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THE SENATORIAL CAREER OF WILLIAM P. FRYE

By

RONALD F. BANKS

B.S. in Ed., Gorham State Teachers College,  
1956

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts (in History)

Division of Graduate Study

University of Maine

Orono

June, 1958

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# THE SENATORIAL CAREER OF WILLIAM P. FRYE

By

Ronald F. Banks

An Abstract of the Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of  
Arts (in History). June, 1958.

William Pierce Frye served as a Senator from Maine for a period of thirty years, 1881-1911. During this time the United States passed from a nation still binding the wounds of the Civil War to a nation which achieved the status of a world power. Frye was an active participant in this growth and as much as any single individual, symbolized the United States of this period.

Like his country, Frye was often impulsive as his opposition to the Bayard-Chamberlain negotiations illustrates. He was an artist at "twisting the lion's tail" and never failed to exploit this ability whenever the position of his country or of himself could be enhanced at the expense of Great Britain.

The Senator was impressed with the greatness of his country, a greatness, which to him, was characterized by its bigness in industrial production rather than by its intellectual and cultural achievements. An analysis of his efforts to preserve this greatness, as he conceived it, has been attempted by investigating his position on such issues as foreign commerce, the tariff, and the merchant marine.

It was Frye's contention that territorial acquisitions were of prime importance to the United States if this country were to maintain her greatness. He championed, indefatigably, the annexation of Cuba and Hawaii and several times advocated that the United States should seize Canada and "hold her against the world." It was Frye who was



personally responsible for the payment of twenty million dollars to Spain for the Philippine Islands in the Treaty of Paris, 1898.

The Senator from Maine held positions of national significance. He was a ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and as Chairman of the Committee on Commerce a subsidy to merchant vessels consumed much of his energies. For fifteen he was president pro-tempore of the senate and for five of those years served as acting Vice-President. From these positions he extended a profound influence on national policy. An attempt to analyze the results of this influence has been the object of this thesis.

## PREFACE

Doing the research and writing on this thesis has brought me into association with many persons who have generously and freely given their time and energies to help me. It is a pleasant duty, therefore, to recognize my indebtedness to them.

To Professor Charles Bayard of the History and Government Department of the University of Maine, I wish to express my appreciation for reading the entire manuscript and for his constructive criticisms and encouragement which made the task much easier.

To Professor Robert York of the History and Government Department of the University of Maine, who, also, read the entire manuscript, I owe a debt of gratitude for the support and encouragement given to me as well as many kindly suggestions.

I wish to express my gratitude to the following persons: to Mr. Donald White, for loaning to me the few papers of his grandfather, William P. Frye; to the staffs of the University of Maine Library and the Bangor Public Library for their assistance in obtaining materials for this thesis; and to my wife, Helena P. Banks, who has been ever ready to offer encouragement and understanding, without which this thesis would not have been possible.

R.F.B.

Orono, Maine

May 1, 1958

## INTRODUCTION

The year 1899 in Maine political history marks the zenith of the influence of her men on shaping national policies. "Maine was," indeed, as Joe Cannon observed, "the whole shooting match." Never before or since can one point to a time when as many important government positions were held by Maine men. Only the Presidency was excluding; the House being led by the capable Thomas B. Reed, Melville B. Fuller, originally a Maine native, served as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and William Pierce Frye was the president pro tempore of the Senate, and due to the death of Vice President Hobart was acting Vice President of the United States. In addition, Maine claimed the Secretary of the Navy, Long, and the Secretary of War, Alger, plus numerous ministerships and consulates.

Why positions as important politically came to these men is difficult to say. Seniority can explain Reed and Frye but even seniority does not apply solely, since other public officials had, in a few cases, served as long. My research has failed to disclose any logical explanation for this power except that Maine was considered politically strategic to Republican leaders of the day. Nevertheless, she represented only six votes in the electoral college and was considered a reasonably "safe state" that could be neglected during election years. Indeed, it was Maine which furnished many of the stump speakers for Republican campaigns in those years when such figures were an integral part of the electioneering machine.

Only three Maine political figures have been approached by the professional historian, namely, Fuller, Reed, and James G. Blaine. Others such as Charles Boutelle, Eugene Hale, Seth Milliken, and

Frye have been neglected. This thesis proposes to shed some light on a career which is comparable in many ways to those which have already been publicized. Recording Frye's Senate career is a prodigious task. A man of his stature and forty years service in Congress deserves to be known and the author submits this very selective work as an attempt, albeit inadequate, to give Frye his deserved place in the history of the United States. Also the question, was his work commensurate with the time he took to accomplish his mission, is worthy of consideration.

## CHAPTER I

### FRYE'S EARLY LIFE AND WORK

William Pierce Frye was born September 2, 1831, in Lewiston, Maine. His parents, Colonel John and Mrs. Alice M. Frye, were pioneers of this town on the Androscoggin River. Colonel Frye was financially well-to-do for his day owning the controlling interest of the Lewiston Manufacturing Company which he helped found in 1834. The Colonel's grandfather had been a high officer in the English army and, as was customary in colonial America, he had received a grant of land for his participation in the French and Indian Wars. Later, he became a general for the Colonials in the American Revolution, and subsequently he settled his grant and thereby founded the town of Fryeburg located in western Maine near the New Hampshire border.

William's father was an active politician. His title of Colonel was not a military rank but rather an honorary one conferred on him as a member of the Governor's Council during the Civil War. In addition to being a councilman, he had previously served as selectman and town treasurer of Lewiston and was later elected state senator from Androscoggin County.

Few facts are known of William's boyhood. His grandson, William Frye White wrote a short and very selective family history, Lewiston Miniatures. From this study, which probably should be classified as family folklore and reminiscences, a general picture of Frye's youth can be drawn. William was sent to Bowdoin, says White, mainly because of his father's excellent financial condition. At Bowdoin, William was a "live wire" who probably partook of the prevailing college festivities, drinking, card playing, and roistering. He was admonish-

ed for his "indecorum" by the Dean several times and for his irreverent excesses with the homely preachers of the day.

Several other students on the Bowdoin campus at this time (1846-1850) were to make great contributions to American history during and after the American Civil War. Oliver Otis Howard and Melville B. Fuller are only two of the more conspicuous college associates of Frye. Despite his various diversions, he graduated from Bowdoin in 1850, although in the third-quarter of his class which numbered only thirty-two.<sup>1</sup> Later, he was honored with L.L.D.'s from Bowdoin and Bates and served on the Board of Directors of his alma mater.

From the Bowdoin campus, Frye went to Portland and studied law in the office of William Pitt Fessenden, the distinguished Maine senator and statesman. He was admitted to the bar after this apprenticeship and established, with a Mr. Came, a practice in Rockland, Maine.

In Rockland, he met Caroline Spear whom he married in 1852. William White related that Frye was persona non grata with the Spear family and was forced to meet Caroline clandestinely at the farm of a sympathetic neighbor.

In 1854, Frye and his family moved to Lewiston and familiar surroundings. He entered into a partnership with a brother of William Pitt Fessenden. Frye was apparently a very capable lawyer; but he also began to show even greater political potential. Nelson Dingley, editor of the Lewiston Journal, said that Frye's law office was the center of Lewiston and Androscoggin County politics.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Charles Lingley, Dictionary of American Biography. Vol. 7, p.51.

2. Edward N. Dingley, The Life and Times of Nelson Dingley, Jr.,

His first experience in the active political arena was as Register of Probate for Androscoggin County. From this position, he was elected to the state legislature where he served from 1861 to 1862 and 1863 to 1867. In 1866 and 1867, he was elected mayor of Lewiston and from that office was elected Attorney-General of the state serving in that capacity for three years. One nineteenth century author praised his record in this office and said, "Some of his prosecutions which he was called upon to conduct as prosecuting officer were for capital offences celebrated in the annals of the criminal cases of Maine."<sup>3</sup>

Frye first ventured into national politics in 1871 as the representative from Maine's second district to Congress. He had sought elevation to this seat both in 1862<sup>4</sup> and in 1866<sup>5</sup> but withdrew before the elections. In 1869, he made a third attempt and was defeated by S.P. Morrill.<sup>6</sup> His career of ten years in the national House is interesting but not as noteworthy as his career in the Senate. He quickly established himself as an effective orator and, with Representative Blaine, Hale, and Lynch, served both the Republican Party and the State of Maine well.

As a member of the Committee on Rules, he, with James Garfield

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(Kalamazoo: Michigan, 1901), p. 36.

3. Jean Paul, Senator Frye of Maine, N.H. State Republican Committee (1894?), p. 16.

4. Dingley, op. cit., p. 65.

5. Ibid., p. 83.

6. Ibid., p. 92.

and others revised and codified the rules of the House.<sup>7</sup> He was to perform a similar revision as a member of the Senate. One of the more interesting episodes in Frye's life was his part in the investigation of James G. Blaine and the Little Rock Railroad - Mulligan letters scandal. Although Frye was not a party to the scandal, it appears that he definitely had a copy of the famous (or infamous) Caldwell Telegram<sup>8</sup> and therefore must have known more than we can ever ascertain. Some years later, Frye's involvement in this affair was to get him into a very discomfoting position.

During the winter of 1874-75, Frye and Representative George Hoar of Massachusetts were sent to Louisiana to investigate the legality of the Kellogg government of that state.<sup>9</sup>

Many of Frye's speeches were directed at the English as his attack on the Geneva award in 1876 would confirm. Unlike many of his colleagues, he believed that the freed negro should be reconstructed through education; he even made speeches demanding a pure ballot among whites and negroes. However, most of his stands were partisan and seldom, if ever, did he rise to statesman like qualities.

In the election of 1876, Frye and his colleague Representative Hale served as Blaine's campaign managers at the Republican National Convention. At this convention in Cincinnati, it was the famed free-thinker Robert Ingersoll of Illinois who nominated Blaine. After

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7. William Robinson, Life of Thomas B. Reed, (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1930), p. 65.

8. David Muzzey, James G. Blaine, (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1934), p. 98.

9. George Hoar, Autobiography of 70 Years, (New York: Scribners;



Ingersoll's eloquent address it was nearing darkness at the huge convention hall. Frye, hoping to capitalize on the momentum from Ingersoll's oratory, asked that the lights be turned on in order to push for Blaine's nomination on the first ballot. His request was greeted with a chorus of "no's" which effectively eliminated any chance for a Blaine nomination.<sup>10</sup> Eventually Blaine supported Rutherford B. Hayes who went on to win from Samuel Tilden in the disputed election of 1876.

Whether Blaine expected favors from Hayes for his support is not entirely clear. However, he asked Hayes for the right to name one cabinet officer from the New England area.<sup>11</sup> Blaine called on Hayes at Senator Sherman's house to urge the President-Elect to appoint Frye as attorney-general.<sup>12</sup> Hayes refused but offered to appoint Eugene Hale.<sup>13</sup> It was now Blaine's turn to decline since he wished to remove Frye as a rival of Hale. Blaine had wanted Hale to succeed Senator Hannibal Hamlin who was about to retire but Frye stood in the way.<sup>14</sup> Hayes noted in his diary that Blaine and Hamlin were both disgruntled and that "Blaine seemed to claim it (appointment of Frye), as a condition of good relations with me."<sup>15</sup>

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1903), p. 79.

10. Muzzey, op. cit., p. 100.

11. Louis Hatch, Maine, A History, (New York: American Historical Society, 1919), Vol. II, p. 586.

12. Harry Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes and His America, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1954), p. 415.

13. Hatch, op. cit., p. 586.

14. Ibid., p. 586.

15. Charles Williams, Ed., The Life of R.B. Hayes, (Ohio Arch. Soc.,

President Hayes' appraisal was correct. His refusal only antagonized the Maine senator. Blaine and the conservative wing of the party were very unhappy with Hayes' other cabinet appointments, particularly Carl Schurz;<sup>16</sup> furthermore they publicly revealed their displeasure. On March 6, 1877, Blaine delivered a speech in the Senate which challenged a statement of policy made by Hayes in his inaugural address. Blaine's intention was to force the President to appoint Frye to the cabinet.<sup>17</sup> However, Hayes was not to be moved by this criticism and Maine still failed to gain a cabinet member. Frye returned to the House apparently unmoved by this incident.

While Frye and Hale were members of the House, Maine also had two nationally famous Senators in the upper house. One of these gentlemen Hannibal Hamlin had been a pillar of the Republican Party since his defection from the Democratic Party in 1856. He had served as Lincoln's Vice President during his first term and was subsequently elected a senator from Maine. The other gentleman, James G. Blaine, had been Speaker of the House of Representatives and a prospective presidential candidate in 1876. Four years later, Blaine was again considered for the nomination. He was still in the national limelight because of his leadership of the Republican element which had recently and successfully forestalled a fusionist (Democrat and Greenback) attempt to prevent seating Republican legislators in his home state of Maine. Emerging from this battle victoriously, he was bent on getting

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1928), Vol. II, p. 24.

16. Ibid., p. 24.

17. Ibid., p. 17.

the nomination. To help him do this, he chose, as previously, Frye and Hale to serve as his campaign managers.

The anti-Blaine, pro-Grant forces were led by Roscoe Conkling, Simon Cameron, and John Logan.<sup>18</sup> The convention was pervaded by hostilities between Conkling and Blaine; the party had split into two irreconcilable factions. Perhaps Frye and Hale were too amateurish and provincial to handle the experienced Conkling otherwise Blaine might have received the nomination.<sup>19</sup> Conkling rose to answer Frye on several occasions and always had complete control of the situation. Once he humiliated Frye by answering him "in a way that was half sneer and half insult."<sup>20</sup> Only once, when Frye seconded Blaine's nomination, did he display any of the poise and eloquence which in later years was to make him one of the most sought after campaign speakers of his time. Referring to Blaine's capable handling of the fusionist threat in Maine, he roused the convention to "tumultous cheering" by his description of the pilot who had safely brought to port the tempest-tossed ship, "the State of Maine."

Freighted with the precious principles of this Republic, with the rights of American citizenship, with the privileges guaranteed by the Constitution, she was battling the waves. The eyes of the whole nation were upon her. They beheld with intense anxiety the perils to which she was exposed. A true man was at the helm. Sagacious himself, he made even the foolish wise and courageous. He inspired the timid. Strong, he strengthened the weak, calm, he restrained the

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18. Theodore Smith, James A. Garfield, Life and Letters, (New Haven: Yale Press, 1925), Vol. II, p. 947.

19. Ibid., p. 961.

20. Ibid., p. 970.

impetuous and brought the imperiled ship with the precious cargo into the port of safety---. Take that man, wise, stout, and brave, for your leader and he will surely bring you to safety and victory---."21

The election of 1880 placed James Garfield in the White House. He had received the nomination because of Blaine's willingness to join the Garfield forces in an attempt to keep Grant from being nominated. As a reward to Blaine, the President made the Maine senator his Secretary of State.

A few months earlier, Senator Hamlin had finally resigned his seat. The legislature was responsible for the selection of his successor and the two most prominent possibilities were Frye and Hale. The situation of party conflict which Blaine had feared in 1876 when he had asked Hayes to appoint Frye to a cabinet post, now presented itself. Hale had lost his House seat in the Greenback revolution of 1878 and was now retired. Frye, on the other hand, had retained his seat and would probably become the next speaker of the House. Despite the efforts of Frye's supporters, the senate seat was given to Hale because Frye had a place in Washington; also Blaine would soon resign his senate seat to become the Secretary of State vacating his seat for Frye.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, in order to discourage an open battle for his seat, Blaine prematurely announced that he was to become the Secretary of State much to the disgust of Garfield.<sup>23</sup> On March 15, 1881, Frye was

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21. Muzzey, op. cit., p. 157.

22. Leon Richardson, Life of William Chandler, (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1940), p. 264.

23. Hatch, op. cit., p. 619.

duly elected to the Senate as he had been promised and served there continuously until his death in 1911, a period of thirty years.

Blaine's concern for Frye is understandable. As has been shown, Frye had been Blaine's campaign manager in 1876 and 1880 as well as one of his most stalwart supporters during the Little Rock - Fort Smith scandal. Moreover, his eloquence in seconding Blaine's nomination had heightened the presidential aspirant's obligation to his fellow partisan.

On assuming his new duties as senator, Frye was to continue much of the program which formerly had been championed by Blaine. One cause espoused, which will presently be considered, was the Bayard-Chamberlain fiasco which succeeded in establishing Frye as one of the more powerful men in the Republican Party.

## Chapter II

### FRYE AND THE BAYARD - CHAMBERLAIN NEGOTIATIONS

The majority of diplomatic historians agree that, between 1783-1911, the North Atlantic fisheries question vexed American Secretaries of State more persistently than any other single issue.

Since John Adams had salvaged fishing rights for New England in the Treaty of Paris, 1783, and subsequent negotiations had secured United States' position, New Englanders had depended heavily on the products derived from the seas. Therefore, any attempt by the British to negate the hard fought concessions to the advantage of Canada was bound to arouse the indignation of New England congressmen.

By the Convention of 1818, American fishermen were allowed to take forever "fish along certain portions of the southern, western, and northern coasts of Newfoundland, and along the coasts, bays, harbours, and creeks from Mount Joly --- through the Straights of Belleisle."<sup>1</sup> Also, the United States received the liberty "to forever dry and cure fish in the unsettled bays, harbours, and creeks" of the southern coast of Newfoundland, and the coast of Labrador. However, the most important provision of the Convention agreement and that which pertains to Frye's life is the so-called "three marine mile clause." By this clause the United States renounced the right to cure, dry, and take fish within "three marine miles of any coasts, bays, creeks, or harbours" of Canada except for those previously cited.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the

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1. Charles C. Tansill, Canadian-American Relations 1875-1911, (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1943), p.4.

2. Ibid., p.5.

United States was permitted to enter the ports of Canada to obtain water "and for no other purpose whatever."<sup>3</sup>

In 1853, Canada, attempting to circumvent the more restrictive clauses of the Convention of 1818, seized a number of American ships off the Canadian coast. Matthew Perry was sent to protect the American vessels. Subsequently, England, anxious to avoid trouble, agreed to negotiate the Treaty of Washington in 1854, also known as the Marcy-Elgin agreement.

Under the terms of this treaty, the United States received in-shore fishing rights denied her by the Convention of 1818. Also, Canadian vessels were permitted to fish along the shores of the United States down to the 36th parallel, which includes Chesapeake Bay.<sup>4</sup> More important to both countries as a whole were the reciprocity arrangements concerning agricultural products of the two countries.

The Marcy-Elgin agreement continued in force through the American Civil War. However, because Canada showed sympathy toward the Confederate States of America and increasing animosity toward reciprocity agreements, the United States announced that the Marcy-Elgin Agreement would be terminated March 17, 1866.<sup>5</sup>

The termination of this treaty deprived American vessels of the right to fish inside the three-mile limit, thus the status of the fisheries question reverted to the agreement reached by the Convention

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3. Ibid.

4. Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People, (New York: F.S. Crofts and Co., 1952), p. 277.

5. Tansill, op. cit., p. 8.

of 1818. As a result, Canada passed additional retaliatory legislation which caused relations to worsen between the two neighbors.

During this time Hamilton Fish, Grant's Secretary of State, began negotiating the Alabama Claims with Great Britain. As these negotiations proceeded, the fisheries question once again reared its ugly head and, as a result, in a new Treaty of Washington of May 8, 1871, provisions were made for the settlement of the fisheries question as well as other pressing diplomatic problems.

Under articles eighteen through twenty-four, the United States was granted all rights she had enjoyed by the Convention of 1818, and the added right to "take fish of every kind, except shell fish, on the coasts and shores, and in the bays, harbours, and creeks, of the provinces of Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick --- Prince Edward Island" providing that its subjects do not damage private property or interfere with British fishermen.<sup>6</sup> To compensate for this loss, Canadian fishermen were authorized to fish along the eastern seacoast of the United States as far south as the thirty-ninth parallel. To further compensate for what Canada felt to be an unfair treaty, a commission was appointed to determine an amount of money to be paid Canada for this liberal grant of her fishing territory.<sup>7</sup>

The commission met at Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1877. It was composed of three members, two being favorable to British interests and

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6. W.M. Mallory, Treaties, Conventions, etc., (Washington: 1910), Vol. 1, p. 708.

7. Ibid., p. 709.



the other favorable to American interests.<sup>8</sup> This body awarded to Canada the sum of \$5,500,000.<sup>9</sup> It should be noted, however, that Mr. Kellogg, the American commissioner, refused to concur with the majority opinion. Kellogg's refusal indicates the dissatisfaction with which some Americans, especially New Englanders, viewed the award.<sup>10</sup>

On November 21, 1878, the payment was made under protest with the United States declaring that it could not accept the findings of the commission but would pay the sum to maintain "good faith in treaties and the security and value of arbitration between nations---." <sup>11</sup> Thus the fisheries question that many hoped was permanently settled by the Treaty of Washington in 1871 was only temporarily solved, and even then only in a spirit of ill will and mutual distrust.

Senator Frye was extremely dissatisfied with the Treaty of Washington and the decision of the Halifax Commission. On January 10, 1883, he proposed a joint resolution in the Senate which asked for the termination of articles eighteen to twenty-six and thirty of the Treaty of Washington. These articles pertained to the fisheries question; essentially Frye sought the abrogation of existing treaty arrangements with Canada.<sup>12</sup>

Congress passed Frye's resolution and gave the required two years

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8. Ellis P. Oberholtzer, A History of the United States Since the Civil War, (New York: McMillan Co., 1931), Vol. IV, p. 448.

9. House Miscellaneous Documents, "The Halifax Award" (Washington: G.P.O. 1893-94), Vol. 39, p. 745.

10. Ibid., p. 745-46.

11. Ibid., p. 753.

12. Congressional Record, 47 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 1041.

notice to Canada abrogating the clauses which guaranteed American rights to inshore fishing, bait purchasing, and transshipment of cargoes within Canadian waters.<sup>13</sup>

The United States had numerous reasons for wishing to abrogate the fisheries articles of the treaty. The Halifax award had been unpopular in the United States. Also, the fact that under the Treaty, Canadian fish had been allowed to enter this country duty free had annoyed New Englanders. Canada was benefiting more than the United States financially, due to the absence of any tariff and this caused envy among many members of the fisheries industry. Incidents like the Fortune Bay affair in 1878 added greatly to the discontent. In this affair American sailors, engaged in taking herring in Fortune Bay, Newfoundland, were attacked by natives who destroyed one of the American seines and forced them to stop fishing. Such occurrences were too common to be ignored.<sup>14</sup>

Officially the Treaty of Washington was to expire July 1, 1885, and therefore the pertinent provisions derived from it would become void on that date. One consequence of this termination would be the reversion of the fisheries agreements to the Convention of 1818. This change was the desire of the fishing interests. Consequently, on January 31, 1885, President Arthur issued a proclamation warning American fishermen of the impending expiration of present privileges enjoyed under the treaty.<sup>15</sup> However, Grover Cleveland's election in the

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13. Allan Nevins, Grover Cleveland (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1933), p. 405.

14. Oberholtzer, op. cit., p. 447-448.

15. Tansill, op. cit., p. 13.

autumn of 1884 abruptly changed the status of affairs.<sup>15</sup> completely.

Unlike President Arthur, the Democratic Cleveland was guided by a sense of national rather than sectional interest. He believed in lowering the high tariff walls erected by the protectionists and was particularly determined to improve relations with Canada. Before Cleveland assumed office, President Arthur had rejected as "impractical" Canadian offers to extend the terms of the Treaty of Washington until January 1, 1886.<sup>16</sup> This rejection by a "lame duck" President and Cleveland's desire to improve relations with Canada confused the fisheries question even more.

On March 6, 1885, Thomas F. Bayard assumed the office of Secretary of State for President Cleveland; he was forced to deal with the problem immediately. The New England fishing interests, he felt, had to be content with the program of the preceding Administration, since they had been primarily responsible for the impending abrogation of the treaty provisions. However, would the fishing interests then be satisfied with the rights granted them by the Convention of 1818, which was to be re-instated on July 1, 1886? No provisions were made for the purchase of bait. Fishing would be prohibited within "three marine miles of any coasts, bays, creeks, or harbors" of Canada except "along certain portions of the southern, western, and northern coasts of Newfoundland---,"<sup>17</sup> and most restricting of all, Yankee fishermen would have no right of transshipment of fish over Canadian land into the United States.

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16. Ibid., p. 13.

17. Mallory, op. cit., p. 631.

Possibly, Secretary Bayard foresaw that the act of abrogation had caused more harm than benefits for the fishing industry. He may have thought that New England did not realize the implications of their decision. Surely, she did not think Canada would extend the rights of transshipment, fishing within the three mile limit, and the curing and drying of fish, particularly, since Canadian fish could not now enter the United States free of duty. Bayard soon discovered the answers to his questions when he accepted an extension of the terms of the Treaty of Washington offered by Canada, an extension that Arthur had rejected. The extension was to be, simply, a modus vivendi until more satisfactory arrangements could be made.<sup>18</sup>

Secretary Bayard found that any postponement of the tariff charges on Canadian fish would not be tolerated by the New England fishing industry. Talk circulated that every fisherman along the New England coast considered rising to arms if the tariff charges were delayed.<sup>19</sup> As diplomatic correspondence between Bayard and Canadian officials was exchanged, it became clear that no arrangement could be consummated along the lines of reciprocity. Indeed, it was doubtful if any satisfactory arrangement could be negotiated.<sup>20</sup>

This fear by the fishermen is more meaningful when one considers the general distrust of the Administration held by these interests. They feared that the first Democratic President in twenty-four years

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18. Tansill, op. cit., p. 18.

19. Ibid., p. 17.

20. Ibid., p. 19.

wished to negotiate a treaty designed to allow Canadian fish to enter the United States duty free.<sup>21</sup> In view of President Cleveland's public utterances, there was justification for such a fear. Cleveland, in his message to Congress December 8, 1885, included a recommendation for an appointment of a commission empowered to negotiate a settlement upon a "just, equitable, and honorable basis" of the entire fisheries question.<sup>22</sup>

Senator Frye with his colleagues, Edmunds of Vermont, and Hoar of Massachusetts assumed the championship of the New England fisheries. Hoar and Edmunds, like Frye, were Senate types. Republican in their politics and partisan in their views toward the Democratic party, this triumvirate was high protectionist and vehemently opposed to concessions to Canadian fish products. They remembered the Halifax Commission only too well, and were not pleased with its decision.

On January 5, 1886, less than a month after Cleveland's message to Congress, the war between the executive and the legislative branches commenced. On that date Frye introduced into the Senate a resolution requesting the Secretary of State to transmit "any and all correspondence and information in the custody of the State Department relative to the extension of certain fishing rights and privileges under the Treaty of Washington from July 1, 1885 to January 1886."<sup>23</sup> The resolution, as was customary, was agreed to unanimously.

Two weeks later on January 18, 1886, Senator Frye introduced

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21. Ibid., p. 21.

22. Ibid., p. 20.

23. Congressional Record, 49 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 403.

another resolution which answered Cleveland's request for a commission:

"---Whereas the fishing rights were settled for ten years by a commission appointed under the Treaty of Washington at a cost of \$5,500,000 paid in money and a remission of duties amounting in the ten years to about \$6,000,000 more, and

Whereas the effect of the terms agreed upon by the said commission was further an increase in the Canadian fishing fleet of five-hundred vessels and of ten-thousand seamen, with a corresponding decrease in our own fleet and sailors, without any appreciable benefits to the people of the United States: Therefore, be it resolved by the Senate of the United States, that in the opinion of the Senate the appointment of a commission clothed with such powers ought not to be provided for by Congress."<sup>24</sup>

A discussion followed this resolution. Senator Morgan of Alabama, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee with Frye, argued that the modus vivendi was simply a temporary arrangement.<sup>25</sup> Frye answered that the British Minister had requested a commission, not the fishermen who were satisfied.<sup>26</sup> Contemptuously, he said that New England had enough of commissions to settle fisheries problems, "I say that the United States paid \$15,000,000 without ever receiving one single cent in return."<sup>27</sup> He continued.

"I remember that in the Treaty of 1783, Great Britain conceded to us the right to fish on the Grand Banks and Banks of Newfoundland. Wonderful magnanimity on the part of Great Britain! Not one of those banks was within 25 miles of the British possessions and running from that to 150 miles...., Why did she not concede us the right to breathe

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24. Ibid., p. 703.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

the air of heaven?"<sup>28</sup>

With his own brand of logic, Frye continued his vehement verbal attack on the administration and the idea of a commission. He argued that the fishermen did not use the inshore fishing banks because the fish had shifted feeding grounds and the only reason Great Britain desired a commission was to "get five and a half millions of dollars out of us literally for nothing."<sup>29</sup> Thinking, realistically, of Great Britain's need for American friendship, he further demanded that "we use a get tough policy." Such a policy would not endanger the United States; Great Britain could not afford to alienate the United States since, "there never was a country in the history of the wide world so under a mortgage to keep the peace with us as Great Britain is today. Neither they nor we seek any war."<sup>30</sup>

Senator Morgan offered a different explanation; he retorted that because the first commission failed, it was no reason to indict a new one.<sup>31</sup> Morgan also insinuated that, perhaps, the duty on fish had something to do with Frye's reasoning. Frye persistently maintained, despite Morgan --- "that we desire nothing and therefore we must inevitably be the loser by a commission."<sup>32</sup> He added later that he did not wish an increase on the tariff and admonished Great Britain to "let us, for Heavens sake alone; --- we can take care of ourselves."<sup>33</sup>

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28. Ibid., p. 703.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., p. 704.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., p. 705.

33. Ibid., p. 708.

Much comment ensued because of this move of the Republican Senator from Maine. The modus vivendi had lapsed January 1, 1886, as had been agreed and Canada could be expected to enforce any violations of the Convention of 1818 to force the United States to negotiate. This possibility and its inherent dangers were appreciated by the State Department<sup>34</sup> but not by the New England fishing interests and their spokesmen. One Maine newspaper applauded Frye's efforts and hoped that the resolution would "have the effect to cause the Senate to see this question in its true light and prevent the sacrifice of the interests of American fishermen to the greed and cunning of British diplomacy."<sup>35</sup>

While the Senate was engaged in other business, Nelson Dingley, Jr., Maine's Representative from the second district, was mustering support for Frye's resolution in the House. Dingley presented a number of memorials from citizens and organizations within his constituency supporting Frye's resolution.<sup>36</sup> They based their opposition, as did Dingley, on the assumption that the commission would allow Canadian fish into United States ports duty free, an assumption that later proved to be incorrect.

Because both the Senate and House appeared to be averse to the idea of a commission, Canada had commenced an illiberal enforcement of the Convention of 1818. She also claimed to have passed legislation which prohibited American fishermen from buying bait in Canadian ports despite the fact that Canadians benefited from these transactions as

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34. Tansill, op. cit., p. 24.

35. Kennebec Journal, January 20, 1886, p. 4. Hereafter K.J.

36. Ibid., January 30, 1886. See also Dingley, op. cit., p. 266-267.



much as Americans did.<sup>37</sup> Thus, American shipowners were threatened with prosecutions for violating the Convention of 1818 and the recently passed legislation prohibiting the purchase of bait.

While the House was debating a proposal similar to Frye's and Canada was passing legislation, the Senate twice refused to act on Frye's resolution. Finally, on April 5, 1886, Frye introduced a report by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee embodying the substance of his earlier resolution.<sup>38</sup> He also read a resolution adopted by the Fishing Exchange of Portland which advocated sending armed vessels into the Atlantic to protect American fishing vessels from the molestations of Canadian authorities.<sup>39</sup> The Portland Exchange request had been prompted by the refusal of Canada to allow United States' fishermen to buy bait as guaranteed by the Convention of 1818. Frye maintained that Americans had a right to go into any Canadian port, except for purposes of "piracy or for fishing within the three mile limit."<sup>40</sup> He pointed out that Canadian vessels had frequently been permitted to enter Portland and Gloucester to obtain provisions. Frye ended his speech with a warning that if one American vessel was seized by Canadian officials he would introduce a bill "to close the United States' ports against all British colonial fishing, freight, and pas-

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37. Tansill, op. cit., p. 20. David Wells reported the pitiful conditions under which Newfoundlanders lived and their dependency on this source of income.

38. Cong. Record, 49 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 3110.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p. 3111.

senger vessels ... until Canada lifted her restrictions upon us."<sup>41</sup>

On April 9, 1886, the original resolution by the Foreign Relations Committee was re-introduced. This time, Frye appealed to broad national interests for support of the measure rather than to his own sectional colleagues. He reasoned that "unobstructed without bounty or subsidy ... there is no reason why our fishing fleet shall not, in ten years, number 15,000 vessels, manned by 200,000 --- sailors."<sup>42</sup> Frye failed to mention the fact that this would aid Maine more than the rest of the country. His policy was to destroy the Canadian fisheries by closing United States' markets to her.<sup>43</sup>

The basic problem was how could the United States keep Canadian fish from entering the country. "Is there any good reason why she [Canada] should have it [the U.S. market]?" asked Frye. "Our fishermen will be sailors in our next war. Why then should these men be selected for sacrifice, and their rights be surrendered to the tender mercies of British diplomacy?"<sup>44</sup> Frye's answer, as always, was for a higher tariff on Canadian fish; a tariff which he had denounced in January when he introduced the resolution originally.<sup>45</sup>

With Dingley leading a successful battle in the House, Maine was well represented in its fight to revive the fishing and shipbuilding industries. On April 13, 1886, Frye's resolution, as embodied in the

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41. Ibid., p. 3307.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., p. 3308.

44. Ibid., p. 3313.

45. Ibid., p. 708.

Committee on Foreign Relations' resolution, passed the Senate by a vote of thirty-five to ten. Senator Morgan one of the more outspoken antagonists of the New England Nationalism voted for the measure.

To Secretary Bayard this debate by the Senate was a "mere blowing of fish horns" for partisan reasons.<sup>46</sup> However, the real difficulties were yet to come. On May 7, 1886, the American vessel David J. Adams was seized by Canadians in Digby Basin. Bayard immediately protested this act as unjustified and admonished that serious consequences might arise if such seizures continued.<sup>47</sup> Especially significant was Bayard's reasoning in this case. He said that American fishermen did not want to dry or cure fish on the interdicted coasts. He pointed out that bait was no longer needed to fish inside the three mile limit and, hence, there could be no possible justification for the seizure under the Convention of 1818.<sup>48</sup> This analysis had a striking similarity to the position that Frye had been presenting since 1885.

Despite British sympathy with the American stand and an apparent desire to settle the issue, the Canadians continued to seize American vessels. Bayard was disturbed over the David J. Adams affair and his concern increased when he learned that the case was to be tried in a Canadian vice-admiralty court. He appointed two men, William Putnam of Portland, Maine and George W. Biddle of Philadelphia, to represent the United States in the litigation.<sup>49</sup> Both men were distinguished lawyers

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46. Tansill, op. cit., p. 26.

47. Ibid., p. 28.

48. Ibid., p. 29.

49. Ibid., p. 29-30.

and authorities on international law.<sup>50</sup>

Putnam reported to Bayard on June 4, 1886, that the Canadians had acted on very inconsequential charges which could easily have been over-looked. Putnam was also unable to discover the laws which allegedly prohibited the Americans from purchasing domestic bait.<sup>51</sup> At the same time Senate Republicans increased the tempo of their attack on the Secretary of State. Bayard was now in a position which demanded positive action. One possible recourse was the use of force; Secretary of the Navy, W.C. Whitney was making preparations to send a fleet into Canadian waters and the use of this fleet might persuade Canada to withdraw her orders to seize American vessels.<sup>52</sup>

Frye introduced, as he had warned, an amendment to the Dingley shipping bill to exclude Canadian vessels from United States' ports until such time as Canada would stop seizing vessels.<sup>53</sup> The amendment quickly passed the Senate and was agreed to by the House. Although one New York paper asked for moderation until all means of peaceful adjustment proved ineffective,<sup>54</sup> Maine newspapers supported Frye's proposal and recommended any action which would procure "justice."<sup>55</sup>

On May 27 the resolution passed the House as a rider to the

50. Ibid., p. 31.

51. Letter from Putnam to Bayard quoted in Tansill, op. cit., p. 36.

52. Ibid., p. 39.

53. Cong. Record, 49 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 4572.

54. New York Times, May 18, 1886, p. 4/1. Hereafter N.Y.T.

55. Bangor Whig and Courier, May 19, 1886, p. 2, also, K.J., May 19, 1886, p. 4.

Dingley bill. The New York Times argued that the high tariff was the real issue involved and questioned how this resolution was to be implemented.<sup>56</sup>

Congressional action had displayed a lack of confidence in Secretary Bayard's efforts to exhaust all peaceful means. In July, Portland fishermen threatened to boycott Canadian goods and demanded that Frye's proposal be implemented.<sup>57</sup> On July 25, the Senate resolved that the Committee on Foreign Relations investigate the "rights of American fishing vessels within the North American possessions of the Queen of Great Britain, and whether any rights of such vessels have been violated...." Senators Frye, Edmunds, and Saulsbury were appointed to the sub-committee to begin its interrogation September 30, 1886.<sup>58</sup>

Between July 25 and September 30, the stage of the controversy shifted from the halls of Congress to the "stumps" of the Maine woods. The Congressional and state elections were to be held in September and Frye, a great campaigner, participated to insure Republican seats even though his own seat was not at stake. Blaine was also an active participant in the off-year election, primarily, as titular head of his party, but also, to keep his name before the nation's voters in preparation for the presidential election of 1888. The Kennebec Journal from August to September 16, recorded the schedule of addresses to be made. From August 18 to September 21, Frye delivered a speech every

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56. N.Y.T., May 28, 1886, p. 4.

57. Ibid., July 20, 1886, p. 1.

58. Senate Documents, 56 Cong., 2nd Sess., No. 231, Vol. 5, p. 631.

day except Sundays. He appeared frequently on the platform with Reed, Blaine, and such national Republican leaders as McKinley and Allison.

The participants, including Frye, concentrated on the fisheries "sell out" by the administration and the usual Republican positions on the tariff, commerce, and the treasury surplus. On August 21, Frye delivered an address at Houlton, Maine, which harmed Blaine more than it aided him. Referring to the Mulligan Letters and the Little Rock scandal, Frye said in his usual descriptive style,

"You take a magnificent bridal dress with its ribbons and splendid laces, and put it on exhibition with a little inkspot on its skirt, and you see nothing but that inkspot. Now the people of this country, with an exquisite fidelity to the best interests of the nation, saw the little bit of a smirch on the skirt of Mr. Blaine's coat..."<sup>59</sup>

Frye tried, unsuccessfully to repair the damage caused by his oratory by referring in a later speech to Blaine as the American Gladstone.<sup>60</sup> The Nation, America's leading liberal journal, predicted that Frye would find himself in trouble because of this speech. "It is a very remarkable statement to come from a friend of Mr. Blaine. So there was a smirch was there? Well, Mr. Frye tell us what it was. We do not agree with him about its being a 'little bit of a smirch'..."<sup>61</sup> The New York Times commented that Frye was a "terrible friend. Mr. Burchard's little alliteration must have seemed to him a mere accident compared to this. The terrible feature of Mr. Frye's remark is its

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59. Nevins, op. cit., p. 291.

60. K.J., Sept. 6, 1886, p. 4.

61. Nation, Aug. 26, 1886, p. 168.

truth."<sup>62</sup>

Frye denied ever making the statements<sup>63</sup> and Blaine insisted that Frye was misquoted. Nevertheless, the damage had been done and the impression remained indelible on the minds of the Democratic opponents.

In late September, Frye, fresh from a smashing Republican victory at home, returned to Washington to assume his position on the sub-committee appointed to investigate the fisheries question.

Between September 30, and October 6, Senators Frye, Edmunds, and Saulsbury interrogated fishermen in Boston, Portland, Gloucester, and other ports along the coast. The committee members were more convinced, if convincing they needed<sup>64</sup> that American fishermen had been grossly maltreated.<sup>65</sup> However, for the sake of truth, it should be noted that the members of the committee received an unilateral education because all of the interviewees were Americans.

The fishing season was over for 1886 and Congress did not convene until December. During this interval, Secretary Bayard attempted to effect a solution by the use of the commission. However, Frye and others kept the atmosphere of animosity alive by publicly pronouncing that Canada needed American markets and the United States could dictate its own terms to her.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, a commission was not needed.

62. N.Y.T., Aug. 24, 1886, p. 2.

63. Denials can be found in the Nation, Sept. 2, 1886; K.J., Sept. 6, 1886; and the Bangor Whig and Courier, Sept. 6, 1886.

64. Tansill suggests that Frye was looking for political ammunition, op. cit., p. 44.

65. Senate Documents, Reports of the Committee on Foreign Relations, 1789-1901, 56 Cong., 2 Sess., 1900-1901, Vol. 23, p. 5, No. 231, P.

66. N.Y.T., Oct. 11, 1886, p. 4.

On January 19, 1887, Senator Edmunds introduced a resolution based on the committee's findings. Frye concurred in this report and actively supported its recommendation that the President be authorized to protect the rights of American fishing vessels by denying the ports of the United States to other countries, meaning of course, Canada.<sup>67</sup> This resolution contained Frye's basic assumption; Canada would be forced to grant the United States concessions because she needed the American market. However, if Canada did not submit, the New England fishermen would be freed from Canadian competition in United States' markets. The New England fishing economy would be stimulated by either proposal.

In support of this resolution Frye, on January 24, 1887, reiterated that Canadian seizure of United States' vessels was unwarranted because none of the provisions of the Convention of 1818 had been violated by Americans. He asked that the measure pass and then "you will never hear of another outrage by the colonies of Great Britain while the world lasts."<sup>68</sup>

This resolution appears to be the catalytic agent needed by the State Department to open negotiations. Frye and his colleagues had forced Canada toward negotiations, while their intentions were probably, to bully her into acceptance of their position without negotiations.

New England Senators may have sensed the conciliatory attitude of Canada and wished to avoid any negotiations which, they feared, would reach agreements disadvantageous to their interests. This apprehen-

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67. Senate Documents, op. cit., p. 631.

68. Cong. Record, 49 Cong., 2 Sess., P. 933.



siveness caused Senator Hoar of Massachusetts to introduce a measure on February 24, 1887, prohibiting negotiations with Canada concerning "the reduction, change, or abolition of any of our existing duties or imports."<sup>69</sup> This proposal apparently portended the impossibility of any form of settlement; it also confirmed Secretary Bayard's belief that the Republican leaders were "reckless, selfish, and mercenary."<sup>70</sup>

On February 24, Frye, Morgan, and Hoar were appointed Senate conferees to determine the wording of the bill introduced by Senator Edmunds. The bill passed the Senate and the House and President Cleveland signed it on March 3, 1887.<sup>71</sup>

Presidential reasons for signing the bill were understandable. Concurrence offered a way to remove the pro-British label from the administration while simultaneously forcing Canada to accept an arrangement on the fisheries question even if hopes for tariff reductions were dead. Both were diametrically opposed to Republican intentions.

Though Cleveland signed the Edmunds bill, he was opposed to the Hoar resolution. Bayard and Cleveland both considered it to be an unprecedented attempt to limit the President's treaty making powers.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, Senator Morgan stated that consultation with the Senate on appointments for commissions was unnecessary; he argued that such executive authority was implicit in the presidential treaty-making powers. Cleveland apparently subscribed to Morgan's interpretation

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69. Ibid., p. 219.

70. Tansill, op. cit., p. 52.

71. Ibid.

72. Nevins, op. cit., p. 55.

since he authorized Secretary Bayard to appoint a commission anyway.

In October, Bayard named as commissioners, James B. Angell of the University of Michigan, William Putnam who had served as counsel in the David Adams case, and known as one of the foremost experts on international law, and himself.<sup>73</sup> British representatives were Joseph Chamberlain, Sir Charles Tupper and Sir Lionel Sackville-West, the British Minister to the United States. With the exception of West, the delegation proved to be inexorably determined to give Canada a "fair" treaty.<sup>74</sup>

Nelson Dingley, the champion of the fisheries in the House, wrote that the fishermen would be content with the commission. They had feared the possibility that the commission would consider more than the issues of the line of the three mile limit and the rights of American fishermen in Canadian ports. Dingley had feared that they would negotiate the free admission of Canadian fish into the United States. However, he admitted finally, that he was confident that Messrs. Putnam and Angell (not Bayard) would not undertake more than the disputed question.<sup>75</sup> Dingley expressed the feelings of his Maine constituents and preferred to wait for the treaty to reach the Senate before opposing any of its provisions. He was, in short, willing to give the commission a chance.

Dingley's attitude coincided with that of the New York Chamber of

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73. Tansill, op. cit., p. 55.

74. Nevins, op. cit., p. 408.

75. Dingley, op. cit., p. 284-85.

Commerce and Jay Gould.<sup>76</sup> Apparently some big-business interests favored a peaceful solution to the problem. Secretary Bayard became quite optimistic about a treaty's chance in the Republican controlled Senate.<sup>77</sup> However, this optimism proved to be premature.

On November 7, an unidentified New England Senator released a statement to the Boston Post noting that President Cleveland had to obtain Senate confirmation of the American commissioners. The statement predicted that the Senate would reject them. Even if the commission met and produced a treaty, the Senator declared that the Senate would reject it.

On November 22, 1887, Frye was interviewed by a reporter of the Boston Journal, a Blaine organ. In answer to questions relating to the commission appointments Frye replied, "there is either hopeless ignorance or a desire to completely surrender to Sir Lionel West"<sup>78</sup>... Bayard has a soft side for England..."<sup>79</sup> Asked to explain Cleveland's attitude Frye said, "he simply doesn't know... Blaine would have at once availed himself of the power granted by Congress and the outrages would have ceased." Frye insisted, still, that America should close her ports to Canadian ships, rather than attempt a peaceful solution.

Throughout the treaty negotiations, the British delegation pressed for tariff reductions. Secretary Bayard knew that such concessions

76. Tansill, op. cit., p. 60-61.

77. Ibid., p. 61.

78. West actually remained quiet except to adjourn. See Nevins, op. cit., p. 409.

79. Bangor Whig and Courier, Nov. 22, 1887, p. 2.

would jeopardize any treaty which might reach the Senate and refused to consider them.<sup>80</sup> Actually, Bayard favored a reciprocity agreement but the partisan attacks by Frye and his colleagues had destroyed any hopes of success along that line. Also, bitterness engendered by the Halifax Award had not yet subsided.

The Bayard-Chamberlain agreement, representing two months' work by the commission was presented to the Senate on February 20, 1888. It was accompanied by a message from President Cleveland urging its approval. Cleveland, Bayard, and the Canadian representatives considered the settlement to be just and equitable.<sup>81</sup> Essentially the terms of the treaty were as follows: (1) A mixed commission would be appointed to delimit the territory named in Article I of the Convention of 1818. (2) Free navigation for American fishing vessels in the Straits of Caseo were assured. (3) Free access to the ports and harbors of Canada to purchase wood and obtain water, with a few minor restrictions was guaranteed. (4) The three mile limit should be measured not from headland to headland but from the low water mark, again with minor exceptions. (5) Although no provisions for reciprocity were included in the treaty, Article XV said, "Whenever the United States shall remove the duty from fish-oil, whale oil, seal oil, and fish of all kinds (except fish preserved in oil)" then the United States (fishermen) could purchase, without license, bait, ice seines, lines, and all other supplies besides the privileges of transshipment of

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80. Ibid., p. 2.

81. Ibid., p. 77.

catch, and shipping of crews.<sup>82</sup>

Immediately the Republican press attacked the treaty as a "sell-out" and American diplomacy was depicted as being at its "low water mark."<sup>83</sup> Nelson Dingley described the agreement an "abject surrender" and said, "it certainly can not get the necessary two-thirds vote."<sup>84</sup> One Bangor, Maine, paper reported confidently "that this one-sided agreement would be promptly rejected by the Senate."<sup>85</sup> The Eastern Daily Argus, the most powerful Maine Democratic newspaper, considered the treaty a "practical solution of the great question,"<sup>86</sup> and roundly condemned Frye for attacking the treaty before the Congress had a chance to consider it.<sup>87</sup> The Maine newspapers, predominately Republican, opposed the treaty because it would have enhanced Cleveland's prospects for re-election in the fall. Maine's Blaine was a likely Republican presidential aspirant. As one Republican Senator was quoted, "The fact is that just now we cannot afford to let this administration do anything."<sup>88</sup>

The first official onslaught of the treaty was initiated by Frye on March 15, 1888. He requested that the President send to the Senate

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82. The Treaty is recorded in Senate Executive Documents, 50 Cong., 1 Sess., 1887-88, Vol. 10, No. 178.

83. Tansill, op. cit., p. 77.

84. Dingley, op. cit., p. 292.

85. Bangor Whig and Courier, Feb. 23, 1888.

86. Portland Eastern Argus, Feb. 22, 1888.

87. Ibid., Feb. 22, 1888.

88. Quoted in Tansill, op. cit., p. 78. (Memorandum to Bayard).

the minutes and protocols of the commission's meetings.<sup>89</sup> The resolution did not include the usual addition to such requests, namely, that transmission of said documents be contingent upon whether the request would be detrimental to the public service.<sup>90</sup>

Bayard thought this resolution was "without precedent in form and substance."<sup>91</sup> He had practically given up the treaty anyway. When the Chamber of Commerce of New York City and other big business organizations had voted against it, he prepared for the worst.

On May 7, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee made its report. The majority report, signed by Frye, attacked the treaty viciously. But President Cleveland was their main target because he had defied the Senate's wish that no commission be formed. It recommended that the "ill advised negotiations" should not receive the support of the Senate.<sup>92</sup>

The minority report, in contrast, was an extended investigation of the fisheries question since 1818. It was well prepared and constituted a cogent defense of the treaty. Senator Morgan, who also defended the treaty in the Senate, and Secretary Bayard were its chief authors.<sup>93</sup> The report argued that Cleveland's refusal to obtain Senate approval of his three commissioners was consistent with a long list of precedents. The report urged that the treaty be supported un-

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89. Cong. Record, 50 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 2093.

90. Tansill, op. cit., p. 79.

91. Ibid., p. 79. Letter from Bayard to Senator Gray.

92. Senate Documents, No. 231, Pt.8, 56 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 286-333.

93. Tansill, op. cit., p. 80.

animously by the Senate while charging that the critics of the treaty were simply over-zealous partisans searching for political ammunition.<sup>94</sup>

In an open session, rather than executive session, the treaty was brought to the floor of the Senate on May 29, 1888. Frye hoped to gain the most by letting the public hear his partisan views and assailed the treaty vehemently.

His attack was composed of generalizations. At one point, he intimated that Senator Payne of Ohio was "unpatriotic" because he defended the treaty. This slur was applauded by the gallery and spurred on by this support of his chauvinistic oratory, he continued to excoriate the treaty.<sup>95</sup> Some Senators, Frye argued, were threatening to place fish on the free list if the Senate failed to accept the treaty. This action he would "deplore" and pleaded with the Senate not to be duped by British diplomacy as it had been so many times previously.<sup>96</sup>

The intensity of Frye's vehemence was partially caused by Senator Payne's insinuation that Frye might be playing politics with his opposition to commissioner Putnam. Frye, apparently, hurt by this accusation answered Payne by explaining his relationship with Putnam.

"I have only to say further about Mr. Putnam that he is an honest man, a good lawyer, and the Democratic candidate for governor of Maine. I am sorry for him that he is going to be beaten, and that this issue will do as much to that end as anything else."<sup>97</sup>

Frye's opposition to Putnam undoubtedly influenced his position in

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94. Senate Documents, No. 231, Pt.8, 56 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 286.

95. Cong. Record, 50 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 4698-99.

96. Ibid., p. 4697.

97. Ibid., p. 4700.

regard to the treaty. One can be sure that the Republican Party could ill afford a Democratic victory in the "portentous" September election in Maine.<sup>98</sup>

Frye continued his diatribe by laboriously attacking the treaty's provisions one by one. In each case he decided that the United States had gained nothing that she did not have before and that the British had conceded what "no civilized nation on the face of the earth would deny to the vessels of any nation in distress."<sup>99</sup> The climax of the Maine Senator's remarks rested on emphasizing that Canadian newspapers favored the treaty.<sup>100</sup> The implication was that if the journals supported the treaty it meant that the United States must have received "the short end of the deal." Later research has proved that the Canadian press was equally divided, the conservative newspapers supported the treaty while the liberal press opposed it.<sup>101</sup> Frye, obviously, was citing the conservative newspapers rather than the liberal, thus distorting the truth in order to re-inforce his own position. Frye concluded that the treaty was "a dishonorable, humiliating, and cowardly surrender."<sup>102</sup>

The Senate debate was intermittent during the ensuing weeks. Re-

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98. The Maine press seemed to favor Frye's position in regards Putnam. The Bangor Whig and Courier attacked Putnam as "Cleveland's negotiator." See, August 11, 1898. Also, "we know what we want and if he [Putnam] thinks he can fool us he is mistaken." Ibid., Aug. 22, 1888.

99. Cong. Rec., 50 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 4704-4705.

100. Ibid., pp. 4707-4708.

101. Tansill, op. cit., p. 78 ff.

102. Cong. Rec., 50 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 4708.



marks by Frye and his colleagues were accepted by New Englanders as true, although comments from other sections were not complimentary. E.L. Godkin in the Nation criticized Frye for his recklessness and generalizations and depicted Frye's speech as being a "boisterous arraignment" of this treaty and all previous fisheries treaties.<sup>103</sup>

On August 9, 1888, Senator Morgan took the floor in an effort to save the treaty for the administration. During his remarks, he accused Frye of perpetuating "a mess" for a paltry sum of money as would be derived from an increase in the tariff.<sup>104</sup> He charged that Frye wished for political union with Canada and that the only difficulty standing in the way of this desire was the fact that Canada would have the same tariff as would the United States. This would hurt the Maine fishing industry. The frustrated Morgan then assailed Frye and the fishing interests of New England. He said:

"Whose market is it? The market of the halibut ring, the fisherman's association, the combine who use it for their own purposes, not the market of the American fishermen.... All of these complaints, now for seventy years, have come from one fishing interest in this country...that of New England."<sup>105</sup>

Morgan reminded Frye that there were many more fishermen in the South and in the interior who were not complaining and that the New England fishing industry had received bounties and subsidies and still it diminished in size. Such reasoning was to no avail; on August 21,

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103. Nation, June 14, 1888, p. 483-84.

104. Cong. Rec., 50 Cong. 1 Sess., p. 7389.

105. Ibid., p. 7391.

1888, the Bayard-Chamberlain Treaty was defeated by a vote of yeas - twenty-seven, nays - thirty, absent - nineteen.<sup>106</sup>

Historians have charged that the treaty opponents acted with partisan intent. Frye, with the possibility of Blaine's election in 1888, the Putnam candidacy for governor of the State of Maine, and his natural anti-Democratic philosophy was incapable of acting differently than he did. As an Anglophobe because of British attitudes during the Civil War, he could not consider Great Britain in any other light than an opportunistic, greedy, and selfish country.

With the treaty's defeat the modus vivendi agreed upon earlier became effective.<sup>107</sup> Negotiations continued between 1888 and 1911 when a general reciprocity settlement was finally concluded only to be rejected by the Canadian parliament. Finally, in 1912, by the virtue of a Hague award, the question was solved to the satisfaction of both parties.

Actually, Secretary of State John Hay in 1900, attempted to settle the question and received the approval of Senator Lodge and Frye.<sup>108</sup> This would seem to indicate that either Frye had acted partisanly in 1888 or he had reversed his position regards to Great Britain. Both were true. Frye admitted his pleasure at Great Britain's support of United States' foreign policy during the Spanish-American War and after. Even as early as Cleveland's second administration, (1892-1896), Frye cooperated with the State Department and Richard

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106. Ibid., p. 7768.

107. Tansill, op. cit., p. 86.

108. Ibid., p. 92.

Olney the Secretary of State when the latter was in need of help to settle the Pribilof Islands seal controversy.<sup>109</sup>

In summation, it should not be forgotten that Frye's opposition to the Mills bill (a Democratic low tariff measure which passed the House in the summer of 1888) was inextricably involved with the fisheries question. Frye was unable to oppose one and support the other and remain consistent in his beliefs.

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109. Ibid., p. 352.

### Chapter III

#### THE TARIFF AND FOREIGN COMMERCE

Senator Frye's position on the tariff question is discerned from the discussion of the Bayard-Chamberlain negotiations. Frye was a high protectionist and consistently followed this position until his death.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century Republicans and some Democrats believed in the necessity of maintaining a high tariff to protect the industrial interests. A tariff for revenue only was considered inadequate. It was their belief that prosperity for all economic interests depended on protection for a few; any other policy would place the American nation in a precarious industrial position in relation to Great Britain and the continent. They reasoned that money should not leave the country. A country should have more exports than imports and the revival of a strong merchant marine was essential for the growth of foreign commerce.

Frye was a zealous advocate of these policies. Shortly after he had replaced Blaine as Senator, Congress was seriously considering the question of a tariff revision downward. Majority opinion held that a commission should be appointed to study the question and to recommend changes to Congress. This was done. But because the commission was composed of protectionists, the final result was only a reduction of about five per cent.<sup>1</sup>

In the discussion prior to the appointment of the commission,

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1. Harold Faulkner, Economic History of the United States, (New York: McMillan Co., 1954), p. 550.

Frye was at his protectionist best. Although in favor of a commission because, "he recognized that our tariff laws must be just and equitable, and the existing law does not in all respects answer this demand;"<sup>2</sup> he made his position on the tariff clear.

"I am a protectionist from principle. If there was no public debt, no interest to pay, no pension list, no army and no navy to support, I still should oppose free trade ... and tariff for revenue only.... What are free trade and a tariff for revenue only? They are one and the same, now and forever as inseparable as Siamese twins."<sup>3</sup>

Following this declaration of principle, Frye denounced the perpetrators of what he thought was an unsound tariff policy: "The only prominent champions of free trade to-day in the world are England and the Democratic Party of the United States."<sup>4</sup>

Frye was not being facetious or "politiking" when he made these statements. He maintained persistently until his death that Great Britain was America's most dangerous competitor, economically and militarily. Like many of his colleagues, he twisted the lion's tail whenever the opportunity offered, as in the Bayard-Chamberlain negotiations.

Probably no man in the United States believed in the tariff as a panacea for the economic ills more than did Frye. Continuously, throughout his career, he gave speech upon speech exalting the tariff and each followed essentially the reasoning contained in his Senate speech supporting the commission:

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2. Cong. Rec., 47 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 1055.

3. Ibid., p. 1050.

4. Ibid.

"...we grow rich and powerful under protection, and yet we have free trade more absolute and abundant than all the rest of the world, between the thirty-eight states and nine territories... protection has invariably brought us prosperity, increased wages, decreased cost of manufacturers, and furnished a ready market for our farmers."<sup>5</sup>

As has already been seen, Frye's desire for a high tariff on fish from Canada helped to secure the defeat of the fisheries treaty. President Cleveland had wanted a lower tariff to encourage freer trade and to remove indirect government support of manufacturing which, he felt, had been a detriment to other elements of the economy. In his annual message to Congress in December 1887, he recommended wholesale tariff reductions. Frye vehemently opposed this message because of its "suicidal" possibilities to American prosperity.<sup>6</sup> However, the fact that this proposal by Cleveland was contemporary to the heated Bayard-Chamberlain negotiations should not be overlooked.

For a number of years a treasury surplus had been accumulating. Cleveland felt that this surplus could most easily be reduced by a tariff reduction, particularly, since, according to the President, the tariff was "strangling" competition and increasing the wealth of only a protected few, namely, the Captains of Industry.

Cleveland had defined the issue and the presidential election of 1888 was fought over it. Republicans interpreted the measure, for political reasons, as a free trade document and Frye was no exception. On January 23, 1888, at the height of the fisheries controversy, Frye

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5. Ibid.

6. Lewiston Journal, December 26, 1887, p. 2.

assailed the message as "a free trade document pure and simple."<sup>7</sup>

Reading from English newspapers that were in favor of the message, he declared that the English were trying to invade the home market of the United States. After giving a list of often cited statistics showing how prosperous America had become under a protective tariff, he proceeded to offer his remedy for the surplus. "He would repeal all internal revenue taxes. If that proved to be too much then taxes on liquors and tobacco could be repealed along with the duty on sugar."<sup>8</sup> This last proposal would appear rather conspicuous if it had been included in one of Frye's many temperance speeches; however, all crusades are easily forgotten when danger strikes at the roots of one's security, in this case, the tariff. A reduction of the tax on liquors would certainly not make the price of that commodity any higher for those who bought it and would, no doubt, enable those who found liquor too expensive with a tax on it to buy it when the tax was removed. This formula for reducing the surplus was inconsistent, also, with a speech delivered October 19, 1887, at the Boston Home Market Club. Frye had just returned from Europe and his speech was based on observations made while there. Warning the group of the evils of free trade he said:

"Are you going to allow men who call themselves reformers, men who pretend to believe in free trade - an utter absurdity, no nation believes in it - are you going to allow them to strike at your home market? --- Within the last 20 years, we have progressed marvelously under our tariff. It was forced upon us by the war. It was one of the most beneficent things that the war achieved

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7. Cong. Rec., 50 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 618.

8. Ibid., p. 618-624.

for us. Why should we give up this vantage ground? Why should we trifle with it?"<sup>9</sup>

In this same speech, instead of mentioning tobacco and liquor taxes, he advocated a different method for dispersing the surplus. Essentially he proposed that ten million dollars a year be granted in subsidies to American shipbuilders and owners, ten million to educate people, and he advocated putting 500,000 men to work digging the Nicaraguan Canal.<sup>10</sup> This change of position indicated that Frye was not favorable to a reduction of the surplus by reducing revenues, but rather by expending revenues on public and private projects. It would seem logical that Frye should recommend, as in January, a reduction of the tax on liquor and tobacco or he should not have mentioned liquor or tobacco since this position was not shared by the Republican Party. The speech caused E.L. Godkin of the Nation to pounce on Frye with his usual pungency by declaring that Frye "did not care where the surplus was expended as long as a tariff was maintained."<sup>11</sup>

Aided by Cleveland's message, the Democrats in the House managed to pass the Mill's Bill which contained the substance of Cleveland's proposals. Not to be out done, the Republican Senate, in the heat of the Presidential campaign, proposed a substitute bill which was highly protectionist. Simultaneously, the heated controversy over the fisheries question confused issues so that the conferees from the House and Senate could not agree on a compromise tariff. As a result, the tariff

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9. Albert Clark, The Tariff Made Plain, "What Senator Frye Saw in Europe," (Boston: 1906), p. 30-36.

10. Nation, Oct. 27, 1887, p. 189.

11. Ibid.



proposals of both parties were thrown to the electorate for a decision in the presidential election of 1888.<sup>12</sup>

Benjamin Harrison emerged the winner in the election. The Republican Party quickly interpreted the results as a mandate for their policies including a high protective tariff. Actually Cleveland had received a plurality of the popular vote. Any mandate based on such an incongruity, therefore, was bound to spell trouble for those who blindly and hopefully read in the results of the election that the people were in agreement with their policies.

Meanwhile, James G. Blaine had become Secretary of State for President Harrison. Blaine had been a protectionist whenever such a policy served his best interests as a politician. Frye sponsored Blaine's bill which proposed a meeting of a Pan-American Congress.<sup>13</sup> The bill passed and Blaine duly invited the South American republics to a meeting to be held in Washington. Paradoxically, Blaine's purpose in calling such a conference was to arrange favorable trade relations among Pan-American countries through tariff revisions.

The delegates to the Congress representing eighteen nations convened in Washington in October of 1889, and were immediately taken on a 6,000 mile junket throughout the East and Middle West. Finally they again assembled in Washington to resume deliberations. Unfortunately, Frye publicized his views on the purpose of the conference. The New York Times reported Frye's comments and sardonically editorialized:

"Mr. Frye avows that the main object was to get

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12. Oberholtzer, op. cit., Vol. 4, p. 487-490.

13. Ibid., p. 99.

them ~~/the delegates/~~here and to take them about the country with a view to impressing them with the greatness of its resources and its power as a nation, as a means of commanding respect. 'This,' he thinks, 'might have a practical result in teaching them to look to this country as an arbitrator in their national disputes.' He thinks, also, that the congress may lead to the adoption of a common silver coin to the profit of our Western silver mines. Beyond that he does not expect much...

If there was an ~~/sic/~~ sincerity in Secretary Blaine's address of welcome to the delegates... he could not have been privy to Senator Frye's little game."<sup>14</sup>

The editorial made additional comments on Frye's inconsistencies in advocating trade with South American countries and also, demanding the high protective tariff. It suggested, sarcastically, that Frye might ask Congress to subsidize steamships to carry American manufactured goods to Latin American countries and thus solve the problem of an adequate merchant marine by "robbing Peter to pay Paul." The editorial summarized its feelings toward Frye by ridiculing his position:

"The whole thing is a tough of inconsistencies and absurdities, and we may as well make up our minds either to remove the barriers to foreign trade or go without it. Putting up barriers and trying to force trade over them is about as sensible as building a fence for the mere purpose of climbing over it."<sup>15</sup>

Even, if as Frye suggested, the conference had been motivated by economic greed, it apparently was not successful. Besides a provision for settling disputes by arbitration, proposals for an intercontinental railroad, customs unions, and an international American bank were

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14. N.Y.T., Nov. 16, 1889, p. 4.

15. Ibid.

offered. However, Canada was not invited and her absence made it impossible to conduct discussions relating to trade arrangements, ostensibly the main reason for calling the Congress to Washington. Therefore, the Congress adjourned with little likelihood that any of its provisions would be implemented.<sup>16</sup>

Secretary Blaine tried desperately in the ensuing months to obtain favorable support for his reciprocity ideas. He was unable to understand why Congress allowed only \$68,000,000 or eight per cent of United States' exports to go to Latin American countries while importing \$170,000,000 worth of goods from those same nations.<sup>17</sup> The chief instrument for securing a more favorable balance of trade with these countries was the duty on sugar. Republican Senators wanted to abolish this duty and thereby lower the treasury surplus. Such a measure would aid the consumer because nine-tenths of the sugar used in this country was imported from Cuba, Hawaii, and the Latin American countries.<sup>18</sup> Blaine, however, saw a splendid opportunity for exacting trade concessions on a reciprocal basis using sugar as a lure. Accordingly, he got Eugene Hale, Frye's colleague from Maine, to offer an amendment to the pending McKinley tariff bill which would effectuate his plan.<sup>19</sup> On July 11, 1890, he expressed his opinions in an open letter to Frye, who was a member of the Senate Finance Committee.

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16. Bailey, op. cit., p. 445.

17. Muzzey, op. cit., p. 443.

18. Ibid., p. 442.

19. Edward Stanwood, American Tariff Controversies of the 19th Century, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1903), Vol. II, p. 277.

"Here is an opportunity where the farmer may be benefited.... Here is an opportunity for a Republican Congress to open the markets of forty millions of people to the products of American farms. Shall we seize the opportunity or shall we throw it away? --- there is not a section or a line in the entire bill McKinley Tariff Bill that will open the market for another bushel of wheat or another barrel of pork."<sup>20</sup>

Blaine wrote a similar letter to the major of Augusta, Maine, and July 26, 1890, he wrote again to Frye expressing the same sentiments. These letters received nation-wide publicity. Unfortunately, Blaine's proposal was defeated largely because the protectionist Congress feared that any such arrangement would have to include Canada. Canada was feared as an economic competitor which might ruin the American economy if her goods were allowed to compete with American goods. Thus ended an intelligent, equitable, and sound proposal buried by the McKinley Tariff of 1890, a tariff for which Frye voted.<sup>21</sup>

Frye's tariff ideas were well known by 1890. He always supported a high tariff, but was never, personally, a potent force for enacting the tariffs. In 1894, he voted against the Democratic Wilson-Gorman Tariff. In 1897, he voted for the Republican Dingley Tariff. He failed to see that the home market was diminishing as the industrial output increased. He always advocated a tariff higher than the prevailing one hoping to capture the remaining few areas of the home market. He did not understand that unless the United States imported, she could not export.

After the passage of the Democratic, but still protectionist

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20. Ibid., p. 278.

21. Cong. Rec., 51 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 9942.

due to crippling amendments, Wilson-Gorman Tariff of 1894, Frye gave a speech at Bridgeport, Connecticut, in which he analyzed the depressed economic conditions of the country and offered his remedies.

"Just as soon as we get the chance we /Republican Party/ will revise the tariff, and on old lines too. We shall admit free of duty all we need and can't produce here, other than luxuries. On everything made in Europe that competes with American labor a duty will be placed equal to the difference between wages here and there. It will be framed on the lines of the McKinley Bill, the best tariff measure ever enacted."<sup>22</sup>

Frye also claimed that Thomas B. Reed had more to do with the bill's passage than McKinley. This caused one paper to note the basic economic fallacies contained in Frye's address and that he was hurting Reed's chances for the Presidency in 1896 by attaching his name to the abominable tariff of 1890.

"We have too much respect for Mr. Reed to suppose that he is not thoroughly nauseated by it. If Frye continues this kind of oratory, Mr. Reed's chances for a Republican nomination will promptly vanish."<sup>23</sup>

In November of 1895, Frye delivered a similar tariff speech at Biddleford, Maine.

"We propose to run this government on the receipts of a protective tariff. Congress may be obliged to touch the tariff but it will do so as lightly as possible for when tariff revision takes place it must be done under the Administration of a party in full sympathy with the protection of American industries."<sup>24</sup>

To the writer it appears that the tariff had made Frye a monomaniac. Every action, every move depended first on how it would

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22. N.Y.T., Mar. 29, 1895, p. 1.

23. Ibid., Mar. 30, 1895, p. 2.

24. Ibid., Nov. 22, 1895, p. 2.

affect the tariff. The Democrats had control of all branches of the government in 1894. However, there were enough protectionist Democrats, if they voted en bloc with the Republicans, to stop any appreciable reduction in the tariff. The Republicans gained control again in 1896 and in the following year passed the Dingley Tariff which imposed the highest duties of any tariff to that date. Frye backed this revision and since Dingley was also from Frye's home city of Lewiston, he probably did considerable coaching of Mr. Dingley.

It is difficult, if not futile, to understand the logic of Frye's position on the tariff. He would faithfully vote for a high tariff and simultaneously lament the decline of the merchant marine. One source commented on this paradox by calling attention to the fact that "Senator Frye's party has for years devoted two-thirds of its dynamic energy and substantially all of its campaign money to the attempt to prohibit and destroy commerce. Dingleyism and extension are incompatible...."<sup>25</sup> Apparently Messers. Dingley and Frye did not share that opinion.

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25. Ibid., June 22, 1898.

## Chapter IV

### THE MERCHANT MARINE

The growth of the United States' merchant marine had been continuous until the Civil War. The era of the forties and fifties had seen clipper ships and packets in almost every part of the world. However, circumstances during and after the war caused the merchant marine fleet to disintegrate until in 1900 the American merchant marine carried only 8.7 per cent of United States' foreign commerce.

There are numerous reasons for this collapse. Great Britain had greatly exceeded American progress in the development of her steel and iron industry. When the revolution from wooden to iron ships was taking place in the 1850's and 1860's, she produced steel ships more cheaply than did American shipbuilders. Therefore, she carried the world's commerce with a distinct advantage over American wooden vessels. Another serious blow to the merchant marine was a law enacted by Congress in 1866, which stated that "no American vessel that had been transferred to foreign registry during the Civil War should be readmitted to American registry."<sup>1</sup> Since American shipowners, wishing to save their vessels from Southern raiders, had sold one-third of the American merchant fleet during the war to foreign countries, one-third of the carrying fleet was eliminated.

Professor Zeis, who has written a definitive account of American shipping policy, feels that the most important single cause for the decline was the maintenance of navigation laws which restricted American

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1. Paul Zeis, American Shipping Policy, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938), p. 15.

registry to ships built in the United States and owned by American citizens living in the United States.<sup>2</sup> These laws prohibited the purchasing of foreign ships for use in the carrying trade. Since Great Britain was building ships at less cost than the United States and since American shipowners could not purchase these cheaper foreign built ships, the inevitable occurred. This situation seriously imperilled two of New England's most lucrative activities, shipbuilding and commerce. Therefore, it was not surprising to see as early as 1870, Representative Lynch of Maine trying to reverse this disastrous trend.

Lynch introduced a bill to provide large bounties to shipbuilders but only token bounties to shipowners.<sup>3</sup> It did not pass the House but was important not only for the interest shown in the decline of the merchant marine, but, also, because it marked the genesis of the battle between those who opposed "free ships" and those who advocated generous government subsidies to the shipping industry. In general, the "free shippers" wanted the navigation laws repealed so that American shipowners could purchase cheaper foreign vessels. The opponents of the "free shippers" obviously echoed the pressures exerted by the shipbuilders whose position would be jeopardized permanently if cheaper foreign vessels could be bought.

For New England, the ideal program would have been one not only requiring American shipowners to buy their ships from native builders, but also, one which allowed the American fleet to compete with English

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2. Ibid., p. 15.

3. Ibid., p. 19.



ships in the foreign carrying trade. This could only be done by granting bounties or subsidies.

While James G. Blaine served as Senator from Maine, he had introduced bills to aid American shipping but these failed.<sup>4</sup> Frye assumed the mantle when he entered the Senate and for twenty-five years tried as futilely as his predecessor to solve the problems of the Maine shipbuilder.

Nelson Dingley was serving as a Representative from Maine's second district much of the time while Frye was in the Senate. Since the second district included Bath the home of the Sewall Shipbuilding Company, Dingley allied himself with Frye to halt attempts made to allow "free ships" in the early 1880's.<sup>5</sup> On January 6, 1883, in a speech on a "free ship" bill, Dingley declared "no policy ... that looks to making this nation dependent upon a foreign nation, upon a nation like England, for the supply of vessels to carry on its merchant marine can be wise and safe."<sup>6</sup> Upholding the navigation laws which prohibited "free ships", Dingley explained that in time of war it would be mandatory to have a merchant fleet "of our own". Three days later, Dingley introduced a bill to aid the merchant fleet and to encourage shipbuilding by the awarding of mail subsidy contracts. Frye introduced the bill in the Senate where it was adopted. In the House it encountered violent opposition and was subsequently killed.<sup>7</sup>

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4. Cong. Rec., 45 Cong., 3 Sess., Vol. 8, p. 2132.

5. Dingley, op. cit., p. 232.

6. Cong. Rec., 47 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 1001.

7. Dingley, op. cit., pp. 233-238.

In 1886, another attempt was made by Dingley during the fisheries controversy. It was the Dingley Shipping Bill to which Frye attached a rider calling for retaliatory legislation against Canadian discrimination.<sup>8</sup> Frye wished to build up the American fishing fleet and thus stimulate the faltering shipbuilding industry.

With the advent of Harrison's administration circumstances changed somewhat. Blaine became Secretary of State again and lost no time implementing his belief that a South American trade was possible through the use of reciprocal trade agreements and subsidies to steamship lines. Although his tariff ideas were repudiated, the movement for subsidization gained momentum and in 1891, the Frye-Farguhar bill passed.

The reader will recall that Frye's solution for the treasury surplus in 1887 contained an appropriation of \$10,000,000 for ship subsidies. In the 51st Congress, he introduced several bills which would have relieved the burden on the merchant marine by exempting vessels from taxation while paying a subsidy to shipbuilders. The most important bills, if for no other reason than that they passed, were ones providing 30 cents a mile a ton for slow vessels built in the United States with American registry.<sup>9</sup> To placate the owners of fast liners, Frye introduced another bill providing for four classes of subsidized steamers with payments ranging as high as six dollars a mile for first class liners to one dollar a mile for fourth class steamers.

Frye's purpose in these bills was simply to revive the merchant marine and benefit Maine shipbuilding. His position on "free ships"

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8. Ibid., p. 269.

9. Cong. Rec., 51 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 6907.

precluded any other solution except subsidies. Frye maintained that the only trouble with the merchant marine was its lack of tariff protection. "Why should we pay \$15,000,000 a year to foreign built ships for carrying our cargoes?"<sup>10</sup> When he visited Europe in the spring of 1887, he had not seen one American vessel in an European port.<sup>11</sup> Frye was bothered by the American neglect of her merchant marine. With Dingley, he argued that in war time it would be necessary to have a native fleet which could be depended on. In addition, he must have hoped that the shipbuilding industry would revive so that Maine could be restored to her rightful place among the more prosperous states of the Union.

Frye persistently fought for subsidies but such men as Senator Vest of Missouri reminded the Senate periodically that Frye represented "a shipping people". "Take away the shipbuilding from Maine and 'Othello's occupation is gone'. As a matter of course, if this bill is passed it is better than a gold mine in Maine."<sup>12</sup> Such assertions were difficult to deny. However, Maine was a sizeable distance from the supplies of steel and iron, and probably would have been at a disadvantage with Massachusetts, New York, or Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, on July 12, 1890, the Senate passed Frye's bill by a vote of 28 to 16 with 40 absences.<sup>13</sup>

In the House Frye's program guided by Representative Farguhar was

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10. Ibid., p. 6914.

11. Ibid., p. 6913.

12. Ibid., p. 6919.

13. Ibid.

overwhelmingly defeated by an aroused opposition led by Joe Cannon.<sup>14</sup>  
 The tonnage bill considered more iniquitous of the two was killed. The postal subsidy bill likewise was attacked and, although passing, was emasculated by cutting the payments by one-third. The Senate accepted the amended bill and it was enacted as the Postal Aid Law of March 3, 1891.<sup>15</sup>

The law divided mail-carrying steamships into four classes. The fastest, at least twenty knots, would carry mails between the United States and Great Britain. The second class, at least sixteen knots, would carry mails between South America and the United States. The third and fourth classes were granted mail delivery with the North American continent. The first and fastest class of ships would receive four dollars per mile for an outward voyage. The remaining three classes would receive two dollars, one dollar, and sixty-six and two-thirds cents respectively.<sup>16</sup>

Originally, Frye had expected that entirely new lines would be formed and new ships would be built. While these vessels carried the mail, they could also carry other goods at rates comparable to those charged by competing nations, namely, Great Britain and Spain, since the subsidy would compensate for the difference in cost. This, presumably, would increase the American merchant fleet so that in a few short years the country would be the proud possessor of a large fleet

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14. Ibid., 2 Sess., p. 3350.

15. Winthrop L. Marvin, The American Merchant Marine, (New York: Scribners and Sons, 1902), p. 414.

16. Ibid., p. 415.

of first line steamships. One authority believes, as does the present writer, that this estimate would have been realized if Frye's proposal had been allowed to pass in its original form.<sup>17</sup>

Except for two foreign built ships and two American built ships, the Saint Paul and the Saint Louis, Frye's expectations failed to materialize. The only new line that was established was the American Line. When the act expired in 1923, only eight lines were in operation and without a postal subsidy they could have continued.<sup>18</sup>

Frye foresaw that the bill as passed would not suffice. Both he and Senator Hale voted against the acceptance of the House amendment but to no avail. Frye, on the day of the vote, pleaded that a revived merchant marine was an absolute necessity, if for no other reason than the vessels could be used as naval auxiliaries.<sup>19</sup> Actually, the net result of the Postal Act of 1891, can be measured by the fact that the four new ships which were engaged in carrying mails were converted to warships during the Spanish-American War and proved to be invaluable additions to the American flotilla.<sup>20</sup>

Throughout the 1890's and early 1900's, the clamor for ships was continued by such bold advocates as Admiral Mahan, Theodore Roosevelt, and Senator Lodge. Frye, their close friend, introduced bills and more bills to aid American shipping but without success. From 1892 to 1912, every platform of the Republican party contained a plank ad-

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17. Ibid., p. 414.

18. Zeis, op. cit., p. 35.

19. K.J., Mar. 3, 1891, p.1.

20. Marvin, op. cit., p. 424.

vocating aid to the struggling merchant fleet. However, it was the methods of implementation on which proponents were attacked and defeated, not the principle in general.

In 1897, Frye organized a committee to promote an intense campaign to expand the foreign trade fleet as an instrument of national defense. This group consisted of many prominent and influential people interested in aid to shipping and aid to themselves or their vested interests. Some of its leading members were: Senators Hanna, Perkins, Frye, and Elkins; Representative Payne of Ohio; Charles H. Cramp, the well known Philadelphia shipbuilder; Edwin Hyde, president of the Bath, Maine Shipbuilding Company; C.A. Griscom, president of the American Line; Theodore Search, president of the National Association of Manufacturers; and Joseph P. Grace, of the famous Grace Lines.<sup>21</sup>

This committee met continuously for three years in New York, Philadelphia, and Washington. It was impossible, inspite of Frye's contention that the only interests considered were the interests of the American people,<sup>22</sup> for this group not to be partial, although evidence of a great deal of compromise is confirmed in the report of the committee given by Frye to the Senate on December 4, 1900. Instead of discriminating duties, tonnage taxes or bounties as might be expected from such a group, the report recommended sailing bounties i.e., bounties paid on tonnage of ships and miles traveled. Frye reported that none of the committee was in favor of "free ships" nor

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21. Cong. Rec., 56 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. 34, p. 31.

22. Ibid.

could he understand why they should be.<sup>23</sup>

This report of the committee was re-drafted and presented to the Senate, in substantially the same language, as the Hanna-Payne bill of 1899. It was defeated and in 1900, Frye introduced it again. Frye's bill would have provided a general bounty of one and one-half cents a gross ton per hundred miles for the first 1,500 miles. Beyond 1,500 miles, the bounty was to be reduced to one cent for each one hundred miles. The total amount to be expended in one year could not exceed \$9,000,000. Frye had set this limit hoping it would facilitate the bill's passage.<sup>24</sup>

Unfortunately for Frye, Senators Vest and Clay completely analyzed the bill and pointed out its defects to the Senate. They ascertained that the major portions of the bounty payments would go to large companies such as the Standard Oil which were already making a profit. Another devastating point was that no new ships could be built because those in the process of being built would absorb two million dollars beyond the nine million dollar limitation suggested by Frye.<sup>25</sup> If the ceiling were lifted there was no telling what the cost to the taxpayer would be. The bill never came to a vote due to the efforts of Vest and Clay who convinced enough Senators that Frye was not the great and patriotic American that one national magazine had described in a recent article.<sup>26</sup>

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23. Ibid., p. 32.

24. Zeis, op. cit., p. 40.

25. Cong. Rec., 56 Cong. 2 Sess., p. 1337. Also, p. 1609-10.

26.. Review of Reviews, January 1901, Vol. 23, p. 15.

In his second inaugural address, President McKinley, no doubt at the insistence of his friend Mark Hanna, had urged that something be done for American shipping. Complying with McKinley's sense of urgency, Frye re-introduced in December 1901, the same bill as in 1900 excluding the nine million dollar limit for bounty payments. This was a "last ditch" attempt to get an aid working program established. The culmination of eighteen years of work and thought went into the bill and the culmination of eighteen years of ill-will defeated the bill. The nine million dollar limit was restored on the Senate bill which passed but in the House the proposal failed to survive the Committee on Commerce and was defeated.<sup>27</sup> Apparently the American people, having their fill of government subsidies like the railroad grants, were not impressed by the chauvinistic utterances of Frye and his supporters.

It is not difficult to discern a major reason why Frye's plans passed the Senate but were rejected by the hostile House. Undeniably the House, being popularly elected, was a more reliable reflector of public opinion. The Senate had become an aristocratic institution representing the nouveau riche, as one can readily see by reading David Graham Phillips' exposures. The Lewiston Senator associated with men of wealth and could not help but be influenced by them. Eugene Hale, Nelson Aldrich, and Mark Hanna, three of his closest friends were multimillionaires and were not noted for their records of public service. Quite naturally associations such as these, would bring cries of special privilege from many people.

Such impressions were underscored when Frye accepted an invitation

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27. Zeis, op. cit., p. 42.



from the commercial, steamship, and other allied groups of the City of New York to attend a huge testimonial dinner to be held in his honor at the Waldorf-Astoria April 26, 1899. The banquet was a "token of thanks from New York City to Frye for his indefatigable promotion of American commerce, particularly, for the huge appropriation Frye had obtained for the improvement of New York's harbor facilities. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, he had for years championed "pork barrel" legislation in an attempt to improve the river and harbor facilities of the country, and thereby improve the status of the American merchant marine.

The dinner was an impressive affair. One newspaper described the ballroom decorations:

"The favors and designs of the evening were appropriate. The sherbet boxes were miniature channel dredges, and with the ice cream the regiment of waiters carried in designs of ocean steamships, steamdredges, and cornucopias. A chart of New York harbor was placed at every place."<sup>28</sup>

Among the guests were Governor Theodore Roosevelt who acted as chairman; Senators Platt, Cutting, Depew, and many of the most prominent representatives of New York's commercial interests.

Governor Roosevelt opened the banquet reading a letter from President McKinley commending Frye's devotion to the commercial and industrial interests of the country. Senator Platt seconded the commendation and added, "if there is a senator now in public life who

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28. N.Y.T., April 27, 1899, p. 1. N.Y. Tribune, April 28, p. 1. Bangor Whig and Courier, Kennebec Journal, Lewiston Journal, and Bangor Commercial, all April 28, 1899, p. 1, give a similar account of the banquet.

can be said to belong to us all, he is the Honorable William P. Frye of the State of Maine." Next to speak was Mr. Ambrose, state senator from New York. He described Frye's cooperation when he (Ambrose) went to the Commerce Committee to ask for an appropriation for New York harbor. Frye pushed the bill through the Senate, related Ambrose, and when the House balked, Frye was appointed as one of the Senate conferees to meet with House conferees to iron out their differences. Ambrose then described Frye's patience and understanding in listening to the "long-winded conferees" and after hearing the House proposals, he then replied "with a ringing declaration in favor of the New York measure and the House conferees were forced to yield to his logic."

After Ambrose's speech, Governor Roosevelt then introduced Frye who was the guest of honor and the main speaker of the evening. Frye began with the traditional after-dinner joke. The New York Times' correspondent reported this portion of his speech where Frye had an occasion to use the word "damn". "This sent a shiver throughout the galleries which were crowded with women, but the point of the story was caught immediately by all and was applauded by the fair hands in the gallery." The main portion of the speech concerned itself with the usual topics, the tariff, commerce, merchant marine, expansion, and how to promote them. He offered no new ideas but simply reiterated old ones and those of his party. He did point to the United States' unpreparedness for the Spanish-American War and blamed government neglect of the merchant marine for a good part of this unpreparedness. This probably was the only indisputable statement made that night.

Maine Republican newspapers rejoiced at seeing one of Maine's

native sons feted by such important men.<sup>29</sup> The New York Times, however, criticized Frye and "his class" with their ideas and methods and voiced the opinion that such ideas and methods were giving way to others of a "broader view and a firmer grip on the facts of international trade."<sup>30</sup>

The dinner itself was described in the New York press in column headlines. Some of the guests must have been uneasy, however. Senator Platt praised Governor Roosevelt whom, in less than a year, he was to "push" into the Vice-Presidency so that he would be eliminated from New York state politics. Platt and Frye exchanged verbal platitudes when memories of the bitter 1880 Republican convention, when Conkling and Platt humiliated Frye, must have been revived. Many who read the accounts of this affair must have had their beliefs confirmed, particularly, those who felt that this type of "honoring" was an example of what America held most sacred.

In all probability, this public association with the industrial magnates alienated the agrarian and reform elements of late nineteenth century America from supporting the merchant marine. They had had unpleasant experiences with railroad subsidies and found that the benefits of such government aid without government regulations was extremely limited. Such affairs as the Waldolf banquet were commonplace in that period and such names as Samuel Gompers, Robert La Follette, or Eugene Debs were conspicuous by their absence.

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29. Bangor Daily Commercial, April 28, 1899. Contains excerpts from other Maine dailies.

30. N.Y.T., April 28, 1899, p. 6.

Delmonico's famed New York restaurant saw many testimonial dinners. From such celebrities as Herbert Spencer and Henry Ward Beecher, to men like Chauncey Depew, Frye, and Charles Cramp often attended dinners in honor of the "successful individualist" in these years. The latter group met at Delmonico's in December 1895, to celebrate the centennial observance of Jay's Treaty. Frye spoke in the presence of Charles Cramp, the Philadelphia shipbuilder, pleading for discriminatory duties and taxes to lift the merchant marine "out of the depths of adversity."<sup>31</sup> Perhaps a similar address at a grange meeting or an A.F.L. local gathering would have been more effective in the final realization of his plans.

From 1902 to 1910, Frye introduced more subsidy legislation but such proposals seldom survived the committees of the House. The hostile, liberal press gave the public the impression that subsidies were raids on the treasury,<sup>32</sup> and that Frye was the personal lobby for the shipbuilders. One of the last of Frye's efforts to revive the merchant marine was contained in one of the few articles Frye wrote for national magazines. It appeared in the June 21, 1906 issue of the Independent and was entitled, "The Meaning and Necessity of Ship Subsidies."<sup>33</sup>

In the article, Frye expressed his disgust that American owned ships carried only six per cent of American foreign commerce. Having spent five million dollars on the harbor of Galveston, Texas, alone,

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31. N.Y.T., Dec. 20, 1895, p. 6.

32. Nation, Aug. 17, 1901, p. 89.

33. pp. 1459-62.

and having only one American ship that used its facilities seemed a huge waste. In addition, he said that in the year 1905, the only American vessels to enter foreign ports were: one in France, two in Germany, and fifty-seven in England. If that was not bad enough, the American consul in Finland had seen only one American ship in his fifteen years at that post. Frye made one notable reversal of position in this article. The author of the Postal Subsidy Act of 1891, confessed that a postal subsidy was an aristocracy, because it resulted in a monopoly. "It is to be paid to but one line. We should encourage the building of ships by any man who has money to build them."<sup>34</sup> He had no idea how to do this and subsidies remained his only answer.

Frye died in 1911 and with him went his vision of a strong merchant marine. Ironically, as a result of the impending World War, in 1914 a Democratic administration succeeded in passing legislation which allowed "free ships" to engage in foreign commerce, a principle that Frye had opposed all of his life. Subsequent legislation was passed embodying many of Frye's ideas, however, and by 1920, Americans could observe that American owned, if not built, vessels registered in the foreign trade were carrying forty-three per cent<sup>35</sup> of American export and import trade compared to the six per cent observed by Frye in 1906.

Frye was correct when he warned that the United States must not become a neutral without ships in time of war. It was because of the war that these ideas were finally vindicated. Whatever the Senator's motives for subsidizing the merchant marine his ideas were essentially sound.

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34. Ibid., p. 1462.

35. Faulkner, op. cit., p. 541.

## Chapter V

### FRYE AND THE RISE OF THE UNITED STATES TO A WORLD POWER

Up to now, Senator Frye has been seen as a champion of the commercial and industrial interests through his support of a high protective tariff as well as a merchant marine. The late 1880's found him espousing a new idea, economic imperialism.<sup>1</sup> Frye was not alone in this crusade to find new markets for the overproduced goods of the tariff protected industrial machine of the United States. But, only a few men were in the position to implement this idea on the national level, and perhaps the Senate Foreign Relations Committee offered as much of an opportunity as could be found.

Senator Frye had been appointed to the Committee on Foreign Relations in 1885, largely because of Senator Hoar of Massachusetts who was a member of that committee.<sup>2</sup> Frye remained a member for twenty-six years terminating with his death in 1911. He was offered the chairmanship of the committee in 1898, but refused because he did not wish to relinquish the chairmanship of the Committee on Commerce.<sup>3</sup> From this vantage point, being associated with his friend, the powerful Henry Cabot Lodge, Frye could be very influential in foreign affairs.

The United States embarked on the expansion trail in the 1890's, mainly because of economic considerations. However, another important

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1. Faulkner, op. cit., pp. 553-555.

2. Eleanor E. Dennison, The Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1942), p. 8.

3. Ibid., p. 14 and p. 79.

reason must be mentioned. In 1890, Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan wrote a book entitled, The Influence of Seapower Upon History. It was Mahan's contention that to be an economically secure country, like Great Britain, a nation must develop a large and powerful navy. Sea power existed to protect commerce in time of peace and war. The navy would keep trade routes open and protect coaling and way stations along the trading lanes. But America had no merchant marine to protect and had there been any, there was only a pathetically anemic navy to protect it.<sup>4</sup>

Frye was greatly influenced by the Admiral's thesis as were many Americans. However, that the writings of Mahan were the determining factor behind Frye's expansionism can be easily refuted. As early as 1888, two years before Mahan's classic, Frye showed his imperialist hand when he became alarmed at German overtures in the Pacific archipelago of Samoa. Before the Apia incident had brought the situation to a head, Frye recommended that the United States display her power as a country by sending war ships to protect its interests.<sup>5</sup> Later, as the situation became explosive, he expressed views which portended the expansionist fervor ten years hence. "It (Pago Pago) is the best harbor in the Pacific Ocean, right in the hurricane latitude, and it is absolutely necessary if we have vessels in that ocean that we can have the right of harborage in Pago Pago - absolutely necessary!--- If the Nicaraguan Canal is built --- Samoa is of infinitely greater

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4. Julius Pratt, Expansionists of 1898 (Baltimore: Johns-Hopkins Press, 1926), pp. 1-20.

5. Cong. Rec., 50 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 108.

importance to our interests than the Sandwich Islands...."<sup>6</sup>

While this aggressive tone was more justified than in the fisheries controversy, Frye omitted humanitarian justification for maintaining American rights in Pago Pago; the economic considerations were paramount. Pago Pago was a coaling station and, true to Mahanism, coaling stations were vital possessions in order to supply American merchant vessels and the navy, however inadequate both were.

More significant than Samoa to the expansionist crusade was American interest in Hawaii. For decades a small group of Americans had been steadily increasing their control over the islands until in the 1880's over two-thirds of the total taxable real estate of the Hawaiian Islands was in American hands.<sup>7</sup> In 1875, Congress had approved a reciprocity treaty with Hawaii whereby sugar was allowed to come into the United States at an advantage over Cuban and Louisiana sugar. This accelerated a boom in the islands so that by 1890, three-fourths of Hawaiian imports came from the United States and ninety-nine per cent of her exports were absorbed by the United States. This gave Hawaii a very favorable balance of trade resulting in the accumulation of surplus capital. Hawaii's phenomenal prosperity, however, depended on the United States and its favorable reciprocity arrangement.<sup>8</sup>

In 1890, Frye supported the McKinley Tariff which allowed all sugar to enter the United States free of duty and gave Louisiana sugar growers a two cent per pound bounty. Hawaii was forced to compete with

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6. Ibid., p. 1374.

7. Bailey, op. cit., p. 469.

8. Pratt, op. cit., p. 147.



Cuban and American grown sugar causing serious economic dislocations in the islands as their exports nosedived. Property in Hawaii depreciated more than \$12,000,000. One solution to this economic disaster was annexation by the United States so that Hawaii could also receive the sugar bounty.

The allegation that American sugar interests incited the eventual revolution in 1893 often has been voiced. Actually opinion among the sugar planters was sharply divided because annexation by the United States would mean the exclusion of Oriental labor upon which the industry depended.<sup>9</sup> The real reasons, it can be safely concluded, were due to the material benefits expected from annexation, plus the desire to oust the unstable government of Queen Liliuokalani.<sup>10</sup>

On January 14, 1893, the Queen promulgated a new constitution highly unfavorable to American interests. Anticipating the Queen's move, her enemies had organized a revolutionary movement which had the support of the United States Minister to Hawaii, John L. Stevens. On January 16, Stevens, at the request of the pro-annexationists, ordered more than 150 armed men from the U.S.S. Boston to protect American property in the islands, and on January 17, he recognized the revolutionary government which had been so weak as to need his assistance. Two weeks later, Stevens proclaimed Hawaii a protectorate and advised the State Department to act quickly lest Great Britain annex the islands. Shortly thereafter, a hastily prepared treaty for annexation

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9. Ibid., pp. 156-157.

10. Ibid., p. 160.

was submitted to the Senate.<sup>11</sup> However, the Senate heeded Cleveland's request for delay and took no action prior to March 4, 1893.

Cleveland, after becoming President for the second time, was extremely suspicious of the conduct of Minister Stevens concerning the revolution. Accordingly, on March 9, 1893, he withdrew the treaty from the Senate and promptly appointed James Blount as an official commissioner with "paramount authority" to visit the islands and investigate the entire situation.

When Blount arrived in Hawaii, he proceeded to lower the American flag over the government house and to dismiss the military who had been ordered ashore by Stevens. His position repudiated, Stevens resigned in disgust and was succeeded by Blount.<sup>12</sup>

John Stevens was a Maine man. He had been co-editor of the Kennebec Journal with James G. Blaine and followed Blaine to Washington where the latter secured Stevens' appointment as Minister to Hawaii in 1889.<sup>13</sup> Being closely connected with Blaine throughout his career, Stevens shared Blaine's philosophy of expansion. It is little wonder that Cleveland's repudiation of him was taken as a repudiation of expansionism in general, and Maine's pride in her public servants in particular.

Blount's final report charged Stevens of improperly aiding the revolution and concluded that the revolution would not have material-

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11. Bailey, op. cit., pp. 469-471.

12. Ibid., p. 131.

13. Thomas Spaulding, D.A.B., Vol. 17, p. 619.

ized without his aid.<sup>14</sup> As if a portent of what was to come, Frye's home-town newspaper viciously attacked Blount and his report as being in a "league with Spreckles",<sup>15</sup> and earlier the Kennebec Journal, true to its former editor, pronounced Blount a liar and described Stevens as a great man who also was a "true, tried and tested American".<sup>16</sup> It is interesting to note that while Blount's report was being discussed, the Journal carried full texts of all of Stevens' addresses, some delivered as far away as Chicago. Stevens had been carrying on a campaign of vindication and had addressed many pro-annexationists groups in the East.

A New York newspaper carried a story which alleged that Senators Hale, Aldrich, and Frye owned Hawaiian bonds and therefore had a monetary interest in annexation.<sup>17</sup> This accusation was alarming to Frye and when the Blount report reached the Senate, Frye not only supported Stevens' position by describing him as a man "of the highest character,"<sup>18</sup> but found it necessary to clear himself of any ulterior motives for his support of Stevens. At one stage of the debate, as if defending himself as well as his friend Stevens, Frye vehemently denied that Stevens would incite a revolution and protested the Democratic assertions to that effect. After one of Frye's remarks, Senator Vest

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14. Pratt, op. cit., pp. 135-137.

15. Lewiston Journal, Nov. 21, 1893, p. 1.

16. K.J., Nov. 21, 1893.

17. Matilda Gresham, The Life and Times of Walter Q. Gresham (New York: Rand McNally and Co., 1919), Vol. II, p. 773. Frye was extremely upset by this report. The author has found no evidence either confirming or denying this allegation.

18. Cong. Rec., 53 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 72.

from Missouri responded that he would sooner trust a hungry wolf "when the bleat of a farmer's lamb is heard than Senator Frye. With all his generous instincts it is impossible for him to be anything else but an intense New England Republican. Like his friend, Mr. Stevens, his whole political action is governed by the great truth that the earth belongs to the saints, and we are saints."<sup>19</sup>

Apparently such verbal attacks bothered Frye little. Shortly afterward he accused Blount of not writing one line of "plain, untarnished truth" in his report, and reiterated that Stevens was unquestionably innocent of any ulterior motives.<sup>20</sup> Tempers and emotions had become so aroused that the Kennebec Journal claimed that Frye's rather unoriginal assessment of Blount's report would "live in history" as it cut to the truth like a skilled surgeon.<sup>21</sup>

On December 27, 1893, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee began an investigation to ascertain whether there were irregularities in Stevens' behavior or in Blount's report. A subcommittee composed of Senators Frye, Morgan, Gray and Sherman worked on the project until late February 1894. There was sharp disagreement on several important points. Senator Morgan's report exonerated everyone except Queen Lili.<sup>22</sup> The Republican members, including Frye, agreed with Morgan's assessment of Stevens but not his conclusions concerning Blount and

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19. Ibid., p. 194.

20. K.J., December 14, 1893.

21. Ibid., December 15, 1893.

22. Senate Report, No. 227, 53 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 173.

President Cleveland.<sup>23</sup> The other Democratic Senators dissented from Morgan's approval of Stevens' actions but approved of Blount's actions. Apparently the subcommittee's investigation and conclusions were simply perfunctory exercises confirming the members' preconceived notions and prejudices. Nothing new was revealed.

Frye and his Republican colleagues based their opposition on the technicality that Blount's appointment without the consent of the Senate was unconstitutional.<sup>24</sup> In addition, they urged that the Queen not be restored as Cleveland had previously suggested.<sup>25</sup> Their recommendations would preserve the integrity of the provisional government and would (when the present furor subsided) leave the way open for a renewal of pressure for annexation.<sup>26</sup> This resolution never came to a vote.

The most important question was whether or not the United States would adopt an expansionist program. A resolution against annexation was introduced by Senator Vest of Missouri and was vehemently debated. Vest who had steadfastly opposed Frye in all of the latter's projects remained equally steadfast on this issue.<sup>27</sup> Frye, on the other hand, took his usual exception to his adversary's proposal and bluntly admitted that he was, "and had been always a very earnest annexationist ..."<sup>28</sup> He maintained that the best interests of Hawaii and the United

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23. Pratt, op. cit., p. 185.

24. Ibid., pp. 35-36.

25. Ibid., p. 33.

26. Ibid., p. 34

27. Cong. Rec., 52 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 1308-1309.

28. Ibid., p. 1308.

States required annexation and advocated the immediate recognition of the provisional government.<sup>29</sup> "Let the Senate pass the [Frye] resolution. Let it be sent across this continent, across the ocean, down into the paradise of the Pacific, and let the hearts of those confiding people once more be assured that they are not to be attacked by the troops of their own government."<sup>30</sup>

As the session progressed, debate on Hawaiian annexation became intermittent and no general agreement seemed forthcoming. Late in May a breakthrough became apparent. Senator Kyle of South Dakota introduced a resolution to the effect that the United States should not use force to restore the monarchy or to maintain the provisional government.<sup>31</sup> To Frye and others this proposal was preferable to the restoration of the Queen. He expressed the sentiments of the annexationists when he voted for the resolution to give the Hawaiian people their "liberty of thought and action," but refused to vote for a resolution which proposed that the United States would not annex Hawaii.<sup>32</sup> This concluded the first political airing of the expansionist philosophy in a body not yet ready to assume the responsibilities of a colonial empire.

Senator Frye was disappointed at the outcome of the treaty and looked forward to the day when annexation would be consummated. From 1894 to 1898, Hawaii under President Dole enjoyed a great peace and

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29. Ibid., p. 1310.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., p. 5192.

32. Ibid., pp. 5194-5247.

prosperity due to the abolition of the Louisiana sugar bounty and a reversion to the favorable position she enjoyed in 1890.<sup>33</sup> If a stable government was all that was desired, Hawaii had one. However, to Frye, stability meant a relatively independent citizenry of Hawaii, an independence which might lead that island into the hands of Great Britain. It is not surprising, therefore, that Frye and others would be acutely aware of any change that would endanger American interests in Hawaii.

Early in January 1895, a small royalist group was apprehended and jailed by Honolulu police. The city was placed under martial law. However, when a sufficient amount of time had lapsed, the provisional government saw that the severe counter measures taken by them were absurd. The prisoners were released and the island returned to normal. Annexationists used the "revolt" as a further excuse to beat the drums for annexation. Quotidian speeches emphasizing the seriousness of the situation were made by Frye, Lodge, and others. At Bridgeport, Connecticut, in March, 1895, Frye delivered a bombastic speech. After extolling the protective tariff and the McKinley Tariff in particular, he added his description of the glories of late nineteenth century Republicanism:

"Give us Republican rule for a single decade of unlimited, uncrippled power, and we will show the people the beneficence of Republican legislation. We will annex the Hawaiian Islands, fortify Pearl Harbor, build the Nicaraguan Canal and marry two great oceans. We will show people a foreign policy that is American in every fibre and hoist the American

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33. Pratt, op. cit., p. 193.

flag on whatever island we think best, and no hand shall ever pull it down.<sup>34</sup>

American journalism would be very irresponsible if it allowed such jingoism to go unchallenged. One paper, a traditional foe of Frye and Imperialism, labeled Frye the spokesman for "a few men of feeble nerves and narrow imagination."<sup>35</sup> The Nation brought up the embarrassing Hawaiian bond syndicate and described Frye and Senator Lodge as going into a "corybantic rage" to denounce the allegation.<sup>36</sup>

Frye took little note of these editorial comments and extended his belligerency in an interview given a week later at Biddleford, Maine.

"I would not submit to any insult, to any aggressions on our rights.... I would annex the Hawaiian Islands at once.... I would maintain our coaling stations in Pago Pago against the world... If Spain, by her actions at any time, justified us in so doing, I would seize and hold Cuba against the world.

I would accept Canada and would not offer her inducements to stay away, as this last Democratic congress did. It made her a present of one million dollars annually as a bonus to remain under the protection of Great Britain, to nag, insult, and abuse us. Even if England forced us into another declaration of war, I would promptly seize Canada and make her forever a part of the Republic."<sup>37</sup>

This interview caused the Nation to describe Frye as being in an intoxicated mental condition,<sup>38</sup> while the Independent called him a

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34. N.Y.T., March 29, 1895, p. 1.

35. Ibid., March 30, 1895, p. 4.

36. Nation, January 31, 1895, p. 81.

37. Lewiston Journal, April 3, 1895, p. 1.

38. Nation, April 11, 1895, p. 269.



"buccaneer."<sup>39</sup> The most bitter assailing came from the Times. It reported that Frye had startled the public and also American friends abroad.

"Not that the Senator has any great reputation for wisdom, for he has not. But he has been considered to be rather more sensitive to ridicule than Boutelle (from Maine's third district) or Henry Cabot Lodge. This goes far beyond the conventional and platitudinous Frye. It out Boutelles Boutelle and out Lodges Lodge.... Lodge in his wildest moments never went as far as this."<sup>40</sup>

In the same article the Times compared the growing imperialistic sentiment with the Salem witchcraft hysteria and concluded, facetiously, that Frye had lost his mind. "Such talk from a man in Senator Frye's position tends to make the United States odious and ridiculous before the world."<sup>41</sup>

Much of the criticism of Frye had been accentuated by his resolution introduced during the height of the "royalist threat" in Hawaii. Appealing to the emotions of his colleagues, he had demanded that warships be sent to Hawaii to protect American life and property and to prevent the restoration of Queen Lili.<sup>42</sup> This would, of course, violate the Vest resolution for which he voted, the resolution saying that the United States would not aid either the royalists or the provisional government of Hawaii with arms. Although the proposal was loudly denounced by the majority of the Senate, Frye persisted, and finally accused President Cleveland and Secretary of State Gresham of

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39. Independent, Quoted in the Nation, April 11, 1895, p. 269.

40. N.Y.T., April 5, 1895, p. 4.

41. Ibid., p. 4.

42. Cong. Rec., 53 Cong., 3 Sess., p. 1133.

being friendly to the Queen and wanting to restore the monarchy. Whether this was an attempt to arouse partisan clamor for annexation or a genuinely held belief is difficult to say. Whatever the reason, the Senate was not yet ready to commit itself to an unequivocal expansionist program.

While the debates on the Hawaiian question continued, another equally vexatious problem was developing in Cuba. The same Wilson-Gorman Tariff which had returned prosperity to Hawaii in 1894-95 had the opposite affect on the Cuban economy since it reimposed the duties of the pre-McKinley Tariff days on Cuban sugar. This caused unstable economic conditions in Cuba and led to a guerrilla uprising which would not end until the Spanish-American War.<sup>43</sup>

The uprising was directed against Spanish colonial rulers but American property was also destroyed<sup>44</sup> with the intention of forcing the United States to intervene.

The Committee on Foreign Relations of which Frye was a ranking member<sup>45</sup> recommended that the United States recognize the Cuban insurgents.<sup>46</sup> During the ensuing discussion, Frye approved the proposal.

"I have but one desire, and that is to see Cuba an independent republic, and whatever I can do justly and honorably to that end I am prepared to

43. Walter Millis, The Martial Spirit, (New York: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1931), p. 44.

44. James T. Adams, Epic of America, (Boston: Little-Brown and Co., 1931), p. 335.

45. Frye had just refused the chairmanship of the committee and also had just been elected Pres. Pro. Tempore of the Senate. Dennison, op. cit., p. 99.

46. Cong. Rec., 54 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 1886.

do."<sup>47</sup> A few months previously he wanted to "seize and hold Cuba against the world."

In the meantime the revolutionists were taking advantage of the American sympathy for their cause by sending filibustering expeditions from American shores. Although American vigilance succeeded in stopping about two-thirds of these endeavors the Spanish charged that United States' assistance alone was keeping the revolt alive.<sup>48</sup> Spain diligently checked vessels for contraband and as is inevitable in such cases made errors. One such error involved the American vessel Allianca. The Allianca was on route from Colon, Columbia, and upon entering the Caribbean Sea was pursued by a Spanish search vessel. The Spanish ship fired on the Allianca and though no shot reached its target the incident inflamed American opinion.<sup>49</sup> Many newspapers immediately demanded punitive measures and some called for annexation of Cuba. Godkin of the Nation opposed this emotional outburst and said of Frye, "War for war's sake has no warmer friend."<sup>50</sup> Frye was reported to have regretted the peaceful solution of the Allianca affair and to have preferred war. As a matter of fact, Frye opposed American interception of any of the filibustering expeditions. It made him "weary and heartsick" to see the United States doing "police duty for

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47. Ibid., p. 2249.

48. Orestes Farrara, The Last Spanish War, (New York: Paisley Press, 1937), p. 36.

49. Joseph Wisan, The Cuban Crises as Reflected in the New York Press, (New York: Columbia University Press., 1934), pp. 70-71.

50. Nation, January 30, 1896, p. 28.

the most wicked despotism ... on earth."<sup>51</sup> And if his position remained in doubt, he caused all speculation to cease by declaring, "I shall do or say or vote anything, consistent with honor and integrity --- which shall promote the success of the Cuban patriots who are --- struggling to wrest liberty from the iron grasp of a cruel and relentless despotism."<sup>52</sup>

As the election of 1896 approached, free Cuba subsided and into the vacuum came "free silver." Frye was being mentioned as a Vice-Presidential candidate and McKinley was reported as saying Frye was his choice. Maine's eyes, however, were on Tom Reed who was seeking the Republican nomination for President. Neither Frye nor Reed achieved success. The Vice-Presidency went to Garret Hobart of New Jersey. [Frye's daughter married Hobart's son.]

Frye gave his usual amount of speeches but did not command the headlines as he once had. His efforts were centered against the free silverites, but it appears that even this issue did not inspire him too greatly.<sup>53</sup> When Congress convened in December of 1896, Cleveland was a "lame duck" and Republican hopes for expansion had resumed its old vigor.

No sooner had William McKinley taken office than his Republican colleagues in the Senate began to needle him to lead the Republican forces in an attempt to annex Hawaii. On March 15, 1897, Frye had

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51. Cong. Rec., 54 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 2249.

52. Ibid.

53. Frye was disgusted at the intraparty strife over the silver question and did not want to go to the extreme for gold. Richardson, op. cit., p. 519.

seen the President and apparently received encouragement for this plan.<sup>54</sup> Earlier in February, Frye had advocated a \$100,000 appropriation for the improvement of Pearl Harbor with hopes of increasing Hawaiian dependency on the United States. Some papers assailed him for this proposal and one called him a "pirate and a common thief" claiming that Captain Kidd had used the same methods. He did not want to improve the harbor but rather to claim an American act of sovereignty there.<sup>55</sup> In short, Frye was using the technique of "dollar diplomacy" before the term originated twenty years later.

In Cuba the situation was worsening. Spanish attempts to alleviate the tension had failed.<sup>56</sup> As new outbreaks of violence occurred, Fitzhugh Lee, American consul-general in Havana, asked that ships be made ready in the event destruction of American property and lives took place. However, he assured his superior that they would not be needed at that time.<sup>57</sup> Despite this assurance by Lee, the battleship Maine was ordered to Havana January 24, 1898.

Public enthusiasm was at a fever pitch. Yellow journalists were reporting the Cuban news and when there was no news to report, they invented some. Hundreds of prominent citizens were giving speeches for Cuban independence or annexation. Frye's every utterance had a Cuban complex. He spoke at many meetings of national organizations and enumerated Spanish abuses while calling for intervention.<sup>58</sup>

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54. Pratt, op. cit., p. 216.

55. Nation, February 11, 1897, p. 47.

56. Pratt, op. cit., pp. 200-225.

57. Ibid.

58. Wisan, op. cit., p. 230.

In all the furor over Cuba, Frye did not forget Hawaii. He addressed the Manufacturers Association of New York in February 1898, and urged those present to exercise their influence upon the Senate for annexation of Hawaii. If they did not, they surely would lose the Hawaiian market.<sup>59</sup> In January, he had been quoted as wanting to "seize" Hawaii so that other interested nations could not annex them,<sup>60</sup> and some Maine newspapers agreed with him.<sup>61</sup>

While the Maine lay in Havana harbor an almost melodramatic incident occurred in the United States, the infamous de Lome Letter fiasco. In Maine, at least, people tended to blame no one but de Lome for his indiscretion, but as time went on this attitude changed to involving Spain directly with the letter.<sup>62</sup> No sooner had the de Lome furor subsided than the country went into a frenzy with the help of Heart's New York World. The Maine had blown up or had been blown up while it innocently lay at anchor!

At first the Maine explosion was greeted with mixed emotions. Senator Hale, Frye's compatriot from Maine, was certain that it was an accident and voiced his disapproval of extremists who clamored for war.<sup>63</sup> Congressman Boutelle, who owned an interest in the Bangor Whig and Courier, sponsored a measure which offered condolences to the

59. Nation, February 3, 1898, p. 80.

60. K.J., January 6, 1898, p. 2.

61. Lewiston Journal, January 6, 1898; K.J., January 7, 1898; Bangor Whig and Courier, February 11, 1898, p. 2.

62. Bangor Whig and Courier, February 11, 1898, p. 1.

63. Ibid., February 17, 1898, p. 1.

families of those who lost their lives on the Maine.<sup>64</sup> Boutelle was opposed to war being one of the three that refused to vote for the declaration of war in April. He felt the pressure from his constituents and publicly declared that "every Congressman had two or three newspapers in his district - most of them printed in red ink --- and shouting for blood."<sup>65</sup> Despite these pressures, the Whig pleaded for moderation and lamented the Congressional preparations for war.<sup>66</sup>

Frye, as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had been close to the Cuban situation since 1895. Since 1896, the committee had been conducting investigations attempting to gain information about the insurgents. It continued its investigations by probing the cause of the Maine disaster. The committee had recently advocated intervention; its present investigation was essentially one to find further justification for intervention. Despite the fact that the official board of inquiry did not find Spain guilty of sabotage, Frye, as a member of the subcommittee questioned the witnesses with a manner suggesting that Spain had deliberately blown up the Maine. His subsequent actions and public statements indicated that his knowledge of Cuban affairs was based solely on his interrogation of the witnesses as a member of the subcommittee. The results of the subcommittee's investigation were embodied in a resolution, Frye concurring, proposing

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64. Ibid.

65. Boston Herald, October 23, 1898. Quoted in Rhodes, The McKinley and Roosevelt Administrations, p. 55.

66. B.W. and C., February 24, 1898, p. 1.

the independence of Cuba.<sup>67</sup>

Shortly after the report was issued, Senator Proctor of Vermont returned to Washington from a trip to Cuba where he had observed the revolution first hand. Proctor's report depicting Spanish brutality and maladministration, served only to accentuate the already bellicose atmosphere of the country. A decade later one unidentifiable source alleged that Frye had literally dragged Proctor from the Senate cloak-room to deliver this inflammatory speech. It was reported that Proctor did not want to give such a report because he realized the probable affects of such action.

On March 29, Frye and Senator Rawlins introduced a "startling resolution" which was only a portent of the pressures to be applied to President McKinley during the next three weeks in an attempt to get the President to declare war.

"Resolved, by the Senate and House of the Republic of the United States of America in Congress assembled that the independence of the Republic of Cuba be and the same is hereby declared, and the President is hereby authorized and directed to employ the land and naval forces of the United States of America to wage such a war to success."<sup>68</sup>

Congressman Boutelle's Bangor Whig called this resolution ill-advised and censured Frye for his jingoism.<sup>69</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, however, congratulated Frye on his aggressiveness but directed Frye to "keep this note private."<sup>70</sup>

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67. Senate Reports, 55 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 458-549.

68. B.W. and C., March 30, 1898, p. 1.

69. Ibid., p. 4.

70. Elting Morison, ed., Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, (Cambridge:



As the days passed, Senator Frye continued to press for intervention. Reportedly he and three others visited President McKinley to urge the President to ask the Senate for a declaration of war immediately.<sup>71</sup> Frye's belligerency was not totally approved by his Maine constituents. Leading Portland businessmen sent Frye a letter endorsing McKinley's policy of watchful waiting but the Senator continued to assure the men that the Foreign Relations Committee would "do nothing rashly."<sup>72</sup> Less than a week later the Portland Press reminded Frye that the cause of the Maine's destruction was undetermined and the reasons for a war with Spain were ill-defined. Therefore, it urged a reconsideration of the whole attitude toward war.<sup>73</sup>

Business, in general, opposed war.<sup>74</sup> This is a likely explanation why Senator Hale supported McKinley's policy, and clearly explains Mark Hanna's opposition to war.<sup>75</sup> Frye had consistently agreed with Hanna and other business leaders on Republican economic programs. It is difficult to explain, therefore, why Frye at this time should pursue such an independent course. In Maine, Senators were still elected by the legislature which had traditionally been controlled by commercial and industrial interests.

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Harvard Press, 1951), Vol. 2, p. 806.

71. B.W. and C., March 31, 1898, p. 2.

72. Ibid., April 1, 1898, p. 1.

73. Quoted in B.W. and C., April 5, 1898, p. 2.

74. Julius Pratt, Hispanic American Historical Review, "American Business and the Spanish American War," XIV, No. 2, pp. 164-178.

75. Herbert Croly, Marcus Alonzo Hanna. (New York: MacMillan Co., 1923), p. 274.

On April 14, the Foreign Relations Committee's resolution demanding independence or war was introduced by Frye; the Senate was in pandemonium.<sup>76</sup> The Teller Amendment was quickly passed to discourage imperial designs of annexation but not without words from Frye who wished to leave the disposition of Cuba until a later date. It is clear that he desired annexation rather than the independence of Cuba.<sup>77</sup>

Finally, April 19, 1898, Congress passed a joint resolution that was tantamount to a declaration of war on Spain. Frye voted for the resolution while Hale and Boutelle voted against it. The Whig praised Boutelle for his courage in opposing such drastic action and praised the "State of Maine" which it said had cut "a very creditable figure throughout the Cuban controversy ... excepting ... the jingoistic tendencies of Senator Frye."<sup>78</sup> This was, indeed, mild talk compared to Frye's speech of April 19, which spearheaded the final vote for war. Lamenting the indecisiveness of Congress, he called for prompt action.

"I have been silent all through this discussion because I wanted action, now for God's sake let us do something to relieve those poor people in Cuba. I believe that if we act now within ten days, Cuba will be free; provisions will be there for the starving and if not our guns will be thundering at Morro Castle."<sup>79</sup>

These are contradictory words from a man who, three years before, had risen to "true statesmanship" after the Allianca incident by saying:

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76. London Times, April 14, 1898, 3:1. Quoted in Baily, op. cit., p. 509.

77. Cong. Rec., 55 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 3791.

78. B.W. and C., April 17, 1898, p. 4.

79. Ibid., April 19, 1898, p. 4.

"I had almost hoped that Spain would assume such an arrogant and belligerent tone that it would be necessary for the United States to round out our possessions as they should be, and if we cannot buy it, I for one should like to have an opportunity to acquire it by conquest."<sup>80</sup>

Shortly after war was officially declared, Frye paid a visit to Secretary of the Navy Long, a Maine native, asking for vessels to protect the coast of Maine from Spanish ships. Long regarded this request as an imposition and apparently did not act on it.<sup>81</sup> The request, in retrospect, seems little more than ridiculous since Spain's fleet was pathetically small and inefficient; besides, it had all it could handle in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Again, a rather obvious inconsistency arises when one compares Frye's fear of attack and his earlier statement that Cuba would be free in ten days, implying that Spain was militarily destitute.

The atmosphere generated by the war had succeeded in raising Americanism to heights not unlike most wars. Hawaiian annexation had been blocked for years because in peacetime a more diverse public opinion was tolerated. Now, however, the time was right except for one obstacle, Thomas B. Reed. Reed had never liked Frye nor did he agree on many issues with him. Reed, as chairman of the Committee on Rules of the House, controlled the consideration of a Hawaiian annexation bill. For three weeks against unbearable pressures from both public

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80. Walter Millis, The Martial Spirit, (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1931), p. 29.

81. Lawrence Mayo, ed., America of Yesterday, Journal of John D. Long, (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1923), p. 185.

opinion and his Republican colleagues, Reed blocked this bill.<sup>82</sup> Finally on July 6, 1898, Hawaii was annexed and Frye rejoiced to see one of his long sought proposals become a reality. A precedent for expansion beyond the continental boundaries had been established.

The "boy scout war" was short-lived. By August the outcome was sure, if a doubt had ever existed. Would the United States follow the Hawaiian precedent by annexing Cuba and the Philippines? President McKinley appointed his peace commission in the middle of August. Three members of the Foreign Relations Committee were selected, Frye, Davis, and Gray. Whitelaw Reid, editor of the New York Tribune, and Secretary of State Day completed the commission. Only Senator Gray, a Democrat, was known to be an anti-imperialist.<sup>83</sup>

Frye was reluctant to serve as a peace commissioner and if he had known that Senator Davis preferred Theodore Roosevelt to him, he might never have gone to Paris.<sup>84</sup>

Official negotiations began in Paris October 1, 1898, and the treaty was signed on December 10. Nearly a month was consumed discussing the delicate Cuban question. On October 31, the vexing and perplexing Philippine question came under discussion. United States policy regarding the Philippines had not been established by a formal statement. President McKinley had stated that he would accept no less

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82. Pratt (1898), pp. 315-325.

83. N.Y.T., August 27, 1898. Frye was labeled a jingo and an expansionist.

84. Thomas Beer, Hanna, (New York: A. Knopf, 1929), p. 208.

than Luzon.<sup>85</sup>

At first, Frye's position was vague. In an interview before going to Paris he stated that Puerto Rico and the Ladrone Islands must be annexed by the United States. To a question asking him if he would demand more than Luzon and Manila he replied, "there are other islands in the Philippines that are valuable. The commissioners can, you understand, exact whatever trade benefits they wish."<sup>86</sup> After a meeting with the other commissioners in President McKinley's office, he and Davis talked about dividing the islands; only Reid wished to take the entire archipelago.<sup>87</sup> At Paris, both Frye and Davis joined Reid in demanding the cession of the entire Philippine Islands.<sup>88</sup> Why he changed his mind remains a mystery. It was, no doubt, this fact which helped to change President McKinley's original demand of just Luzon to demand that all the islands were to be taken (with the help of Divine Providence, of course).

The Spanish commissioners balked at American demands for the entire Philippine Islands and negotiations broke down. At this juncture, Senator Frye made one of the most important moves of the entire deliberations. He sent a telegram to President Cleveland via Mr. A. A. Adeo (State Department aide) informing him of the precariousness of the negotiations. He warned that Spain had already conceded all that her

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85. Foreign Relations, 1898, pp. 905-907.

86. Lewiston Journal, August 25 or 26, 1898, p. ?

87. Pratt, op. cit., p. 332.

88. U.S. Foreign Relations, 1898, (Washington: G.P.O., 1899), pp. 932-933.

people would possibly accept; so could not the United States offer Spain a slight inducement which would placate the Spanish people while gaining America's desired ends?

"Might we not agree to pay Spain from \$10,000,000 to \$20,000,000 if thus a treaty could be secured? If no treaty then war, a continued disturbance of business, an expenditure of a million dollars a day, and further loss of life --- If war is resumed, I hope orders will be given to seize at once all of the Philippine Islands, also the Carolines."<sup>89</sup>

Two days later, Secretary of State John Hay called Frye to proceed with the negotiations along the lines proposed in Frye's telegram. If money would save a treaty then use money but do not sacrifice national honor were Hay's instructions.<sup>90</sup> The remainder of the negotiations proceeded on this basis. Spain, toward the end of the deliberations, desired free entry into Philippine ports if the islands were to be given to the United States. Frye emphatically opposed this request.<sup>91</sup>

By the terms of the treaty Spain ceded the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam to the United States. Cuba was to become free from Spanish sovereignty. The final settlement provided that Spain receive \$20,000,000 in exchange for the Philippines.<sup>92</sup>

The commissioners returned to the United States and were met with a mixed reception. After reading Frye's account of the proceedings in

89. Ibid., p. 939. Frye to Adee, October 30, 1898, Sunday midnight. (Author's italics, my underlining).

90. Ibid., Hay to Frye, November 1, 1898. The U.S. could not claim the Philippines by right of conquest since Manila was captured after the war ended.

91. Ibid., p. 962. Spain eventually gained a ten year guarantee of port privileges. Pratt, op. cit., p. 340.

92. Pratt, op. cit., p. 345.

The New York Tribune, the Nation declared that "negotiations of this sort have been familiar to all highwaymen and burglars since robbery began."<sup>93</sup> Frye was questioned by reporters as to the unpopularity of the commissioners on the continent and answered that only in French newspapers did he notice any hostility. He went on to say that we would have been "insane" to give the Philippines to Spain and fools to divide them among other countries.<sup>94</sup> Some labeled the \$20,000,000 a bribe and others, conscience money. Frye threw off remarks of men like William Jennings Bryan who said that the United States was buying the Philippines at \$2 a head as "campaign buncombe." He justified the payment on grounds that it followed a "common precedent and a universal custom among nations, and was doing just as we had done before, in the cases of Alaska, Louisiana, and other territories."<sup>95</sup>

The opposition to ratification of the treaty came from most Democrats and a few Republicans. It was based on constitutional arguments and the fear of entanglements in the affairs of the Orient.<sup>96</sup> Support for the treaty came from Republicans who had traditionally supported the philosophy of imperialism set forth by Beveridge, Mahan, Roosevelt, Lodge, and a few Democrats like Bryan who thought the treaty was better than nothing.<sup>97</sup> Frye, of course, supported the treaty. Senator Hale opposed the treaty as he had opposed the declaration of war.

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93. Nation, December 29, 1898, p. 1416.

94. N.Y.T., December 27, 1898, p. 2.

95. Ibid., October 5, 1900, p. 4.

96. Pratt, op. cit., pp. 349-355.

97. Ibid., p. 357.

When the treaty was ratified on February 6, 1899, only two Republicans, Senator Hoar and Hale voted against it.<sup>98</sup> Frye and Hale narrowly escaped a complete break on this issue.<sup>99</sup>

The United States had broken with its traditional isolationism and had, briefly at least, entered the arena of power politics. Frye perfectly reflected this chauvinistic, expansionistic age and philosophy.

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98. Ibid., p. 358.

99. Thomas B. Reed, even more irate at Frye and his colleagues than Hale, resigned the Speakership of the House and retired permanently from politics because of his disgust with the treaty.



## Chapter VI

### AN END OF AN ERA

Not much material of historical dependability is available about the personal and professional relationships of William P. Frye. It would be extremely hazardous, therefore, to draw from the material that is available any definite conclusions regarding this side of Frye's career. However, the author feels that it is necessary to fill in a few of the obvious gaps and to attempt to place Frye in an historical relationship with his colleagues and with their times.

Criticisms and compliments of Frye by his associates tended to follow party lines. His Republican friends apparently liked him and thought him amicable but the records fail to reveal that they considered him a party giant or even a great man. Chauncey Depew, Senator from New York and a friend of big business, described Frye as a remarkable man, always honest and frank in his personal relationships and a great legislator.<sup>1</sup> However, considering his long and undistinguished career such value judgments from Depew are of questionable validity.

Shelby Cullum described Frye as follows:

Frye held the respect of the people of his state to a greater degree than any other Maine statesman, except Blaine. As Chairman of the Committee on Commerce he was familiar with every question pertaining to rivers and harbors, the shipping interests, and the multitude of matters coming before the Committee....

It was his custom to report a bill from his Committees... and ask for its immediate consideration. No one ever objected, and the bill went through as a meritorious measure without question, on his word

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1. Chauncey Depew, My Memories of Eighty Years (New York: Scribners, 1922), p. 178-180.

alone to the Senate.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the positions Frye held were due to seniority but he filled them capably. He was elected president pro-tempore of the Senate three times, 1896, 1901, and 1907, a total of fifteen years service in that office.<sup>3</sup> In addition, he served as president of the Senate for six years because of the death of Vice-President Garret Hobart in 1899 and the assassination of President McKinley in 1901. For his long and distinguished service as presiding officer, his colleagues presented him a loving cup "that he cherished until his death."<sup>4</sup>

It is from his death notices that a more complete estimate of Frye can be drawn. Maine newspapers naturally eulogized him. One, in describing Frye's opposition to drinking, declared, "...not John B. Gough, or Sam Jones, or General Dow himself hold a nobler record in defense of prohibition than ... Frye. Senator Frye was one of the greatest men Maine ever reared."<sup>5</sup> Another paper emphasized that "the young men will miss him.... He aided a great many of them in securing lucrative positions..."<sup>6</sup>, and his own Lewiston papers carried front page headlines.<sup>7</sup>

It is not Maine newspapers, however, that record a mature and

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2. Shelby Cullum, 50 Years of Public Service. (New York: A.C. McClurg and co., 1911), p. 345.

3. Charles Lingley, Dictionary of American Biography. Vol. 7, p. 51.

4. Lewiston Journal, August 11, 1911, p. 1.

5. B.W. and C., August 10, 1911, p. 1.

6. Bangor Commercial, August 12, 1911, p. 1.

7. Lewiston Sun, August 9, 1911, p.1. Lewiston Journal, August 9, 1911, p. 2.

sensitive evaluation of Frye. The Nation, which had opposed Frye on a number of crucial issues in the past, conceded that he was a remarkable man, able and learned in diplomatic relations and in law, but "whose vision narrowed with the passing years ... the adjective great is not of those that suggest themselves in any review of the long, and in several ways very useful, career recently ended."<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps the Outlook described him best:

"Senator Frye may be described as belonging to the better of two divisions in which conservative leaders of a generation ago may be classed, he was not a petty politician and yet he was a politician in the main, rising sometimes to statesman like qualities and never becoming a mere tool of great interests. He was an indefatigable worker, a capable speaker, and tested by recent standards, may be regarded as an ultra-conservative in all such matters as the protective tariff and the control of corporations."<sup>9</sup>

It can not be denied that Frye fitted this description. He did not adapt to change easily. This conservatism coupled with his association with some of the more wealthy members of the "millionaires club", as the Senate was then known, caused him to be identified as one of these gentlemen in both wealth and ideas.<sup>10</sup>

It was David Graham Phillips who presented to the American people their first shocking encounter with the entrenched special privilege to be found in American political institutions during the first years of the twentieth century. In 1905-1906, Phillips published a serial type expose of some members of the Senate entitled Treason in the Senate.

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8. Nation, August 17, 1911, p. 133.

9. Outlook, August 19, 1911, p. 857.

10. Frye apparently was anything but a wealthy man.

Phillips assailed Chauncey Depew of New York, Nelson Aldrich of Rhode Island, and Arthur Gorman of Maryland. He alleged that these men were tools of big-business and were sacrificing the interests of the common people in favor of big-business concerns which they represented. One installment concentrated on "Fairbanks, Hale, and Frye."

Phillips' attack on Frye was scathing although he admitted Frye's competence in some areas.<sup>11</sup> Frye's ship subsidy programs were characterized as grabs admissable only in the "club" because the Senate was the only legislative body not controlled by the common man. He added, "Hale and Frye have their senatorial seats from legislatures ruled by railroad interests, therefore they are but tools of the Boston and Maine."<sup>12</sup> Phillips concluded by denouncing Frye's motives for entering politics. He sits in Congress "for his dear friends in politics and social life. Those rich friends, being comfortable and in possession of more than their share, wonder at discontent, call confiscation conservatism, and extol the virtue and piety of standputism."<sup>13</sup>

Phillips' charge that both Hale and Frye were "tools" of the Boston and Maine would be difficult to substantiate. Undoubtedly Frye was attentive to that railroad's best interests; he was a member of the board of directors of one of its branch lines from 1901 to 1911.<sup>14</sup>

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11. David Graham Phillips, The Treason in the Senate (Stanford, California: Academic Reprints, P.O. Box 3003), p. 94.

12. Ibid., p. 94.

13. Ibid.

14. Fortieth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the Maine Central Railroad, June 30, 1901, p. 2.

William Chandler, Senator from New Hampshire, conducted investigations of the railroad and found that it controlled the legislatures of Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire while it issued free passes to hundreds of important officials in order to secure their support. Chandler often remarked that New Hampshire was controlled by a dictator and its name was the Boston and Maine.<sup>15</sup> Frye was not a reformer at heart. Chandler asked for his support a number of times to curb the Boston and Maine and the general trend to consolidation by New England railroads. Frye shrugged off such requests by declaring that he was glad to say that he did not belong to the reformers "for generally they are only disgruntled politicians or assistant Democrats."<sup>16</sup>

Actually, in the last analysis, Frye was more progressive than his colleague Hale. After 1901, Hale became increasingly unpopular in the country at-large because of his refusal to recognize the changing atmosphere of Washington politics. On the question of the popular election of senators, Hale voted with other New England senators in opposition, while the "aged and infirm" Frye concluded that the people were determined to have it and so expressed a willingness to go along with public sentiment.<sup>17</sup>

From 1905 to 1911 Frye remained in the Senate but little of the old vigor remained. His wife had died and he was nearing the age of eighty. On August 8, 1911, having spent forty years as a member of Maine's congressional delegation, Frye died at his home in Lewiston,

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15. Richardson, op. cit., p. Ibid., pp. 617-625.

16. Ibid., p. 684.

17. Boston Herald, August 11, 1911, p. 1.

Maine. When notified of Frye's death, President Taft lamented, "the Lord seems to be against the Republican party for that means another Democrat and at once."<sup>18</sup> What Taft did not realize was that not Divine Providence but public sentiment was against the "old guard". Frye's death served only to emphasize the passing of a generation which had lived so comfortably with the inconsistencies of democracy in theory and plutocracy in practice.

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18. Henry F. Pringle, The Life and Times of William Howard Taft (New York: Farrar-Rinehart Co., 1939), Vol. 2, p. 623.

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The author was born January 24, 1934, in Bangor, Maine.

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He graduated from Camden High School in 1952.

In the fall of 1952, he entered Gorham State Teacher's College from which he graduated in 1956 with a B.S. in Education degree.

August 28, 1955, he married Helena T. Poland of Camden, Maine.

During the academic years 1956-1957 and 1957-1958, he served as a graduate assistant in the History and Government Department of the University of Maine. Concurrently, he was engaged in course work leading to the degree, Master of Arts in History.

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