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CUTTING VS. CHAVEZ:
A REPLY TO WOLF'S COMMENTS

WILLIAM H. PICKENS

I AM GLAD my article "Bronson Cutting vs. Dennis Chavez: Battle of the Patrones in New Mexico, 1934" (NMHR, vol. 46, 1971, pp. 5-36) has provoked some controversy. Both "patrones" deserve further comment if only for their domination of New Mexico politics for thirty-five years. I also appreciate the time and effort Professor Wolf has invested in his critique. I believe our debate contains some fundamental disagreements about the best way to approach the 1934 election as an historical event. Such disagreements have a broader importance than merely the Cutting-Chavez story since they involve assumptions that guide historical research from the beginning.

Perhaps the scope of the original article was too broad and general for such a relatively brief study. I concede that more evidence is needed to clarify certain assertions. But, in accusing me of going further than the evidence permits, Wolf overstates his own criticisms. My defense rests on two points.

First, Wolf ignores the stated purpose of the article. Beyond the drama of the election, I sought "to illuminate the larger outlines of the New Deal in New Mexico and ways that depression was shaping political consciousness" (p. 7).¹ The research of many scholars has produced substantial accounts of the political lives of Cutting and Chavez and in particular of this election (pp. 6 and 30). I tried to summarize this research and offer broad interpretations from the summaries. So it is neither appropriate nor accurate to use (as Wolf does) only the information in the article for judgment. He criticizes my lack of elaboration on several

points. My answer is that he will find the details he demands in such recent scholarship as Richard Beaupre's master's essay and Gustav Seligmann's dissertation on Cutting's life, both of which shaped my overview. It is regrettable that Seligmann's work has not been published, and indeed that University presses have given us no comprehensive work focussing on this period of New Mexico's history.²

Within the space of twenty-five pages, then, my problem was to identify the major historiographical issues and draw some conclusions without choking the article with clots of quotations or massive footnotes. If I might extend Wolf's parting analogy, I drove few nails into the "historical" house because (1) the number of nails I could use was limited; (2) many different-sized nails, driven by others, had secured parts of the house before I arrived; (3) my nails were meant for strategic points to hold the frame together. The building inspector finds few nails driven by the contractor because the walls, ceiling, and floor were well prefabricated.

Second, Professor Wolf's comments informed by political theory are most perceptive. But he lacks familiarity with the actual events of the national New Deal, recent historical judgments about its course, and Cutting's place among Republicans in the U.S. Senate. He is led to conclusions about the Thirties and Cutting's national role which, regardless of how well they apply to most theoretical situations, clearly distort this period in American history. Wolf makes much over my confusion of "the customary with the unusual" and speaks often of rules, exceptions, deviations, and patterns. My goal was more modest than the one he demands; I wished to describe the reactions of two men to an urgent crisis (the Great Depression) without regard to other crises or other men. Generalizations about "the behavior of political elites," "general situations," etc. in this particular case are largely unenlightening. We should rather be concerned with specifically what happened, how it happened, and tentative conclusions about why it happened. I do not claim that New Mexico was unique or exceptional, the pattern or the deviation. That is for others to decide. I merely

attempted to summarize the findings of scholars and offer further explanations based on their research and my own into the source materials.

Two alternative responses to Professor Wolf's criticisms are possible. I could attempt a point-by-point discussion of his questions and challenges, using additional information in narrow explanations and shaping it to meet his specific objections. This strikes me as somewhat pedantic and of interest to a very small number of readers. I have therefore decided to address my comments to Wolf's major criticisms while attempting to cover most of his detailed suggestions at least by implication. Using this approach, I can provide more elaboration on the issues of substantial importance in the Cutting-Chavez fight, the prime goal of the original article. Perhaps Wolf and I can find some common ground after all.

THE LABOR COMMISSIONER FIGHT AND THE GOP

OUR FIRST ARGUMENT comes over the Republican split of 1929. Wolf suggests that I have cited "no evidence that demonstrates the shrewdness" of Republican leaders in that year. Surely their overwhelming victory in 1928 made possible by the coalition of Springer, Dillon, and Cutting is "evidence" enough (p. 9). National prosperity did not insure a triumph in New Mexico; a Republican split had lost the Governorship and a Senate seat during the Coolidge sweep of 1924. Serious doubt existed that the three wings of the GOP, especially the one dominated by the rebellious Cutting, could work together in 1928. I quoted Hervey's doubts on page 8. "I'm absolutely independent," Cutting had said then, "I'm almost fifty-fifty as far as the major parties are concerned."³ The Old Guard distrusted him to an extreme. "God forbid!" wrote H. B. Hensley to Holm Bursum in August, "that the Republican party should make the grievous mistake of sending [Cutting] to the U.S. Senate . . . whose highest ambition seems to be never to miss an opportunity to knife the Republican party."⁴

In spite of this tension, Springer, Dillon, and Cutting did cooperate and so contributed their respective blocs (p. 9) to the greatest victory in state history to that date. The compromises that allowed this unity resulted from shrewd trade-offs, the most significant being the Old Guard's (*i.e.* Springer's) acceptance of a labor commissioner in the party's platform (p. 13). It is doubtful, though little concrete evidence exists, that Springer's Republicans thought Cutting would seriously push the commissioner idea. As we know, he did—making it the major fight during the legislative session. For reasons outlined on page 13, the Old Guard could not accept the commissioner bill especially since its original form contained such absurdities as promotion of workers' organizations. On February 13, 1929, Cutting's *New Mexican* declared that anti-commissioner Republicans had repudiated the laboring man. Charges followed that "the Republican Old Guard is keeping the lower class in a state of serfdom."⁵ A battle began within the GOP that lasted for twenty years.

In this regard, the article's point was that, though any faction within a party desires dominance over the party's organization, the central conflict in 1929 was ideological. Through Cutting and his allies, Spanish-Americans along the Rio Grande and lower-class Anglos along the Texas border and in the mines of New Mexico began to demand a government that would actively meet their needs. Wolf suggests that the commissioner fight was primarily for party control and patronage. Surely these are ever-important in American politics, but I think substantial evidence exists that ideology was equally important. The commissioner fight involved a struggle for ideological dominance of the Republican party in New Mexico.⁶

I shall not elaborate much on the arguments between the "Barons" and Cutting's "government expansionists" that appear in the article, except to suggest that a reading of the *New Mexican*, the *Albuquerque Journal*, the *New Mexico State Tribune*, and the *Las Vegas Optic* (the spectrum of editorial opinion) during the legislative debates reveal arguments of a distinctly

ideological hue. Time and again appear charges of "class legislation," "unfair government intervention," "the lower class," and "the natural course of the economy," phrases which had rarely cropped up during Dillon's first term.⁷ Such rhetoric may mask personal power struggles, but in this case two further factors persuade me to the contrary. I reiterate the contention that this was a serious debate over which groups within the state should be assisted by the government.

First, according to Gustav Seligmann, during this time Cutting began to lose support from those upper- and middle-class "respectable people," mostly old Progressives, who disliked appeals to class interest. During the commissioner fight and more so as the Depression crept over America, Cutting openly suggested "fundamental reforms in the body politic" that might aid the lower classes. We shall explore these reforms in later paragraphs; the point is that in public office Cutting renewed a sense of commitment to an egalitarian philosophy he urged during the Progressive Era. "He went to the Senate in [late] 1927," Arthur Schlesinger Jr. writes, "and quickly won a place as a hard working and courageous radical. . . . He conveyed in Washington a genuine sense of aristocratic high principle, which he mingled somewhat strangely with the tough political machine he maintained in New Mexico."⁸

Schlesinger's comments have a balance (high principle and tough political machine) that well reflect the two thrusts of Cutting's position on the labor commissioner. This leads to the second reason for my conclusion that ideology played a strong role in the commissioner battle. In spite of Cutting's "tough machine," it is impossible to believe that in 1929 Cutting could have gained control over the party's patronage or political machinery regardless of the commissioner controversy. Clearly Dillon was on the Old Guard's side. After learning of Springer's adamant opposition, the Governor disavowed his support for the bill. Bitter words passed between Cutting and Dillon upon several occasions. An embarrassed Dillon later blamed Cutting for the mistakes that

forced a special session of the Legislature to untangle knots caused by "the crowding and confusion during the last days of the [regular] session."⁹

Likewise, the Old Guard could hardly have believed that the national Administration would smile on Cutting. He was notorious for political irregularity. By 1929 he had switched parties four times. One story circulated, according to Erna Fergusson, that "when Senator Cutting presented himself in the U.S. Senate, [the Sargeant-at-Arms] asked on which side of the chamber he wished to be seated: was he a Democrat or a Republican?" Indeed, by 1930 the New Mexican Senator had lost what patronage he gained by his support of Hoover in 1928.¹⁰

It is therefore difficult to believe that the Old Guard feared Cutting's control over party machinery in 1929 if his only resource had been his money and maneuvers in the capitol's cloakrooms. Cutting's "tough machine" operated best outside the confines of formal party structures.¹¹ On the other hand, his ideological appeal for a coalition based on lower-class support was a threat not only to Old Guard domination of the Republican party but also to their power in New Mexico politics. This ideological struggle became even clearer during the desperate years after the commissioner fight.

THE ISSUE OF A PHILOSOPHY OF GOVERNMENT

PROFESSOR WOLF ignores both my intention in discussing the views of Cutting and Chavez about government and the historical context for these views. I intended no disquisition on "general political philosophies," delegate theories, etc., such as Wolf provides. Rather, my goal was to define "ways that depression was shaping political consciousness" (p. 7). Throughout the article appears the theme of *the economic responsibilities of government*: the labor commissioner battle, "state government . . . protecting their property and employing about a thousand [party members]," "rhetoric tailored to the economic crisis," "government had to

have powers to strike directly at evils produced by an industrial society" (pp. 19, 22, 25).

Even the hastiest overview of the Hoover years indicates that debates increasingly centered on the wisdom of Federal intervention in the economy and on national relief. The sort of discussion that Wolf provides for several pages literally became academic as the American economy hit bottom in 1932-33. Rarely have the fundamental responsibilities of our government been scrutinized with such passion and solutions thrust forward with such vigor. Swept into this debate were traditions and totems of American life whose enduring wisdom had been questioned earlier by only the most profane. In this regard, I cannot resist one challenge: "defense of the constitution and popular sovereignty in no way make Chavez distinctive. Can we cite any American politician who would deny these principles? I doubt it," says Wolf. "The doctrine of the infallibility of the Holy American Constitution was decidedly sour," said Cutting, ". . . [We should] pitch . . . a lot of that ancient and venerable document into the trash can. . . . It could well be rewritten." Comparing Depression to war, Al Smith asked in 1933, "And what does a democracy do in war? It becomes a tyrant, a despot, a real monarch." "Give the President for a year the widest and fullest powers," suggested Walter Lippman a few days later.¹²

My point about the Cutting-Chavez differences is illustrated by their actions in Congress. During the crisis the question of government leadership (and leadership within the government itself) became acute. It was no longer enough to rely, as Dennis Chavez said he did, on "the will of the people" (p. 18) and vague notions of popular sovereignty. Americans and New Mexicans literally had no "will" if that term implies a consensus about measures against Depression. From a thousand respected voices came complaints, threats, suggestions, panaceas. In the face of this, several scholars have noted that the dominant mood in America was not anger, not revolutionary zeal, not determination for real change, so much as a confusion of hopelessness.¹³

Forcefully and continuously, Cutting led or supported attempts by "Republicans of the left wing" (Hoover's phrase) to employ the resources of the Federal government for massive public works, relief, and economic reform. Before the New Deal, Cutting introduced a five-billion-dollar works bill, helped organize Senators behind the LaFollette-Costigan relief measure, authored legislation providing assistance for transients, strongly opposed cuts in government salaries and budget balancing, and "assailed [Hoover's] relief program as a 'wavering policy which left the country facing the alternatives of starvation or revolt.'" During the Roosevelt years, Cutting broadened his concerns, introducing measures to nationalize credit, provide wider coverage for the elderly than the Administration proposed, organize consumer groups, grant relief to striking workers, and assist the nation's schools with Federal funds. By 1933 Cutting had become the Senate's leading spokesman for veterans' benefits. He consistently stressed the "fundamental need for national planning to equate consumption with production." Cutting's leadership prompted a writer for the *New Republic* to conclude that he had "perhaps the greatest understanding of the modern trend in government." "His radicalism may be no deeper than that of Norris or 'Young Bob' LaFollette," wrote Frederick Barkley in *Sons of the Wild Jackass*, "but it is broader and more encompassing."¹⁴

In contrast, although Dennis Chavez did not vote solidly with the "conservative" Democrats (he opposed their national sales tax, veterans' cuts, and the Roosevelt Economy bill), he never assumed leadership on any major measure nor was his record consistent in regard to government expansion. Mainly, Cutting and Chavez disagreed about the need for national, coordinated efforts against the Depression as opposed to local measures (a point made in the article). One may question Cutting's solutions for the Great Depression (this seems the trend now in New Deal historiography).¹⁵ Nevertheless, it is clear that Cutting and the other Progressives assumed leadership long before the advent of Roosevelt and offered a viable program for economic reform and government responsibility for unemployment. As Hofstadter tells

us (p. 29), they were not better equipped than conservatives to understand the paradoxes of the Great Crash in 1929. But they were, according to Seligmann, "ideologically prepared to extend the scope of government when no other means could succeed." This was the major political issue during the height of the economic crisis. "Reform in the 1930's," William Leuchtenberg writes, "meant *economic* reform."¹⁶ On one side of this debate, Bronson Cutting took a forceful and consistent stand.

CUTTING AS A NATIONAL FIGURE
AND HIS IMAGE WITH NEW MEXICANS

PROFESSOR WOLF is correct to emphasize the difficulty in establishing voter motivation with any precision. Certainly Cutting made effective use of his money, his political ties, and his newspapers (pp. 7-8, 26). Certainly the 1934 Senate vote was dramatically close. In view of growing Democratic majorities, the popularity of Dennis Chavez, and the opposition of the powerful FDR, the surprising element is that Cutting won at all. My contention is not that Cutting's ideology was the only factor in the election, but rather that it was a major factor in dividing the voters both for and against the Republican.

Professor Wolf's most misinformed assertion is that Cutting was not a national figure. Although I respect the *New York Times*, we should not let it be the definitive source of a man's reputation, as Wolf does. Cutting's major fights in Congress—for Philippine independence, for veterans' assistance, against the Smoot Anti-obscenity proposal—were given wide coverage and especially endeared him to liberal intelligentsia. "Cutting is the Senate's leading liberal," announced a New York newsman after the obscenity fight, "the Senate's most astonishing man." "He is today one of the most intelligent and clearthinking of the insurgents," Drew Pearson concluded. "That he is himself the most intelligent and cultured man in the Progressive group," Owen White wrote in *American Mercury*, "is generally admitted by the gentlemen of the press." In the Senate there were "none of greater

national stature," according to Hiram Johnson. "Outstanding as a national liberal," was William Keleher's appraisal in his *Memoirs*.¹⁷ Cutting spoke frequently on national radio. Several times he was mentioned for the Presidency, even by Huey Long (the Senator whom Wolf insists dwarfed Cutting in national prominence). He even appears in Mary McCarthy's *The Group* as "a fighting gentleman Progressive." "It would be difficult to conceive of a greater blow to the progressive-radical movement in America than his death," wrote *Common Sense* in 1935.¹⁸

Cutting has also entered the exclusive company of politicians mentioned by our leading historians. He appears on fourteen separate occasions in Schlesinger's three volumes on the New Deal. In one of the finest single volumes on the period, Leuchtenberg's *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, Cutting is quoted or cited four times. Even recent scholarship on the Hoover Administration finds a place for Cutting.¹⁹ Allegations of his greatness might be denied; Cutting's national prominence should not be.

I can hear Professor Wolf saying "So what? Where's the evidence that New Mexicans knew of or cared about Cutting's reputation as a leading Progressive?" There is no precise measure for public knowledge, of course, but it seems clear the voters were frequently exposed to the Senator's left-wing ideology. Cutting often made the point that his repudiation of the Republican Party in 1932 was based on its conservatism and that his readoption of the party in 1934 was conditioned on acceptance of his ideology. "He has been pretty consistently liberal," the *Albuquerque Tribune* said grudgingly in early 1934. That year the GOP platform was "even more liberal than the New Deal," according to Fleta Springer in the *New Republic*. "Cutting was a New Dealer," Seligmann contends, "before most of the New Mexico politicians had realized that it existed." Although considered a moderate before 1934, Dennis Chavez became "recognized as the leader of conservatives among the Democrats," the *Farmington Times-Hustler* alleged, "[Chavez and the Democrats] are rallying the conservatives of all parties under their banner to defeat the liberal Senator Cutting."²⁰

More indications of Cutting's ideology came from endorsements. All nationally known progressives supported him; many traveled to New Mexico to say so. His support of Labor was recognized by the A.F. of L. and its President, William Green. The radical Farmers' Holiday Association wanted him returned to Congress. John E. Miles, state Democratic chairman in 1934, charged "that Bronson Cutting contributed to the Communist party, both national and local." The Senator never denied such contributions. Clyde Tingley, the Democrat for Governor, called Cutting "a disgrace" since Herbert Hoover believed him "a dangerous radical." As Professor Wolf admits, New Mexicans were not accustomed to such a national storm over their politicians. My bet is that many of Cutting's statements seeped into the public's consciousness, abetted by comments of others all along the political spectrum. "Party lines have been wiped out," Owen White said in *Colliers*, "everybody is either for or against Cutting."²¹

ROOSEVELT'S ENDORSEMENT OF DENNIS CHAVEZ

PROFESSOR WOLF declares that Presidents simply do not endorse candidates outside their own party in any but the most unusual circumstances. He cites a variety of obvious risks that dissuade the national leader from such endorsements (including the injunction that "Presidents are also aware that incumbents have a marked advantage in getting re-elected." Need we be reminded that Cutting was the incumbent?) Wolf's comments are pertinent to most situations. I suggest, however, that his theory of Presidential endorsements, along with a superficial knowledge of New Deal coalitions in Congress, leads him to notable errors about the particular case of New Mexico's Senate seat in 1934.

First, I get the impression from Wolf's writing that he thinks Franklin Roosevelt had a series of consistent proposals in a reform package for America. These were called "the New Deal." Wolf speaks of FDR being "moved by votes for his programs not by campaign oratory." So, we can total up the votes of Cutting and Chavez for the President's "programs" to discover how much

support each gave to "the New Deal." Using proposals that came to have Presidential approval before Congressional passage, a hasty search of the *Congressional Record* indicates about equal support. More important than this exercise is the point made by many post-Schlesinger scholars. They conclude that the New Deal was not a set of "programs" drawn by the Administration but rather attempts by Roosevelt to coordinate various groups so they could frame proposals.²² "Gradually, haltingly, incoherently, almost haphazardly another possibility was emerging," writes Ellis Hawley about the Administration's reaction to the problems of monopoly, "one that sprang not from any preconceived plan, but rather from the process of political compromise, the conflict of ideals, and the interplay of power between rival pressure groups." Hawley's description applies well to most of Roosevelt's "programs." The President's greatest strength was his ability to draw groups into the power structure, to give them aid and encouragement, and to elicit their ideas which he might then endorse. His passion was to please as many organized groups in America as possible. "Weave them together!" Roosevelt told a speechless Raymond Moley after reading two contradictory tariff proposals. The President's gift was not formulation of his own program, but making room for the programs of others.²³

The Senate Progressives had a program. Their ranks varied, but the most consistent members were Robert Wagner, George Norris, William Borah, Gerald Nye, Burton Wheeler, Huey Long (in his milder moments), Edward Costigan, Robert LaFollette Jr., Hiram Johnson, and Bronson Cutting. Always full of "an instinctive sympathy for the underdog" as Senator Borah put it, these Progressives had kept a determined vigil during the Hoover years, alone pressing the President for substantial relief measures and social legislation. They were inflamed by the abuses of big business they found everywhere. Cutting was particularly abusive about Hoover's "trickle-down theory" of relief whereby money from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation would gradually reach the masses after the great corporations were saved. A conference called by these Progressives in 1931 received wide publi-

city for its strong proposals and commendations from Governor Franklin Roosevelt of New York. Urging government action against monopolies, for labor unions and public works and small farmers, and nationalization of key industries, these Progressives were loud when aroused and sternly critical of those men and ideas which the middle-class community often held in high regard.²⁴

Although they increasingly disagreed with Roosevelt as the New Deal unfolded, the President respected many of their efforts. "They were inventive and they knew how to carry on a dialogue" so that even had Roosevelt disagreed with their goals, the Progressives would have played a significant role in so experimental an administration. Most New Deal measures with the sharpest breaks from the past (strong control over credit, public ownership of power facilities, steeply graduated income tax, Federal assistance for labor unions) came from out of their midst. Though the great majority of their votes went for New Deal legislation, they criticized the President for ending the CWA, for allowing price collusion under NRA, for permitting company unions, and for deflationary tactics such as the Economy Act of 1933 and veterans' cuts. Still, they consistently defended the New Deal against charges of socialism, communism, and unreasonable attacks on business. Even in their most heated disagreements with Roosevelt, theirs was an anger of disappointment, not disavowal: "complaints . . . about an erring brother."²⁵

Roosevelt had other reasons to be fond of these Progressives. His political life up to the Presidency had been part of their tradition. During the Depression he came to share their attitude about the stupidity and excesses of many businessmen, especially financiers. He agreed that government must help "the Forgotten American." Though Roosevelt's reformist zeal was tempered by place and circumstance, at times he shared the concern of Senate Progressives that politics be conducted along lines of ideology rather than expediency. His attempted purge of Southern Democrats in 1938 was based on his announced "right to intervene in elections whenever there was a clear issue of principle." "If we have the

right kind of people," Roosevelt told the press in 1934 with overtones for the Progressives, "the party label does not mean so very much." He then endorsed LaFollette and Johnson that year and Norris against a Democrat two years later. On a wintry night in Albany, the President-elect had told Tugwell: "We'll have eight years in Washington. By that time there may not be a Democratic party, but there will be a progressive one."²⁶

It is questionable, of course, that Roosevelt was completely serious about reorienting the parties on ideological grounds. I think Roosevelt disagreed, not with the ultimate justice of the Progressives' cause, but with their "rugged individualism" in politics. Conservatives struck with the power of a clenched fist, the President said, while "the progressives are like a man trying to strike with his fingers spread out stiffly. He would accomplish nothing and would very likely break his fingers." Though he did not share their temperament or sense of righteousness, the President's sympathies reveal an admiration for the lonely grandeur of the Progressives' struggle. They were pure though sometimes tragic types, at least in the halls of Congress. "If Franklin had not been a Roosevelt," Tugwell reflected, "I am quite certain he would have liked to be a LaFollette."²⁷

As business became disillusioned with the New Deal in 1934, as there rose a "resurgence on the right," and as critics such as Father Coughlin, Huey Long, and Dr. Townsend captured the popular imagination with demagoguery (Roosevelt's view), the President came to depend more on the Senate's "responsible" Progressives. In short, Roosevelt's political traditions as well as practical considerations led him toward the Republicans among the Progressives, including Bronson Cutting.²⁸

Here is where Professor Wolf's opinion on the President's endorsement of Chavez is faulty. Most contemporary commentators and later historians have found the endorsement quite problematical. As "a persistent student of New Mexico politics," Wolf should be aware that the decision Roosevelt faced in 1934 was not between Cutting and Chavez as single votes in Congress nor between merely the Republican and Democratic parties. Rather,

Chavez was a member of an amorphous, Democratic majority that had little in common except for party affiliation and respect for the President's awesome power at this time. On the other hand, Cutting was a member of a small though powerful band of Senate Progressives, bound together by what they perceived as "the interest of the little man."

Nor was Cutting on the periphery of these Senators. Bitter exchanges occurred between the Progressives and Roosevelt about his support for Chavez. "I took the opportunity," Harold Ickes said at campaign's end, 1934, "to tell [FDR] that the opposition of the Administration to Senator Cutting of New Mexico had created a bad feeling among the Progressives of the West. Senator Johnson was very much worked up." Later, George Norris spoke bitterly of "the disgraceful and unwarranted fight made to drive Senator Cutting out of public office. . . . It is a blot upon the record of the Administration." Heartened by Cutting's victory, the Progressives were again furious that Roosevelt did not quash the election contest of Dennis Chavez for Cutting's seat. "It was quite the most upsetting political development of last week," Raymond Swing said in the *Nation*, "for it throws into doubt the President's entire informal alliance with the Progressives. . . ." The article concluded that even Democratic leaders opposed the contest.²⁹

Cutting's death in 1935 revealed the depths of affection these Progressives had for the New Mexican. Norris wept openly on the Senate floor. Borah, his face flushed with grief, told the *New York Times* "it is one of those times that you have no language to express yourself." Huey Long "broke down' and cried" when an aide rushed to him with the news. Bob LaFollette could not bring himself to the Senate that day and later named one of his sons after his friend. "So many of us could have been more easily spared," said Senator Nye. "No man has performed more signal service," said Senator Johnson. This tragic death, New York Senator Wagner told reporters, "deprives the nation of a great leader who understood these critical times as few men have." "Cutting was unique among the Progressives," Schlesinger wrote later, "and adored by them."³⁰

The point is that President Roosevelt was well aware of the risk he was taking in turning his back on Cutting in 1934. The Senator was a popular incumbent not stained by the repudiated Republicanism of Hoover. He was in the inner circle of a group of Senators whose support the Administration badly needed. Cutting's triumphant return to the Senate would mean a political reputation enhanced tenfold by victory over a powerful President's opposition. Chavez in the Senate could hardly have been so important to Roosevelt or Democratic unity. In the article I offered one among several explanations for Roosevelt's action. Professor Wolf may justifiably argue that others were more important. To insist, however, that the Chavez endorsement is not an important problem in political historiography simply ignores the events and their context. In this case a theory of Presidential endorsements must give way to the historical situation.

CONCLUSION

REGARDLESS of Wolf's many astute criticisms, I believe the major points in my article still stand. Even though Cutting was erratic in political alliances, switched party labels often, and was guilty of tough-minded opportunism, his ideology about government's role in social and economic affairs remained consistent over these years. Cutting tried to bring lower-class New Mexicans into a political coalition based on their economic interests. He was a "radical" who supported massive government intervention in the economy, elaborate systems of security for workers and consumers, and strict regulation of private enterprise. He was a national leader who brought the Senate Progressives' solutions for Depression to the public in a forceful and articulate way. Roosevelt opposed Cutting in 1934 only after careful thought, a good deal of political risk, and an awareness that Cutting was a rival to his own leadership.

My thanks to the *New Mexico Historical Review* for publishing this exchange. Also, thanks to my friend and former teacher, T. Phillip Wolf; I shall try to return the "favor" some day. Perhaps

our dialogue has revealed some problems of examining history as well as reviewing a fascinating period in New Mexico politics. Each of us is likely guilty of being "intellectual" in the sense President Eisenhower used the term: "a man who takes more words than are necessary to tell more than he knows."

NOTES

1. Pages cited in the text refer to my article. Footnotes refer to quotations and information included here.

2. I can testify to the difficulty of publishing in this area. Though a solid book with a wealth of information, Jack Holmes' *Politics in New Mexico* has a sort of "science" dryness that has restricted sales, apparently, and fails to convey the flavor of politics during the Twenties and Thirties. Publishers around the state have therefore become reluctant to accept any scholarly piece on this period, preferring some glamorized personal-narrative account. The extent of my activities has been reading papers on the New Deal at the Missouri Valley Historical Association and a Phi Alpha Theta conference in Las Cruces. I have submitted a manuscript for publication as a chapter in an anthology of state New Deals, but its fate is uncertain as of now.

3. Francis McGarity, "Bronson Cutting, Senator from New Mexico" (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1934), p. 7.

4. H. B. Hensley to Holm Bursum, Aug. 1, 1928, Holm O. Bursum Papers, File on "Political Matters, 1926-9," Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico. See also Erna Fergusson, "Clyde Tingley," p. 220. Unpublished Manuscript, Zimmerman Library, UNM. Charles B. Judah, *Governor Richard C. Dillon: A Study in New Mexico Politics*, (Department of Government *Bulletin*, no. 19, University of New Mexico, 1948), p. 30. Gustav L. Seligmann, "The Political Career of Bronson Cutting" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1967), pp. 71-73.

5. Herbert Theodore Hoover, "History of the Republican Party in New Mexico, 1867-1952" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1966), p. 158. For a detailed account of the fight, see Vorley M. Rexroad, "The Two Administrations of Governor Richard C. Dillon" (M.A. thesis, University of New Mexico, 1947), pp. 11-23. I cannot help mentioning Wolf's lecture about the difference between "the votes" of wealthy GOP

members and their financial support for the party. I think we are all aware, as he belabors the point, that the resources, influence, and opinion leadership are the ingredients of power for the wealthy, not the strength of their votes. If he felt I meant "votes" so narrowly, my apologies.

6. To illustrate the ways Republicans were responding to the needs of lower-class New Mexicans, I would point out that the 1929 legislature increased appropriations and assistance for the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (after complaints by Spanish-Americans about assessments), passed a much stronger Workmen's Compensation bill, and almost doubled the amount spent in fiscal 1927 for state government. See Rexroad, pp. 136-37. *New Mexico Tax Bulletin*, 10 (1931), p. 83. In response to Wolf's call for clarification of a "logical inconsistency" about Republican factionalism during the 1929 Legislature, I offer the following synopsis of the original article: (1). *Cutting and Labor*. Cutting had consistently supported "labor" as against the interests of "management" since 1925 (pp. 7-8). In October, 1928, he outlined a broad program to strengthen the laborer's position in the economy (*Santa Fe New Mexican*, Oct. 20-25, 1928). "Cutting gave a great deal of his campaign time to the labor vote in the state," says a biographer of Richard Dillon (Rexroad, p. 97). He criticized the use of troops to break strikes and suggested that government needed to assist the weak, the helpless, the unorganized in America. Both Santa Fe and Washington, Cutting suggested in 1932 continuing this theme, should "look out for the underdog and the underprivileged man" (McGarity, p. 40). (2). *Cutting Felt Betrayed in his Attempt to Gain Labor Votes for the GOP*. It is my feeling from reading newspaper accounts of the Legislature and some of Cutting's correspondence then, that the Senator was taken aback by the enormous opposition that developed to the labor commissioner. After all, Republicans had used it as a campaign pledge. Governor Dillon endorsed the commissioner in his address to the Legislature. Most Democrats seemed favorable, at least until it became a factional issue among Republicans. Democrats became the balance of power then. (3). *The Older Interpretation that Party Power was the Major Issue*. I am puzzled by Wolf's question of referent for the phrase "such a view insists" (p. 14). He asks is the "view" mine or Andrea Parker's? The phrase clearly refers to Parker's view: I have expressed none of my own opinions about the Old Guard's motivations up to this point in the text. The phrase immediately follows others such as "the usual explanation . . . [Parker] continues this interpretation," and Parker's analysis of the motivations within the quotation. Such a view (I hope the referent is clear now) argues along lines similar to Wolf that the commissioner fight was primarily for party control and patronage.

7. Robert G. Thompson, "The Administration of Governor Arthur T. Hannett, A Study in New Mexico Politics, 1925-7" (M.A. thesis, UNM, 1949), pp. 32, 105-06. Rexroad, pp. 10-20. Judah, *Dillon*, 9-12. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, editorial, May 20, 1927. A full collection of Dillon's campaign speeches in 1928 appear in Richard C. Dillon Collection of Papers, Zimmerman Library Archives, UNM. They reveal a very "soft sell" approach.

8. The quotations appear in Seligmann, pp. 63-64; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Politics of Upheaval* (Boston, 1960), p. 140.

9. *New Mexico Tax Bulletin*, vol. 7 (March-April, 1929), p. 39. Cutting became so furious with Dillon that he sent the Governor a letter resigning from the Senate. See Rexroad, pp. 113-36. Judah, *Dillon*, pp. 28-34.

10. Fergusson, "Clyde Tingley," p. 220. Hugh James Savage, "Political Independents of the Hoover Era: The Progressive Insurgents of the Senate" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1961), p. 206.

11. This point is fully documented in Andrea A. Parker, "Arthur Seligman and Bronson Cutting: Coalition Government in New Mexico, 1930-1933" (M.A. thesis, UNM, 1969). "By switching his Progressive party into 'fusion' with this or that party," said ex-Governor George Curry, "[Cutting] virtually controlled every New Mexico election result from 1916 to his death in 1935." H. B. Hening, ed., *George Curry, 1861-1947: An Autobiography* (Albuquerque, 1958), p. 272.

12. The quotations appear in Owen P. White, "Cutting Free," *Colliers*, vol. 94 (Oct. 27, 1934), p. 24. *Congressional Record*, 73rd Cong. 2nd sess., 1934, vol. 78, p. 8051. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Crisis of the Old Order* (Boston, 1957), p. 461. For the nature of debates about government's role, see Schlesinger, *Crisis*, pp. 2-8, 224-69, 402; James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York, 1956), pp. 105-67. William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal* (New York, 1963), pp. 1-40.

13. Jordan A. Schwarz, *The Interregnum of Despair: Hoover, Congress, and the Depression* (Urbana, Ill., 1970), pp. 230-31. Leuchtenburg, pp. 26-29. Schlesinger, *Crisis*, pp. 266-69, 456-85.

14. The quotations appear in *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Great Depression, 1929-41* (New York, 1952), p. 101; *New York Times*, May 24, 1932, p. 4; *Cong. Rec.*, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess., 1934, vol. 78, p. 8051. Janet Spiess, "Feudalism and Senator Cutting," *American Mercury*, vol. 33 (Nov. 1934), p. 374; Frederick R. Barkley, "Cutting: A Blue-Blooded Buccaneer," in Ray Tucker and Frederick Barkley, eds.,

Sons of the Wild Jackass (Boston, 1932), p. 198. For the information on Cutting's actions in Congress, see *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Oct. 26, 1932, p. 3; May 19, 1934; June 6, 1934. *Cong. Rec.*, 73d Cong., 2nd sess., 1934, vol. 78, pp. 1476, 8051-53, 9226. *Cong. Rec.*, 74th Cong., 1st sess., 1935, vol. 79, pp. 4062-73. Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (New York, 1939), pp. 191, 193. Edward Lahart, "The Career of Dennis Chavez as a Member of Congress, 1930-4" (M.A. thesis, UNM, 1958), p. 79. Jonathan R. Cunningham, "Bronson Cutting" (M.A. thesis, UNM, 1940), pp. 212-13. *New York Times*, Jan. 9, 1934. Schlesinger, *Crisis*, p. 226. McGarity, pp. 30-34. Seligmann, pp. 96-98, 124-27, 151-60, 178-79, 196-206. Hogue in the *New Republic* (cited in fn 69 of my article). Ellis W. Hawley, *The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly* (Princeton, 1966), p. 318.

15. For different "views" in recent historiography, see Hawley, *Problem of Monopoly*, pp. 169-86, 270-80. Barton J. Bernstein, "The New Deal: The Conservative Achievements of Liberal Reform," in Bernstein, ed., *Towards a New Past* (New York, 1967), pp. 263-88. Richard Pollenberg, *War and Society* (New York, 1972), pp. 75, 79-82. William A. Williams, "On Hoover," *New York Review of Books*, vol. 15 (Nov. 5, 1970), pp. 7-11. For Chavez votes: Lahart, pp. 51-52, 60, 65, 75, 82. *New Mexico State Tribune*, May 3, 1932.

16. Quotations come from Seligmann, p. 273; Leuchtenberg, p. 339.

17. Quotations come from Barkley, "Cutting," pp. 200, 219. [Robert S. Allen and Drew Pearson], *Washington Merry-Go-Round* (New York, 1931), p. 204. Owen P. White, "Membership in Both Clubs," *American Mercury*, vol. 25 (Feb., 1932), p. 189. *New York Times*, May 7, 1935, p. 15. William A. Keleher, *Memoirs, 1892-1969: A New Mexico Item* (Santa Fe, 1969), p. 171. For descriptions of the fights that made Cutting famous, see *New York Times*, Jan. 9, 1934, p. 5. Gerald E. Wheeler, "Republican Philippine Policy, 1921-1933," *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 28 (Nov., 1959), p. 390. Owen P. White, "Cutting Free," *Colliers*, vol. 94 (Oct. 27, 1934), p. 24. "Cutting and Leadership," an editorial in *Common Sense*, vol. 4 (June, 1935), p. 2-3. Seligmann, pp. 96-127, 178-86. McGarity, pp. 17-30.

18. Quotations appear in Seligmann, p. 16; "Cutting and Leadership," p. 2. Cutting's national addresses are described in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Oct. 26, 1932 and May 19, 1934. *New York Times*, May 24, 1932. Seligmann, p. 165. For mention of Cutting for President, see Diogenes, "The New Mexico Political Campaign . . .," *Literary Digest*, vol. 118 (Nov. 3, 1934), p. 13. Haniel Long, *Piñon Country* (New York, 1941), p. 138. John Heaton, *Tough Luck: Hoover Again* (New York, 1932), p. 19. Keleher, p. 171. Seligmann, pp. 207, 239.

19. See the index of each of Schlesinger's volumes for citations about Cutting. A fine analysis of the Senator's impact on national politics appears in Schlesinger, *Politics of Upheaval*, pp. 139-41 in a chapter entitled "Insurgency on Capitol Hill." Leuchtenberg, *FDR.*, pp. 12, 52, 108, 123. Schwarz, pp. 7, 33, 142, 188-200, 205. Albert U. Romasco, *The Poverty of Abundance: Hoover, the Nation, the Depression* (New York, 1965), pp. 217-18. See also Burns, *Roosevelt*, pp. 149, 202.

20. Quotations come from *Albuquerque Tribune*, Feb. 2, 1934, editorial. Fleta C. Springer, "Through the Looking Glass," *New Republic*, vol. 80 (Nov. 7, 1934), p. 357. Seligmann, pp. 220-21. *Farmington Times-Hustler*, July 27, 1934. For Cutting and the Republican party: *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Sept. 23, 1932; May 16, 1934. *New Mexico State Tribune*, editorial, Feb. 3, 1934. Parker, p. 63. Cunningham, pp. 172, 178.

21. Quotations come from a broadside published by the Democratic Party in the Bronson Cutting Papers in Washington, D.C., mentioned by Seligmann. Also quoted in Lahart, p. 114. *Albuquerque Journal*, Oct. 21, 1934. White, "Cutting Free," p. 28. For endorsements, see the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, July 25, 1934; Aug. 20, 1934; Sept. 16, 1934. *Albuquerque Journal*, Oct. 14, 1934. Russell B. Nye, *Midwestern Progressive Politics* (New York, 1951), p. 364. Beaupre, p. 40. Lahart, p. 109. For a dramatic description of the way politics in New Mexico was forming along ideological lines, see Miguel A. Otero to U.S. Senator Carl Hatch, May 11, 1934 (and others), Miguel A. Otero Papers, Box 11, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico.

22. See especially Arthur S. Link and William B. Catton, *American Epoch: A History of the United States Since the 1890's* (New York, third ed., 1967), vol. 2, pp. 384-85. Leuchtenberg, pp. 87-89, 331-36. Gerald D. Nash, ed., *Franklin Delano Roosevelt* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967), pp. 5-7. David A. Shannon, *Between the Wars: America, 1919-1941* (Boston, 1965), pp. 153-54. Roosevelt's reaffirmation of his "Progressive faith" in 1932: Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Triumph* (Boston, 1956), pp. 351-55.

23. Quotations come from Hawley, p. 187; Schlesinger, *Crisis*, p. 427. A book whose main theme is to trace this kind of leadership throughout the New Deal and the war years is Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York, 1950).

24. Quotations from Tucker, "The Herd," in *Sons of the Wild Jackass*, p. 6; *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Nov. 26, 1934, p. 3. For pre-Roosevelt efforts of the Progressives, see Roy V. Peel and Thomas C. Donnelly, *The 1932 Campaign: An Analysis* (New York, 1932), pp. 198-99. Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker, 1920-1933* (Baltimore, 1960), pp. 262-86; 391-415, 460-74. Rexford Tugwell, *The Demo-*

cratic Roosevelt (Baltimore, 1957), p. 203. Schlesinger, *Crisis*, p. 226. For the Progressives' conference: *New York Times*, March 12, 1931. Alfred Lief, *Democracy's Norris: The Biography of a Lonely Crusade* (New York, 1939), pp. 375-78, 409-10. "Backstage in Washington," *Outlook*, vol. 157 (March 18, 1931), p. 395. Conference of Progressives, *Proceedings of a Conference of Progressives, March 11 and 12, 1931* (Washington, 1931). For other comments on the Progressives' position, see Rexford Tugwell, *The Brains Trust* (New York, 1968), pp. 405, 411, 489-92, 496. Tugwell, "The Progressive Tradition," *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 155 (April, 1935), pp. 409-12. Ernest K. Lindley, *The Roosevelt Revolution, the First Phase* (New York, 1937), pp. 10-11. Bernard Sternsher, *Rexford Tugwell and the New Deal* (New Brunswick, 1964), p. 310. Savage, "Political Independents," chapter VIII entitled "The Progressives' Dilemma," pp. 204-52. In addition to the Senators I have listed in the text, Savage includes the following among the Progressives: Brookhart, Couzens, Dill, Frazier, Norbeck, Schall, Shipstead, Walsh.

25. Quotations from Tugwell, *Brains*, pp. 497, 405. For other information in the paragraph, see *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Aug. 6, 1934; Sept. 5, 1934. Cutting's speech to the People's Lobby of the Cosmos Club on May 19, 1934. Basil Rauch, *History of the New Deal* (New York, 1944), p. 135. Lief, *Norris*, pp. 409-10. Seligmann, p. 180.

26. Quotations from Leuchtenberg, p. 267; Burns, p. 202; Tugwell, *Democratic Roosevelt*, p. 41 and *Brains*, p. 411. (In regard to the demise of the Democratic party, see Lindley, pp. 10-11). For FDR's endorsements of Progressives: Diogenes, p. 13; Schlesinger, *Uphaval*, p. 140.

27. Quotations from Tugwell, *Democratic Roosevelt*, pp. 413, 298. The Progressives, of course, had championed Roosevelt in 1932, rejecting pleas from academic types such as John Dewey that they create a third party. See Donald C. McCoy, *Angry Voices: Left of Center Politics in the New Deal Era* (Lawrence, 1958), pp. 4-10, 44, 80-84, 184, 187. Most of them again joined to support the President in 1936, forming a special group to keep the Progressives' autonomy while still endorsing Roosevelt. One of the largest contributors to this group for FDR was Bronson Cutting's mother.

28. "Resurgence on the Right" is a chapter title in Schlesinger, *The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the New Deal* (Boston, 1958), p. 421. See also Burns, pp. 202-08.

29. Quotations from Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes: The First Thousand Days, 1933-6* (New York, 1953), p. 217; Norman Zucker, *George W. Norris: Gentle Knight Of American Democracy* (Urbana, Ill., 1955), p. 19; Raymond G. Swing, "Party Regularity for 1936?" *Nation*, vol. 140 (Jan. 30, 1935), p. 127. For other exchanges

between the Progressives and Roosevelt about Cutting, see Ickes, pp. 358-59. McCoy, p. 203, fn 18. Schlesinger, *Upheaval*, pp. 139-41. Seligmann, p. 223. Beaupre, p. 53. For authors who have found the Chavez endorsement problematical, see Moley, p. 126. Schlesinger, *Upheaval*, p. 140. Burns, p. 202. Diogenes, p. 118. Beaupre, pp. 89-91. Seligmann, pp. 213-14, 236-41.

30. *New York Times*, May 7, 1935, p. 14. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, May 6, 1935, special edition. Gerald Nye, "Bronson Cutting," *Common Sense*, vol. 4 (June, 1935), p. 6. Cunningham, p. 218. Schlesinger, *Upheaval*, p. 141. Letter to author from T. Harry Williams, winner of the National Book Award for his biography, *Huey Long*, Oct. 27, 1970. Letter to author from James T. Patterson of Indiana University on Nov. 25, 1970. For further comments by Progressives, see *Cong. Rec.*, 73d Cong., 2nd sess., 1934, vol. 78, p. 12,052. Lief, p. 449. Senator Norris accepted Cutting's gold watch from his mother and wore it in place of his own. He harbored a grudge against President Roosevelt since Cutting was killed returning from New Mexico on business concerning the election contest. Rexford Tugwell, "Your Future and Your Nation," Commencement Address at the University of New Mexico on June 10, 1935, in the *New Mexico Quarterly*, vol. 5 (Aug., 1935), p. 145.