule, passed by a vote of 247 to 149. 21

The make-up in the House Rules Committee was not especially
representative, either of the membership or of the country. The
twelve members on the committee had served an average of eight terms
each. The Chairman, Sabath, had served ten terms or longer. Three

17Pringle, op. cit., p. 129.

18Lloyd Riddick, "The Eighty-first Congress, First and Second
Session," Western Political Quarterly, IV (March, 1951), 59.


20James Robinson, "The Role of the Rules Committee in Analyzing
the Program of the United States House of Representatives," Western
Political Quarterly, XIII (September, 1959), 860.

21George B. Galloway, The Legislative Process in Congress (New
of its members came from west of the Mississippi River. The Committee had four members from the North Central States, four from the South, two from the Middle Atlantic States, and two from the Pacific area.22

Although opposed by Labor, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and other urban groups, most big-city Congressmen voted in favor of rescinding the rule. Sixty-four Republicans voted with the administration. Eighty-three Southern Democrats went against the administration. This is interesting because in the original vote in 1949, only thirty-five Southern Democrats had gone against the President, and only forty-nine Republicans had supported the Twenty-one-Day Rule. Martin and Rayburn said the vote showed the unfavorable attitude of the House toward Mr. Truman's program.23

The reasons for the defeat of the Twenty-one-Day Rule were given to be lack of orderly procedure under the rule and the Rules Committee should block bad legislation. The main reason the Twenty-one-Day Rule was killed was because of the heavy flood of bills that were coming onto the floor, forcing the House to try to take care of more business than it was capable of handling.24

Two opposing principles were again involved in the vote on the Rules Committee. It was whether legislative action should be controlled by a majority of the entire House, or the majority party should control

22Ibid.
Committee Report to the House of Representatives, p. 66

The first reason for the passage of the Ten­-Day Rule in 1796 was because of the House's desire to be efficient. Before the adoption of the Ten­Day Rule, the Speaker of the House had to approve every amendment to legislation. This delay often prolonged legislative debates. The Ten­Day Rule was thus created to expedite the legislative process. The committee believed that by limiting the number of days a bill could be debated, they could ensure that legislation was passed in a timely manner.

There were many reasons for a conference to be granted to overcome the Ten­Day Rule. One of the major reasons was the need to resolve conflicts between the House and the Senate. The Ten­Day Rule was intended to prevent the House from delaying legislation unnecessarily. However, the committee felt that by granting conferences, they were able to address these issues more effectively. The committee believed that granting conferences was a necessary step in the legislative process.

There is one bit of irony that must be explained here. The

Though the nation's agents...
In both foreign and domestic affairs the majority party official leadership was often at odds with the majority of members on the Rules Committee. 27

On one occasion in 1951 former Rules Chairman Snell referred to the committee as a "coalition of six or more members, who might arrogate unto themselves the power to determine what vital legislation should or should not receive consideration by this legislative body." 28

The Rules Committee During the Eisenhower Administration

The Republican Presidential and Congressional victories in 1952 once again put the Rules Committee in the position of an agent of the majority party. Joseph Martin, Speaker of the House, got along fine with the committee, as it represented a moderate conservative view—a view that was prevalent in the Eisenhower administration. 29

An example of this type of thinking can be seen by the statement of Charles Halleck, a Republican from Indiana, concerning the Rules Committee. He said that the function of the committee was to "block, un-wise, ill-timed, socialistic measures." 30

29 Meek, op. cit., pp. 104-5.
The composition of the Committee in 1953 reflected the rural conservative pattern. Of the eight Republicans and four Democrats, four were from the South, three from the northeast, three from the Middle West, and one each from the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast states.31

The close working relationship between the Rules Committee and the Republican leadership can be seen on many occasions. For example, every Monday morning at breakfast a meeting was held between Leo Allen, Chairman of the Rules Committee, and party leaders, Martin, Halleck, and Arends.32

There was, however, some occasional bitterness. The Rules Committee under Allen at one-time bottled up a pet tax-reduction bill of Uncle Dan Reed, Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means. Reed bombarded Allen with protests on how the Committee on Rules had bottled up his bill. Allen replied that his committee was to be guided by Speaker Martin. Reed vowed that he would force the bill from the committee. The old New Yorker took his fight to the floor, but in vain. Later, he was to ask the House what grievance he had caused the members to be treated in such a manner. Later in the session, when the embittered Reed refused to let his own committee pass on a tax extension needed to balance the budget, the Rules Committee, in a dramatic move,


32Pringle, op. cit., p. 23.
took the administration bill out of the Ways and Means Committee.

With an open fight about to break out, a compromise was reached by Speaker Martin.33

During the two years in which the Republicans were in the majority in the Eisenhower administration, the relationship between the House Committee on Rules and the administration was very friendly.34 This is not to say that Mr. Eisenhower had no battles with the Rules Committee. In 1954, much to the dismay of the administration, the Rules Committee held back a rule for lending authority for the Small Business Administration, federal funds for polio vaccination, and others. The administration had to force these bills out.35 Once a rift occurred between President Eisenhower and Rules Committee Chairman Leo Allen. The dispute was over a tax amendment placed by the Rules Committee on a pet Eisenhower bill. Although the Allen amendment was not liked by Mr. Eisenhower, he accepted it with the statement that "you had to take a little castor oil along with the sweetening."36

At the end of the Republican controlled Congress the Rules Committee had continued functioning in the same way as it had under previous Democratic Congresses, but the chief difference was the fact that the

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., pp. 22-23.
36 Pringle, loc. cit.
leadership of the Republicans had views similar to those held by the
members of the Committee on Rules.

At this time it would be, perhaps, wise to take into account
how the Rules Committee had functioned on certain measures from the
Seventy-sixth Congress to the Eighty-fourth Congress. As I have pointed
out, the committee has tremendous power in deciding what measures may,
or may not be considered for debate. Perhaps, the most powerful weapon
the Rules Committee has is the power to adopt either closed or open
rules.37

The decision to decide in the committee whether a bill needs to
be passed or not is a very important one. Actually, one-tenth of the
bills considered by the Rules Committee fall into an important category,
taking up around three pages of discussion in the Congressional Record.
More than one-half of these bills are handled by special resolutions
from the Committee on Rules.38

The House Rules Committee on many occasions denies hearings when
there are many bills, or when legislative committees are tardy in their
votes. Nevertheless, in recent years, the committee has denied very
few requests for hearings and most of them have been on minor bills.39

37James Robinson, "The Role of the Rules Committee in Regulating
Debate in the United States House of Representatives," Midwest Journal
of Political Science, V (February, 1961), 69.

38Robinson, "The Role of the Rules Committee in Analyzing the

39Ibid., p. 654.
The tables on the next four pages will give an indication of how the Rules Committee has dealt with several of the matters that I have mentioned.

A brief summary of the tables leads to these conclusions:

1. The number of requests for rules denied after hearings (Table 4) have been very small in number excluding the Eighty-first Congress (1949-50). The Rules Committee has not denied to members of the House the rules which they desire, but only on a very few occasions.

2. That bills reported by the committee but not called up by the leaderships (Table 5) have been scarce. This proves that the Rules Committee's function is generally considered not only to be essential to legislative business, but also that when the Rules Committee gives a favorable rule to a bill, it is one that the entire House is interested in.

3. Table 6 shows that the Rules Committee in the interest of passing legislation has given rules that permitted debate, but not unlimited debate, and also has passed only one closed rule. This record indicates that the Rules Committee rarely issues a rule that does not allow members of the House a chance to express themselves concerning the measure.

4. Table 7 points out the fact that the leadership calls up bills in other ways rather than directly from the House Committee on Rules. This shows that the Rules Committee
### TABLE 4

NUMBER OF REQUESTS FOR RULES DENIED AFTER HEARINGS

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Number</th>
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<td>81st</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1957-58</td>
<td>7</td>
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TABLE 5

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Congress</th>
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<tr>
<td>84th</td>
<td>1955-56</td>
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### TABLE 6

**TYPES OF RULES CALLED UP BY THE LEADERSHIP FROM 1939 TO 1956**

<table>
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<th>Types</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>Two Hour—Open</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Hour—Open</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Hour—Closed</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 7

**BILLS GRANTED FAVORABLE RULES BY THE COMMITTEE BUT CALLED UP BY OTHER MEANS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congress</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76th</td>
<td>1939-40</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77th</td>
<td>1941-42</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>78th</td>
<td>1943-44</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>79th</td>
<td>1945-46</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80th</td>
<td>1947-48</td>
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<td>1951-52</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1953-54</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84th</td>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
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</table>

does not have to be used in every case to get a bill to the floor. For various reasons the leadership in the House believes that these other methods on occasion are more desirable.

As a final note, it should be pointed out that from 1937 to 1956, only nineteen rules of the House Rules Committee were defeated. This generally shows that the majority of the members in the House agreed with the action taken by the Committee on Rules.40

Dr. James Robinson, a student of the legislative procedure in the House Rules Committee, has made several interesting observations concerning the committee.

1. The committee withholds rules from only a few bills each session. Generally from five to nineteen in number.

2. The committee hears all but a small number of requests for hearings in recent years.

3. The House discharges the committee at least once a session.

4. The leadership usually ignores a few rules in each Congress—from one to ten—and schedules some bills without using the rules reported by the Committee on Rules, usually from three to twenty.

5. The House averages defeating one rule each session.41

These facts that have been pointed out by Dr. Robinson leads to several conclusions. The Rules Committee does have the majority of the House's support as it carries out its committee function.

40 Ibid., p. 665.
41 Ibid., p. 669.
They do not block legislation, per se. The members are diligent in their duty, as they conduct a tremendous amount of business in each session.

In 1954 the Democrats captured control of the Congress once again. The Rules Committee took on once again its status as the defender of conservative action. As Eisenhower tried to push through certain measures that would be called liberal, he was aided in his attempt by Speaker of the House, Sam Rayburn. The bills reached the House Committee on Rules, where they ran upon strong opposition. The great majority of these bills were blocked by this committee.42

Mr. Rayburn had the job of trying to get these measures passed through an obstinate committee. This was made even more difficult, because Rayburn's good friend, Eugene Cox, had died, and the leader of the Southern conservatives in the House was Howard Smith of Virginia, Chairman of the Committee on Rules. Sometimes, Rayburn did manage to secure help from his old friend and Republican leader, Joe Martin.43

Speaker Rayburn, although a Democrat, attempted to help President Eisenhower with his moderate measures. This was true of many other Democrats who often helped the liberal Republican push measures through the House. These measures were generally opposed by the conservative wing of the Republican party and by the Southern Democrats led by Howard Smith, Democrat from Virginia.

42Hayes, op. cit., p. 105.
43Time, February 10, 1961, p. 11.
Howard Smith as Rules Committee Chairman

Under Judge Smith the conservative coalition on the Rules Committee tightened its grasp on legislation. One of its pet tricks was to place an amendment on the bill that members of the House could not dare attack; because in attacking the amendment, they would attack some key provision of the bill intertwined in the amendment. This was done on the reciprocal trade bill, federal highway funds, and the minimum wage.\(^{14}\)

Mr. Rayburn offset this conservative majority and tried to get Democrats of liberal leanings on the committee to neutralize the conservatives.\(^{15}\)

This staffing by Rayburn did not change the outlook on the committee to an appreciable degree. In 1956, for example, the committee struck down a housing bill sponsored by Albert Rains, a Democrat from Alabama, and supported by the Speaker. At the time the committee killed the bill, Rains commented that "the bill represents eighteen months' work, and they have killed it in eight minutes without even reading the bill."\(^{16}\)

In rallying support for the bill, a delegation of mayors from almost every major city in the country had come to Washington to lobby for the bill. As it was getting late in the session, pressure was

\(^{14}\)\textit{Nation's Business}, p. 102.

\(^{15}\)\textit{This}, p. 35.

\(^{16}\)\textit{MacNeil, op. cit.}, p. 106.
being put on Chairman Smith to give the bill a favorable report. The mayors went to Smith's office looking for the chairman. Smith could not be found. The mayors and other interested parties combed Washington, trying to find the gentleman from Virginia. Later in the week, Smith turned up, and in mock surprise said, "I did not know that I would be missed so much; I only went down to my farm to look at the hay crop that I was afraid had been damaged by a severe storm."\(^4\)

This type of opposition to vital measures by the Rules Committee was sometimes encouraged by the President. On other bills, supported by Eisenhower, this opposition was discouraged.\(^5\)

With the obstructionist tactics of the Rules Committee, a counterforce to these tactics was developing. The more the committee used its power in an arbitrary manner, the more discussion was held on the possibility of changing the committee. Many members of Congress felt as one distinguished observer felt when he said that, "The Rules Committee had tremendous power."\(^6\)

The years between 1946 and 1958 show the different roles played by the Rules Committee. At times, the committee was the agent of the Republican party. At other times, it opposed the program of Eisenhower. The reason for this was the fact that the Republican party, as the Democrats, had both a liberal and conservative wing, and the Rules Committee

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 104.


was a bastion for conservative forces. If you could sum up the
activities of the Rules Committee during this period in history,
you could use one word—"independent."

It is interesting to note that the power of the Rules Com-
mittee was never changed no matter how equal the political parties
were divided in the House, or whether one party had a heavy edge in
numbers over the minority parties. The reason for this was that most
members resided in safe districts. In these districts, whether Demo-
crat or Republican, they were never challenged seriously by an opponent;
therefore, their vote in the Rules Committee was never watched with
great interest by their constituents. Table 8 will point out the
political division in the House.
TABLE 8

POLITICAL DIVISIONS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FROM THE 75TH TO THE 87TH CONGRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congress</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of Representatives</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<td>1939-40</td>
<td>435</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1941-42</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>267</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1943-44</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>222</td>
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<tr>
<td>79th</td>
<td>1945-46</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1949-50</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1951-52</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>234</td>
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<tr>
<td>84th</td>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>435</td>
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<tr>
<td>85th</td>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>201</td>
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<tr>
<td>86th</td>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>283</td>
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<tr>
<td>87th</td>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>263</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIGHT OVER THE RULES COMMITTEE EXTENSION IN 1961

Throughout this paper I have referred to a coalition of Southern Democrats and Northern Republicans as the conservation coalition. It must be pointed out that in the House of Representatives there was also a bloc of liberals that was forming. From this group of liberals would come the force behind the change that was made in the Rules Committee in 1961. Around 1956 this bloc was being formed around Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota, and it was called "McCarthy's Mavericks."

The Formation and Objectives of the Liberal Group

In 1957, taking a cue from the southern bloc, the liberal bloc issued a manifesto of its own outlining the group's legislative goals. The document was signed by twenty-eight Northern and Western Democrats. Among them were Lee Metcalf of Montana, Stewart Udall of Arizona, Henry Reuss of Wisconsin, and Frank Thompson of New Jersey. Richard Bolling of Missouri stayed somewhat aloof from formal identification with the liberal bloc; but he, as an intimate friend of Sam Rayburn, provided them with close liaison with the Speaker.

After the election of 1958, an election in which the Democrats controlled the House by a two-to-one majority, the new liberal group plotted their strategy. The leader of the group now was Lee Metcalf.
He took the place of McCarthy, who had moved to the Senate. By
January, 1959, the liberals had received feelers from around 170
Democrats in the House. The liberals decided that they would attack
the bastion of the conservative coalition's strength, the House Rules
Committee. ¹

The liberals knew that to work a change in the Rules Committee
they would have to get the approval of Speaker Sam Rayburn. Chet Holi-
field of California was sent to Rayburn. He suggested to Rayburn several
ways to offset the power of the Rules Committee. There were four pro-
posals. The first was for the Democratic caucus to place the Democratic
members on the Committee. The second was to expand the Committee to
fifteen members, adding the Speaker, Majority Leader, and one other
member. The third proposal was that a tie vote would count as an af-
firmative vote. The last proposal was to adopt the old "Twenty-one-
Day Rule." ² To these and other proposals, Rayburn said "no." ³ There
had been other suggested changes in the Rules Committee such as: the
Committee on Rules must report out a bill if it is called up a second
time. ⁴ Another one advanced has been that the Rules Committee must
come up with a rule, if the committee to which the bill had been

¹Neil MacNeil, Forge of Democracy: The House of Representatives
²Congressional Record, Eighty-second Congress, Second Session,
p. 16697.
³MacNeil, op. cit., p. 293.
assigned gave the bill a favorable vote.5

Mr. Sam encountered only moderate difficulty in the 1959 session, mainly because the Democrats were holding their big bills until election year.6 One of the reasons that Mr. Rayburn was having trouble with the Rules Committee was because his old friend Joe Martin had been dumped by the Republicans, and into his place had stepped Charles Halleck, a conservative Republican, not to be influenced by the Speaker.7

By late 1959 the liberal Democrats decided that something more stringent would have to be done if they were to break the conservative hold on the Rules Committee. Working to put this together were Metcalf, Holifield, Udall, Thompson, Roosevelt of California, Hlatnik of Minnesota, and George Rhodes of Pennsylvania. The organization they formed was known as the Democratic Study Group. Metcalf was chosen chairman; Roosevelt, vice-chairman; and a thirty-three man policy committee was appointed. The group selected formal "whips" with the responsibility to keep the members of the Democratic Study Group in line. Metcalf appointed "task forces" to study problems and to plan the Democratic Study Group's over-all strategy on the proposed bills. A staff was headed by William Phillips; a legislative technician. To help pay for the cost of the operation, each of the 100-odd members was charged


7Ibid.
twenty-five dollars a year for dues.

The Rules Committee as Obstructionist in 1960

In 1960 the liberals presented a seven-point program of the session. Included were recommendations for a federal construction bill, a civil rights bill, an increase in minimum wages, and medical care for the aged. Most of these bills had the approval of John McCormick and Speaker Rayburn.⁸

During 1960 the liberals along with Speaker Rayburn tried to get measures passed—such as the Democratic housing bill. This bill, with many other measures, met death in the House Rules Committee.⁹

The post-convention session in August of 1960 increased even greater the hostility toward the Committee on Rules. The Rules Committee had stymied most of the Democratic bills, and Rayburn was in humiliation because of the way he was being treated by the Rules Committee. Ever since he had been in the House, the Rules Committee had been always an obstruction to legislation, and he did not like the arbitrary powers of this committee that made the Speaker have to negotiate and give in, in order to get a few bills passed. At a meeting of the Rules Committee in August, 1960, Ray Madden, Democrat of Indiana, and Thomas O'Neill, Democrat of Massachusetts, tried hard to force

Smith to release all the Democratic bills pending in the committee. Smith refused. "The only legislation I will consider," he said, "is the minimum-wage bill. You can tell your liberal friends that they will get that or nothing. If you try to bring up anything else, I'll adjourn this meeting." Judge Smith and Charles Halleck's friends had turned the short session into a fiasco.

By the end of the summer strategy sessions were being held between Halifield, Thompson, Udall, and Belling to discuss the strategy of taking over the Rules Committee. One of their plans of strategy worked perfectly during the short session. The liberals introduced bills designed to help various pressure groups, only to have them killed in the Committee on Rules. This is what they had hoped for, since these groups became very antagonistic towards the Committee on Rules. Another device was used by Frank Thompson. A card on every representative was prepared by the Democratic Study Group. This card contained all pertinent information about the representative that might be useful. "This," said Thompson, "was an attempt to reach everyone."

On election day John Kennedy and a Democratic majority were elected. The new House had 261 Democrats and 174 Republicans. The Democrats had lost a score of seats from the North, and this made the

10 MacNeil, op. cit., p. 414.
...the meeting was devoted to presenting information for the attack. The meeting was devoted to presenting information for the conference on the motion of the Freeman Committee. Addressing the House, the speaker turned to mention the consistency of the meeting. "This is the House. I have to say that this would represent the conclusion of the meeting. It was a 15-minute discussion that the committee on knives was all right for the traditional caucus in the House began to move to head off the leftist assault.

...to a democratic caucus. Right after the attack, the committee...

Although Democrats on the knives committee had an entirely different position of the House, the meeting was devoted to presenting information for the attack. The meeting was devoted to presenting information for the conference on the motion of the Freeman Committee. Addressing the House, the speaker turned to mention the consistency of the meeting. "This is the House. I have to say that this would represent the conclusion of the meeting. It was a 15-minute discussion that the committee on knives was all right for the leftist assault.

In the knives fight in 1961,...
In the House of Representatives, Mr. Speaker, on November 9, Representative Thome of the House on how they stood

that the representatives polled the members of the House on how they stood

President's seat on the measures of the Democratic leadership. Thome now to pay Beach to order the

House. Those papers were disregarded to members of the House to

Just after designation of the Rules Committee and other committees

which have entered a congressional package under the direction of the

Democratic Party leaders to build their strength.

To the House, Mr. Speaker, by the Rules Committee's present act,

Mr. Speaker, I've stated the Rules Committee's present act.

This was a different form from the former opposition. At

the time, other than the fact that it was voted the Rules Committee

not to involve itself in this. I've heard, if the position of the President was not known

been able to go on the part and I expect we will see who to go in the

decision to reveal at the time the decision of the President. We've

conservative coalition in the fight over the Rules Committee.
The House, except on a roll call vote on the floor of the House, cannot make a motion to adjourn to the next day without the consent of the Speaker. The Speaker, in his discretion, may adjourn the House when the adjournment is necessary to the business of the House.'
...and that many members, men who were very much the house more substantial in this fight that there would be no chance on the floor. The conservatives realized that if they promised that they might succeed their opponents but would lose their power. They realized that it might be possible to work out some type of co-op.

Publican Leader, Mr. Hallock, were not so eminent on their靓州.

- on the question, the southern leader, Representative Swift and the Rep.

Although many on the anti-Rutgers change groups wanted no cooperation.

- Leadership.

and probably would bring about representation on them from the Repubed that they would.

The Public Committee knew that radical action on their part could have the consequences: In the Repubed that Reformed change.

- burn, knowing that they expected to change, or do the house would.

- the Public Committee. Moored carefully, taking the one from Speaker Bay.

- the Repubed. The Repubed Declaration, knowing it needed the change in.

- not enough. It knew the did not have their support; the program was.

- Southern leaders, those men who were the champions of the important house can.

- the program or Mr. Kennard. This was expected. Reid. This was expected. The members would turn away-elected him and

- extreme change in House Rules would turn many away elected him and

- turn Speaker Hughes against their cause. Mr. Hopkins. In turn, many

- in the Public Committee. Right. Another reason for the cautious move

- vote against liberal programs, because of the action of the liberals.

- since the House had many conservatives and moderates in the district, later.

- The liberals could not be too extreme in their demands for a change.
rules, might vote with the opposition. The strategy of the conservatives would be first to work out a compromise; if this failed to play upon the moderates' uneasiness about rules change, then use pressure upon certain members when needed.

On December 30 a meeting of thirty-four Democratic liberals instructed a delegation of three to meet with Rayburn and convince him of the necessity of altering the Rules Committee. It is interesting to note, however, that they adopted no plan to change the committee.20 Also during the latter part of December some Republicans, who shared the view of Curtis, spoke with Charles Halleck about the views of the few liberal Republicans. Halleck rebuffed the group.21

Rayburn invited Smith to call on him in his office. Smith came, and the two old antagonists talked for two hours about the Rules Committee. Rayburn did not suggest that Colmer be purged. Instead, he asked Smith to agree to add three new members to the Rules Committee. Two of the three would be Democrats, and one would be a Southerner. Smith flatly rejected this proposal, because he knew that Rayburn would pick a Southern liberal.22

The next day the Democratic liberals' spokesmen, Blatnik, Thompson, and Holifield met with Speaker Rayburn about the change in the Rules

20 Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports, No. 1, January 6, 1961, p. 4.


22 MacNeil, op. cit., p. 419.
Committee. They reported back to the committee that the Speaker was planning to make a change, but they had given him their word that they would not tell anyone what the plan was.\(^{23}\) The following day Rayburn met with some liberals and party leaders and told them of his decision to purge Colmer. This was quite unlike the Speaker, since he did not operate in this manner. The intimates of Rayburn did not believe that he would follow this line, but he was only letting this out to put pressure on the Southern bloc. This came as a blow to the old members of the House, for it undercut the seniority system. Clarence Cannon, a Democrat from Missouri, Carl Vinson, a Democrat from Georgia, Francis Walters, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, and others rushed to the Speaker's office to denounce this plan. However, Mr. Sam did not change his mind, and for a week waited for Judge Smith to come see him.

In the meantime Wilbur Mills, Democrat from Arkansas, and others were trying to work out some compromise between the two factions. On January 9 the pressure on Smith from the wavering Southern ranks caused him to go to Rayburn with a compromise. The Rules Committee would let five of the major Kennedy bills go through the committee. Rayburn rejected Smith's offer, and he insisted that either Colmer be purged or that the three members be added on. Smith would not yield, "no purgin," "no packin."\(^{24}\) When Smith walked out of the office without reaching a

\(^{23}\) Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports, No. 1, January 6, 1961, p. 4.

\(^{24}\) MacNeil, op. cit., p. 424.
compromise with the Speaker, Carl Vinson, second in command of the Southerners, knew that Rayburn had the votes to purge Colmer if he wanted to. A Southern caucus was held that afternoon, attended by most of the Southern Democrats. They agreed, over Smith's objection, to settle the argument of Rayburn's terms in enlarging the membership on the committee, rather than to endanger the seniority system. A lieutenant of Rayburn had been planted in the caucus as a spy, and he informed Rayburn of the decision. With this assurance at hand he called a special news conference to announce that there would be an attempt to raise the number of the Committee on Rules from twelve to fifteen.25

Up until this time the fight had been only in the Democratic camp, but with the change in Rayburn's tactics it took on the aspects of a messy political fight with the Republicans. Some Republicans saw no sense in this fight because it would align them with Southern Democrats.26 On January 1, Congressman Florence Deyer of New Jersey, John Lindsay of New York, Silvio Conte of Massachusetts, Seymour Halper of New York, William Cahill of New Jersey, and Perkins Bass of New Hampshire issued a statement on the floor of the House that it was not in the best interest of the Republican party to join this coalition. A resolution was sent to the Republican Policy Committee from the Republican Caucus for further study.27 Curtis associates said that Halleck and the Policy

27Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports, No. 4, January 27, 1961, p. 175.
Committee Chairman, John Byrnes of Wisconsin, assured Curtis and his colleagues that their resolution would get full consideration. The Policy Committee, it was charged, failed to hold hearings on the resolution, and on January 19 voted unanimously against it.28

It must also be noted here that another prominent Republican was siding with the Speaker. Denying that his position was one of vengeance against Mr. Halleck, Joe Martin pledged support to the Speaker.29

In the Democratic caucus Rayburn said that he had no malice in his heart and would not purge anyone. Judge Smith followed Rayburn and said that he could count, and he knew that Rayburn had the votes, but he would fight it on the floor. Smith agreed to give the rule to the House, and the Democrats roared their approval as a resolution was passed to give approval to the extension of the Rules Committee.30

On January 19 the House Republican Policy Committee disapproved of the Rayburn plan. However, many Republicans said that this decision did not speak for them. The 174-man GOP caucus on January 23 approved of the Policy Committee's stand, but a few dissents were heard.31

The Republican forces came out of the caucus determined to fight the Speaker. Some members said it reminded them of the court-packing

plan of Roosevelt in 1937. Others said that the plan made the Rules Committee a "rubber stamp" of the Kennedy administration.32

Charles Halleck defended the committee by saying that at one time or another every member of the House was grateful to the Committee on Rules for killing a piece of legislation that was embarrassing to him.33 Judge Smith was adamant, saying that the function of the Rules Committee was to block undesired legislation, and that he was not supposed to be a traffic cop.34

Lobbying against the proposal were the United States Chamber of Commerce, the American Farm Bureau, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Southern States Industrial Council, the National Association of Real Estate Boards, and the National Lumber Manufacturers Association.35 Groups sending mail in backing the Rayburn proposal were the AFL-CIO, the National Education Association, the Civil Rights lobby, the League of Women Voters, and the Association of University Women.36 Other groups backing the extension of the committee were the Americans for Democratic Action, the American Municipal Association,

32MacNeil, op. cit., p. 420.
33Y. S. News and World Report, February 13, 1961, p. 16.
35Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports, No. 4, January 27, 1961, p. 170.
the United States Conference of Mayors, and the National Farmers Union. 37
Both camps along with interested individuals flooded the mails, hoping to influence the votes of their congressmen. 38 Representative Hoffman of Michigan said that he had not seen as much mail on any one issue since the court-packing plan of Roosevelt in 1937. 39

The nation's press was also having its say concerning the Rules Committee fight. Most of the small papers and Southern papers favored Judge Smith. Many big city newspapers favored Rayburn, among these the influential New York Times. 40

It is interesting to note that in all of the concern over the Rules Committee during these months, only one scholarly and non-prejudiced article could be found. 41 This was by Dr. James Robinson.

The Republican leaders had entered the fight, doubting that they had much of a chance to win. This assumption was based on the fact that they believed that Carl Vinson of Georgia would pull too many Southerners to the Rayburn side. When Vinson broke with Smith, Rayburn felt confident that he would win the parliamentary fight. This switch of tactics from purging Colmer to increasing the membership of the committee had an

37 Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports, No. 4, January 27, 1961, p. 172.
39 Congressional Record, Eighty-seventh Congress, First Session, p. 1388.
In the 19th century, John Quincy Adams, a Representative from Massachusetts, would present the case for the self-sufficiency of the United States. He argued that the country was underrepresented in Congress, and that the population distribution in the United States was becoming more uneven. Adams believed that the country needed to develop a plan for unification and representation of all states. He proposed a constitutional amendment to address the issue. The amendment, however, was not adopted by Congress. Adams continued to work on the issue until his death in 1848.
in a different light when he said, "The New Frontier is having trouble with its first round-up."45

On Wednesday, January 25, during the President's News Conference, the President in answering a question on the Rules Committee extension said that the members of the House should have the opportunity of voting on legislative proposals to be presented by his administration, and he hoped that a small group would not prevent them from doing so.46

On Saturday, the 28th, efforts were made between the two sides to work out a compromise. This probably indicated that both sides feared defeat. Attempts were made to reach a settlement. Rayburn said that he would call off his plan if Smith agreed to give all of the Kennedy bills a "green light." This was rejected by Smith, who promised to get five bills of the administration onto the floor. At a special news conference Speaker Rayburn rejected all attempts at a compromise.47

On Friday and Saturday Rayburn's forces decided that if they were to win they must get a lot of help from the administration, including the Vice President, Lyndon Johnson, Robert Kennedy, the Attorney General, and Larry O'Brien, assistant to the President. These men drew up a list of members in the House that they would call and try to

45Neal, op. cit., p. 437.
persuade to go with Rayburn. Three other Cabinet members were used extensively in the fight for Speaker Rayburn's proposal. These were Luther Hodges, Secretary of Commerce, Postmaster General Edward Day, and the Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall. Hodges attempted to use his influence on his Southern friends in Congress. Day called many members and asked them if they needed post offices in their district. He casually mentioned in at least four or five cases that the administration was in favor of House Rule 127. Udall used pressure, especially on Congressmen who wanted reclamation projects for their districts.

O'Brien also let it be known that the President believed that his prestige in the world would receive a tremendous defeat, if he was the loser in the Rules Committee outcome.

As the final showdown appeared, President Kennedy threw his weight into the affair. He made three or four key calls to various members in the House who he hoped to persuade. One of these went to Harold Cooley of North Carolina, the Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee. North Carolina had been treated well in appointments, and the President expected help. However, Cooley voted with Smith and went to the top of Kennedy's black list.

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52 Ibid.
Cracking down on liberal Republicans who had promised to vote for the Rayburn proposal, these insurgents were threatened by the Republican leaders. Charlie Halleck at one point grabbed a Congressman by the coat lapels and shook him. The man staggered away cursing Halleck, but he did switch his vote from Rayburn to Smith. No Republican doubted the measures that Halleck would use against them in the future.53

Democrats were threatened with the prospect of being put on minor committees. One of Rayburn's old friends, Carl Vinson of Georgia, trying to force three freshman congressmen from Georgia in line, reminded them of the committee assignments, as he said: "I'm telling you here and now, if you don't vote with the Speaker, the only committee assignments you will receive will be on the 'Committee for the Disposition of Useless Executive Papers.'"54

Rayburn would call Congressmen into his office or buttonhole them and ask them if they were going to vote with him or "Old Man Smith."55 Governor Terry Sanford of North Carolina called the members of the North Carolina delegation asking them to support Kennedy. However, his pleas were not heeded by these members. Orvil Faubus put pressure on three Arkansas members to go along with the Rayburn proposal.56

On Tuesday, January 31, the galleries in the House were packed.

54Newsweek, February 13, 1961, p. 27.
56Ibid.
The last session of Congress. He also presented the petition of 60
laws from northern and western states, who had started the drive in
the Hepburn forces on the champions of certain liberal
principles, but the peace had fallen on dear ears. He believed the action
of the Standing Legislative Committee. He said he had tried to con-

The position was that he had never held up as many bills as he had.
To him to present his side of the argument. He was certain of his position.
He stood and rapped on the table. He sent that other committee to be
brought up. He was a member of the committee, seemed to day down the
average president, "we are here one, will make them change."
The message, "come out will change when the speaker, without his gun and the
Mike, a man of certain Democrats to put some fear on the House and
representative to stand the extraction of the committee was

one hour 15

operation from the Gallery. TheCube on the measures was intended to
as soon as possible married to the place, as was expected. A standing
th участие had to hold the crowd outside of the door to the chamber.
The Affirmation of the Rules Committee Vote

A tremendous cheer from the Democratic side. 'e ey sang "Zest to Zest" with your members not voting. After the vote, there was tremendous put the victory in the hands of the Republican men. The vote was unanimous and added more to the right 100 votes. However, the left voices were in the lead through the last 200 votes. The Smith-Halluck forces were not needed and good many of the no votes. The vote lasted thirty-five minutes. The speakers in the Gal- The vote lasted thirty-five minutes. The speakers in the Gal-

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The vote lasted thirty-five minutes. The speakers in the Ga
Speaker Rayburn. Others knew that they would have a lot of explaining to do in their districts. All sixty-four Democrats who had gone against the proposal were from the eleven Confederate States, plus one each from Missouri and Oklahoma. Thirty-seven from the South went with the Speaker.63

Speaker Rayburn and his aids displayed pleasure over the victory. The Republicans made light of the victory, due to the closeness of the vote. Different Congressmen told of the various pressures that had been put on them by members of both sides. Certain Congressmen in the South went along with Rayburn, due to the threat on projects in their districts. This cannot be proven, but evidence seems to indicate it.64

It is also true that due to his important role in the fight, Richard Belling of Missouri will be one of the leading figures in the Congress for many years.65

The voting in the Rules struggle is an interesting study. One hundred and ninety-five Democrats voted along with twenty-two Republicans for the increase on the Rules Committee. One hundred and forty Republicans teamed with sixty-four Democrats to vote against the measure. In the ranks of the Southern Democrats, as shown in Table 9, forty-seven

64*Newsmaker*, February 13, 1961, p. 28.
TABLE 9

SOUTHERN REPRESENTATIVES AND HOW THEY VOTED ON THE RULES COMMITTEE EXTENSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Yes Votes</th>
<th>No Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports, No. 4, January 27, 1961, p. 174.*
voted with the Speaker, and sixty-three voted against him.66

The young men that made up the GOP dissenter included five freshmen. Of these dissenters nineteen from New England, three from the Mid-West, and one from the Far West.67

The great importance of the House Rules Committee was emphasized in the battle over extension of committee members in 1961. Looking back on the struggle we can surmise a few things.

1. The power of the Rules Committee was not diminished in any way.

2. The Southern Democrats do not vote as a bloc—48 voted with the liberals and 66 with the conservatives.

3. That both sides agreed to the importance of a Rules Committee and its wise role of killing legislation in committees to avoid the jamming of the Calendar with unimportant bills.

4. The extension of the Rules Committee has made easier passage of liberal legislation.

5. That the members of the Rules Committee including the new liberals, have at times shown that they could and would act independently of majority or minority wishes by killing various measures. This proves once again that you may place


67Ibid.
a man on a committee with the avowed purpose of having him act in a certain way, only to find that when he believes his position to be secure to act as independent as he desires.

6. As long as the Rules Committee is in a position to send or block measures, it will always be the center of political struggle, no matter what the issue and regardless which party is in the minority.

With the victory won, Rayburn informed Wilbur Mills and the members on Mill's Committee on Committees that he wanted Carl Elliott of Alabama and B. J. Sisk of California, both liberals, to be named as the new Democratic members on the Rules Committee. Halleck and the Republican Committee on Committees named William Avery of Kansas, a moderate conservative. The additional three members shifted the balance of power in this crucial committee from conservative to liberal. Where the conservatives had held a balance of power under the six-to-six conservative-liberal stalemate, the newly added members gave the liberals an eight-to-seven dominance on the committee.68

The Rules Committee in 1961 and 1962

The Rules Committee in 1961, without delay, cleared for formal House action many of Kennedy's controversial bills—bills that otherwise would have been buffeted and harassed by the Rules Committee. Among

68MacNeil, op. cit., p. 447.
these were a depressed areas bill, a minimum-wage bill, legislation providing unemployment benefits, and a far-ranging housing bill. Even with these the committee members did not automatically ratify every administration bill. In 1961 the Rules Committee voted to kill several of Kennedy's domestic bills, including the school construction bill. In 1962 the same committee refused to send Kennedy's plan to create a Department of Urban Affairs. Even so, the House supporters of President Kennedy felt that a change in the political attitude of the House Rules Committee was more than worth the effort to get it.69

69Ibid., pp. 447-448.
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The history of the Rules Committee of the House of Representatives has been one of turmoil and controversy. From an insignificant select committee in 1789, the House Rules Committee has risen to a position of extreme importance. There can be no doubt that in 1962 the Committee on Rules is the most powerful committee in the entire House.

Summary

During the period between 1789 and 1835, the Rules Committee was a minor committee in the House of Representatives. At first the committee issued rules that would govern the House. In these early years the rules of the House, not the Committee on Rules, were the focal points on which some controversies would take place.

In the late 1790's the House engaged in a political struggle between the supporters of Jefferson and Hamilton. Political parties in the period between 1800 and 1836 used the rules to their advantage. On many occasions the administration and the House leadership were thwarted by the rules of the House, especially concerning the War of 1812. The rules of the House during this span of years had some effect on public policy. By the use of the filibuster and other dilatory
tactics, the majority in the House was hampered in the conduct of business.

Speaker White's ruling in 1840, which permitted reports by the committee to come to the floor easier, made the committee stronger and gave them more important powers. Two important things that were given to the committee during this period were the addition of the Speaker to the committee and the rules revision in 1860. These helped to enhance the position of the committee in the eyes of the House members. With the addition of the Speaker, the Rules Committee was led by the most powerful official in the House.

At times the rules were used by the majority party, but mainly the rules of the House were a haven for the minority party. By using the filibuster, amendments to the One-hour rule, the "no quorum present" tactic, and others, many measures of the majority were blocked.

The majority party, House leadership, and the administrations of various Presidents, viewed the rules of the House, not the Rules Committee, as an obstruction to orderly business in the House. This is why the various revisions, the One-hour rule, and other measures were pushed so hard.

The effect of the rules on public policy at this time was very great. The examples of the "no quorum present" tactic on the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the long delay in the election of Speaker Pennington, made people feel that the rules of the House should be changed. Generally they favored the revisions of the rules.

In the period from 1860 to 1890 the Rules Committee achieved a
position of power that it has held to this day. The function of the committee changed from one of insignificance, generally used by the majority party, to one of great importance, dominated by the Speaker and the majority party. From 1860 to 1880 with an increase in House business, the Rules Committee played a more important role in the House. The Rules Committee in 1890 had revised the rules, had become a standing committee, was composed of the House's ablest members, and had defeated the filibuster and the "no quorum present" tactic. Even more important because of the Reed rules, the Rules Committee was now no longer just another House committee but the steering committee of the majority party.

By the early 1890's the Rules Committee was attacked for the power it had been given. There was a clamor for a change in the composition of the committee.

Until the Speakership of Reed, the Presidential administrations had been concerned mainly with the cumbersomeness of the House rules and the dilatory acts on the part of the minority. With the revision of 1880 and especially the Reed rules, the Rules Committee was now the steering committee of the administration and the majority party in the House. Although the Republicans were the instigators of the steering committee, the Democrats also used it when they gained control of the House in the 1890's. It is ironic that before the revision of 1880, the Reed rules, the rules of the House, and at times the Rules Committee, had been used to the advantage of the minority, and now only a few years later, it was being used as the chief agent of the majority party.
The majority party was to block measures drafted by the minority and the administration proposed. In addition, the committee was the right arm of the House of Representatives. It gave favorable rules to legislation which the House believed under the Democrats or Republicans, was the right arm of the house committee.

Between 1910 and 1930 the function of the house committee was not the work of the committee on rules. The committee on rules, that had suffered such great change in the organization of speaker, canons was generally applied by the house committee to their utmost advantage. In contrast, the caucus of the house committee, both parties when an attack on the function of the house committee.

The majority party was no longer concerned by the speaker, but the committee from being an agent of the majority party became the speaker did not change the function of the rules committee was not changed once done as a result. The committee, not rather the use of the committee by the speaker. The rules committee, not rather the use of the committee by the speaker. It is important to note that the attack on the minority party from 1930 to 1940 was very important concerning the
the House Committee was in operation at the time that the
some representatives were committed to their committees for the first time
note also the House Committee. There was a moral
were given access to the committees and the House panel read through the House
were not responsible for the consideration of the House during this period

the House Committee. By the 1920s, the House Committee was the most powerful group in
the House was a new development in the House Committee. The House Committee
would act independently of the House Committee. But the House Committee
the fact that it was as it was in the 1920s, the House Committee
160
As the Rules Committee became such a conservative force, the image of the House Committee changed greatly. Under Speaker Cannon, Crisp, Carlisle, and others, the Rules Committee was associated with the movement of legislation and the destruction of out-dated procedure. Now it was synonymous with delay and reactionary thinking, a stigma that is carried today by the committee. In the realm of public policy the Rules Committee was looked upon as the agent of the House to stop all progressive legislation.

From 1946 to 1958 the role played by the Rules Committee was determined by what political party controlled the House and the Presidency. For Mr. Truman and the Democratic-controlled House, the committee played the role of obstructionist. While under Republican control, they served generally as the agent of the majority party. The reason for the obstructionism under the Democrats was that certain Democratic members were in agreement with the Republicans rather than with their own. These members, residing in safe political districts, had worked their way up on the Rules Committee through the seniority system. These reasons made the Committee on Rules come under sharp attack by the Democrats, but rarely scolded by the GOP.

Mr. Truman and the House leadership of the Democrats had no great love for the conservatives on the Rules Committee. In the early years of the Eisenhower Administration there was great accord. However, in the latter years (1957-1960) the committee was opposed at times by the President and the liberal Republicans, but was cheered by the conservatives in the party.
The function of the committee did not change. It served as the committee in charge of keeping an orderly flow of business in the House; killing some bills, and passing others. In the House there was a growing concern that the committee was taking action that it was not supposed to take. Many bills were being killed that a number of legislators desired to come to the floor for a vote. This was the reason for the introduction of the ill-fated Twenty-one day rule. By 1958 the committee had tremendous power; in fact, many members believed that it was using power to judge legislation, rather than giving the entire House that right.

The role played by the Rules Committee in the area of public policy is interesting. It was the Rules Committee that sounded the death knell to many bills during this period. For this they made news. Other bills, just as important, were passed by the Rules Committee. Once again the Rules Committee was being identified with obstructionism.

The function of the Rules Committee between 1958 and 1961 did not change as far as power was concerned, but its composition and outlook changed noticeably.

Beginning in 1958 the Rules Committee became an even stronger bastion for the conservative forces in the House, even though the Democrats held a tremendous majority. Experiencing frustration at the hands of the coalition on the Rules Committee, the House leadership, administration, and some liberal Republicans decided to try to remedy the situation. In a bitter fight the liberals of the House, Democrats and Republicans, with much moderate support, won a bitter battle over the House
conservatives. The number on the committee was changed from twelve to fifteen. The new men gave the House Rules Committee a liberal leaning.

Due to this change, the effect on public policy in the House has been interesting. Measures pushed by the administration and the House leadership would be sent to the floor in a much speedier fashion. Once again the committee was acting as an agent for the majority party.

The Reason for the Power of the Rules Committee

The reason for the accretion of power in the hands of the members of the Rules Committee is due to the uniqueness of the committee. While other committees debate the merits of legislation, the Committee on Rules must decide whether to let a measure go through for a vote. If it decides to let the bill go to the floor of the House, then it must decide what form the bill will take. Will amendments be allowed? How much time shall be given for the debate? It is in reality a little House of Representatives, debating whether or not to let the big House of Representatives decide a matter. The power these men hold by their positions on the committee is enormous. Eight representatives can kill a bill which many members desire.

As I have tried to point out, the Rules Committee has not grasped power by some unlawful measure or by a coup d'etat in the House. The power that has been acquired by this committee has been vested in it by the members of the House. There are not just one or two issues
that face the present day representative, but literally hundreds of
subjects that must be studied. Because of this, the Rules Committee
had to be given this extraordinary power. If the Rules Committee did
not function properly, the House could not carry on its business in an
efficient manner.

In defense of the Rules Committee, I believe that my thesis will
bear out the facts that on the whole the Rules Committee has had mem-
bers who were hard-working, conscientious, and who worked with the good
of the country in mind. The high regard that is held for the members
of this committee can best be seen by the fact that there has not been
any great assault on the function of the Rules Committee, with the ex-
ception of the Twenty-one day rule, which was killed after two years
without great mourning.

The Validity of the Twelve Assumptions

In the introduction of the thesis I pointed out that I would
test twelve assumptions which are widely held by many people. I think
that if I have done nothing else, I proved these assumptions to be
false.

1. The House of Representatives could function without a Com-
mittee on Rules.

2. The Chairman of the House Rules Committee can bottle up
legislation, thereby preventing the members of the House
from voting on the measure.
3. The Rules Committee is synonymous with conservatism.

4. Members of the Rules Committee can block legislation desired by the majority of House members; therefore, they are a little undemocratic group of men bent on stopping progressive legislation.

5. The Rules Committee has never played any important role in the history of the House of Representatives other than to block legislation not wanted by the conservatives in the House.

6. Until 1958 the Rules Committee of the House of Representatives had never made news in the daily papers of the United States.

7. Each year the Rules Committee blocks a tremendous amount of legislation in each session of Congress.

8. The members of the House would like to see the Committee on Rules abolished or seriously weakened, because the individual representative has never been in gratitude to this committee.

9. In the past the Rules Committee may have served a purpose, but in the Atomic Age it is an anachronism.

10. All Presidential administrations have trouble with this committee and desire to see it abolished.

11. The Rules Committee has always been a bastion of strength for the Southern Democrats.
12. In the history of the House of Representatives the Rules Committee has been used more for the advantage of the minority party than in aiding the majority party.

What Should Be the Role of the Rules Committee

The one big question remaining is: What role shall the Rules Committee play in the House? I do not mean whether the power of the Rules Committee be diminished, or added to, but whether it should be independent of the majority and minority parties, or would it be better for it to represent the majority view in Congress, whether it be liberal or conservative. Another role it could play would be that of a brake on the majority party. This would cause the committee to serve as an agent for the minority party. There are many who believe the Rules Committee should serve as the party and policy vehicle of the majority party. The last of these roles is the one I adhere to.

The Rules Committee Should Be the Agent of the Majority Party

What are the reasons for my stand? I believe that the political parties in our country will travel either of two roads. One is toward realignment, the other is a continuation of the fragmentary parties that are in existence today. No matter which way the development takes place, the Rules Committee as the vehicle of the majority party would, I believe, serve a more useful function.

If there is realignment, it will be over the central question
concerning the role of the federal government in the affairs of our country. Already there are three fragments of the Republican party: the conservatives (South, Midwest, a good representation from the Far West, and a few from New England, and some from the Border States); the liberals (located mainly in the Northeast); and a third, not really a group but moderates who vote with one side on one occasion and with the other side at another time.

The Democrats have two wings of their party. These are not as evenly distributed as the Republicans. The liberal group of the Democratic party is much stronger than the conservative wing. Also the conservatives are sectional, confined in the main to the South.

If there is realignment, and this looks very feasible, as a result of the apparent nomination of Senator Goldwater, the Rules Committee in the House can serve as a vehicle for either the liberals or the conservatives, depending upon which one occupies a majority in the House.

If, on the other hand, there is no realignment and there is only a continuation of the present party set up, I believe that it would serve the best interests of our country for the Committee on Rules to be the agent of the majority in the House. I will explain briefly the reasons for my view.

With the exception of 1937 to 1961 the Committee on Rules has traditionally served as the agent of the majority party. It is true that while serving in this capacity there have been some abuses on the part of the committee, but these abuses have been infinitesimal,
The fact is that measures can be brought out of the committee. The refusal of the Committee to claim that these men can block legislation means that legislation can be brought out of the committee and that it is in the hands of the House. I know some would argue that these are matters not to be voted on by the committee members. If that is so, then the question of the representation of the representation process to allow three measures and the representation process to allow three measures, and the major party cease to exist in the hands of the House Committee.

The major party cease to exist as the hands of the House Committee. If that is the case, the major party cease to exist as the hands of the House Committee. And I mean by that a major party cease to exist as the hands of the House Committee.

Let us look at another reason why the rules committee should not be the only one party to the rules committee. If members of the House Committee were degenerate or would not have the committee or the House Committee or the major party cease to exist in the House. Under the committee, the House Committee would have more cohesion and direction in the House. The major party would have more cohesion and direction in the House. The House Committee could become the major party's committee of the House, together with the party's committee of the House, and the major party's committee of the House, together with the party's committee of the House.

If that is what we need to give direction to the major party's committee of the House, rather than the committee's function.
Any one of the parties may very likely be the political)
that is to say the House Committee is used as a tool to look at the platform of the party
is that if the House Committee were run by the majority
and the political platform of the party could be made much more

...before appearing to them on the committee. This was done in 1961
...to counter the committee so that the majority can place enough men
...of the majority party, then there are two courses available. One is to
...the rules of the House members cannot be adequately represented in

It is clear that while the committee system is incorporated in

...have to vote on the measure when they reach the floor
...of the committee, so the minority party would never have a chance to
...power from the minority party. Rather than having all legislation
...a position of power, former the minority group in their party to sup-

This type of House Committee will place the dominant into

...then I would introduce representatives from rural and urban areas. One derivat-

...should represent each geographic section of our country, and

...the House should be some of the most able representatives in the House. These men

The members present the majority on the committee should

and these committee discussions participation and by other methods. However, it is difficult
measure may be born in a platform, only to see it die in the Rules Committee. This, combined with the Rules Committee acting as an unofficial steering committee, would make for tighter disciplined political parties.

I am of the opinion that there has been too much government by stalemate. The fragmented parties have been able to check moves made by another group through many ways and especially in the House Rules Committee.

It is my contention that party responsibility should be stronger, whether this be in a realignment, or, if there is a continuation of the fragmented parties, in letting the dominant wing of either party send its legislation through a Rules Committee, not only acting its usual function but as the unofficial steering committee.

I know that there would be the protest that by placing the Rules Committee in this role, it becomes a "rubber stamp." I do not think this is correct. It is true that the committee has served as the agent of the majority party in the past, but after the deposing of the Speaker, there is no indication that the committee automatically approved of every bill sent up by the administration. These men on the Rules Committee are representatives with constituents. These voting citizens will invariably favor one bill over another, putting pressure on their congressmen for the defeat, or the approval of the measure. The representatives have likes and dislikes concerning all types of legislation. I do not think they will, nor would I want them to, act as a "rubber stamp" for legislation. They should represent the dominant wing of
the fragmented parties, or the new liberal and conservative parties. When a representative becomes placed on a committee, he may act independently some of the time. After he had held this position for a while, he feels he is secure. However, if he acts too independently, he should be replaced by his party. Finally, the committee would not be a "rubber stamp." If the majority of the House would want to kill a bill, they would accomplish this purpose on the floor.

In summation, if the Rules Committee acts as the party and policy vehicle of the majority party, it will give greater cohesion to House leadership, it can serve as an unofficial steering committee, the dominant wing of the majority party will be placed in a position of power, political platforms will become more meaningful; the individual representative will face greater party responsibility; the differences between the parties will be illuminated, thus giving the citizen a clearer distinction in the parties. This type of committee will not allow three representatives to block legislation in the House. Finally, the Rules Committee will not be a "rubber stamp."

The last observation that I make will contain a bit of prophecy. The Rules Committee will be in the news for years to come. There is no doubt of this because of the important role it plays in the House of Representatives.
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The Speaker shall take such measures at each Committee of the Whole as he deems necessary to maintain order in the House and to ensure that all questions are put on the same day and in the order of the proposed programme. He shall also ensure that the Government and the opposition vote on the motion of the Speaker and that the Speaker's decisions are followed. The President of the House shall appoint a Committee of the Whole to consider matters of the House and to take any other necessary action.
Committee of the Whole: Any one hundred or more members of the House who may consider legislation on the Private or Union Calendars, adopt amendments without record votes, and report them to the House for further action. It is a device for expediting business since a quorum in Committee of the Whole is one hundred and no record votes are taken.

Committee on Committees: A political party committee that draws up slates of standing committee assignments for the members of the party in the chamber.

Companion bills: Bills identical to those introduced in the other chamber.

Conference: A meeting of representatives of the two Houses of Congress for the purpose of reaching an agreement on conflicting views on bills and joint resolutions or parts thereof.

Conference committee: A committee appointed by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, composed usually of the ranking members of the committees of each House that originally considered the legislation in disagreement. The members on the part of the House of Representatives are referred to as "managers" and those on the part of the Senate as "congress." The purpose of the committee is to consider the points of conflict between the two Houses on a specific bill with a view to reaching an agreement.

Dilatory motion: A motion, usually made upon a technical point, for the purpose of killing time and preventing action on a bill. The rules outlaw dilatory motions, but their enforcement is largely within the discretion of the presiding officer.

Discharge rule: A rule of the House which permits a committee to be relieved of jurisdiction over a measure before it. Under this rule, after reading of the Journal on the second and fourth Mondays, a motion which has been signed by 218 members, to discharge a committee from consideration of a public bill which has been referred to it thirty days, may be called up by any of the 218 members, and the House shall proceed to consideration without intervening motion except one motion to adjourn.

Division: A standing non-record vote on the House floor in which Members stand and are counted for and against a proposal by the presiding officer who announces the result.

Enacting clause: Key phrase in bills reading, "Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives . . ." A successful motion to strike this clause from a bill kills the measure.

Engrossed bill: A bill that has passed the House of origin and is sent to the other House for further action, or having passed the other House
also, is sent back to the House of origin for enrollment. The engrossed copy of a bill that has passed both Houses together with its engrossed amendments is the official working copy from which an enrolled bill is prepared.

Enrolled bill: The final draft of an engrossed bill that has passed both Houses, embodying all amendments. Such a bill is enrolled on paper (formerly on parchment) and is signed-first by the Speaker of the House and secondly by the President of the Senate. On the back is an attestation by the Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate, as the case may be, indicating the House of origin. This final draft is then presented to the President for his approval or disapproval.

Exclusive committee: A standing committee whose members are excluded from serving on any other standing committee of the House.

Executive session: Committee meetings that are held behind closed doors and are not open to the public.

Filibuster: A time-consuming tactic used by a minority in an effort to prevent a vote on a bill. The strict rules of the House make filibusters more difficult than in the Senate, but dilatory tactics are sometimes employed in the House through such devices as repeated demands for quorum calls.

Five-minute rule: A House rule dating from 1867 under which, when general debate is closed in Committee of the Whole, any Member proposing an amendment has five minutes in which to explain it, after which the Member who shall first obtain the floor is allowed to speak five minutes in opposition to it.

Floor: The ground level of the Hall of the House where its business is conducted and where Members sit and speak and enjoy certain rights.

Item vote: Disapproval by the Executive of portions of a bill such as separate items of appropriation or "legislative riders" on appropriation bills.

Joint hearings: Hearings held by members of two or more committees of Congress.

Joint rules: Rules governing the procedure of the two Houses of Congress in matters requiring concurrent action. The joint rules were abrogated in 1876, but the most useful of their provisions continue to be observed in practice.

Journal: The official record of the proceedings of the House. It summarizes the actions taken in the chamber, but does not provide an adversarial transcript of the proceedings which is given in the Congressional Record.
Legislative committees: Committees that report legislative measures as distinguished from investigating committees, study committees, party policy committees, etc.

Legislative veto: Disapproval by Congress or either House of a legislative proposal or an executive reorganization plan submitted by the President.

Lobbying: Making representations to Members and committees of Congress for or against the passage of legislative proposals.

Majority Leader: Chief strategist and floor spokesman for the majority party in the chamber. He is elected by his party-conference and is in charge of its program on the House floor.

Marking up a bill: Going through a measure in committee, section by section, making changes, revising language, adding amendments, etc. If the bill is extensively revised, a "clean bill" with a new member may be introduced in place of the original one.

Minority Leader: Chief strategist and floor spokesman for the minority party on the floor of the House.

Morning hour: The time set aside at the beginning of each legislative day for the consideration of regular routine business. The House rarely has a morning hour, unlike the Senate, where the first two hours of a daily session following an adjournment are usually devoted to morning hour business.

Open hearing: A committee hearing from which members of the press and the public are not excluded.

Open rule: A rule recommended by the House Committee on Rules that allows a bill to be amended by the House.

Pairs: A pair is a written agreement between Members on opposite sides not to vote on a specified question or during a stipulated time. It is available to Members not wishing to be recorded on a proposition, or those desiring to preserve their vote or the vote of a colleague during absence from the House.

Party caucus: A meeting of all the members of a political party in either House of Congress held to select party leaders in the chamber or to establish party policy on legislative questions and promote party unity. House Democrats customarily call such meetings caucuses; House Republicans refer to them as conferences.

Party conference: A meeting of all the members of a political party in the House or Senate.
Referred to send a bill to the committee that reported it.

The subject of the debate is the agreement to send a bill to the committee of the whole of the House.

The Speaker: The Speaker of the House.

Motion: Motion for the previous question on the order of the day.

The motion for the previous question was seconded by the Speaker.

The Speaker: The Speaker of the House.


The report of the Select Committee was read and the House adjourned.

The House adjourned.
committees. It does not require Presidential approval. A joint resolution is a form of proposed legislation almost identical to a bill which requires the signature of the President or passage over his veto before it becomes law (except a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution).

Revenue bills: Bills that originate with the Committee on Ways and Means and levy taxes.

Rider: A provision tacked on to a bill in the hope of getting it enacted into law, even though it may not be germane to the main measure. The most familiar form of rider is that providing for legislation in appropriation bills. A rule bans such riders, but it is not always invoked.

Roll call: (1) The calling of the roll of Members for the purpose of determining the presence of a quorum or for recording the yeas and nays. (2) The record of roll calls taken.

Select committee: A committee created by a simple resolution of the House to perform a special function. Its members are appointed by the Speaker and it expires upon the completion of its assigned duties.

Seniority: Tenure of Congressmen either in the House or on a particular committee.

Speaker of the House: The presiding officer of the House of Representatives, elected by its Members at the opening of each new Congress.

Speaker's table: All bills transmitted by message from the Senate, whether Senate bills or House bills with Senate amendments, go to the Speaker's table. Under the rules, all bills on the Speaker's table are distributed by reference to the appropriate committees, with two exceptions.

Special order: (1) A report by the Committee on Rules providing for the consideration of a measure, which is agreed to by a majority vote; (2) permission to address the House for a specified period of time not to exceed one hour, following the legislative program.

Standing committee: A permanent group of Members whose size and jurisdiction are prescribed in the standing rules of the House. The House had twenty standing committees in 1961.

Steering committee: A political party committee which formerly advised the leadership regarding the order of business on the House floor, but which in the later practice has fallen into disuse.

Subcommittee: A subdivision of a standing committee that considers specified matters and reports back to the full committee.
Suspension of the rules: A time-saving House procedure in order on the first and third Mondays and the last six days of a session only, when the rules may be suspended by a two-thirds vote. Debate is limited to forty minutes and no amendments from the floor are allowed. Permission of the Speaker must be secured to make the motion and is within his discretion. The practice has been for the Speaker to list the Members he agrees to recognize in the order of their application and recognize them in turn.

Table: To dispose of a matter finally and adversely without debate.

Teller vote: A method of voting in the House in which Members file down the center aisle past tellers who count those for and against a measure, but do not record individual votes. Tellers are ordered upon demand of one-fifth of a quorum, which is forty-four in the House and twenty in Committee of the Whole.

Voice vote: A method of voting in the House in which Members answer "aye" or "no" in chorus and the presiding officer decides the result.

Yea and nays: The record of the vote on a matter by the Members of the House.