

**Congress: The Electoral Connection – the original longhand draft**

Back in the 1970s, how did we go about doing our writing? Here is an instance. In the summer of 1973, I wrote the original draft of Congress: The Electoral Connection in longhand on (mostly) yellow lined 8x14 legal-sized pads using a number two pencil. That was the way to go. No computers back then. I didn't use an electric typewriter or even a manual one. As for devising a figure (on page 64) and a table (page 92), I drew them by hand. Once I got it all done, I whipped it off to a professional typist. I kept a photocopy, which I found and fished out of a closet a few years ago. This is that photocopy. I have left it alone except to supply a more legible version of page one. That old page is uniquely messy since I seem to have stuttered at getting into the writing.

I wrote this book draft paragraph by paragraph, footnote by footnote, in a form that went into print at Yale University Press in 1974 virtually unchanged. I drew on stacks of note cards and other materials that I had accumulated previously. The actual writing took thirteen weeks. It was a June-into-September enterprise wedged in between teaching semesters. There was a rhythm: I wrote during the days and watched the reruns of Sam Ervin's Watergate hearings during the evenings.

~~new~~ FN 92 (Fiellin) (p. 29)

FN 68 (p. 21) under

p. 6 - on chs 2+3

JMC - <sup>u</sup>It was all there - "

## Congress: The Electoral Connection

— David R. Mayhew —

Note to typist: When a Congressman has an identification tag after his name it should be spaced like this:

John Smith (D. - N.M.)

George Brown (R. - Calif.)

Double space except when specified  
(footnotes all single - space)

Footnotes at bottom of page

To go on the page just after the title page  
(no page number)



For their most useful comments as I was preparing this work I should like to thank Chris Achen, Alfred Cover, Joseph La Palombara, David Grier, Douglas Rae, and David Seidman. I could not have written without having spent a year on Capitol Hill as a Congressional Fellow in the American Political Science Association's program. In that year I enjoyed access to the offices of two members who serve in the public interest -- Congressman Frank Thompson, Jr. (D.-N.J.) and Senator Lee Metcalf (D.-Mont.). All the arguments in the following work are mine, except the ones I have explicitly appropriated from others.

caps →

# I INTRODUCTION

How to study legislative behavior is a question that does not  
 need a personal, unreservedly political answer. ~~It is~~  
~~an~~ Another of the standard problems provided in the field  
 and we shall deal with it. If there is any consensus it is on this  
 point that scholarly journals should offer explanations -- that they  
 should go beyond descriptive accounts of legislative and legislative  
 supply special statements about why both of them do what they do.

~~What is the point of this? In their own right, these~~  
~~are not questions that can be answered by a simple~~  
~~reference to the history of the field. The history of~~  
~~the field is a complex and messy affair, and the~~  
~~answers to these questions are not simple and~~  
~~straightforward.~~

What constitutes a persuasive explanation? In their contemporary quest for  
 legislative studies have ranged far and wide, borrowing  
 explanatory explanatory styles from the neighboring social sciences.  
 The most important borrowing has been from sociology.

What is the history of this? The history of this is a complex  
 and messy affair, and the answers to these questions are not  
 simple and straightforward.

In fact it is interesting that legislative research in the 1950's and 1960's had a strong  
 to it. One literature developed in terms of the words  
 "norm", "system", and "socialization". We found that  
 some U.S. literature adopt an "outside" perspective that

~~What is the history of this? The history of this is a complex~~  
~~and messy affair, and the answers to these questions are not~~  
~~simple and straightforward.~~

(1) Ralph K. Hitt, "The Decision in the Senate: An Alternative Role," ch. 4 in Hitt and Robert L. Peabody (eds.), Congress: Two Decades of Analysis (New York: Praeger and Row, 1967).

The first page of the original C:EC draft is uniquely hard to read. Where was I going? There is a lot of stuttering and crossout. Here is an upgraded version.

## I INTRODUCTION

How to study legislative behavior is a question that does not yield a consensual answer among political scientists. .... An ethic of conceptual pluralism prevails in the field, and no doubt it should. If there is any consensus it is on the point that scholarly treatments should offer explanations—that they should go beyond descriptive accounts of legislators and legislatures to supply general statements about why both of them do what they do. .... What constitutes a persuasive explanation? In their contemporary quest to find out, legislative students have ranged far and wide, sometimes borrowing or plundering explanatory styles from the neighboring social sciences.

The most important borrowing has been from sociology..... In fact it is fair to say that legislative research in the 1950's and 1960's had a dominant sociological tone to it. The literature abounded in terms like "role," "norm," "system," and "socialization." We learned that some U.S. Senators adapt an "outsider" role;<sup>1</sup> that .....

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph K. Huitt, "The Outsider in the Senate: An Alternative Role," ch. 4 in Huitt and Robert L. Peabody (eds.), Congress: Two Decades of Analysis (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

The House Organizing Committee can be properly looked at as a self-maintaining system (2) that legislators can be categorized as "frustrated," "politicians," or "delegates," (3) that the U.S. Senate has "folkways" (4) These findings and others like them grew out of research based for the first time on systematic elite interviewing.

From another social science has borrowing been so direct or so important. ~~But it is possible to point to writings that have shed - or finally shed - a root assumption of economics.~~ The difference between economic and sociological explanation is sharp. As Niskanen puts it, "the 'comparative' method of economics, which develops hypotheses about social behavior from models of purposive behavior by individuals, contrasts with the 'collectivist' method of sociology, which develops hypotheses about social behavior from models of role behavior by representative ideal types." (5) To my knowledge no political scientist has explicitly anchored his <sup>empirical</sup> research in economics, but a number have ~~invoked~~ in one way or another invoked "purposive behavior" as a guide to explanation. There are three articles by Scher in which he posits the conditions under which Congressmen will find it in their interest to engage in legislative oversight. (6) There is Wilensky's work on bargaining in the budgetary process. (7) There is Riker's general work on coalition-building with its legislative applications. (8) More recently, Manley and Ferris have given a clear "purposive" thrust to their <sup>empirical</sup> committee studies. (9) Ferris's thinking has evolved to the point where he now places strong emphasis on detecting why Congressmen join specific committees and what they get out of being members of them.

(2) Richard S. Tedlow, The Rise of the Lobby (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1966), ch. 5.

(3) John C. Wahlke et al., The Legislative System (New York: Wiley, 1962), ch. 12.

Roger H. Shils, The Role of the Congressman (New York: Praeger, 1967), ch. 4.

(4) David R. Matthews, U.S. Senators and Their World (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1960), ch. 1.

(5) William A. Niskanen, Bureaucracy and Representative Government (New York: Aldine-Atherton, 1971), p. 5.

(6) Seymour Scher, "Congressional Committee Members as Interrelated Policy Overseers: A Case Study," 54 American Political Science Review 911-920, 1960; "The Politics of Agency Organization," 15 Administrative Science Quarterly 328-344, 1962; "Conditions for Legislative Control," 25 Journal of Politics 526-551, 1963.

- ⑦ Andrew Wildavsky, The Politics of the Budgetary Process (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1964).
- ⑧ William H. Riker, The Theory of Political Coalitions (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), with ch. 7 specifically on Congress; also William H. Riker and Donald Niemi, "Coalitions and Coalitions in Politics of Representation," 56 American Political Science Review 58-65, 1962.
- ⑨ John F. Mansley, The Politics of Finance: The House Committee on Ways and Means (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970); Richard F. Fenno, Jr., Congressmen in Committees (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1973).

There is probably a disciplinary drift toward the purgative, a drift, so to speak, from the sociological toward the economic. If so it occurs at a time when some economists are themselves edging over into the legislative field. There is Lindblom's writing on the politics of partisan mutual adjustment, with its legislative ramifications (10). More generally there are recent writings of economists in the public finance tradition (11). Public finance has its normative and empirical sides, the former best exemplified here in the discussion of legislative decision-making offered by Buchanan and Tullock (12). Niskanen develops the empirical side in his work positing bureaus as budget maximizers -- an odd but colorful hypothesis about the relations between bureaus and legislative committees (13). Public finance scholars seem to have gotten interested in legislative studies as a result of their abandoning the old idea of the Benthamite legislator; that is, they have come to display a concern for what public officials actually do rather than an assumption that officials will automatically translate good policy into law once somebody finds out what it is (14). With political scientists exploring the purgative and economists the legislative, therefore at least three firms that future relations between writers in the two disciplines could take. First, scholars in both could continue to disregard each other's writings. Second, they could engage in an unseasonably shrill, over-the-top feud. Third, they could use each other's insights to develop collectively a more vigorous legislative scholarship in the style of political economy.

(10) Charles F. Lindblom, The Politics of Democracy (New York: Free Press, 1965).

(11) A suitable characterization of this tradition: "The theory of public finance has addressed itself to the questions of how much money should be spent on public expenditures, how these expenditures should be distributed among different public wants, and how the costs should be distributed between present and future, and among the members of the society." James S. Coleman, "Individual Interests and Collective Action," in Gordon Tullock (ed.), Papers on Non-Market Decision Making (Charlottesville: Thomas Jefferson Center for Political Economy, University of Virginia, 1966).

(12) James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, The Calculus of Consent (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), Part III.

(13) Niskanen, op. cit.

(14) See a discussion of this feud in William E. Shafer, "The Politics of Public Finance"



- (14) There is a discussion of this point in Nathan Rosenberg, "Efficiency in the Government Sector: Discussion," 54 American Economic Review July 1964, pp. 211-228.  
and in James M. Buchanan, Public Finance in Democratic Process (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), p. 173.

The thesis is an introduction to a statement of what I intend to do in the following chapters. Mostly through personal experience on Capitol Hill, I have become convinced that scrutiny of "purposive behavior" offers the best route to an understanding of legislatures -- or at least of the U.S. Congress. In the fashion of economics, I shall make a simple abstract assumption about human motivation and then speculate about the consequences of behavior based on that motivation. Specifically, I shall conjure up a vision of U.S. Congressmen as single-minded seekers of re-election, see what kinds of activity that goal implies, and then speculate about how Congressmen so motivated are likely to go about <sup>At all possible, seeking to match abstract with the actual.</sup> ~~running~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~making~~ <sup>making</sup> legislative institutions and making policy. I find an emphasis on the re-election goal attractive for a number of reasons. First, I think it fits political reality rather well. Second, it puts the spotlight directly on men rather than on parties and pressure groups, which in the past have often entered discussions of American politics as ghostly visitations. Third, I think politics is best studied as a struggle among men to gain and maintain power and the consequences of that struggle. Fourth -- and perhaps most important -- the re-election quest establishes an accountability relationship with an electorate, and any serious thinking about democratic theory has to give a central place to <sup>the question of</sup> ~~accountability~~ <sup>accountability</sup>.

~~The~~ ~~abstract~~ ~~assumption~~ notwithstanding, I regard this venture as an exercise in political science rather than economics.

~~Just~~ leaving aside the fact that I have no economics expertise to begin with, I find that economists who study legislatures bring to bear interests different from those of political scientists. Not surprisingly, the public finance scholar tends to look upon government as a device for spending money. I shall give more attention to spending, but also to <sup>other</sup> governmental activities such as the production of binding rules. And I shall focus upon such traditional political science subjects as elections, parties, governmental structure, and regime stability.

(5)

Another distinction here is that economic research tends to be ~~refused~~ refused with the normative assumption that ~~policy~~ policy decisions should be judged by how well they meet the standard ~~of Pareto optimality~~ of Pareto optimality. This is an assumption that I do not share and that I do not think most political scientists share. There will be no need here to set forth any alternative assumption. I may say, for the record, that I find the model of proper legislative activity offered by Roubin a good deal more edifying than any that could be built on a formulation of Pareto optimality. (15)

My subject of concern here is a single legislative institution, the U.S. Congress. In many ways, of course, the Congress is a unique or unusual body. It is probably the most highly "professionalized" of legislatures, in the sense that it promotes careerism among its members and gives them the salaries, staff and other resources to sustain careers. (16) Its parties are exceptionally diffuse. It is widely thought to be especially "strong" among legislatures as a checker of executive power. Like most later British legislatures but unlike most European, it labors in the shadow of a ~~constituted~~ elected executive. My decision to focus on the Congress flows from a belief that there is something to be gained in an intensive analysis of a particular and important institution. But there is something general to be gained as well, for the exceptionalist argument should not be carried too far. In a good many ways the Congress is just one in a large family of legislative bodies. I shall find it useful at various points in the analysis to invoke comparisons with European parliaments and with American state legislatures and city councils. ~~I shall ponder the question~~ I shall ponder the question of what "functions" the Congress performs or is capable of performing - a question that can be answered only with the records of other legislatures in mind!

(15) John Roubin, Theory of Justice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), chs. 4 and 5, and especially pp. 274-284.

(16) The term is from H. Douglas Price, "Computer Simulation and Legislative 'Professionalism': Some Quantitative Approaches to Legislative Evolution," paper presented to the annual convention of the American Political Science Association, 1970.

(6)

Functions to be given special attention are those of legislating, overseeing the executive, expressing public opinion, and servicing constituents. No functional capabilities can be automatically assumed. (17) Indeed the ~~very~~ term "legislature" is an unfortunate one because it confuses structure and function. Accordingly I shall here on use the more awkward but more ~~neutral~~ neutral term "representative assembly" to refer to members of the class of entities inhabited by the U.S. House and Senate. Whatever its name,

The identifying <sup>structural</sup> characteristics of institutions in the class have been well stated by Loewenberg: it is true of all such entities that 1) "their members are formally equal to each other in status, distinguishing parliaments from hierarchically ordered organizations," and 2) "the authority of their members depends on their claim to representing the rest of the community, in some sense of that protoan concept, representation." (18)

The following discussion will take the form of an extended theoretical essay. Therefore it will raise more questions than it answers. As is the custom in mono-causal ventures, it will no doubt carry arguments to the point of exaggeration; finally, of course, I shall be satisfied to explain a significant part of the variance rather than all of it. What the discussion will give, I hope, is a picture of what the U.S. Congress looks like if the re-election quest is examined seriously. The essay will be heavily footnoted, with the references serving as a running bibliography of <sup>to</sup> works by political scientists, economists, journalists and politicians I have found useful in thinking about the subject. Chapter 2 will deal with the electoral incentive and the activities it induces. Chapter 3 will deal with institutional arrangements in Congress, Chapter 4 with Congressional policy-making.

(17) "But it is equally true, though only of late and slowly beginning to be acknowledged, that a numerous assembly is a little fitted to the direct business of legislation and that of administration." John Stuart Mill, Considerations on Representative Government (Chicago: Reprint, 1962), p. 104.

(18) Gerhard Loewenberg, "The Role of Parliaments in Modern Political Systems," in Loewenberg (ed.), Modern Parliaments: Change or Decline? (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1971), p. 3.

END OF CH. I (start next page)

CAPS →

(7)

## II THE ELECTORAL INCENTIVE

"Congress has declined into a battle for individual survival. Each of the Congressmen and each of the Senators has the attitude: 'I've got to look out for myself.' If you remember the old best advice you ever had in the army, it would go with: 'Never volunteer.' This applies to Congress, and so we have very few volunteers. Most of them are willing only to follow those things that will protect them and give them the coloration which allows them to blend into their respective districts or their respective states. If you don't stick your neck out, you don't get it chopped off."

INSET  
+  
SINGLE  
SPACE

-- Senator William B. Saxton (R.-Ohio) (19)

The discussion to come will hinge on the assumption that U.S. Congressmen (20) are interested in getting re-elected -- indeed, in their role here as abstractions, interested in nothing else. Any such assumption <sup>necessarily</sup> does some violence to the facts, so it is important at the outset to root this one as firmly as possible in reality. A number of questions about that reality immediately arise.

First, is it true that the U.S. Congress is a place where members ~~wish to~~ wish to stay once they get there? Clearly these are representative assemblies which do not hold their members for very long. Members of the Colombian parliament tend to serve single terms and then move on. (21) Voluntary turnover is quite high in some American state legislatures -- for example, Alabama. In his study of the unreformed Connecticut legislature Parker labeled some of his subjects "reluctants" -- people not very much interested in politics who were briefly involved with it by others. (22) An ethic of "volunteerism" pervades the politics of California city councils. (23) All in the

- (19) Comments made in a Time "file of Congress" symposium, reprinted in Congressional Record (daily ed.), March 10, 1973, p. H1793.
- (20) Where the context does not suggest otherwise, the term "Congressmen" will refer to members of both House and Senate.
- (21) James L. Payne, Patterns of Conflict in Colombia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 17-20.
- (22) James D. Parker, The Connecticut Legislature (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), ch. 4.
- (23) Kenneth Brewitt, "Political Ambitions, Volunteerism, and Electoral Accountability," 64 American Political Science Review 5-17, 1970.

Congress itself voluntary turnover was high throughout most of the Nineteenth Century. Yet in the modern Congress it is unmistakable that the "Congressional career" is upon us. <sup>(24)</sup> Membership has noticeably declined among Southern Senators as early as the 1850's, among Senators generally just after the Civil War. <sup>(25)</sup> The House followed a similar path, with turnover dipping in the late Nineteenth Century and continuing to decline throughout the Twentieth. <sup>(26)</sup> In recent decades, the vast majority of members of both houses

Turnover figures show that over the ~~last~~ past century increasingly proportions of members in any given Congress have been holdovers from previous Congresses -- members who have both sought re-election and won. Membership turnover noticeably declined among Southern Senators as early as the 1850's, among Senators generally just after the Civil War. <sup>(25)</sup> The House followed a similar path, with turnover dipping in the late Nineteenth Century and continuing to decline throughout the Twentieth. <sup>(26)</sup> Average number of terms served ~~has~~ gone up and up with the House in 1971 registering an all-time high of 20% of its members who had served at least four terms. <sup>(27)</sup> It seems fair to characterize the modern Congress as an assemblage of professional politicians spinning out political careers. The jobs offer good pay and high prestige. There is no want of applicants for them. ~~What success in~~ ~~career~~ ~~is~~ Successful pursuit of a career requires continual re-election. <sup>(28)</sup>

(24) H. Douglas Price, "The Congressional Career Then and Now," ch. 2. in Nelson W. Polsky (ed.), Congressional Politics (New York: Random House, 1971).

(25) H. Douglas Price, "Longer Survival and Legislative 'Professionalism,'" pp. 14-16.

~~Continuing to decline throughout the Twentieth Century.~~  
~~Continuing to decline throughout the Twentieth Century.~~

(26) Nelson W. Polsky, "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives," 62 American Political Science Review 176, 1968.

(27) Charles S. Bullock III, "House Careerists: Changing Patterns of Longevity and Attrition," 66 American Political Science Review 1296, 1972.

(28) Indeed it has been proposed that professional politicians could be gotten rid of by making re-election impossible. For a plan to select one-term legislators by random sampling of the population see Dennis C. Mueller et al., "Legislative Government Via Random Selection," 12 Public Choice 57-68, 1972.

A second question is this: even if Congressmen seek reelection, does it make sense to ~~attribute~~ attribute that goal to them to the exclusion of all other goals? Of course the answer is that a complete explanation (if one were possible) of a Congressman's or any else's behavior would require attention to more than just one goal. There are even occasional Congressmen who intentionally do things that make their own electoral survival difficult or impossible. The late President Kennedy wrote of Congressional "profiles in courage."<sup>(29)</sup> Former Senator Paul Douglas (D.-Ill.) tells of how he tried to persuade Senator Frank Graham (D.-N.C.) to tailor his <sup>issue</sup> positions in order to survive a 1950 primary. Graham, a <sup>liberal</sup> appointee to the office, refused to listen. He was a "saint," says Douglas.<sup>(30)</sup> He lost his primary. There are not many saints. But surely it is common for Congressmen to seek other ends alongside the electoral one and not necessarily incompatible with it. Some try to get rich in office, a quest that may or may not interfere with re-election.<sup>(31)</sup> Fenno assigns three prime goals to Congressmen -- getting re-elected but also achieving influence within Congress and making "good public policy."<sup>(32)</sup> These latter two will be given attention further on in this discussion. Anyone can point to contemptuous Congressmen whose public activities are not obviously reducible to the electoral explanation; Senator J. William Fulbright (D.-Ark.) comes to mind. Yet, saints aside, the electoral goal has an attractive universality to it. It has to be the proximate goal of everyone, the goal that must be achieved over and over if other ends are to be entertained. One former Congressman writes, "All members of Congress have a primary interest in getting re-elected. Some members have no other interest."<sup>(32)</sup> Re-election underlies everything else, as indeed it should if we are to

(29) John F. Kennedy, Profiles in Courage (New York: Knicker and Row, 1956).  
 (30) Paul H. Douglas, In the Fallness of Time (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), pp. 238-241.  
 (31) In the case of the late Senator Thomas Dodd (D.-Conn.) these two goals apparently conflicted. See James Boyd, Above the Law (New York: New American Library, 1968). Using office for financial profit is probably less common in Congress than in some of the state legislatures (e.g., Illinois and New Jersey).  
 (32) Fenno, Congressmen in Committees, p. 1.

33

~~Frank E. Smith (D.-Miss.)~~  
~~of Congress~~  
 historical and Congressman from Mississippi (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 127. It will not be necessary here to reach the question of whether it is possible to defeat the goals of Congressmen by asking them what they are, or indeed the question of whether there are unconscious motives lurking behind conscious ones. In Lasswell's classical formulation "political types" are power seekers, with "private motives displaced on public objects rationalized in terms of public interest." Harold D. Lasswell, Power and Personality (New York: Viking, 1948), p. 38.



expect that the relation between politicians and public will be one of accountability. <sup>(34)</sup> What justifies a focus on the re-election goal is the justification of these two aspects of it -- its outative empirical primacy and its importance as an accountability link. For analytic purposes, therefore, Congressmen will be treated in the pages to come as if they were single-minded re-election seekers. Whatever else they may seek will be given passing attention, but the analysis will center on the electoral connection.

Yet another question arises. Even if Congressmen are single-mindedly interested in re-election, are they in a position as individuals to do anything about it? If they are not, if they are inexorably shoved to and fro by forces in their political environments, then obviously it ~~is~~ makes no sense to pay much attention to their individual activities. This question requires a complex answer, and it will be useful to begin reaching for one by pondering whether individual Congressmen are the proper analytic units in an investigation of this sort. An important alternative view is that parties rather than lone politicians are the prime movers in electoral politics. The now classic account of what a competitive political universe will look like with parties as its analytic

(34)

Of other kinds of relations we are entitled to be suspicious. "There can be no doubt, that if power is granted to a body of men, called Representatives, they, like any other men, will use their power, not for the advantage of the community, but for their own advantage, if they can. The only question is, therefore, how can they be prevented?" James Mill, "Government," in Essays on Government, Jurisprudence, Liberty of the Press, and Law of Nations (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1967), p. 18. Madison's view was that the U.S. House <sup>by design</sup> the popular branch, "should have an immediate dependence on, and an intimate sympathy with, the people. Frequent elections are unquestionably the only policy by which this dependency and sympathy can be effectually secured." The Federalist Papers, selected and edited by Jay Fairfield (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961), No. 52, p. 165.

units in Downs' Economic Theory of Democracy (35) In the familiar Downsian world parties are entirely selfish. They seek the rewards of office but in order to achieve them they have to win office and keep it. They bid for favor before the public as highly cohesive "teams." A party enjoys complete control over government during its term in office <sup>and uses its control solely to win the next election.</sup> In a two-party system a voter decides how to cast his ballot by examining the record and promises of the party in power and the previous record and current promises of the party out of power; he then calculates an "expected party differential" for the coming term, consults his own policy preferences, and votes accordingly. These are the potential lineaments of the Party (36) Legislative representatives, generally as modest "intermediaries" of the governing party, gather ~~and~~ information on grass-roots preferences and relay it to the government; and they try to persuade constituents back home that the government is doing a worthy job. (37)

How well a party model of this kind captures the reality of any given regime is an empirical question. One difficulty lies in the need for parties as cohesive "teams" (members whose "goals can be viewed as a single, consistent preference-ordering" (38)). In all non-autocratic regimes governments are made up of a plurality of elective officials -- not just one man. How can a group of men be bound together so that it looks something like a Downsian "team"? Probably nowhere (in a non-autocratic regime) does a group ~~achieve~~ achieve the ultimate fusion of preference-orderings needed to satisfy the model; party government in Britain, for example, proceeds

(35) Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy (New York: Harper and Row, 1957). Downs gives a formal touch to a political science literature of both normative and empirical importance extending from Woodrow Wilson through F. E. Schattschneider and V. O. Key, Jr.

(36) ibid., chs. 2, 3.

(37) ibid., pp. 88-90. Because the information and opinions supplied by representatives are inputted in decision-making, Downs says that in effect some decision-governing delegates take responsibility. But there is this constant: "Theoretically, the government will continue to decentralize its power until the marginal gain in votes from greater conformity to popular desires is outweighed by the marginal cost in votes of lesser ability to coordinate its actions." pp. 87-90.

(38) ibid., p. 26.

substantially by intra-party bargaining. (39) Nonetheless it is plain that some regimes fit the model better than others. For some purposes it is quite useful to study British politics by using parties as analytic units. Britain, to start with, has a Constitution that readily permits majoritarian government. But, beyond that, British M.P.'s vote in cohesive party blocs that approximate "teams." It is not inevitable that they should do so, and indeed there were and had 'individualistic' voting in the Commons in the mid-Nineteenth Century. (40) Why do contemporary M.P.'s submit to party discipline? There are, at least three reasons why they do so, and it will be useful here to examine them in order to allow better contacts with the American regime.

First of all, in both British parties, the nominating systems are geared to produce candidates who will vote the party line if and when they reach Parliament. This happens not because nominations are centrally controlled, but because the local nominating outfits are small elite groups which serve in effect as nationally-oriented checkleaders for the Commons party leadership. (41)

Second, British M.P.'s lack the resources to set up shop as politicians with bases independent of parties. Television time in campaigns goes to parties rather than to scattered independent politicians. (42) By custom or rule or both, the two parties sharply limit the funds that Parliamentary candidates can spend on their

(39) See, e.g., Richard E. Neustadt, "White House and Whitehall," The Public Interest, No. 2, Winter 1966, pp. 55-69.

(40) See William O. Aydelotte, "Voting Patterns in the British House of Commons in the 1840's," Comparative Studies in Society and History, 134-163, 1963.

(41) Austin Ranney, Pathways to Parliament: Candidate Selection in Britain (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), p. 281; Leon D. Epstein, "British M.P.'s and Their Local Parties: The Suez Case," American Political Science Review 385-386, 1960.

(42) Jay G. Glendon and Denis McQuail, Television in Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. xi-xxviii.

OWN in comparison. (43) Once elected, M.P.'s are not supplied the kind of office resources -- staff help, free mailing, ~~privileges~~ privileges, and no like -- that can be used to achieve public salience. (44) These arguments should not be carried too far; M.P.'s are not ciphers, and obviously dissident leaders like Duncan Burnham and Enoch Powell manage to build important independent followings. But the average backbencher is constrained by lack of resources. It comes as no surprise that individual M.P.'s add little to (or subtract little from) core partisan electoral strength in their constituencies; the lion's share of the variance in vote change from election to election is changeable to national swings rather than local or regional fluctuations. (45)

Third, with the executive entrenched in Parliament the only posts with holding in a Commons career are the ones doled out by party leaders. Up to a third of majority party M.P.'s are now included in the Ministry. (46) "For the ambitious backbencher, the task is to impress ministers and particularly the Prime Minister." (47) Party loyalty is rewarded; heresy is not.

One upshot of all this is that British M.P.'s are locked in. The arrangement of incentives and resources elevates parties over politicians. But the U.S. is very different. In

(45) R.T. McKenzie, British Political Culture (New York: St. Martin's, 1955),

pp. 252-253, 555.

(46) "An American Congressman, it is said, collapsed with shock on being shown the writing-rooms and the Library of the Commons full of men writing letters in longhand: Members of Parliament answering the constituency mail." Bernard Crick, The Reform of Parliament (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), p. 58; and generally, Crick, pp. 55-59. Things have changed somewhat since Crick's account, but the contrast is still valid. See also Anthony Barker and Michael Rush, The Member of Parliament and His Information (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1970).

Loewenberg reports that, in West Germany, "the average member of the Bundestag works under Spartan conditions." Gerhard Loewenberg, Parliament in the German Federal System (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 53.

(45) Donald Stokes, "Parties and the Nationalization of Electoral Forces," ch. 7 in William N. Coleman and Walter D. Burnham, The American Party System (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 128-129.

(46) Crick, *op. cit.*, p. 30-31. Crick adds: "A modern Crime Minister has a patronage beyond the wildest dreams of political avarice of a Walpole or a Newcastle." p. 31.

(47) John P. Mackintosh, "Reform of the House of Commons: The Case for Specialization," in Loewenberg (ed.), Modern Parliaments: Change or Decline? p. 39.

America The underpinnings of "Teamwork" are weak or absent, making it possible for politicians to triumph over parties. It should be said that Madisonian structure and Rousseauian teamwork are not necessarily incompatible. (48) Connecticut state government, in which party organizations exercise substantial control over nominations and political careers, comes close to the British model; governorship and state legislative parties are bound together by party organization. (49) But Connecticut is exceptional, or, more accurately, it is at one end of a spectrum toward the other end of which there are states in which parties have little binding effect at all. (50) In American politics the place where Rousseauian logic really applies is in the election of individuals to executive posts — Presidents, Governors, and big city mayors. To choose among candidates for the Presidency or the New York City mayoralty is to choose among "executive teams" — candidates with their retinues of future high administrators, financial supporters, ghostwriters, pollsters, student ideologues, journalistic flacks, hangers-on, occasionally bunglers and spies. In executive elections the candidates are highly visible; they bid for favor in Rousseauian fashion; they substantially control government.

- (48) Indeed in city studies there is the standard functional case ~~that~~ that cohesive parties may arise to deal with problems caused by constitutional diffusion. See, e.g., on Chicago, Edward C. Banfield, Political Influence (New York: Free Press, 1961), ch. 8. American parties have traditionally been strongest at the municipal level. But something interesting happens to them on the way to the city. Where parties are held together by patronage, and where there are no geographically subordinate governments which can serve as independent political bases, there is a strong tendency for party politics to become monopolistic rather than competitive. Ambitious politicians have little incentive to sustain an opposition party and every incentive to join the ruling party. The same argument generally holds for national politics in mid-Eighteenth Century England.
- (49) See Duverrier, New England State Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), chs. 9, 10; Joseph P. Lieberman, The Power Game (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966); James P. Oakes, "Coalition Strategies for Legislative Party Coercion," 28 Journal of Politics 347-367, 1966.

(50) In the California Senate, for example, ~~it~~ at least until recently ~~the~~ committee chairmanships have been given out to the most senior members regardless of party. Alvin D. Sokoloff and Richard W. Brandsma, "Partisanship and Seniority in Legislative Committee Assignments: California After Reapportionment," 24 Western Political Quarterly 741-747, 1971.

(or appear to) and can be changed with its accomplishments and  
 verdicts (President Nixon for inflation, Mayor Lindsay for crime);  
 elections are typically close (now even in most old machine cities);  
 voters can flip in "spoiled differentials." When the late V.O.  
 Key, Jr. wrote The Responsible Electorate (51) a book in the Downian  
 spirit, he had the original good sense to focus on competition  
 between incumbent and prospective Presidential administrations rather  
 than more broadly on competition between parties. Indeed it can be  
 argued that American representative assemblies have declined in power  
 in the Twentieth Century (especially at the city council level) and  
 executives have risen chiefly because it is the executives who offer  
 electorates something like Downian accountability. (52)

But at the Congressional level the camaraderie model breaks down. To  
 hark back to the British discussion, the specified resource and incentive  
 arrangements conducive to party unity among M.P.'s are  
 absent in the Congressional environment.

First, the way in which Congressional candidates win party  
 nominations is not, to say the least of it, one which fosters  
 party cohesion in Congress. For one thing, 435 House members and  
 98 Senators (all but the Indiana pair) are now nominated by  
 direct primary (or, perhaps, in the few states with challenge  
 primaries) rather than by caucus or convention. There is no reason  
 to expect large primary electorates to honor party loyalty.  
 (An introduction of the direct primary system in Britain might in  
 itself destroy party cohesion in the Commons.) For another, even  
 where party organizations are still strong enough to control  
 Congressional primaries (53) the parties are locally rather than  
 nationally oriented; local party unity is vital to them,

(51) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966.)

(52) There is Huntington's point that sweeping turnover of a Jacksonian sort now occurs  
 in national politics only at the top executive level. Samuel P. Huntington,  
 "Congressional Response to the Twentieth Century," ch. 1 in David B. Truman (ed.), The Congress and America's  
 Future (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 17.

(53) In Chicago, for example. See Leo M. Snowiss, "Congressional Recruitment and  
 Representation," 60 American Political Science Review 627-639, 1966.



national party unity is not. Apparently it never has been. (54)

Second, unlike the M.P. the typical American Congressman has to mobilize his own resources to win initially a nomination, to win election and win re-election. He builds his own electoral coalition and sustains it. He raises and spends a great deal of money in doing so. He has at his command an elaborate set of electoral resources that the Congress bestows upon all its members. There will be more on these points later. One important point here is that a Congressman can -- indeed must -- build a power base that is substantially independent of party. (55) In the words of a House member quoted by Clapp, "If we depended on the party organization to get elected, none of us would be here." (56)

Third, Congress does not have to sustain a cabinet and hence does not engage the ambitions of its members in cabinet formation in such a fashion as to induce party cohesion. It would be wrong to posit a <sup>general</sup> one-to-one relation here between party cohesion and cabinet sustenance. On the one hand there is nothing preventing Congressmen from building disciplined Congressional parties anyway if they wanted to do so. On the other hand, as the records of the Third and Fourth French Republics show, cabinet regimes can be anchored in relatively

(54) On the fluid behavior of machine Congressmen back when there were a good many more of them; see M. Ostrogorski, Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties, Vol. II, The United States (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), pp. 286-289. Tammany Democrats broke party ranks to save Speaker Joseph G. Cannon from Insurgent and Democratic attack in the Sixtieth Congress, a year before his downfall. See Blair Bolles, Tyrant from Illinois (New York: Norton, 1951), p. 181.

(55) See Charles L. Clapp, The Congressman: His Work and His World (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1963), pp. 30-31; Robert J. Huckshorn and Robert C. Spencer, The Politics of Defeat (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971), p. viii, 71-72; David A. Lenthall, Electrifying in a Democracy (New York: Wiley, 1965), p. 100.

(56) Clapp, op. cit., p. 351.

incohesive parties. Yet, to pose the proposition in statistical rather than deterministic form, the need for an assembly to sustain a cabinet probably raises the likelihood that it will spawn disciplined parties. (57)

The fact is that no theoretical treatment of the U.S. Congress which posits parties as analytic units will go very far. So we are left with individual Congressmen, with 535 men and women rather than two parties, as units ~~to be given~~ attention in the discussion to come. The style of argument will be somewhat like that of Downs, but the reality more like that of Namier. (58) Whether the choice of units is justifiable can be shown only in the facts marshaled and the arguments embellished from them. With the units nailed down, still left unanswered is the question of whether Congressmen in search of re-election are in a position to do anything about it.

Here it will be useful to deal first with the minority subset of Congressmen who serve marginal districts or states — constituencies fairly evenly balanced between the parties. The reason for taking up the marginals separately is to consider whether their electoral precariousness ought to induce them to engage in distinctive electoral activities. Marginals have ~~an~~ an obvious problem; to a substantial degree they are at the mercy of national partisan electoral swings. But general voter awareness of Congressional legislative activities is low. (59) Hence national swings in the Congressional vote are normally

(57) See the argument in Leon D. Epstein, "A Comparative Study of Canadian Parties," 58 American Political Science Review 46-59, 1964.

(58) Lewis Namier, The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III (London: Macmillan, 1960). For a Namier passage on assemblies without disciplined parties, see p. 17.

(59) David E. Stokes and Warren E. Miller, "Party Government and the Salience of Congress," ch. 11 in Angus Campbell et al., Elections and the Political Order (New York: Wiley, 1966), p. 199.

Judgments on what the President is <sup>(or is thought to be doing)</sup> doing rather than on what Congress is doing. In the familiar case where parties controlling the Presidency lose House seats in the mid-term, surveys seem to be not judgments on anything at all but rather artifacts of the election cycle. <sup>(60)</sup> More along a judgmental line, there has been an impressive relation over the years between partisan voting for the House and ups and downs in real income among voters. The national electorate rewards the Congressional party of a President who reigns during economic prosperity and punishes the party of ~~the~~ one who reigns during adversity. <sup>(61)</sup> Rewards and penalties may be given by the same circuitous route for other states of affairs, including national involvement in wars. <sup>(62)</sup> With voters behaving the way they do, it is in the electoral interest of a marginal Congressman to help insure that a Presidential administration of his own party is a popular success or that one of the ~~opposite~~ party is a failure. (Purely from the standpoint of electoral interest there is no reason why a Congressman with a safe seat should care one way or another).

But what can a marginal Congressman do to affect the fortunes of a Presidency? One shorthand course a marginal serving under a President of his own party can take is to support him diligently in roll call voting; there is ambiguous evidence that relevant marginals do behave disproportionately in this

<sup>(60)</sup> Angus Campbell, "Surge and Decline: A Study of Electoral Change," ch. 3 in *ibid.*; Barbara Hinckley, "Interpreting House Midterm Elections: Toward a Measurement of the In-Party's (Expected) Loss of Seats," <sup>(61)</sup> *American Political Science Review* 694-700, 1967.

<sup>(61)</sup> Gerald H. Kramer, "Short-Term Fluctuations in U.S. Voting Behavior, 1896-1964," <sup>(65)</sup> *American Political Science Review* 131-143, 1971.

See also the symposium on the Kramer findings in <sup>(63)</sup> *American Economic Review* 160-180, Aug 1973.

<sup>(62)</sup> Kramer, *op. cit.*, 140. Wars seem to earn penalties.

fashion. <sup>(63)</sup> This strategy may not always be the best one. During the 1958 recession, for example, it may have been wise for marginal Democrats to support Democratic deficit-spending bills over the opposition of President Eisenhower; in the 1958 election Eisenhower's policies seem to have been ruinous for members of his own party. How about marginals of the opposition party? By the same logic it might be advantageous for opposition marginals to try to wreck the economy; <sup>if it would do more harm to the President</sup> the voters would probably blame the President, not them.

There are number of intriguing theoretical possibilities here for marginals of parties both in and out of power. Yet marginals seem not to ~~seem to~~ ~~give much attention to strategies of this sort,~~

~~whether ingenious or ingenious.~~ <sup>What we are pondering is</sup> whether individual marginals can realistically hope to do anything to affect the national component of the variance over time in Congressional partisan election percentages. <sup>(64)</sup> And the answer seems to be no--at least extraordinarily little. Leaving aside the problem of generating collective Congressional action, there is the root problem of knowing what to try to do. It is hard to point to an instance in recent decades in which any group of Congressmen (marginals or not) has done something of clear effect of which has been to change the national Congressional electoral percentage in a direction, in which the group intended to change it. <sup>(Con'to keep it stationary & not in the interest)</sup>

There are too many imponderables. Most importantly, Presidents follow their own logic. So do events! Not even economists can have a clear idea about what the effects of economic measures will be. The election cycle adds its own kind of perversity; the furious enactment of President Johnson's Great Society legislation (by all the <sup>surely</sup> extreme liberals) was followed in 1966 by the largest Republican gain in House popular vote percentage of the last quarter century. Hence there is a lack of usable lore among Congressmen on what <sup>legislation</sup> actions will

63) David B. Truman, The Congressional Party (New York: Wiley, 1959), pp 213-218.

64) As in Stokes, op. cit.

produce what national electoral effects. <sup>(65)</sup> And there is after all the problem of generally collective action - especially <sup>action</sup> among non-marginal Congressmen who can watch national election percentages oscillate and Presidents come and go with relative equanimity. All in all the rational way for ~~the~~ marginal Congressmen to deal with national trends is to ignore them, to treat them as Acts of God over which they can exercise no control. It makes much more sense to devote resources to things over which they think they can have some control. There is evidence that marginals do think and act distinctively. House marginals are more likely <sup>than non-marginals</sup> to turn up as "district-oriented" and "delegates" in role studies; they introduce more floor amendments; <sup>(67)</sup> in general marginals of both houses display more focus in their election-oriented activities. But these activities are not directed toward affecting national election percentages. And although they may differ in intensity they do not differ in kind from the activities engaged in by everybody else.

Are, then, Congressmen in a position to do anything about getting re-elected? If an answer is sought in their ability to affect national partisan percentages the answer is no. But if an answer is sought in their ability to affect the ~~the~~ percentages in their own primary and general elections, the answer is yes. At least so the case here will be. More specifically, the case will be that they

(65) Nonetheless there are interesting questions here that have never been asked. Do marginal Congressmen - or members generally - of the party not in control of the Presidency try to sabotage the economy? Of course they must not appear to do so, but there are "respectable" ways of acting. How about Republicans in the Eightieth Congress with their tax-cutting in time of inflation? Or Democrats with their spending programs under President Nixon - also in a time of inflation? The answer is probably no. It would have to be shown that the same Congressmen's actions differ under presidencies of different parties, and they probably do not. Strategies like this not only require duplicity, they require a vigorous consciousness of distant effects of a sort that is foreign to the Congressional mentality.

(66) Davidson, *op. cit.*, p 128.  
 (67) David M. Olson and Cynthia S. Nonidez, "Measures of Legislative Performance in the U.S. House of Representatives," *Historical Journal of Political Science* 273-274, 1972.

Think that they can affect their own percentages, that in fact they can affect their own percentages, and furthermore that there is reason for them to try to do so. This last is obvious ~~to~~ for the marginals, but perhaps not so obvious for the non-marginals. Are they not, after all, occupants of "safe seats"? It is easy to form an image of Congressmen who inherit party bastions and who graze their way through their careers without ever having to worry about elections. But this image is misconceived and it is important to show why it is misconceived.

First, when looked at from the standpoint of a career Congressman seats are not as safe as they may seem. Of House members serving in the Ninety-third Congress 58% had at least one time or another in their careers won general elections with less than 55% of the total vote, 77% with less than 60%. For Senators the figures were 70% and 86% (the last figure including 15 of the 22 Southerners). ~~And aside from these~~ And aside from these November results there is competition in the primaries. The fact is that the typical Congressman is someone who at least occasionally ~~has~~ has won a narrow victory. <sup>(68)</sup>

Second -- to look at the election figures from a different angle -- in U.S. House elections only about a third of the variance in partisan percentages over time is attributable to national swings. About half the variance is local (or, more properly, residual, the variance not explained by national and state components). <sup>(69)</sup> The local component is probably at least as high in Senate elections. Hence vote variation over which Congressmen have reason to think they can exercise some control (i.e., the primary vote and the local component of the November vote) is substantial.

(68) Over the long haul the proportion of seats switching from party to party is quite surprising. Of Senators serving in the Ninety-third Congress, ~~in~~ initially coming to the Senate 56 had succeeded members of the opposite party, 43 had succeeded members of the same party, and one (Hiram Fong; R.-Haw.) had come into the Senate at the same time his state entered the union. (Predecessors here are taken to be the last elected predecessors; i.e., interim appointments are ignored.) Of House members serving in the same Congress, 36% had originally succeeded members of the opposite party, 51% members of the

21 B

same party, and 13% had originally taken newly created seats. (District continuity  
at the time of member transfer is assumed and if a less distinct form in substantially the same party, as well as,

(69)

Spikes, op. cit., p. 186. This <sup>American</sup> ranking of vote components in order of  
importance ~~is different from the British ranking~~ differs from the British ranking.

What this comes down to in general elections is that district vote fluctuations beyond or in opposition to national trends can be quite striking. ~~For example~~ for example between 1968 and 1970 the Republican share of the national House vote fell 3.3%, but the share of Congressman Chester L. Mize (R.-Kans.) fell from 67.6% to 45.0% and he lost his seat. In 1972 four incumbent Republican Senators lost their seats; in general it was not a bad year for Congressional Republicans, and all four Senators had won in 1966 with at least 58% of the vote - and so it goes. In addition there are the primaries. (70) It is ~~hard~~ hard for anyone to feel absolutely secure in an electoral environment of this sort. In Kingdon's interview study of candidates who had just run for office in Wisconsin (about a third of them running for Congress) the proportion who recalled having been "uncertain" about electoral outcome during their campaigns was high, and the incidence of uncertainty was only modestly related to actual electoral outcome. (71) But the local vote component cuts two ways; if losses are possible, so presumably are gains. In particular, it seems to be possible for <sup>some</sup> incumbents to beef up their November percentages beyond normal party levels in their constituencies. On the House side (but apparently not on the Senate) the over-all electoral value of incumbency seems to have risen in the last decade. (72) - - although of course some House incumbents still do lose their seats.

- (70) In the 1964-1972 period ten House committee chairmen lost their primaries.
- (71) John W. Kingdon, *Candidates for Office: Beliefs and Strategies* (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 56-59.
- (72) From about 2% in the 1950's to about 5% in 1966 and maybe higher by 1970-1972. See Robert S. Erikson, "The Paradox of Incumbency in Congressional Elections," *3 Polity* 395-405, 1971; Erikson, "Malapportionment, Gerrymandering, and Party Fortunes in Congressional Elections," *66 American Political Science Review* 1240, 1972; David R. Mayhew, "Congressional Elections: The Case of the Vanishing Marginalist," forthcoming in *Polity* Spring 1974. It is not clear what accounts for the rise in incumbency value, not even certain that it is attributable to the election-oriented activities of incumbents. But some of the electoral sagas of recent years are truly startling. There is the case of the Wisconsin 7th district, strongly Republican for years in the hands of Melvin R. Laird. Laird's last percentages were 65.1% in 1966 and 64.1% in 1968. When Laird went to the Cabinet, David R. Obeg took the seat for the Democrats with 51.6% in a 1969 by-election. Obeg won with 67.6% in 1970 and then with 63.5% in a 1972 election in which he was forced to run against an incumbent Republican in a merged district. On Obeg's election-oriented activities see Norman C. Miller, "Privileges of Rank: New Congressman Finds Campaigning Is Easier Now Than He's in Office," *Wall Street Journal*, August 4, 1969, p. 1.



Third, there is a more basic point. The ultimate concern here is not ~~how probable it is~~ how probable it is legislators will lose their seats. But ~~whether there is a connection between~~ whether there is a connection between what they do in office and their need to be re-elected. It is possible to conceive of an assembly in which no member ever comes close to losing a seat, but in which the need to be re-elected is what inspires members' behavior. It would be an assembly with no saints or fools in it, an assembly packed with skilled politicians going about their business. When we say "Congressman Smith is unbeatable," we do not mean that there is nothing he could do that would lose him his seat. Rather we mean, "Congressman Smith is unbeatable as long as he continues to do the things he is doing." If he ~~stopped answering his mail, or stopped visiting his district, or began voting randomly on roll calls, or shuffled his~~ stopped answering his mail, or stopped visiting his district, or began voting randomly on roll calls, or shuffled his vote card 80 points on the A.D.A. scale, he would bring on primary or November election troubles in a hurry. It is difficult to offer conclusive proof that this last statement is true, for there is no Congressman willing to make the experiment. But normal <sup>political</sup> activity among politicians with healthy electoral margins should not be confused with inactivity. What characterizes "safe" Congressmen is not that they are beyond electoral reach, but that their efforts are very likely to bring them uninterrupted electoral success.

Whether Congressmen think their activities have electoral impact, and whether in fact they have impact, are of course two separate questions. Of the former there can be little doubt that the ~~assessments~~ <sup>assessments</sup> are ~~inaccurate~~ <sup>successful</sup>. The fact in their own minds, politicians probably overestimate the impact of activity. Kingdon found in his Wisconsin candidates a "congratulation - rationalization effort," a tendency for winners to take personal credit for <sup>their</sup> victories and for losers to assign their losses to forces beyond their control. <sup>(73)</sup> The actual impact of politicians' activities is more difficult to assess. The evidence on this point is soft and scattered. It is hard to find variance in activities undertaken, for there are no politicians who consciously try to lose. There is no

(73) Kingdon, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

doubt that the electorate's <sup>general</sup> awareness of what is going on in Congress is something less than robust. <sup>(74)</sup> Yet the argument here will be that Congressmen's activities <sup>in fact</sup> do have electoral impact. Pieces of evidence will be brought in as the discussion proceeds. <sup>(75)</sup>

The next step then is to offer a brief conceptual restatement of the relation between Congressmen and their electorates. In the Downsian analysis what <sup>potential</sup> party leaders must worry about is voters' "expected party differential." <sup>(76)</sup> But to Congressmen this is in practice irrelevant, for reasons specified earlier. A Congressman's attention must rather be devoted to ~~the~~ what can be called an "expected incumbent differential." Let us define this "expected incumbent differential" as any difference perceived by a relevant political actor between what an incumbent Congressman is likely to do if returned to office and what any possible challenger (in primary or general election) would be likely to do. And let us define "relevant political actor" here as anyone who has a resource that might be used in the election in question. At the ballot box the only usable resources are votes, but there are resources that can be translated into votes: money, the ability to make persuasive endorsements, organizational skills, etc. By this definition a "relevant political actor" need not be a constituent; one of the most important resources, money, flows all over the country in Congressional campaign years. <sup>(77)</sup>

(74) Stokes and Miller, op. cit.

(75) The most sophisticated treatment of this subject is in Warren E. Miller and Donald Stokes, "Constitutional Influence in Congress," ch. 16 in ibid., pp. 366-370. Note that a weird but important kind of accountability relationship would exist if Congressmen thought their activities had impact even if they had none at all.

(76) Downs, op. cit., pp. 38-45.

(77) To give an extreme example, in the North Dakota Senate campaign of 1970 an estimated 85 to 90% of the money spent by candidates of both parties came from out of state. Philip M. Stern, The Money Game in Politics (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 384.

Now it must be emphasized that the average voter has only the haziest awareness of what an incumbent Congressman is actually doing for me. <sup>(78)</sup> But an incumbent has to be concerned about actors who do form impressions about him, and especially about actors who can marshal resources other than their own votes. Senator Robert C. Byrd (D.-W.Va.) has a "little list" of 2,545 West Virginians he regularly keeps in touch with. <sup>(79)</sup> A Congressman's assistant interviewed for a Nolan profile in 1972 reports the "thought leadership" back in the district. <sup>(80)</sup> Of campaign resources, money is most vital in every way. An incumbent not only has to assure that his own election funds are adequate, he has to try to minimize the probability that actors will bankroll an expensive campaign against him. There is one story that during the first Nixon term Senator James B. Pearson (R.-Kans.) was told he could face a well-financed opponent in his 1972 primary if he did not display more party regularity in his voting. <sup>(81)</sup> Availability of money can affect strength of candidacy in both primary and general elections. <sup>(82)</sup> Another resource of significance is organizational expertise, probably more important than money among labor union offerings. Simple ability to do electioneering footwork is a resource the invoking of which may give campaigns an interesting twist. Leffler found in studying ten 1962 House elections in the San Francisco area that 50% of campaign workers

<sup>(78)</sup> For thousands of November voters totally unaware of candidate particularities the crimmest selection criterion is no doubt the party label on the ballot. These voters are normally left undisturbed in their ignorance, although candidates may find it useful to bring resources to get the right ones to the polls. But it must not be assumed that there are no circumstances under which such voters can be aroused into vigorous candidate awareness.

<sup>(79)</sup> Robert Sherrill, "The Embodiment of Poor White Power," New York Times Magazine, February 28, 1971, p. 51.

2) Ellen Szita, Ralph Nader Congress Project profile on Gannett E. Shriver (R.-Kans.) (Washington, D.C.: Grossman, 1972), p. 14.

Shriver's administrative assistant was asked about the distinct value of the Congressman's Organizational Committee membership. His answer: "Project-wise, it's been valuable... I wouldn't say the majority of his constituents recognize that the Organizational Committee is one of the most important — just because I would have the 'thought leadership' niche filled." The interviewee

noted it must be the "Community Leadership in Wichita" the A.A. was referring to, for, when asked, "with few exceptions... the Centers could have been ten different federally-subsidized projects that Representative Shriver had brought to the public's attention!!" (Congress project profiles referred to in future footnotes will be called "Nader profiles" for short. For all of them the more complete citation is the one given here.)  
 (81) Dennis Farney, "How GOP Sen. Pearson Went From Super Star to Super Winner in 1972," Wall Street Journal, September 29, 1972, p. 1.

(82) Here is the following report of an election poll conducted by Congressman Torbert H. Macdonald (D.-Iowa), chairman of the Communications and Power Subcommittee of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee:

"His fear of opposition from some of these industries is so overwhelming that they have succeeded in immobilizing him with regard to regulatory legislation.

For example, several years ago, he received a pitched battle when the electric companies brought his efforts to regulate electric rates.

According to [Congressman] [D.] Tiernan [D.-R.I.]: "Macdonald will not touch them." That intimidation is exemplified by Macdonald's former aide, Marty Kuhn, who states that "Even though Torby openly defied his opponent, the relations make him out of pariah."

He is most reluctant to do anything that would offend the power people."

John Paris, Legislation in Communication in Marketplace (C.B.), "Position and Senate Committee on Commerce" (unpublished manuscript), p. 161.

The reference is apparently to the election of 1968, when Macdonald's percentage fell to 62.5. It is normally well over 65.

held college degrees (as against 12% of the Bay area population) and that the workers were more issue-oriented than the general population.<sup>(83)</sup> The need to attract workers may induce candidates to tackle in issues more than they otherwise would. Former Congressman Allan K. Lowenstein (D.-N.Y.) has as his key invocable resource a corps of student volunteers who will follow him from district to district, making him an unusually mobile candidate.

Still another highly important resource is the ability to make persuasive endorsements. Manhattan candidates angle for the imprimatur of the New York Times. New Hampshire politics rotates around endorsements of the Manchester Union Leader. Labor union committees circulate their approved lists. Chicago Democratic politicians seek the endorsement of the Mayor. In the San Francisco area and elsewhere House candidates try to score points by winning endorsements from officials of the opposite party.<sup>(84)</sup> As Neustadt argues, the influence of the President over Congressmen (of both parties) varies with his public prestige and with his perceived ability to punish and reward.<sup>(85)</sup> One Presidential tool is the endorsement, which can be carefully calibrated according to level of fervor, <sup>and which can be given to Congressmen or to challengers running against Congressmen.</sup> In the 1970 election Senator Charles Goodell (R.-N.Y.), who had achieved public notoriety by attacking the Nixon Administration, was apparently done in by the resources called forth by that attack; the Vice President <sup>implicitly</sup> endorsed his Conservative opponent and the Administration acted to channel normally Republican money away from Goodell.<sup>(86)</sup>

(83) Leukold, op. cit., pp. 92-94.

(84) ibid., p. 44.

(85) Richard S. Neustadt, Presidential Power (New York: New American Library, 1964), chs. 4, 5.

(86) Of course when the President's poll ratings drop so do his ability to punish and reward and his influence over Congressmen. When they drop very low it becomes politically profitable for Congressmen of his own party to attack him -- as with Democrats in 1951-52 and Republicans in 1973.

What a Congressman has to try to do is to insure that in primary and general elections the resource balance (with all other deployable resources finally translated into votes) favors himself rather than somebody else. To maneuver successfully he must remain constantly aware of what political actors' "mumchut differential" readings are, and he must act in a fashion to insure readings that favor himself. Complicating his task is the problem of slack resources. That is, only a very small portion of the resources (other than votes) that are conceivably deployable in Congressional campaigns are ever in fact deployed. But there is no sure way of telling who will suddenly become aroused and with what consequence. For example just after the 1948 election the American Medical Association, unnerved by the medical program of the Atlee Government and by Democratic campaign promises here to institute national health insurance, decided to venture into politics. By 1950 Congressmen on record as supporters of health insurance found themselves confronted by a million-dollar A.M.A. lobbying drive, local "healing arts committees" making candidate endorsements, and even doctors sending out campaign literature with their monthly bills. By 1952 it was widely believed that the A.M.A. had decided since elections, and few Congressmen were <sup>still</sup> mentioning health insurance. (87)

In all his calculations the Congressman must keep in mind that he is seeing two electorates rather than one -- a November electorate and a primary electorate nested inside it but not a representative sample of it. From the standpoint of the politician a primary is just another election to be survived. (88) A typical scientific poll of a constituency yields a Congressman information on the public standing of possible challengers to him in the other party but also in his own party. <sup>A threat is a threat.</sup> For an incumbent with a firm "supporting coalition" (89) of elite groups in his party the primary election is normally quiescent. But there can be sudden turbulence.

"The American Medical Association: Power, Progress, and Politics in Organized Medicine," 63 *Yale Law Journal* 1011-1016, 1954. Sister Myles's recollection: "legislators thought the conclusion that the voters were opposed to all forms of health insurance and that they should avoid an open conflict with the A.M.A." *Drugs, as cited*, p. 390.

- (88) The convention system of the Nineteenth Century offered comparable perils. Bayne comments that House seats were highly prized and that there was an ethic that they should be rotated. "An ambitious Congressman is therefore forced to think day and night of his re-nomination, and to secure it not only by procuring, if he can, grants from the Federal Treasury for local projects, and places for the relatives and friends of the local wire-pullers who control the nominating Conventions, but also by sedulously ('nursing') the constituency during his vacations." James Bryce, The American Commonwealth, vol. I (New York: Putnam's, 1911), pp 40-41.
- (89) The term is Kingdon's. Op. cit., p. 45.

Did it sometimes happen that the median views of primary and November electors are so divergent on salient issues that a Congressman finds it difficult to hold both electorates at once. This has been a recurrent problem among California legislators. <sup>(90)</sup>

Behavior A final conceptual point has to do with whether Congressmen's should be characterized as "maximizing" behavior. Does it make sense to visualize the Congressman as a maximizer of vote percentage in elections -- November, or primary, or, with some complex tradeoff, both? For two reasons the answer is probably no. The first has to do with his goal itself, which is to stay in office rather than to win all the popular vote. More precisely his goal is to stay in office over a number of <sup>future</sup> elections, which does mean that "winning comfortably" in any one of them (except the last) is more desirable than winning by a narrow plurality. The logic here is that a narrow victory (in primary or general election) is a sign of weakness that can inspire hostile political actors to deploy resources intensively the next time around. By this reasoning the higher the election percentages the better. No doubt any Congressman would jump in an act to raise his November figure from 80% to 90% if he could be absolutely sure that the act would accomplish the end (without affecting his primary percentage) and if it could be undertaken at low personal cost. But still, trying to "win comfortably" is not the same as trying to win

(90) Although the direct primary system is uniquely American there are variants that pose similar problems for politicians. In Italian parliamentary elections each voter registers a vote for a favored party's candidate list, but then can also cast preference votes for individual candidates on that list. Whether a given candidate gets elected depends both on how well his party does against other parties and how well he does against members of his own party. Mass organizations (e.g., labor and farm groups) capable of mobilizing preference votes reap benefits in the parliament "where nothing seems to count so much as the ability to deliver the required number of preference votes." Joseph La Palombara, Interest Groups in Italian Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 248-249.



all the popular vote. As the personal cost (e.g., expenditure of personal energy) of a hypothetical "sure gain" rises, the Congressman at the 55% <sup>Housewide</sup> level is more likely to be willing to pay it than his colleague at the 20% level.

The second <sup>and more decisive</sup> reason why a pure maximization model is inappropriate is that Congressmen act in an environment of high uncertainty. An assumption of minimax behavior therefore gives a better fit. Behavior of an innovative sort can yield vote gains but it can also bring disaster (as in Senator Goldwater's case.) For the most part it makes sense for Congressmen to follow conservative strategies. Each member, after all, is a recent victor of two elections (primary and general), and it is only reasonable for him to believe that whatever it was that won for him the last time is good enough to win the next time. When a Congressman has a contented primary electorate and a comfortable November percentage it makes sense <sup>to stay</sup> to sit tight, <sup>to keep the coalition together</sup> where November constituencies are polarized in the conventional fashion -- labor and liberal on one side, business on the other -- there is hardly any alternative. Yet simply repeating the activities of the past is of course <sup>invariably</sup> for the world changes. There are always new rules, new events, new issues. Congressmen therefore need conservative strategies for dealing with change. And they have some. For members with conventional supporting ~~constituencies~~

~~constituencies~~ it can <sup>be</sup> useful to accept party cues in deciding how to cast roll call votes; <sup>91</sup> a Republican House member from Indiana can hardly go wrong in following the party line (though for an Alabama Democrat or Massachusetts Republican it would be madness to do so). It may be useful to build a voting record that blends in with the records of party colleagues in one's state delegation. <sup>92</sup> It is surely useful to watch other members' primary and

<sup>91</sup> On cues generally see Donald H. Matthews and James A. Stinson, "Cue-Taking by Congressmen: A Model and a Computer Simulation," 1972 paper presented at Conference on the Use of Quantitative Techniques in the Study of the History of Legal and Political Behavior; and John E. Jackson, "Statistical Models of Senate Roll Call Voting," 65 American Political Science Review 451-470, 1971.

<sup>92</sup> See Aage Clauson, How Congressmen Decide: A Voting Theory (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), ch. 7.5. Fiehl's criticism of the New York delegation, "most important of all, perhaps, is that the members in taking cues from the New York group cannot get into electoral difficulties as a result of deviation. There is security in numbers." Alan Fiehl, "The Reaction of Informed Groups: Advice Delegation," ch. 3 in Pub. Affs. 1963, p. 67.

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general elections to try to gain class on voter judgement. But conservatism can be paid only so far. It requires a marked degree of venturism just to hold an old coalition together. And for <sup>members</sup> in great electoral danger (again, God!) it may <sup>or balance</sup> be wise to resort to ostentatious innovation.

Whether they are safe, marginal, cautious or audacious, Congressmen must constantly engage in activities related to re-election. There will be differences in emphasis, but all members share the root need to do things - indeed to do things day in and day out during their terms. The next step here is to present a typology, a short list of the kinds of activities Congressmen find electorally useful to engage in. The case will be that there are three basic kinds of activities. It will be important to lay them out with some care, for arguments in later chapters will be built on them.

One activity is advertising, defined here as any effort to disseminate one's name among constituents in such a fashion as to create a favorable image but in messages having little or no issue content. A successful Congressman builds what amounts to a brand name, which may have a generalized electoral value for other politicians in the same family. The personal qualities to emphasize are experience, knowledge, responsiveness, candor, sincerity, independence and the like. Just getting one's name across is difficult enough; only about half the electorate, if asked, can supply their House members' names. It helps a Congressman to be known. "In the main, recognition carries a positive valence; to be perceived at all is to be perceived favorably." (93) A vital advantage enjoyed by House incumbents is that they are much better known among voters than their November challengers. (94) They are better known because they

(93) Shiles and Miller, op. cit., p. 205. The same may not be true among, say, mayors.

(94) Ibid., p. 204. The likelihood is that Senators are also better known than their challengers, but that the gap is not so wide as it is on the House side. There is no hard evidence on the point.

Spent a great deal of time, energy, and money trying to make themselves better known. (95) There are standard routines -- frequent visits to the constituency, non-political speeches to home audiences, (96) the sending out of infant care booklets and letters of condolence and congratulation. Of 158 House members questioned in a poll - 1960's, 121 said that they regularly sent newsletters to their constituents (97); 48 write separate news or opinion columns for newspapers; 82 regularly reported to their constituencies by radio or television; (98) 89 regularly sent out mail questionnaires. (99) Some routines are less standard. Congressman George F. Shufley (D.-Ill.) claims to have met personally <sup>about</sup> half his constituents (i.e., <sup>some</sup> 200,000 people). (100) For over 20 years Congressman Charles C. Diggs, Jr. (D.-Mich.) has run a radio program featuring himself as a "combination disc-jockey, commentator and minister." (101) Congressman Daniel J. Flood (D.-Pa.) is "famous for appearing unannounced and often uninvited at wedding anniversaries and other events." (102) Anniversaries and other events aside, Congressional advertising is done largely at public expense. Use of the franking privilege has mushroomed in recent years; in early 1973 it was estimated that House and Senate members would send out about 476 million pieces of mail in the year 1974.

(95) In Clapp's interview study, "Conversations with more than fifty House members uncovered only one who seemed to place little emphasis on strategies designed to increase communication with the voter." Op. cit., p. 88. The exception was an innocent freshman.

(96) A statement by one of Clapp's Congressmen: "The best speech is a non-political speech. I think a commencement speech is the best of all. X says he has never lost a precinct in a town where he has made a commencement speech." Op. cit., p. 96.

(97) These and the following figures on member activity are from Donald G. Tachman and Morris K. Udall, The Job of the Congressman (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), pp. 281-288.

(98) Another Clapp Congressman: "I was looking at my TV film today -- I have done one every week since I have been here -- and who was behind me but Congressman X. I'll swear he had never done a TV show before in his life but he was even by a few hundred votes last time. Now he has a weekly television show. If he had done that before he wouldn't have had my trouble!" Op. cit., p. 92.

- (99) On questionnaires generally, see Walter Wilcox, "The Congressional Poll--and Non-Poll," in Edward C. Dreyer and Walter P. Rosenbaum (eds.), Political Opinions and Electoral Behavior (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 340-400.
- (100) Ellen Szita, News profile on Shelley, p. 12. The Congressman is also a certified diver. "When Shelley is home in his district and a drowning occurs, he is sometimes asked to dive down for the body. 'It gets in the papers and actually, it's pretty good publicity for me,' he admitted." P. 3. Whether this should be classified under casework rather than advertising is difficult to say.
- (101) Lenore Cooley, News profile on Diggs, p. 2.
- (102) Anne Zandman and Arthur Magida, News profile on Flood, p. 2.

at a <sup>public</sup> cost of \$1 33.1 million -- or about 900,000 pieces per member with a subsidy of \$78,000 per member. <sup>(103)</sup> By far the heaviest mailroom traffic comes in October of even-numbered years. <sup>(104)</sup> There are some differences between House and Senate members in the ways they go about getting their names across. House members are free to blanket their constituencies with mailings for all boxholders; Senators are not. But Senators find it easier to appear on national television -- for example, in short reaction statements on the nightly news shows. Advertising is a staple Congressional activity, and there is no end to it. For each member there are always new voters ~~to~~ to be apprised of his worthiness, and old voters to be reminded of it. <sup>(105)</sup>

A second activity may be called credit-claiming, defined here as acting so as to generate a belief in a relevant actor (or actors) that one is personally responsible for causing the government, or some unit thereof, to do something that the actor (or actors) considers desirable. The political logic of this, from the Congressman's point of view, is that an actor who believes that a member can make pleasing things happen will do what he can to keep him in office so that he can make pleasing things happen in the future. The emphasis here is on individual accomplishment (rather than, say, party or governmental accomplishment) and on the Congressman as doer (rather than as, say, expounder of constituency views). Credit-claiming is highly important

(103)

Norman C. Miller, "Yes, You Are Getting More Political Mail: And It Will Get Worse," Wall Street Journal, March 6, 1973, p. 1.

(104)

Monthly data compiled by Illiad Covei.

(105)

After serving his two terms the late President Eisenhower had this conclusion: "There is nothing a Congressman likes better than to get his name in the headlines and for it to be published all over the United States." From a 1961 speech quoted in the New York Times, June 20, 1971.

to Congressmen, with the consequence that much of Congressional life is a relentless search for opportunities to engage in it.

Where can credit be found? If there were only one Congressman rather than 535 the answer would in principle be simple enough. (106)

Credit (or blame) would attach in Division fashion to the doings of the Government as a whole. But there are 535. Hence it becomes necessary for each Congressman to try to peel off pieces of governmental accomplishment for which he can believably generate a sense of responsibility. For the average Congressman the staple way of doing this is to traffic in what may be called "particularized benefits." (107) "Particularized"

Governmental benefits, as the term will be used here, have two properties. 1) Each benefit is given out to a specific individual, group, or geographical constituency, the recipient unit being of a scale which allows a single Congressman to be recognized (by political actors and other Congressmen) as the claimant for the benefit (other Congressmen being perceived as indifferent or hostile).

2) Each benefit is given out in approximately ad hoc fashion (unlike, say, social security checks) with a Congressman apparently having a hand in the allocation. A particularized benefit is usually regarded as a benefit of a class. That is, a benefit given out to an individual, group, or constituency can usually be looked upon by Congressmen as one of a class of similar benefits given out to similar numbers of individuals, groups, or constituencies.

Hence the impression can arise that a Congressman is getting "his share" of whatever it is the government is offering. (No classes may be vague defined. Some state legislatures deal in what their members call "local legislation.")

In sheer volume the bulk of particularized benefits come under the heading of "casework" - the thousands of favors Congressional offices perform for supplicants in ways that normally do not require legislative action. High school students 'ask for essay' materials, soldiers for emergency leaves, pensioners for location of missing checks, local governments for grant information, and on and on. Each office

(106) In practice the one might call out the army and suggest the Constitution.

(107) These have some of the properties of what Lewis calls "distributive" benefits. Theodore J. Lewis, "American Business, Public Policy, Case-Studies, and Political Theory," 16 World Politics 670, 1964.

(108) On the other hand, see the title of the book by Lewis and others, "The Distribution of Governmental Resources."

has skilled professionals who can play the bureaucracy like an organ -- pushing the right pedals to produce <sup>the</sup> desired effects. (108) But many benefits require <sup>new</sup> legislation, or at least <sup>new</sup> important allocative decisions ~~on~~ on matters covered by ~~existing~~ <sup>existing</sup> legislation. Here the Congressman fills the traditional role of supplier of goods to the home district. It is a believable role; when a member claims credit for a benefit on behalf of a ~~man~~ he may well receive it. (109) Shiny construction projects seem especially useful. (110) In the decades before 1934 tariff duties for local industries were a major commodity. (111) In recent years awards given under grant-in-aid programs have become more useful as they have become more numerous. Some quests for credit are ingenious; in 1971 the story broke that Congressmen had been earmarking foreign aid money for specific projects in Israel in order to win favor with home constituents. (112) It should be said of constituency benefits that Congressmen are quite capable of taking the initiative in drumming them up; that is, there can be no automatic assumption that a Congressman's activity is the resultant of pressures brought to bear by organized interests. Fermo shows

- (108) On a course generally see Kenneth G. Olson, "The Service Function of the United States Congress," pp. 337-374 in American Enterprise Institute, Congress: The First Branch of Government (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1966).
- (109) Sometimes without justification. Thus this comment by a Republican member of the House Public Works Committee: "No announcements for projects are an important part of this.... And the folks back home are funny about this -- if your name is associated it, you get all the credit whether you got it through or not." James T. Neujohy, "Contributing and the House Public Works Committee," 1968 American Political Science Association Convention, p. 10.
- (110) "They've got to see something; it's the bread and butter issues that count -- the loans, the post offices and the other public buildings, the highways. They want to know about you've been doing." A comment by a Democratic member of the House Public Works Committee. Ibid.
- (111) See classic account in E.E. Schattschneider, Politics, Resources, and the Tariff (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1935).
- (112) "Israeli Schools and Hospitals Seek Funds in Foreign-Aid Bill," New York Times, October 4, 1971, p. 10.

the importance of member initiative in his discussion of the House Tuleain Committee. <sup>111</sup>  
 A final point here has to do with geography. The examples given so far are all of benefits conferred upon home constituencies or recipients therein (the latter including the home residents who applauded the Israeli projects). But the properties of "particularized benefits" were carefully specified so as not to exclude the possibility that some benefits may be given to recipients outside the home constituencies. Some probably are. Narrowly drawn tax loopholes qualify as particularized benefits, and some of them are probably conferred upon recipients outside the home districts. <sup>114</sup> (It is difficult to find solid evidence on the point.) Campaign contributions flow into districts from the outside, so it would not be surprising to find that benefits go where the resources are.

How much particularized benefits count for at the polls is extraordinarily difficult to say. But it would be hard to find a Congressman who thinks he can afford to wait around until precise information ~~is~~ is available. The lore is that they count — ~~for~~ for example, given how expensive, that they must be applied in regular quantities ~~for~~ for a member to stay electorally even with the Board. ~~for~~ Awareness of favors may spread beyond their recipients, <sup>115</sup> building for a member a general reputation as a good provider. "Reveries Delivered."

<sup>113</sup> Ferris, Congressman's Committee, p. 40. Cf. this statement on intervention in the French Third Republic: "Most deputies recently championed the cause of interest groups in their district without waiting to be asked." Bernard T. Brown, "Business Politics in France," 18 Journal of Politics 718, 1956.

<sup>114</sup> For a discussion of the politics of tax loopholes see Stanley S. Surrey, "The Congress and the Lobbyist — How Special Tax Commissions Got Their Start," 75 Harvard Law Review 1115-1182, 1957.

<sup>115</sup> Thus the comment of a Senate aide, "The world's greatest publicity organ is still the human mouth.... When you get somebody \$25.00 from the Social Security Administration, he tells his friends and neighbors about it. After a while the story grows until you've single-handedly obtained \$2,500 for a constituent who was on the brink of starvation." Matthews, op.cit., p. 226.



"He Can Do More for Massachusetts." <sup>(116)</sup> A good example of Capitol Hill line on electoral impact is given in this account of the activities of Congressman Frank Thompson, Jr. (D.-N.J. 4th District):

INSERT  
SINGLE  
SPACE

"In 1966, the 4th was altered drastically by redistricting; it lost Burlington County and gained Hunterdon, Warren, and Sussex. Thompson's performance at the polls since 1962 is a case study of how an incumbent congressman, out of line with his district's ideological persuasions, can become untenable. In 1966, Thompson carried Mercer by 23,000 votes and lost the three new counties by 4,600, winning reelection with 56% of the vote. He then survived a district-wide drop in his vote two years later. In 1970, he carried Mercer County by 20,000 votes and the rest of the district by 6,000, finishing with 58%. The drop in Mercer resulted from the attempt of his hard-line conservative opponent to exploit the racial unrest which had developed in Trenton. But for four years Thompson had been working friends in Hunterdon, Warren, and Sussex, busy doing the kind of chores that congressmen do. In this case, Thompson concerned himself with the interests of dairy farmers at the Department of Agriculture. The results of his efforts were clear when the results came in from the 4th's northern counties." <sup>(117)</sup>

So much for particularized benefits. But is credit available elsewhere? for governmental accomplishments beyond the scale <sup>of these</sup> already discussed?

The general answer is that the prime mover role is a hard one to play on

large matters -- at least before broad electorates. A claim, after all, has to be credible. If a Congressman ~~says~~ <sup>goes</sup> before an audience and says, "I am responsible for passing a bill to curb inflation," or "I am responsible for the highway program," hardly anyone will believe him. There are two reasons why

people may be skeptical of such claims. First, there is a numbers problem. On an accomplishment of a sort that probably engaged the <sup>suggestive</sup> interest of more

than one member it is reasonable to suppose that credit should be apportioned among them. But second, there is an overwhelming problem of

information costs. For typical voters Capitol Hill is a distant and mysterious place; few have anything like a working knowledge of its maneuverings. Hence there is no easy way of knowing whether a

(116) For some examples of particularistically oriented Congressmen see the Nader (p. 10). By Sven Holm on James A. Haley (D.-Fla.), Newton Koltz on Joseph P. Addabbo (D.-N.Y.), Alan Berlow on Kenneth J. Gray (D.-Ill.), and Sarah Glazer on John Young (D.-Tex.). For a fascinating picture of the things these members were expected to do half a century ago see Joe Mastey, My First Fifty Years in Politics (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), pp. 55-59.

(117) Michael Barne, Grant Ujifusa, and Douglas Matthews, The Almanac of American Politics (Boston: Gambit, 1972), pp. 479-480.

Congressman is staking a valid claim or not. The odds are that the information pattern cuts in different ways on different kinds of issues. On particularized benefits it may work in a Congressman's favor; he may get credit for the damn he had wotting to do with building.

Sprinkling a desert with dams, after all, is something a Congressman is supposed to be able to do. But on larger matters it may work against him. For a voter lacking an easy way to sort out valid from invalid claims the sensible recourse is skepticism. Hence it is unlikely that Congressmen get much mileage out of credit-claiming on larger matters before broad electorates. (118)

Yet there is an obvious and important qualification here.

For many Congressmen credit-claiming on non-particularized matters is possible in specialized subject areas because of the Congressional division of labor. The term "governmental unit" in the original definition of "credit-claiming" is broad enough to include committees, subcommittees, and the two houses of Congress itself. Thus many Congressmen can believably claim credit for blocking bills in subcommittee, adding on amendments in committee, etc. The audience for transactions of this sort is usually small.

But it may include important political actors (e.g., an interest group, the President, The New York Times, Ralph Nader) who are capable of both

paying Capitol Hill information costs and deploying electoral resources. There is a well-documented example of this in Fenn's treatment of post office politics in the 1960's. The postal employee unions used to watch very closely the activities of the House and Senate Post Office Committees, and to supply valuable electoral resources (money, volunteer work) to members who did their bidding on salary bills. (119) Of course there are many examples

118

Any teacher of American politics has had students ask of Senators running for the Presidency (Goldwater, McGovern, McCarthy, any of the Kennedys), "But what bills has he passed?" There is no unambiguous answer.

119

Fenn, Congressmen's Committees, pp. 242-255.