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Thomas Staples Martin: his senatorial career

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THOMAS STAPLES MARTIN:
HIS SENATORIAL CAREER

A Thesis
Presented to
The Department of History and Political Science
University of Richmond

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

by
Ernest Scott Strother, Jr.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>PRIOR TO 1893</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>ELECTION TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>FIRST YEARS IN OFFICE</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>THE JUNIOR SENATOR'S RISE TO RECOGNITION</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>THE BITTER CAMPAIGN OF 1911</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>SENATOR MARTIN'S WORK WITH APPROPRIATIONS</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>SENATOR MARTIN AND THE ANTI-SALOON LEAGUE</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Democratic party and the combined Republican and Readjuster parties were approximately equal in strength in Virginia in the 1880's, the elections being won by majorities of a few thousand votes. By 1890, however, the Democratic party was in command of most branches of the government and appeared determined to perpetuate itself in power. In the years following 1890 there arose a relatively latent political figure who, through the powerful Democratic organization and with the able assistance of his lieutenants, influenced the political affairs of Virginia to such an extent that opposition offered only token resistance. From the time he was first chosen to represent Virginia in the United States Senate in 1893 until the end of his senatorial career in 1919, Thomas Staples Martin prevailed significantly in Virginia as well as National matters, and it is with this period that the writer is concerned.

While this paper will include some aspects of the Democratic party in Virginia as well as touch upon some political and diplomatic areas of Virginia and the nation, this study does not attempt to be a definitive work in either phase. Rather, this paper concerns itself with Thomas S. Martin as a United States Senator and incidentally those areas of local and national life which his career affected.
The chief sources of information for this study have been state newspapers, personal papers and accounts, and government publications. The study also includes material obtained by correspondence and interviews with persons familiar with Senator Martin's career. Efforts were made to secure the Senator's personal papers, but with little success. While there is a collection of newspaper clippings and letters of Martin in the Alderman Library at the University of Virginia, it is an incomplete set as far as pertinent personal correspondence is concerned. Senator Martin's own personal papers, if they exist, were not available for study, and thus many of the Senator's feelings and attitudes on domestic and national issues during his career that possibly may have been revealed through his personal correspondence remain untouched.

Particular thanks is owed to Miss Elizabeth N. Tompkins of Richmond, and to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas S. Martin, Jr., also of Richmond, who generously supplied me with and directed me to sources otherwise difficult to obtain. I also wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to Dr. R. C. McDanel for his time and valuable advice while writing this paper.
CHAPTER I

PRIOR TO 1893

One of the great upsets of American politics occurred on December 7, 1893. A Democratic caucus was held in the House of Delegates in Richmond to select a United States senator, and General Fitzhugh Lee, war hero, former governor of Virginia, and probably one of the most popular men in the entire state, was generally considered the foreordained choice to receive the nomination. General Lee was opposed by Thomas Staples Martin, a small-town lawyer, who had never held any public office and was comparatively unknown beyond his own community. There was little doubt as to the outcome of these two apparently ill-matched opponents.

To the astonishment and surprise of a great majority of the people of Virginia, the caucus made unanimous Martin's nomination on the sixth ballot. After the nomination, which at that time was considered equal to an election, many Virginians were asking: "Who is Tom Martin?" Unlike many of Virginia's political leaders, Martin was not born into aristocracy but sprang from the merchant-farmer class.

1. Richmond Times, December 20, 1893.
2. Ibid., December 8, 1893.
He had no great family heritage to launch him into political prominence.

Martin's success, however, did not seem to have been a political "fluke"; it merely presaged the appearance on the scene of an immensely able politician. He was re-elected to the Senate four times and served continuously from March 4, 1895, until his death on November 12, 1919.

Thomas Staples Martin was born on July 29, 1847, in Scottsville, Virginia. After such preparation as was afforded by teachers at home and neighborhood schools, he entered on March 1, 1864, the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington and remained with the battalion of cadets until the evacuation of Richmond. Martin then attended the University of Virginia from 1865 until 1867 at which time he had to forego continuation of his formal education because of his father's death.

During the next two years Martin began to read law privately, being advised as to a proper course of study, and in 1869 he was admitted to the bar, practicing law in Albermarle County. Although


never an orator, Martin was, none the less, competent in presenting his cases, and before many years had passed he was recognized as a successful lawyer. In "the early 1880's he became the local counsel for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in the counties of Albermarle, Fluvanna, Buckingham, and the city of Charlottesville -- an event which portended a great significance for the future political aspirations of Thomas S. Martin.

The struggle of the Democratic party to wrest control of the state from the powerful William Mahone and the Readjusters provided the opportunity for Thomas Martin to begin taking an active part in politics. About 1883 Mr. Martin served on the State and executive Democratic committees in an advisory capacity and worked closely with John S. Barbour, party chairman. Although Martin continued his law practice, he devoted much of his time to effective, behind-the-scenes party labors and was Modest, unassuming, never seeking publicity, willing to work and let others receive the credit, years before it was generally known he was the guiding spirit in the management.

6. Bear, op. cit., p. 38. "In the decade of the seventies Martin became recognized ... as a successful lawyer."

7. Ibid., p. 40.

of the Democratic Party of Virginia, its wisest and most trusted advisor. 9

So quietly yet efficiently did Martin work within the party that his growing power was not fully recognized until the race for the Senatorial seat in 1885. This actually was Thomas Martin's first prominent appearance in politics. With the Democrats in control of the legislature, Mahone's time of departure from the Senate had arrived and his most logical successor was John S. Barbour. Martin, however, did not side with Barbour but gave his support to John W. Daniel. 10 Barbour had wide-spread backing, including powerful railroad interest, but Martin spent a month in Richmond prior to the election and when the time came, Daniel won the caucus showdown by a comfortable majority. 11 But by far the most significant fact reported by the press on this caucus was that among the men who worked for Daniel was Thomas Martin. One newspaper discerningly


10. Richard Burke Doss, "The Public Career of John Warwick Daniel, Spokesman of the New Conservatism" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Virginia, 1952), p. 35. Though J. W. Daniel was associated with the Democratic machine, he was never a part of it. "Martin's alliance with Daniel represents a union of two of Virginia's most outstanding and yet most dissimilar political figures. This trek down the political trail together, however, was to become marked by one of many divergent stands; only when party supremacy or expediency demanded harmony would they stroll hand in hand."

11. Richmond Times, December 8, 1885.
stated: "It was Martin who made a reputation as an organizer by controlling the great legislative caucus for John W. Daniel, and winning the senatorship for him." 12

Since Martin had served the railroads well as a counselor, 13 and at the same time strengthened and consolidated his power within the party, it may have been only natural that the railroads now gave him their full support. At any rate, since this was the railroad era of Virginia as well as for the nation, the liaison was a momentous one. Political organizations, especially at that time, needed money, and this the Democrats secured from railroads and sympathetic business men. 14

In 1892, John S. Barbour, who had finally been elected to the United States Senate in 1889, died, and General Eppa Hunton was

12. Ibid., December 12, 1885.


14. Allen Wesley Moger, "The Rebuilding of the Old Dominion" (unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Virginia State Library, 1940), p. 67. "The ablest men in the state were connected with them (railroads) as officials or as legal counsel. . . . The railroads remained, despite excessive and discriminatory rates, untouched by public complaint or protests because they either directly or indirectly controlled the new Democratic machine of Virginia."
appointed to fill the unexpired term. For the first time in the forty-five years of his life, Thomas Martin reached out for public office, and the organization which he and Barbour had built up so competently would now help to render him successful.

CHAPTER II

ELECTION TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE

It was a curious condition of affairs which exhibited so much strength for Thomas Martin in the Virginia legislature during his campaign against the formidable Fitzhugh Lee for the Senatorial seat in 1893. Eppa Hunton relates in his Autobiography:

I heard a gentleman say that he was discussing Tom Martin's popularity with a friend of Mr. Martin's, in one of the towns of the State, and he said: "Tom Martin isn't known. The representative from this city voted for him and he hasn't five constituents who know who Tom Martin is." Martin's friend denied it, and they agreed to take a position on the most frequented thoroughfare of the city, and test which was right—as to that city. Large numbers of citizens passed by, and they asked each one, "What do you think of the nomination of Thomas S. Martin for the Senate"—and the reply was unvarying, "Who is Tom Martin? I never heard of him." 15

Indeed, it would seem curious that Thomas S. Martin should be selected for the United States Senate over one of the most popular of the Major-Generals of the Confederate Army, Fitzhugh Lee.

However, it is not altogether true, as sometimes assumed, that Thomas Martin was utterly unknown. While it is true that he never held public office and that he may not have been as widely known throughout the state as Lee, Martin, nevertheless, had been active in party counsels and a member of the state party committee which enabled

him to become very well known to, and popular with members of the legislature. Just shortly after Senator Barbour's death it was written that:

Martin has fifty legislators signing first choice, ten second, others have assured their support in person to the Governor and still others by telegram from third parties. He has much the strongest support in the State.  

This certainly indicates Martin's strength within the legislature, and the legislature, not the people, would make the decision.

When the nomination for the Senate seat was delayed until the meeting of the new legislature which was to be elected in 1893, the Martin forces were given an opportunity to be active in the legislative campaigns. "What we must do in a quiet sort of way," one of the Martin men wrote, "is let our friends in the district know that Martin's name will be before the Legislature so that they will not oblige themselves to somebody else and so become embarrassed." Thus, with a powerful organization of experienced men behind him, Martin started to move; and when his rapid support paid off in legislative votes, the New York Times was justified in writing that the

17. Ibid. Also see Robert C. Glass and Carter Glass, Jr., Virginia Democracy (Democratic Historical Association, Inc., 1937), I, 263.


19. Ibid., June 9, 1892.
Martin wing "was the most perfect organization the South has ever known."  

The unexpected election of Martin caused a storm of protest and gave rise to charges that Martin's road to the Senate had been paved by railroad money. The Richmond Times stated:

It may be very well for patriotic Democrats to contribute for campaign purposes through the Executive Committee; but for gentlemen who get money from 'private sources,' it is apt to be for particular purposes.

This implied a method of securing elections whereby the legislator would be approached, told that certain people had helped with his election, and asked to reciprocate the favor. Lee himself provided somewhat of a descriptive analysis of Martin's victory in a letter to a friend when he said:

I was defeated for the Senate because a subordinate railroad official distributed money directly to the candidates for the legislature or their friends. The candidates


21. The full extent of such activity was not widely known until William A. Jones introduced the "Barbour-Thompson Letters" into his bitter campaign against Martin in 1911. This will be discussed later.


23. Reeves, op. cit., p. 352. Mr. A. F. Withrow, member of the House of Delegates from Alleghany county, claimed that he had been offered money for use in his election if he promised once he had secured office to vote for Martin for United States Senator. See also Richmond Times, December 5, 17, 1893.
receiving the benefit of the contribution became under obligations to the distributor of the money, and he being a close friend of one of the candidates for the Senate, the connection between the distributor, the legislative candidate, and the United States senatorial candidate was easily and quickly made.

The number of men who turned up in the legislature under such obligations was too numerous to overcome.24

Suspecting foul play, Lee's stunned followers demanded an investigation of the situation by a committee of the state legislature.25 An inquiry into the tactics used in this election proved only that there had been certain practices of which the committee could not approve but that Martin had not been directly involved.26 The investigating committee also declared that these practices had not been any different from those resorted to in former political campaigns.27 It should also be noted that the inquiry revealed that


25. Mr. A. F. Withrow, mentioned above, introduced a resolution in the House which was adopted by the Senate resolving, that a committee of four on the part of the House and three on the part of the Senate be appointed to investigate whether any improper methods or means were used in the interest of any candidate or candidates for the nomination of United States senator at the caucus of the Democratic members of the House and Senate. See Richmond Times, December 17, 1893.

26. Ibid., December 21, 1893.

Fitzhugh Lee had bolstered his popular appeal with the Martin-like use of business funds.28 Martin had merely done a better job and won.

Though apparent from the newspapers that Martin's election was not in accord with the expectations of the people, opinions varied widely and the true story can still be debated. After reaching the Senate, however, his career was above reproach. The adverse criticism he received because of the methods used in his first election may have resolved him to abstain from any financial assistance from any source29 and as a result his subsequent campaigns were free from any such criticism.

Even though Thomas Martin's election to the United States Senate may be viewed as a reward for his service to the railroads and as a result for his ability as an organizer and political leader, the


29. Herman L. Horn, "The Growth and Development of the Democratic Party in Virginia Since 1890" (unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Duke University, 1949), p. 459. "He (Martin) was probably worth $100,000 when he was elected to the United States Senate but at his death he left only his home in Charlottesville, valued at $45,000 but which had a $15,000 mortgage against it. His friends claimed that he had many opportunities to make money while in the Senate but he steadfastly refused to take advantage of any of the opportunities. Several of his friends in Richmond who knew of his financial embarrassment made up a sum of $50,000 as a gift for him during his last illness but he refused to accept the gift."
assiduity with which he went about his business may best describe his success. Prior to his nomination in 1893, Martin said: "I realize the importance of vigilance and activity. I will not suspend efforts until action of the caucus is announced."\(^{30}\)

\(^{30}\) Thomas S. Martin to F. R. Lassiter, November 13, 1893, F. R. Lassiter Papers, Duke University Library.
CHAPTER III

FIRST YEARS IN OFFICE

To benefit the reader in future reference, a chronological sketch of Thomas Martin's twenty-four years in the Senate will be presented. This will be followed in this chapter and in the succeeding one by a more detailed study of the Senator's career.

Thomas Martin took his seat in the Fifty-fourth Congress in December of 1895, almost two years after his caucus selection. During this first session he was appointed to three Standing Committees—Claims Committee, the District of Columbia Committee, and the Committee on Indian Depredations—and one Select Committee—To Investigate the Conditions of the Potomac River Front at Washington. 31

In his first session the junior Senator introduced twenty bills and joint resolutions of which the major portion included bills of relief. He also offered two amendments concerned with appropriations, an area in which he was later to distinguish himself. 32 His remarks on the floor were brief, characteristic of his long career in the


Senate when he seldom raised his voice publicly. Though admittedly his elocution was not on the same level with that of his senior colleague, John Daniel, Martin's senatorial power would, nevertheless, be felt in the committee rooms of Congress.

In the second session the Vice-President appointed Martin to the Joint Select Committee to Make Investigations of the Charities and Reformatory Institutions of the District of Columbia, and in the Fifty-Fifth Congress he kept his original appointments and added two new ones: The Study Committee on Naval Affairs and the Select Committee on the Construction of the Nicaragua Canal. During the first session of the Fifty-sixth Congress Martin was appointed to his fifth Standing Committee, Commerce, and in the Fifty-seventh he received his first Chairmanship, On Corporations Organized in the District of Columbia. Martin's second Chairmanship was of the Select Committee on Additional Accommodations for the Library of Congress in the Fifty-ninth Congress, and his third was in the Sixty-first with the

33. Not once during his senatorial career did Martin have anything inserted in the Appendix of the Congressional Record.

34. C.R., 54th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 871.
Standing Committee on Public Health and National Quarantine. Up to this time, however, it would seem safe to conclude from the Congressional Record that the Senator's main concern was with Commerce ever since his appointment to that Committee in 1899. But on December 8, 1910, Senator Martin was appointed to fill the vacancy on the Appropriations Committee caused by the death of his senior Senator, John Daniel. He remained a member of this Committee until his death. On March 15, 1913, Martin was appointed Chairman of the Appropriations Committee for which he served throughout the crucial years of World War I. The huge, unprecedented appropriation bills which Senator Martin guided from committee to enactment must have given him a distinction that could not be overestimated.

An important feature of Martin's early senatorial career was his ability as a conferee to work out differences between Senate and House bills. He began to be active in this area with the second session of the Fifty-fifth Congress and as his ability became recognized he was frequently called upon to serve in this capacity.

41. C.R., 63rd Congress, 1st Session, p. 25.
42. C.R., 55th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 4833, 6316, 6418.
When the Sixty-second Congress met in a special session in April 1911, the discordant Democratic Senators elected Thomas Martin as Minority leader.\textsuperscript{43} And during the second session of the Sixty-fourth Congress, the Democratic party expressed the highest confidence in him by selecting him Majority leader.\textsuperscript{44} He served in this capacity until the Republicans regained the Senate in May 1919, at which time he reverted back to Minority leader.

Thus from a reserved, unassuming entrance, Thomas Martin rose to an eminence desired by most but obtained by few. The events and issues which affected his distinguished career will now be considered.

One of the first issues generally understood to be directed at Martin, and with which the Senator concerned himself less than a year after he went to Washington, was the matter of the direct election of United States Senators. Throughout the nation during the 1890's the impact of populistic proposals was being felt. Virginia was no exception. Failure of the Populists as a third party in Virginia led to an influx of many less conservative thinkers into the Democratic

\textsuperscript{43} Richmond \textit{Times Dispatch}, April 2, 1911.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., December 7, 1916.
fold after 1895.\textsuperscript{45} These political progressives made their first bid for control of the party by demanding the direct election of United States Senators.

Virginia's right to express her choice of representatives to the United States Senate through voting in state primaries was led by Representative William A. Jones of Warsaw,\textsuperscript{46} in response to the bitterness engendered by those who were still displeased with the legislative caucus selection of Martin over Lee. In the meeting of the state Democratic committee prior to the state convention in Roanoke, the issue was formed; and during the convention Representative Jones presented the arguments for the direct primary, stating in effect that the proposal was the epitome of the Democratic process.\textsuperscript{47}

Although Martin's viewpoint was recorded at this time as being opposed to the direct primary, it is of interest to note that Senator John Daniel, one of the most popular men in Virginia, was a prominent

\textsuperscript{45} C. Vann Woodward, \textit{Criss-Cross of the New South} (Vol. IX of \textit{A History of the South}, ed. W. H. Stephenson and E. W. Coulter, 9 vols.; Louisiana State University Press, 1951), pp. 371-372. Due to the severe depression after the War between the States, the Populist party, also known as the People's party, resulted from the union of several smaller dissatisfied organizations. The Populist party stood for social reform that would help the farmers and the workers.

\textsuperscript{46} William A. Jones was recognized as an Independent Democrat and was considered Senator Martin's most bitter opponent.

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Richmond Times Dispatch}, August 1, 14, 1896.
spokesman against the plank. Nevertheless, it was the primary issue that popped up against Martin in his bid for re-election in 1899 and 1905.

When the nomination of United States Senators by state primaries was first offered at the Roanoke Convention, Martin was opposed to it mainly because the expense would be so great that only men of means would be able to run for that office.48 Martin estimated that it would cost him $10,000 to run for the senate on the basis of the party primary and thus concluded that few, if any, of the State Committee would be deluded into such a scheme.49 However, the Senator did predict that the forthcoming campaign would be on the idea of the popular election theory,50 and in an interview with a Richmond newspaper declared: "Pertaining to the matter of electing senators by popular vote, under a constitutional amendment making provision therefore—I shall vote for such an amendment to the constitution.51


49. Thomas Martin to F. R. Lassiter, January 30, 1899, F. R. Lassiter Papers, Duke University Library.

50. Ibid., May 13, 1899.

51. Richmond Times, July 29, 1899.
In 1899 Senator Martin was opposed by one who was not affiliated with the Democratic organization in Virginia, Governor J. Hoge Tyler, an Independent Democrat. Though the party primary issue was at length rejected by the State Committee, the prevailing resentment resulting from Martin's defeat of Lee had not disappeared. The generally accepted opinion that Senator Martin would not take his chances before the people but preferred the secret legislative caucus, led the people to believe that the days of political bossism in the Commonwealth had not been buried. In short, that old Mahone collar had been resurrected and reformed, and it was as strong then as it ever was in the days of Mahone. The Richmond Times stated:

The Richmond Times is figuring on the possibility of enough Independents and Republicans being elected in November to give Tyler a majority combined with the Democrats who are for him.... The Governor, if he is really opposed to machine rule in politics, can do only one thing, and that is to assist, in any honorable way, to mash the machine.... The people of Virginia, of which we are one, are very weary of the machine methods.

Indeed, Senator Martin's re-election was viewed with apprehension.

Nevertheless, Martin's tenacity and political sagacity enabled him to win a crushing victory. The legislature voted 103 for Martin.

52. Ibid., October 22, 1899.
While only 27 for Tyler, 53

While the primary plan had served as an interstice between the conservative and progressive folds of the Democratic party locally, the existing antagonism was intensified on the national level with the silver crusade. The author of the free-silver plank was William Jennings Bryan, three times the unsuccessful candidate for the President of the United States. As a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1896, Bryan won the nomination for President by advocating the free coinage of silver at a fixed rate with gold. Senator Martin was opposed to the Bryan faction and once wrote Senator Daniel, an avowed "Silverite":

... As things now stand he will be the next Democratic nominee... He will fill a gap in which someone must be sacrificed. I have no idea he will ever be President. I have made up my mind... not to magnify his political schemes. 54

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53. Looking through the letters and papers of Francis Rives Lassiter and Henry D. Flood, two of Martin's able lieutenants, it is easy to attach the importance and concern with which they along with Martin regarded their work. They recognized the strength and weaknesses of all districts and took the necessary measures to secure the loyalty of each if at all possible. e.g. see Henry Flood to Thomas Martin, August 11, 12, and September 2, 1899, Henry Flood Papers, Library of Congress. Also Thomas Martin to F. R. Lassiter, October 23 and November 5, 1897, F. R. Lassiter Papers, Duke University Library.

54. Martin to John W. Daniel, September 3, 1906, John W. Daniel Papers, Duke University Library. (Although Martin's letter to Daniel is dated 1906, Martin also stated in this letter that he thought Bryan's judgement to be unsound prior to the Democratic National Convention of 1904.) See also Richard B. Doss, "Inside the Democratic National Convention of 1904—Letters of Allen Caperton Braxton and John W. Daniel," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 64 (1956), 293.
Thus, the free-silver issue early forged a tête-à-tête between the junior Senator from Virginia and the leader of the Democratic party only to become more manifest in other arenas which usually saw Martin the victor.55

After re-election to the Senate in 1899, Martin's duties and responsibilities became greater and at the same time were accepted more readily by the people of Virginia. Immediately following his reinstatement into office he was appointed to Commerce, his fifth Standing Committee and an area consuming most of his time prior to his Appropriations assignment. In 1900 the Senator pushed for the construction of the Memorial Bridge from the District to Arlington, motioning for an appropriation of $100,000 to start the bridge. On December 18, 1901, Martin was appointed to his first Chairmanship of a committee whose five members included Nelson W. Aldrich of Rhode Island.56

55. Martin was Chairman of the Virginia Delegation at the Democratic National Convention in St. Louis in 1904. Even at this early stage in his career it is said that his opinion influenced nominations. At any rate William Bryan was not nominated for President in 1904. See Doss, op. cit., "Inside the Democratic National Convention of 1904," p. 308.

In 1902 Senator Martin's work was described as "having issue in great and good things for Virginia." During the war of 1812, Virginia advanced a large sum to the United States. When the United States paid this debt to Virginia, soon after the close of the war, it was paid in installments. Whenever a payment was made the United States, instead of applying that payment to the accumulated interest of the debt, applied it to the principal. Virginia protested against that method of settlement, but the United States insisted on it and the claim was settled and receipted for by the State. Ever since the settlement was made Virginia had been insisting that it was erroneous and had been trying to have it reopened and settled on a just basis but to no avail.

Senator Martin introduced a bill providing for the reopening of this settlement and directing the account to be restated on correct principles, requiring that payment should be applied first to the accumulated interest due on the debt, and that the principal of the debt should be reduced only by the amount of any payment in excess of the amount of interest due at the time. That year Virginia was saved $1,700,000 resulting from the new settlement.

57. Daily Progress, June 17, 1902, from the Martin Collection, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

58. Ibid.

59. Richmond Times Dispatch, December 11, 1902.
To attest Martin's rising popularity within the State, it was reported in the following year that the Senator was honored by the business men of Richmond as few public men had ever been. 60 A mass meeting of representative citizens was held and adopted resolutions assuring Senator Martin that his course in securing the passage by the Senate of a bill for a larger and better post office in Richmond was in accord with the expressed wishes of the business organizations of the city. There was not a discordant vote among those represented. 61

Finally, Martin's conception of public duty gained him wide acceptance among Virginians. The Senator comprehended the minor as well as the larger and more important features of his trusts. In his correspondence he relates to a friend that his attention had been called to the imprisonment of a young soldier because of undiscerning judgment in the line of duty, and that he was trying to secure some modification of his military sentence. 62

60. Washington Post, February 27, 1903, from the Martin Collection, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

61. In the gathering were wholesale merchants, manufacturers, retail dealers, mechanics, and every bank in the city was represented.

capacity for attending to the smallest wishes of his constituency while at the same time studying and disposing of the large public questions earned him the widespread admiration and trust heretofore held only by those closest to him.
CHAPTER IV

THE JUNIOR SENATOR'S RISE TO RECOGNITION

During Senator Martin's second bid for re-election in 1905, he was again faced with the recurrent problem of the direct primary. Whereas before the primary plan had only been one of heated debate terminating in rejection, it had since been accepted and written in the Virginia constitution of 1902. The Democratic voters could now by primary election nominate a candidate for the United States Senate. As a matter of party rule and party honor, the Democratic nominee for senator would be voted for by Democratic members of the Legislature, but no members of the Legislature, Democratic or Republican, would be legally bound to do so. Thus, for those who thought Martin had opposed the primary earlier for fear the people would not elect him had good reason to believe that the new election method would present a very real problem for the Senator while at the same time make an excellent campaign issue against him.

Governor Andrew J. Montague, an Independent Democrat and Martin's opponent, directed his campaign along these premises when he challenged the Senator to debate the primary system at King George Court House. The debate, which would stress Martin's early refusal to support the primary, was also intended to accentuate the public speaking ability of both statesmen, an art at which Senator Martin was considered less than perfect. Fortunately Martin proved himself
equal to the occasion and, from the newspaper coverage, may even be said to have bested Montague at his own game.\textsuperscript{63}

Rather than reproach his adversary, Senator Martin desired to be understood as not running for office on any defect or weakness in his opponent, but on his own record. He wanted and asked for the closest scrutiny of both his private and official records, and only if they met with the approval of Virginia Democrats would he ask for their vote of confidence.\textsuperscript{64} Because he believed so strongly that he had performed his senatorial duties to the best of his abilities, Martin felt his confidence in the people to be well founded. Referring to the general State primary election, Martin wrote a friend:

\begin{quote}
I am a candidate for re-election, and take the liberty of writing to you in relation to it. Feeling that I have devoted myself earnestly and unremittingly to the duties entrusted to me, and that I have accomplished something for the people of Virginia during my term of service, I do not believe that the fairminded and conservative people of the State will be disposed to defeat a public servant who has discharged his duties faithfully, and who has the benefit of experience, merely to make room for another.\textsuperscript{65}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{63} For a report on this debate and its intended purposes, see Richmond \textit{Times Dispatch}, July 7, 1905.

\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Ibid.}, August 17, 1905.

\textsuperscript{65} Thomas Martin to J. A. Cousins, April 18, 1905, C. A. Swanson Papers, Duke University Library.
In addition to the Senator's record speaking for itself, Martin had by this time new support. The newspapers which, with few exceptions, were opposed to him in 1893 and 1899, were almost solidly behind him in 1905. When Governor Montague charged that leading newspapers in the State were in "cahoots" with the Martin machine the Richmond Times Dispatch emphatically denied that Martin had built up a political machine in Virginia by the use of patronage and gave instead as its reason for supporting him:

Mr. Martin has made an able, useful and industrious senator in Congress; he has attended intelligently and diligently to the people's business; he has led a clean life... and served his State so well that he is fairly entitled to another term.

Even the Richmond News Leader, long one of Martin's most bitter critics, spoke favorably in his behalf. Referring to Senator Martin and Claude Swanson, the gubernatorial candidate on the Democratic ticket, the News Leader commented:

There is no reason or excuse why anybody should vote against them and there are very many strong reasons why every thinking Virginian desiring the development of his State and the welfare of his people should give them cordial and faithful support.

67. Ibid., August 23, 1905.
68. Richmond News Leader, August 24, 1905. The Petersburg Index-Appeal, also one of Martin's earlier critics, became one of his ardent supporters.
Martin's confidence in the people proved correct, and when he was swept into office by a large majority for a third term\(^6^9\) the Times Dispatch rightfully stated:

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\text{.... when the question of senatorial election came up between Martin and Governor Montague, the Times Dispatch lent full force of its position to the principle of the primary, and the event fully justified the wisdom of that action, for at the conclusion of the popular election it was clearly demonstrated that Martin was the choice of the people of Virginia, and the outcome of the primary forever set at rest the charge that Martin had been forced in again against the people's will by means of Machine politics and the fraudulent use of money.}^{70}
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Still a junior Senator, Martin's name was not linked with any major enactments at this time. But there is evidence in the roll-call votes that Martin represented the views of the majority when in the interest of the public good. His vote for the Hepburn Act under the Roosevelt Administration serves well to illustrate this point when it is remembered that Martin's early railroad connections would have seemed to bias his support for any future railroad interest whether publicly supported or not.

\(^{69}\) Results of Martin's unrelenting efforts in this campaign are revealed in some of his letters to R. F. Lassiter. Senator Martin wrote that Petersburg exceeded itself in the election and that because of this Republican opposition was practically eliminated. See Thomas Martin to R. F. Lassiter, September 1, 1905 and June 2, 1906, R. F. Lassiter Papers, Duke University Library.

\(^{70}\) John Stewart Bryan to Major J. C. Hemphill, June 30, 1910, Hemphill Papers, Duke University Library. In this letter Bryan was writing on the editorial policies of Times Dispatch.
The Hepburn Act, pushed strongly by President Theodore Roosevelt, deprived the railroads of ultimate sovereignty in the rate-making process. It was proposed, as a fair security to shippers and protection from excessive or discriminatory rates for the small shipper, that the Interstate Commerce Commission should be vested with the power to decide, subject to judicial review, a reasonable rate in cases where a given rate had been challenged and after full hearing found to be unreasonable.\(^1\) The bill was passed through the House of Representatives in February 1906, but was strongly opposed in the Senate by various railroad factions. After two months' battle the bill was finally passed by the Senate, granting rate-making power to the Interstate Commerce Commission, on May 18, 1906. Senator Martin voted "yea."\(^2\)

Reiterating Martin's senatorial appointments, he received his second and third committee chairmanships during this third term. The Select Committee on Additional Accommodation for the Library of Congress in 1905, and the Committee on Public Health and National Quarantine in 1909, fell under his leadership.\(^3\) Although Martin's

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\(^2\) Ibid.

assignments were increasing, his main concern, as previously men-
tioned, was with Commerce, an area in which he dealt primarily
with river and harbor improvements, lighthouses, and generally
everything connected with the shippers of the country. However,
in 1910 Senator Martin was appointed to the important Appropriations Committee to fill the vacancy of his late senior, John Daniel.\textsuperscript{74} Under Martin's guidance and direction this committee
would soon produce bills and many other important measures indis-
pensable for a successful and vigorous waging of war. Finally,
Martin's fifteen years in the Senate had made him senior Democrat
on four significant committees,\textsuperscript{75} along with commanding positions
on others, and the senior Senator from Virginia was now ready to
taste some of the prestige and power which length of service in
any legislative body bring to an able man.

\textsuperscript{74} G.R., 61st Congress, 3rd Session, p. 105.

\textsuperscript{75} Senator Martin was senior Democrat on the Commerce
Committee, the Claims Committee, the Committee on the District
of Columbia, and the Committee on Naval Affairs. See Petersburg
Index- Appeal, April 11, 1911.
CHAPTER V

THE BITTER CAMPAIGN OF 1911

Thomas Martin's long and devoted service in the Senate was not slow to be recognized. When the Sixty-second Congress met in special session in April 1911, the Democratic Senators were preparing to elect a Minority leader. The candidate of the conservative faction was Senator Martin. The progressive wing, led by William J. Bryan who took an active and open part in seeking Martin's defeat, agreed to support Senator Benjamin F. Shively of Indiana. Opposition to Martin was mainly on the basis of the Payne-Aldrich tariff of 1909, when the Senator's votes on that Bill were claimed to be in direct violation of the letter and spirit of the Democratic platform. Martin's opponents labeled him "a reactionary" and a representative of the "Interests" when it was reported that he voted with Senator Nelson Aldrich eighteen times and more often than any other Democratic Senator, except the two from Louisiana. In view of these accusations, a closer

76. Richmond Times Dispatch, April 8, 1911

77. Ibid., April 7, 1911. The Payne-Aldrich tariff, passed in 1909, was an attempt at tariff reduction. It resulted in many changes but little correction with respect to its aim.

examination of Senator Martin's record on the Payne-Aldrich tariff was made and published which proved the charges highly misleading.\textsuperscript{79}

It was disclosed by this record that Senator Martin cast his vote against all the "Interests" without exception. It was further revealed that the seventeen (instead of eighteen) votes he cast with Senator Aldrich were votes in favor of the income tax, the corporation tax, for admitting certain works of art free of duty, against increase of duty on pineapples (which was a strictly Democratic vote against high protection), and other votes strictly justified on the Democratic principle of "a tariff for revenue." Finally, as to Senator Martin's vote on final passage of the Tariff Bill, he voted against it.\textsuperscript{80}

Apparent how wholly different were Senator Martin's votes with Senator Aldrich from what the charges in question would, on their face, mislead one to believe, the accusations that Martin had tried to help Aldrich, or the "Interests" seemed somewhat wanting. At any rate, the expected battle did not take place and Senator Martin was elected Minority leader by an easy margin, more than doubling Senator Shively's votes.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., pp. 3, 7, 8.

\textsuperscript{81} Richmond Times Dispatch, April 8, 1911. It should be noted that Senator Martin yielded to urgent pressure in agreeing to become Minority leader. He preferred not to have the position if he was not the choice of all his colleagues. See Times Dispatch, April 7, 1911.
Just when the people's confidence in Martin had reached an unprecedented high, the senatorial primary of 1911 found the Senator facing possibly the most serious challenge he ever encountered. It was at this time that William A. Jones, for many years Martin's nemesis, disclosed letters which aroused dormant suspicions concerning the Senator's disputed caucus election in 1893. This resulted in a political campaign characterized by bitterness and indiscriminate charges probably matched by no other in Virginia.82

The letters in Jones' possession were those of Barbour Thompson, well known in Virginia at this time as a prominent official of the Richmond and Danville Railroad.83 The correspondence revealed names of important officials connected with the railroads and also that of Thomas Martin as having contributed to the cause of Democratic supremacy in the State. To this, Jones attached the inconclusive story that in 1891 there was a "yellow dog" railroad fund in Virginia, made up of contributions of four railroads operating in Virginia, as well as that Senator Martin was one of the most


83. William A. Jones, "Senator Martin's Railroad Connections as shown by the Barbour-Thompson Letters," Who Is "Us"? (Richmond: Picot Print, 1911), p. 2. Mr. Thompson had charge of the legislative affairs of the Richmond and Danville Railroad from 1891 until 1911.
trusted of those who disbursed this fund. Jones also added that some of these letters written two years later established clearly that Senator Martin was in Richmond just prior to the assembling of the legislature in 1895 for the purpose of advancing the interests of the four railroad corporations through the use of a "yellow dog" fund to be employed in organizing the legislature against impending legislation undesirable to the railroads. Furthermore, the money discussed in these letters supposedly was not paid to the chairman of the Democratic party but given to Senator Martin to apply to "the purpose stated." Therefore, Jones concluded, the fact that the money was expended directly by the railroads through their chosen agent, and not through official Democratic channels, demonstrates that the railroads, for some ulterior purpose of their own, desired to place Democratic candidates who received it under pecuniary obligations to them.

84. Mr. Jones claims that the railroad corporations of Virginia were extremely anxious to so organize the Legislature which assembled in December 1891, as to prevent the enactment of any legislation which they might deem hostile to their interests. The railroad corporations mentioned as contributing to the "yellow dog" fund were: the Richmond and Danville Railroad Company; the Richmond and Alleghany Company which consolidated with the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad Company; the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad; and the Norfolk and Western Railroad.

85. Ibid., p. 7. The Kent Bill which was pending at this time is a case in point.

86. A letter to Martin included a check which was to be applied to "the purpose stated." The "purpose" was never actually stated in any of the letters. Also, nowhere in the letters was the subject of influencing legislation directly referred to.

87. Ibid., p. 9.
The evidence was suspicious but certainly not conclusive.

It was sufficiently damming, however, to get a denial from Martin.

The Senator explained:

Before my election to the Senate I was local counsel for the Richmond and Alleghany Company until it consolidated with the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad Company, which I had not before that time represented. My agreement with that company was to prosecute and defend suits and transact all the legal business in which they might be interested in five counties, for which I received an annual salary. I was retained solely in legal matters. I never represented any other railroad corporation.

Martin also denied that he had ever represented any interest or corporation or anyone before any legislative body, state or national. He explained that he had been in the habit of helping J. Taylor Ellyson, then State Democratic Chairman, in the conduct of fund raising campaigns for the needs of the party, and declared that he had solicited funds from the railroads in the same manner in which he had solicited funds from other sources that were interested "in the welfare and good order of the state." Mr. Ellyson concurred.

Thompson, owner of the letters, denied any charge of corruption when he stated that:

88. Ibid., p. 1.

89. Ibid.

90. Cox, op. cit., p. 50. Also see Richmond Times Dispatch, July 11, 1911.
The letters, in so far as they relate to money, have reference to the campaign funds contributed by the railroads or by their owners and by men of means generally to the Democratic party of the State. Such contributions were unquestionably made, and were made at the earnest solicitation of the Democratic managers.91

Thompson may have also found legitimate cause to question ethical standards of conduct when his letters had so mysteriously disappeared from his private files.

While the foregoing accounts present neither sufficient evidence for adjudging Martin guilty, nor satisfactory proof in sustaining his innocence of the charges brought against him, revelation of some of his attitudes and remarks prior to the campaign itself may serve to help reach a verdict.

In 1909 Martin wrote to a friend criticizing a man for being counsel for the Norfolk and Western Railroad Company while holding a legislative position at the same time. Senator Martin felt that although this was "not a violation of the letter of the law, it was certainly a violation of the spirit of the law."92

Judging from this it is difficult to follow why Martin should have felt, then, that a railroad attorney using his influence with

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91. Richmond Times Dispatch, August 6, 1911.

92. Thomas Martin to F. R. Lassiter, October 12, 1909, F. R. Lassiter Papers, Duke University Library.
members of the legislature for the purpose of protecting railroad interests, for which he was accused, would be any less subject to criticism than the person active in railroad counseling and at the same time holding a legislative position thereby subjecting him to partiality where railroad interests arise. Martin, more than likely, did not and he obviously felt that the two areas should be divorced from one another so as to prevent as much as possible any bias that would narrow the legislators freedom to approach problems open mindedly and in the best interest of the people. Does it seem natural, then, that Senator Martin would have disposed himself to such practices of which he was accused when he denounced them not only publicly but in confidence to his close friends?

Relevant also is the fact that Jones tried to amplify the corrupt charges made against Martin by censuring the Senator's resolution in the William Lorimer case. Senator William Lorimer of Illinois was accused of purchasing his election to the United States Senate. Mr. Jones, in turn, charged Senator Martin with proposing a committee for the investigation of the case that was supposedly partial to the Illinois Senator.93

Examining Senator Martin's remarks on the Lorimer inquiry, he is quoted as saying:

I considered the case then on the evidence and on the law, and I reached the conclusion that Mr. Lorimer was not entitled to a seat on the floor of the Senate, that bribery and fraud had been used to secure his election; and I voted for the resolution which declared that he had not been legally elected and was not entitled to a seat on the floor of this body. 94

When new and material testimony had been discovered calling for further investigation into the case, Senator Martin presented a resolution to that effect, stating:

Surely there can be nothing of greater or more vital importance to the Senate than the question of the right of a man to sit here and to exercise the privileges of a Senator. I say his right to exercise those privileges and to vote here from day to day when that right is seriously called in question, as is the right of Mr. Lorimer, should be investigated not only thoroughly but promptly. 95

Martin further added that:

The dignity and honor of the Senate is involved, and it is of the utmost importance that the dignity and honor of the Senate should be preserved by the exclusion from its membership of any man who has obtained a seat here by bribery, fraud, or corruption of any character. 96


95. Ibid., p. 4.

96. Ibid.
Senator Martin's remarks indicate without a doubt the seriousness with which he regarded his office, as well as reflect his strong aversion to any form of corruption that might jeopardize the honor and dignity of the Senate. In view of this, Mr. Jones' condemnation of Martin during the Lorimer inquiry seems hardly justified, and in fact, the Senator's remarks in this case may be seen as lending additional force to proving his own election in 1893 free of corruption. It seems highly unlikely that Senator Martin would so vehemently protest corruptible practices of any character if he knew that he himself had once been an instrument of such designs and had brought dishonor to the Senate.97

As a result of these disclosures concerning Martin, some of the leading newspapers that had been favorable to him before urged the election of Representative Jones.98 But in spite of the damaging evidence the Independent Jones was no match for the well-organized Conservatives. The vote was 57,000 for Martin and

97. An interview with Mrs. Henry Fairfax of Richmond revealed that Senator Martin was a close friend of her husband and that he was a frequent visitor to their home. To the best of her knowledge, Mrs. Fairfax believed the accusations against the Senator to be false.

98. The Richmond News Leader, August 1-13, 1911, and the Richmond Times Dispatch, September 7, 1911, both stated that Martin was unfit for the Senate and urged the election of House Representative Jones. However, many of Virginia's newspapers still gave Senator Martin their full support. See Some of the things the Press is saying in behalf of the Candidacy of Senator Thomas S. Martin (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1911).
25,000 for Jones.99 The campaign marked the climax of the struggle by the Independent Democrats to take control of the party in Virginia.

The Democratic majority in the Sixty-third Congress presented Senator Martin an opportunity to be promoted to Majority leader. As a Minority leader Martin was noted for his generalship and ability to harmonize differences,100 and it was generally believed that he would be permitted to retain the nominal leadership.101 As before, however, a struggle developed between the Conservative and Progressive wings of the party, and Martin's old adversary, William J. Bryan, gave his support to Senator John W. Kern of Indiana.102

The final showdown did not take place. On March 1, 1913, four days before the caucus was to be held, Senator Martin withdrew from the race assuring Kern's selection.103 Martin's withdrawal from the race was met with mixed emotions. Friends of the Senator were inclined "to be blue over the matter" feeling that his decision was a serious blow to his prestige in the "councils of the nation."104

100. Richmond Virginian, April 11, 1911.
102. Richmond Times Dispatch, February 27, 1913.
103. Richmond Times Dispatch, March 1, 1913.
104. Ibid.
His opponents, on the other hand, were overjoyed at what they regarded as his defeat, and believed that the blow would weaken him in his own state while at the same time be the entering wedge in destroying the organization which had previously backed him. 105

Senator Martin's reasons for withdrawing from the race were not really known, but many felt that President-elect Woodrow Wilson had taken a hand in the matter. 106 It was concluded that President Wilson desired to have as party leaders men who he felt would carry out his policies "without either direct or tacit opposition." 107 Naturally, a President's wishes would be respected in such a matter.

There may have been another reason which figured in his withdrawal. During the Senate race for Minority leader in 1911, Martin preferred not to have the position if he was not the choice of all his colleagues. Because of the conservative and progressive factions in the party, Martin did not have the support of all his colleagues but yielded anyway to urgent pressure in accepting party

105. Ibid.

106. Ibid. Three days prior to his withdrawal "Martin felt sure of re-election."

107. Ibid. Wilson may have considered Martin too conservative to push his program effectively in the Senate. There were even reported instances of Wilson failing to confer with Martin, but instead only with progressive leaders of the party. See New York Times, January 2, 1913.
leadership. The race for Majority leader bore close similarity to the Minority race, the Conservative and Progressive wings again at odds, and Senator Martin may not have wished to become the object of party friction a second time.

Whatever the reasons, Martin had, nevertheless, suffered the first and only major defeat of his political career. But even this would change quickly.

108. Richmond Times Dispatch, April 7, 1911.
CHAPTER VI

SENATOR MARTIN'S WORK WITH APPROPRIATIONS

In spite of his well-known opposition to Woodrow Wilson, Martin remained unshaken in his power. This was not only proved by his landslide senatorial victory over Representative Jones, but also by his appointment to the Chairmanship of the Appropriations Committee only a few days after the Senate caucus had rejected him as Majority leader. Senator Martin's leadership and parliamentary skill was now being counted on to produce important measures necessary to the ever expanding interests of the nation.

In dealing with appropriations, Senator Martin handled both domestic and foreign affairs with a surprising breadth of view. Significantly, Martin pushed for a $55,000 appropriation to the negro population for the purpose of holding an exposition to celebrate their emancipation along with their achievements in education and industrial enterprise. Less than a year later in 1915, the

109. Carter Glass to R. H. Dabney, January 10, 1912, Carter Glass Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia. Glass wrote: "The machine in Virginia, as elsewhere, is utterly opposed to Wilson." Also the Richmond Times Dispatch, July 4, 1912, quotes Martin as saying: "Although I was not originally favorable to the nomination of Governor Wilson, believing that there were stronger candidates ...." Senator Martin went on to say that after further consideration Governor Wilson's nomination would be in the best interests of the Democratic party.

110. C.R., 63rd Congress, 2nd Session, p. 11797.
Senator upheld an appropriation for Howard University, a negro institution in Washington, D.C., saying: "As a southern man, living all my life with the colored people, I will say there is nothing which appeals more strongly to me than this appropriation." 111

Having been in the Senate during the administration of Theodore Roosevelt and now that of President Wilson, Martin was naturally concerned with United States expansion as well as the added responsibilities accompanying acquisition of new territories. 112 As a result of the United States acquiring the zone on which the Panama Canal was built, Senator Martin felt that a strong power had dealt harshly and unreasonably with a weak power. "They had something we wanted," stated Martin, "and by indirection we took it." 113 Because, according to Martin, we wrongfully aided in the secession of Panama from Colombia in 1903 and in doing so created bad feelings between the two Republics, it was incumbent upon the United States to make amends. He, therefore, proposed a $25,000,000 payment to Colombia,

111. C.R., 63rd Congress, 3rd Session, p. 4191-4192.

112. In the turn-of-the-century-period the United States engaged in the Spanish-American War, moved into the Caribbean and Pacific Islands, erected naval bases in both oceans, and constructed the Panama Canal.

113. C.R., 63rd Congress, 2nd Session, p. 18163.
stating: "I am anxious to see good feelings re-established, provided we can re-establish it by simply doing what is just and honest and right by our neighbor. 114

Use of the Panama Canal was also a subject of contentious debate. On the question of permitting foreign Governments to use the Canal on the same terms with the United States, Senator Martin expressed to his colleagues:

In these troubous times, when the whole world is disturbed with bloody war, do you not think it was a mighty small consideration that we paid for the good will and the friendship and the cordial cooperation of foreign Governments, by conceding to them something which, whether all of us thought it was right or not, all of them thought was right? 115

Concern for wise and statesmanlike management of potentially explosive situations was also expressed by Senator Martin following the "Lusitania" crisis in May 1915. Martin along with Henry D. Flood of Virginia, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives, called on Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan and asked him to communicate a message to President Wilson. Bryan wrote:

114. Ibid., p. 18164

115. Ibid., p. 18165
'Senator Martin was the spokesman but Mr. Flood concurred in what he said. The Senator spoke with great earnestness to the effect that this country does not want war with Germany and that it expects you to find a way out that will not involve hostilities ...'116

Later that year Senator Martin wrote to a friend reflecting some of his views on the war in Europe and its future effect on the United States. The Senator wrote:

I have not studied closely the transactions or motives of the European powers, but have been living quietly and practically to myself in the last six months .... My sympathies are strongly with the Allies, but I must say that I have been disappointed in the actions and efficiency of England. Germany has demonstrated her preparedness and her potentiality. The Kaiser is easily the foremost ruler in Europe, I think I may say the ablest since the days of Napoleon. I cannot, however, doubt the ultimate success of the Allies.

Martin continues by saying that:

There is strong feeling here that Congress next winter will have to put our country in a better state of defense. There will be clamor for very large appropriations for that purpose. I feel that something should be done, but I am not in sympathy with any

116. Arthur S. Link, Wilson: The Struggle for Neutrality (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 416-417. Martin and Flood wrote letters substantiating Bryan's comment. They wrote: "We will not go further than to say that with the limited knowledge we have, we have not been able to reach the conclusion that war should result from any questions growing out of the destruction of the Lusitania and the incidental loss of American lives." See William J. Bryan Papers, Duke University Library.
extravagant expenditures at this time. The manufacture of munitions in this country for the belligerents will develop factories and really be of great defensive strength to the United States. 117

On the basis of this letter there has been some tendency to conclude that Senator Martin's interest was primarily in domestic affairs rather than foreign problems. But in the words of Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia:

It would not be wise to judge the primary interest of Senator Martin, or any other Senator, especially one who served in the Senate for a quarter of a century, on the basis of one statement. 118

It may have been that Senator Martin's unfamiliarity with war in Europe and his unsympathetic attitude concerning extravagant appropriations for extensive military buildup in this country was in part, due to his refusal to believe that war should be resorted to as a basis for settlement. On previous occasions Martin gave


118. Senator Harry F. Byrd to Ernest Scott Strother, Jr., personal letter, August 11, 1965. Senator Byrd further wrote: "It should be remembered that when Senator Martin came to the Senate domestic development had been the nation's overriding interest for 100 years.... I think it was natural for him to have been interested in domestic affairs, and he should have been. But he could not have served as Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and leader of the Senate during the years of World War I and immediately after without interest in both domestic and foreign affairs." Also, Mr. Thomas Staples Martin, Jr., in a personal interview, stated that he had no reason to believe that his father was not as interested and concerned with foreign affairs as he was with domestic matters.
opposition to any United States policies featuring aggressiveness where war might have been the result, and his letter to Thomas Page, Ambassador to Rome, may just have been, in effect, further refusal to acknowledge the motives for war and certainly disapproval of this nation appropriating large sums to such a cause when the United States was not at the time actually involved.

But when the Government realized how dangerously close the United States was to war, Senator Martin and his committee appropriated the necessary money to make effective the legislation which was "necessary for the protection of the country and the development of its material interests." The increase of appropriations for expenses of the Government in 1917 over 1916 amounted to $7,877,991.10, and the total increase for the defense of the country over 1916 amounted to $418,383,266.08. The passage of such

119. Senator Martin's appeasing attitude regarding the Panama Canal and the Lusitania crisis have already been mentioned. Also when open war between the United States and Mexico seemed certain to break out in 1913, as a result of an organized revolution in Mexico in 1911, President Wilson made special efforts to maintain peace. Senator Martin gave particular thanks to the President for his great wisdom, forebearance, and success in avoiding war and trouble of every sort. For an account of this see C.R., 63rd Congress, 2nd Session, p. 18170.

120. C.R., 64th Congress, 1st Session, p. 14016.

121. Ibid., pp. 14014-14016
large sums by Senator Martin and the Committee was indeed unprece-
dented.

Although Senator Martin was labeled a "conservative of deep
stripe,"\textsuperscript{122} he favored and furnished the necessary money for progres-
sive activities. A proposition which Martin dissented from most
emphatically was that — "an appropriation was extravagant if it is
an increase of a previous appropriation."\textsuperscript{123} He dissented from the
idea that small appropriations are economical appropriations, and
proposed to meet the demands of a growing country and to supply not
only as good a service as in the past but "a service commensurate
with the growth and development and increase of population in the
country."\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{122} New York Times, January 2, 1913.

\textsuperscript{123} C.R., 63rd Congress, 2nd Session, p. 18162

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
A study of Martin's Senate career would not be complete without mention of the close alliance between himself and Bishop James Cannon, Jr., Chairman of the Anti-Saloon League of America. Virginius Dabney is quoted as saying:

The entente cordiale established between the Martin and Cannon machines in 1909 was the beginning of a long period of close co-operation between the two groups. Senator Martin was thereafter to be found almost invariably supporting the measures advocated by Cannon, while Cannon usually saw eye to eye with Martin.

About 1912 renewed efforts by the Anti-Saloon League to secure prohibition on the State and National levels were again in force. Senator Martin's lack of sympathy with the liquor traffic and his willingness to assist in any "practical remedial legislation" made him instrumental in securing a majority in the Senate, as well as a good majority in the House of Delegates of Virginia friendly to the carrying out of Anti-Saloon League policies. In reply to his support of state controlled liquor


126. Ibid., p. 56.

127. Senator Martin recognized that legislation of this nature could not be passed and carried out successfully if it was too far ahead of public sentiment. See Richard L. Watson, Jr., (ed.), *Bishop Cannon's Own Story* (Durham, N.C.,: Duke University Press, 1955), p. 152.

128. Ibid., p. 161.
traffic to protect Virginia "dry" territory from interstate ship-
ments, Martin stated:

I am in full accord with the purpose of the reso-
lution and will do every thing in my power to secure legisla-
tion that will prevent the exercise of any
National power under the Interstate Commerce clause
of the Constitution so as to prevent the state of
Virginia from controlling as it may see fit the ques-
tion of bringing liquor from another state into dry
territory in Virginia. I believe the state should
be supreme in the matter, and if I can secure legis-
lation to that effect it will be a pleasure for me to
do so.129

The first important victory for the Anti-Saloon League was
the Webb-Kenyon law passed by Congress over President Taft's veto
in 1913.130 This law stopped the shipping of liquor from a "wet"
to a "dry" state,131 and the passage of this law had the "active
and efficient assistance of Senator Martin in the Senate."132 Sub-
sequently, Martin also gave his support to the passage of the

129. Ibid., p. 146. Senator Martin's support of Anti-Saloon
League policies was not one sided. Bishop Cannon, in a letter to
the Senator, states: "There are a number of us who have not hesi-
tated to openly support candidates favored by the present Democratic
organization, not because we have ever made any bargain so to do, as
had been falsely asserted by our enemies, but which you know to be
absolutely false, but because we thought that the present organiza-
tion was equally as good as those who were aiming to come into
power." See James Cannon to Thomas Martin, February 25, 1912, James
Cannon, Jr., Papers, Duke University Library.

130. Ibid., pp. 148-149.

131. United States Statutes at Large, XXXVII, p. 699.

Enabling Act. The Enabling Act was a House of Delegates bill providing for an election on the question of "prohibiting the manufacture for sale and the sale of intoxicating liquors, and to declare the effect of the result of such election; and to provide penalties for the violation of the provisions of this act."¹³³

Shortly after the United States declared war, the prohibition leaders strengthened their cause through the food-control bill. The Food Conservation Bill stated, in effect, that the President would be authorized to limit or prohibit the use of foods for the production of liquors for beverage purposes whenever these foods were found to be essential for the national defense.¹³⁴ But President Wilson's appeal to Congress for the bill's passage met stiff opposition, and it was only after Senator Martin's mediation between the "wet" and "dry" interests that reconciliation was finally effected.

When the Food Conservation Bill was at last passed by the House (June 23, 1917), containing the absolute prohibition of the use of foodstuffs in the manufacture of intoxicants, it was sharply attacked in the Senate. Friends of the brewers declared that they


¹³⁴. United States Statutes at Large, XL, pp. 276-287.
would not allow the Food Bill to pass the Senate unless the "prohibition of the manufacture of beer and wine was stricken from the bill." 135

Faced with this, Senator Martin conferred with President Wilson and informed him that he was well acquainted with Bishop Cannon and that he would have a conference with him concerning the passage of the bill. 136 The Senator met with Bishop Cannon and the Legislative Committee of the Anti-Saloon League and an agreement was reached to the effect that the Food Bill would be amended to "prohibit the use of food materials for distillation, but leaving the use of such materials for the manufacture of beer and wine to the discretion of the President." 137 The agreement greatly commended itself to a large majority of the Senate and several senators now announced their intention to vote for the prohibition resolution. 138 Thereupon, President Wilson expressed his appreciation to Senator Martin for accomplishing what he thought to be of vital necessity to the nation. 139

135. Watson, op. cit., p. 188.
136. Ibid., p. 189.
137. Ibid., p. 190.
138. Ibid.
139. President Wilson thought that the immediate passage of the Food Bill was vital. Before calling upon Senator Martin, he appealed to the patriotism of the friends of the breweries and wineries. See Ibid., p. 188.
Senator Martin's last legislative involvement, just prior to his death, was his assistance in securing ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment.\textsuperscript{140} His influence in securing this Amendment was not only felt in the Senate but was also extended to the House of Representatives. Bishop Cannon recalls, in his autobiography, a meeting with Congressman Carraway of Arkansas and discussing with him the vote of the Southern representatives for submitting the Eighteenth Amendment. Cannon relates:

He (Carraway) told me quite frankly that he was too much of a States' Rights Democrat to vote for the resolution. I asked him if he thought that Arkansas believed in the states' rights any more than did Virginia. He said, 'No.' I replied that Virginia's senators and congressmen were going to vote almost unanimously for the submission of the resolution, and when he expressed incredulity, I said to him, 'Go and see Senator Martin.' He replied without a moment's hesitation, 'If Senator Martin is in favor of that resolution, I will guarantee you the vote of the entire Arkansas delegation.' He went forth and saw Senator Martin and when I saw him the next day, he said, 'Martin says it is all right, and if Virginia can vote for it, Arkansas can.'\textsuperscript{141}

On November 12, 1919, Senator Martin died. "His death just at this juncture," Bishop Cannon said, "was a very great loss to Virginia and to the nation."\textsuperscript{142}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{140} Ibid., p. 446.
\item \textsuperscript{141} Ibid., p. 291. Also quoted in Reeves, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 363.
\item \textsuperscript{142} Ibid., p. 290.
\end{itemize}
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In 1916 Senator Martin's only major political defeat was reversed. He was chosen Majority leader "on the ground that he was the best-qualified man in the Senate for the position." By 1918 Senator Martin's national prestige as Majority leader of the Senate and Chairman of the Appropriations Committee left him unopposed in the senatorial primary and the general election, and he was returned to office the unanimous choice of the people. Senator Claude Swanson of Virginia appropriately said:

When in 1918 Senator Martin was re-elected for the fifth time to the United States Senate as the unanimous choice of all parties and all the people of Virginia, it was clearly demonstrated that these

143. Richmond Times Dispatch, December 7, 1916. It was reported that after Martin's defeat for Majority leader in 1915, he went right along supporting the "Administration and party's policies as though he had not been superseded."

144. Adoption of the Seventeenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution in 1913 made election of United States Senators mandatory by popular vote.

145. Richard Evelyn Byrd is quoted as saying in a letter to Senator Martin: "So far as you are concerned, you have reached an impregnable position in the confidence and affection of the people of Virginia..." See R. E. Byrd to Thomas Martin, January 31, 1919, Henry Flood Papers, Library of Congress.
enmities (referring to political campaigns which engendered bitterness and produced political divisions) were obliterated, these party divisions had faded, and that around his strong personality clustered the confidence, esteem, and affection of an entire Senate. 146

Much of Martin's success during his senatorial career was attributed to the fact that he stood staunchly by his friends. "He never forgot a friend nor a friendly act." 147 Senator Martin, however, must have been a political genius in his own right. For a small town lawyer, hardly known outside his own community, to gain control of a political party and then to be elected to the United States Senate over possibly the most popular man in Virginia was, indeed, a remarkable feat. Bishop Cannon's appraisal of Senator Martin could not have been far from wrong when he said: "I do not think that Thomas S. Martin had his equal in the political life of Virginia or in the Senate of the United States." 148


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