THE RISE AND FALL OF
THE FARMER - LABOR PARTY
IN NOVA SCOTIA

by

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INDEX

ABSTRACT

The shrieks and howls of protest in Nova Scotia against the "bad bargain" of Confederation subsided into a sullen murmur as the people ungraciously accepted an unpalatable and unprofitable contract. A woman, pushed into an unhappy marriage by authoritarian parents wishing to get her off their hands, retains her right to complain while accepting the inevitable. In similar fashion, the people of Nova Scotia nursed their resentment against Confederation. Only rarely had this feeling been openly vented; W. S. Fielding was able to use it in 1886, to strengthen the position of the provincial Liberals vis-á-vis the Conservatives. Possibly one of the causes of the Liberal Party's long dominance of Provincial politics, from Confederation to 1956, was its ability to tap the hidden reservoirs of anti-Confederation sentiment, by invoking Howe and the other ghosts of 1867. Along with other factors—good luck, efficient organization, economical administration, and the reluctance of voters to change their party allegiance, the intense dislike of "Upper

Canada" contributed to the long life-span of Liberal administrations.[1]

Until 1956 the Conservative Party had only rarely been able to challenge effectively the Liberal hold on Nova Scotian voters' affections. Professor J. M. Beck has given a concise summary of the causes of the rare Conservative victories:

> Up to 1956 the Conservatives had administered the provincial affairs for only nineteen years since 1848 and for only twelve since 1867; the electorate had normally shown its satisfaction with Liberal governments and had not tried an alternative except in times of crisis. The first of the four Conservative periods of office—the Johnston administration from 1857 to 1860—was the result not of a victory at the polls but of the defection from the Liberal Party of the Catholic assemblymen during a bitter religious controversey; the second—the Tupper government from 1863 to 1867—followed the general collapse of a Liberal administration from old age and economic depression; the third—the Holmes—Thompson administrations from 1878 to 1882—was the outcome of depression and the impoverishment of the provincial finances; the fourth—the Rhodes—Harrington administrations from 1925 to 1933—may be explained in considerable measure by the failure of the province to recover from the economic ills which beset it at the close of the First World War.[2]

It is particularly significant in the larger Canadian political context, that only the two traditional parties

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[1] The Anti-Confederation feeling, however, did not prevent Nova Scotian voters from sending a majority of Conservative M.P.'s to Ottawa, in most of the Dominion elections between 1870 and 1896. See J. M. Beck, The Government of Nova Scotia (Toronto, 1957), 158-9.

[2] J. M. Beck, The Government, 157-8.

have ever received enough voter support to form administrations at Halifax. In spite of the fact that the province has been a virtual economic, social and political outcast within Confederation, the vast majority of Nova Scotians have been quite satisfied to work within the framework of the existing political system. Only twice has a third party threatened the political status-quo— in 1920 and in 1945. On both occasions a third party—the Farmer-Labor alliance in 1920 and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in 1945— succeeded in electing enough members to form the official Opposition in the Legislature. Both times the third party momentum was effectively neutralized by a revived Conservative Party which stole the third party's thunder by absorbing some of its progressive ideas. The voters turned, with obvious relief, to the support of a traditional party with strong leadership and a seemingly enlightened program. Their return to old political ways, after 1920 at least, was made easier by the new party's growing disunity and its organizational weaknesses.

The Farmer-Labor group's achievement in 1920 was much more spectacular than that of the C.C.F. twenty-five years later. While the C.C.F. won 13.6% of the popular vote, electing two members, the Farmer-Labor Party won 30.9% of the popular vote, electing eleven members. Yet the C.C.F. survived, with dwindling support, until its

assumption of a new name, the New Democratic Party, in 1961. The Farmer-Labor Party, however, was a mere shadow within five years of its nativity. One of its constituent elements, the United Farmers' Party, was virtually dead by 1922; a second, the Independent Labor Party, maintained a precarious existence until the 1930's, but it was never a political threat after 1921. A third element, which aided in the formation and initial success of the new party, was the powerful war veterans' organization. The veterans' anger with government's conduct during and after the war caused many of them to support, briefly, the new "reforming" party. With the gradual dulling of bitter war memories and the return to the humdrum ways of peacetime, veterans became less inclined to follow new paths of political action.

It is curious that the Farmer-Labor Party has not only passed from the scene, but almost from memory. It had, in the long run, only a slight impact on the almost non-existent radical political tradition in Nova Scotia. Its only tangible reminders are yellowing copies of a newspaper in farm-house attics, United Farmers membership buttons in old bureau drawers, and a few community halls falling to ruin in rural villages. For the most part people who supported the Farmer movement tended, when interviewed some forty-five years later, to speak rather apologetically of their political heresy. On the other

hand, many old Labor men, who fought and worked for the Independent Labor Party in the days of their youth, still regretted the loss of an opportunity to create a genuine working-class political movement.

The short-lived revolt of many Nova Scotian voters against traditional policies and parties had four main causes. First, people in the rural areas were angered by the fall in the population of farming districts and in the sharp decline in importance of farming as an industry and vocation. Their anger was steered into political channels by ambitious men who were either prominent farmers themselves, or had a particular interest in agriculture. Secondly, the successes of farmers' political parties in New Brunswick, Ontario, and the Western provinces, pushed Nova Scotian farmers on to match their efforts. In the third place the "wave of discontent" which followed World War I led workingmen to embrace political Labor parties, modelled on the aggressive and successful Labour Party of Great Britain. The triumph of Russian workers, peasants, and soldiers over the Czar's despotic regime caused a great upsurge in radical agitation and activity among industrial workers in Nova Scotia as elsewhere. Fourthly, the Union government at Ottawa had been discredited, in the eyes of soldiers and civilians alike, by its conduct of the war and its failure to protect veterans' rights afterward. Some of this dissatisfaction carried over to

hurt the provincial Conservative Party, which, in any case, was too weak and disorganized to provide effective opposition to the Liberals. Premier Murray's Liberal government, in power since 1896, had exposed itself to charges of corruption and autocracy, and of truckling to industrial corporations and to the mercantile and commercial "establishment" of Halifax. Moreover, it failed to develop an adequate program of social legislation for the times.

Of the farmers who supported the United Farmers, many soon came to regret their action. Farmer representatives in the Legislature found it impossible to pass any legislation which the Liberal majority opposed. Another excuse for the condemnation of the United Farmers was found when their elected representatives agreed to an increase in indemnities at a time when farmers were sinking into economic depression. The co-operation of farmers with organized labor, luke-warm at best, was destroyed by the growing radicalism of many sections of the labor movement. In the industrial areas of Cape Breton, many workers were turned away from their support of the Labor Party by its aggressive radicalism, and by the growing conviction that good labor legislation could be obtained from a sympathetic Conservative Party. An important external stimulus to the third party was removed when the United Farmer government of Ontario was defeated and Farmer organizations in other provinces turned from political action to emphasize

economic co-operation. So complete was the demoralization of the new party in Nova Scotia by 1925 that only ten third-party candidates could be found to contest seats in the provincial election of that year. In going down to decisive defeat, they polled only 2.8% of the popular vote.

The significance of the Farmer-Labor movement lay most dramatically in its surging rise to great political prominence in the space of a few months, followed by its rapid descent into oblivion. Why did a large proportion--almost one-third--of Nova Scotian voters suddenly turn away from their "immemorial conservatism" to support a new political group, and then abandon it so quickly? The answers seem to lie in the realm of psychology and/or sociology rather than in economics. It was a quest for status and for recognition by farmers who felt themselves being thrust aside by the rest of the community and by industrial workers whose unions were unable to protect them against layoffs and short-time work, that prompted the hasty grasping for political novelty.

But this explanation of the nature of the new party's appeal opens the door to other questions. For what reasons did the people support the new party during a period of relative economic prosperity, then reject it in a time of economic depression? Was it their innate conservatism and political inertia that caused Nova Scotian voters to flock to the support of the Conservative Party, when that

party's leaders showed their willingness to cooperate with farmers and industrial workers? Was it a belated recognition of the strength of this conservatism that caused most of the leaders of the Farmers' political movement, some of the Labor leaders to return with unseemly haste to the welcoming arms of the Conservative or Liberal parties? What part was played by newspapers and by the Churches in the changing political alignments? The attempt to answer these questions and to chart the course of this adventure in political idealism, or knight-errantry, has been made chiefly through the examination of contemporary newspapers and documents, and through interviews, in person or by letter, with many people who were involved in the Farmer-Labor movement either as participants or interested observers. The picture of the Farmer-Labor movement which is presented is that of a cry of protest—a cry that was easily stilled by voters' prejudices or convictions, by the action of traditional religious and political forces, and through the absence of effective leadership. Perhaps the unlucky fate of popular political movements containing some philosophy and idealism in Nova Scotia has been expressed most forcefully, if somberly by Mr. Joseph Steele, who once sat in the Nova Scotia Legislature as an Independent Labor Member:

> There is no fit place for an honest farmer or labor man in the Legislature, where 50% of the Members

are lawyers and 25% are doctors. They will always succeed in bribing, or smooth-talking, the bulk of the workers and farmers into backing the old parties that won't rock the boat.[3]

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[3] Writer's interview with Joseph Steele, Atlantic St., Sydney, July 28, 1966.

CHAPTER I

THE UNITED FARMERS OF NOVA SCOTIA—A HASTY CREATION

A few days before the 1920 provincial election, a correspondent of the Annapolis Spectator commented on the nature of the Nova Scotia Farmers' political movement:

> [It] arises from a long, slow growth of feeling that we must have legislation that will give a clean, just, square deal, not only to the farmers, but to all working men and women, and not legislation favouring the influential and wealthy. It is not a scheme on the part of the Conservative Party to oust the Government by throwing in with the farmers. The Farmers don't want to lower wages—they would give laboring men a better deal, especially educationally.[1]

The "growth of feeling" was slow indeed; the seed of farmer discontent lay long dormant in Nova Scotia, until its germination was hastened by the "winds of change" which spread across the world in the wake of the Great War and the Russian Revolution, and by the striking electoral victories won by Farmer candidates in other parts of

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[1] Annapolis Spectator, July 22, 1920.

Canada. Professor W. L. Morton has said that three of the outstanding causes for the Ontario and Western farmers' dissatisfaction with the government were the tariff, rural depopulation, and conscription. However, it seems that conscription, and the cancellation of exemptions from conscription, which had been granted to farm labor, were not of vital significance in the rise of anti-government resentment among Nova Scotian farmers.

In the comparatively undeveloped stage of Nova Scotian agriculture in 1920, it might seem that farmers would have little cause to resent the government tariff policy which kept prices of machinery and appliances at a high level. Nevertheless, the high prices and good markets enjoyed by agriculture during wartime encouraged farmers, either individually or in groups, to undertake the purchase of new grain drills, binders, hay mowers, and other machinery. Furthermore, farm wives were demanding electricity, and running water to free them from some of the household drudgery.[2] Reflecting the desire of farmers to increase their share of the national income, the Canadian Council of Agriculture fabricated a "New National Policy," demanding reciprocity in natural products with the United States, and the eventual

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[2] The 1921 census report records an increase of more than five million dollars in the value of implements and machinery on Nova Scotia farms, from 1911 to 1921. See Sixth Census of Canada, 1921, Volume V, Agriculture (Ottawa, 1925), 5, 58.

introduction of free trade with Great Britain. The expansion of markets, combined with lower machinery costs, which would be a result of the breaking of trade barriers, would enable farmers to maintain their wartime level of prosperity.[3] With more money in their hands, farmers could improve their living conditions, as well as purchase the machinery, commercial fertilizers, and Western feed grains, upon which large-scale farm production was becoming increasingly dependent.

Hopefully, a higher standard of living for farm people would help to check the flight from country to town. While the urban population of Nova Scotia increased by more than 43% in the period 1901-1921, the rural population decreased by 10% during the same period—a greater drop than in any other province except Prince Edward Island.[4]

L. A. Wood, an historian of Canadian farmers' movements, singled out rural depopulation as the leading cause for organization among farmers of the Maritime Provinces:

> The returns for 1921 as compared with those for 1911 disclose the vitiating influence exercised upon agricultural conditions in that part of Canada during the ten-year period by rural depletion, accompanied by a wholesale abandonment of farms . . . The Maritime governments have tended to keep this skelton of theirs securely locked up,

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[3] W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada (Toronto 1950), 62.

[4] Sixth Census of Canada, Volume V, 3. On page 5 of this volume, the decrease in this area of improved farm land during the 20-year period is shown to be substantially greater in Nova Scotia than in any other province.

> and to gloss over an unhappy situation . . . by the publication of optimistic agricultural reports. The farmers, living close to the soil, and fully aware of their economic disabilities, have been seeking by forms of combined action to make their industry both more profitable and attractive, and to stop, if possible, the trek from the rural districts.[5]

The depopulation of rural districts, however, was not a new phenomenon in Nova Scotia. Emigration from the province to other parts of North America had been substantial since 1860. Most of the emigrants had gone to the United States, though there had been a sizeable movement to Western Canada since 1896. The disappearance of rural and village industries, such as water-powered mills, shipyards, and tanneries, had brought about a decline in the opportunities for auxiliary income in rural areas. In those areas of the province where soils were marginal for agricultural purposes, families who had been willing to see their younger members seek lucrative employment in New England or New York found it necessary, after 1900, to shut up the old homestead and move to new industrial areas within Nova Scotia; they could not make a living from the meagre resources of the soil alone.[6] With the disintegration

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[5] L. A. Wood, Farmers' Movements in Canada (Toronto, 1924), 301.

[6] S. A. Saunders, Economic History of the Maritime Provinces (Ottawa, 1940), 14-15. Also R. M. Dawson's Report of the Royal Commission on Provincial Development and Rehabilitation (Halifax, 1944), 22-23.

of families and of rural communities came a resentment, among many country people, toward the parties or circumstances which had caused the deterioration of rural life in relation to that of the towns.

In Ontario, it has been said, the farmers tended to attribute the loss of rural population to the tariff, which favoured industry at the expense of agriculture:

> The short working-day and high wages of the city, which protected industry and extravagant governments, sanctioned, enhanced the attractiveness of the city over the country. These conditions were maintained by legislatures in which farmers had ceased, it was alleged, to be represented in proportion to their numbers. The remedy for protective tariffs and rural depopulation was therefore to elect farmers to the legislatures who would see to it that the farmers' views were taken into account in legislation and administration.[7]

It is not easy to say whether Nova Scotian farmers were as interested in tariff reduction as their Ontario counterparts. Government protection had aided the growth of the coal, steel, and textile industries, whose employees furnished the chief market for agricultural products (except apples and seed potatoes). It is true that the United Farmers of Nova Scotia, at their founding convention in 1920, endorsed, unanimously, the Canadian Council of Agriculture, with its attack on the tariff system.[8] In spite of this ambiguity on the part of the officialdom of

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7 W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party, 73.

8 Appendix, United Farmers' Guide, October 1, 1921, also the Canadian Annual Review (Toronto, 1921), 678.

the United Farmers, some of the Farmer candidates, in both the 1920 (Provincial) and the 1921 (Dominion) elections attacked the old parties' tariff policies.9

The equivocal attitude of Nova Scotian organized farmers toward the tariff was demonstrated by the case which they presented in November, 1920, to the Royal Commission investigating the tariff structure. President Taggart of the United Farmers told the Commission that many Nova Scotian farmers wanted a general reduction in the tariffs on manufactured goods, but wished to retain a protective tariff on apples and other fruit. In general, the Nova Scotian Farmers' Memorial to the Tariff Commission seems to have been much less vigorous in its anti-tariff attitude, than that presented by the United Farmers of New Brunswick.9A The Halifax Citizen, a Labor journal, alleged that the Canadian Manufacturers' Association sent a special speaker to Halifax, to persuade voters that "This sacred tariff, which has done so much to transfer millions from the pockets of the people to those of the manufacturers, must never be submitted to the tender mercies of the farmers."10 One newspaper editor asserted in 1920, that the

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9 As in the election card of Farmer candidates printed in the Hants Journal, Windsor, July 21, 1920.

9A Canadian Annual Review, 1920, 170.

10 Halifax Citizen, October 31, 1921.

> astounding birth and rapid growth [of the Farmers' Party] are owing to recoil from the burdens placed upon the farming industry by the economical laws of the National politician . . . Why did not these farmers go into the Liberal Party? . . . Simply because they saw too many protectionists in the Liberal Party.[11]

It is apparent that the organized farmers regarded the protective tariff as only one of the millstones placed around the necks of farm people by the cabal of "financial, industrial, and transportation interests, represented in Parliament by lawyers . . . these parisitac [sic] interests . . . who have replaced the old Family Compacts . . ."[12] The Farmers' newspaper excoriated the Montreal Gazette, "that chief Canadian defender of privileged interests," for its "cowardly attack on farmers as wartime profiteers."[13] On the contrary, many farm families had to resort to all sorts of expedients to earn a cash income; the Guide described a fairly typical family:

> The farmer works away in the lumber woods in the winter, while his wife, at home, tends four cows, one horse, one pig, forty-eight hens, teaches three children, and cares for one house of four rooms. In the evening, she paints on satin and sometimes on show cards . . . [all this in order that] they may maintain their independence as

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[11] New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, September 10, 1920. Editor James A. Fraser's ideas were strongly influenced by his conviction that Nova Scotia had been ill-used by Ottawa. He was, at this stage of his life especially, a staunch anti-Confederate.

[12] United Farmers' Guide editorial, April 15, 1922.

[13] United Farmers' Guide, March 30, 1921.

> property owners, and live in God's pure sunshine . . . . The necessity of living in such conditions has brought about the Farmers' movement.[14]

Some farmers were blunt and picturesque in their attempts to account for the birth of the new political movement. "At present," one wrote in the Pictou Advocate,

> there is a feeling abroad in the country that our government has been left too much to lawyers and capitalists, and that legislation has too often favored the man of wealth and wit at the expense of the honest worker . . . we cannot deny that there is insistent and imperative demand for organization and union among the farmers, so we better go with the farmers throughout the whole of Canada.[15]

To another correspondent, the farmer, in the hands of politicians of the past . . .

> had been like a shackled animal lying on an elevated table and while one man holds her head the shearer slashes off her wool together with numerous patches of tender skin, and because she kicks in resentment, as soon as he has robbed her of her coat, rewards her with such aid as his worn out boots will give her.[16]

Farmers were frequently reminded, by spokesmen of their organized movement, of their great importance in the national economy:

> The marble halls of the big banks and insurance companies, the limousines, silks, furs, trips to Europe, are coming, as Sir Thomas White has said, from the top ten inches of the soil, and the

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14 Ibid.

15 The Pictou Advocate, July 7, 1920.

16 Ibid., July 9, 1920.

> farmer is beginning to understand. If he contributes these things, he wants something to say about who is going to get them and under what conditions.[17]

Obviously, the leaders of the farm movement were endeavouring to create, or to expand, a sense of discontent and oppression among farmers, together with an esprit de corps which would serve to unite them in support of a new political alignment. Just as apparent was the conviction, held by many progressive farmers, that joint action was necessary to enable the agricultural industry to maintain a measure of the prosperity it had enjoyed during the war years. Indeed, the reports of the Secretary for Agriculture, who was also Principal of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, indicated that in both 1919 and 1920 the provincial agricultural industry was in a healthy condition. "The general outcome of the /1919/ season, as far as the farmer is concerned, was rather above average," Dr. Cumming reported.[18] In 1920, a 10% decline in production /from 1919/, and a midsummer slump in livestock prices were counterbalanced by a very heavy apple crop; the Secretary called it a "good average year" for the farming industry.[19] The report of the Nova Scotia Farmers' Association described

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17 United Farmers' Guide, November 15, 1921.

18 Journals of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, 1919 Part 2, Appendix 8, 35. (Hereafter called JHA).

19 JHA 1920, Part 2, Appendix 8, 1.

1919 as a "very prosperous year" for agriculture, and called for more farmers in the province.[20] A number of farmers recall the years from 1916 to 1920 as "the only time we ever made money on the farm,"[21] and "the only time I could really afford to pay wages and buy machinery."[22]

It is clear that the disastrous agricultural depression of the post-war period did not affect the industry in Nova Scotia until the summer of 1920; the United Farmers' Party was organized before that time. Naturally, farmers were well aware of the high cost of living. They were not convinced that they were getting a fair share of the consumers' dollar—their own incomes seemed scant indeed, when placed beside the earnings of merchants, professional men, and industrial workers. The increases in railway freight rates since 1912 had placed a heavy burden on consumers and producers alike in the Maritimes. While depression had not yet laid its cold hand on the economy, there was a "fundamental economic unrest" among the rural population which made organization possible. Farmers were

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20 Canadian Annual Review 1921, 663. N.S.F.A. records for the period were destroyed in a fire at the Agricultural College, Truro.

21 Thomas Smith, Hilden, Colchester Co. interviewed July 10, 1966. Mr. Smith is a son of R. H. Smith, United Farmer member of the House of Assembly, 1920-25.

22 Charles A. Maxwell, Mt. Thom, Pictou Co. interviewed October 20, 1966.

aware—some of them rather dimly, perhaps—that, during the war, they had risen above their old status of second-class citizens. A number of them, who were sufficiently aggressive and educated, determined to follow the lead of farmers in other provinces and fashion a new organization for economic and political action.

The objectives of the new organization—the United Farmers of Nova Scotia, were set out by H. L. Taggart, the Colchester county dairyman who was elected president of the new body in 1920. They were: the organization of social clubs to improve community spirit and local conditions; organization of commercial companies or co-operatives to cut out the middle-man; the entrance of the farmers into the political arena.[23] Mr. Taggart may have realized, though he apparently did not indicate it, that in Nova Scotia, the Farmer organizers were striving to "build Rome in a day" by accomplishing the three steps almost simultaneously. A decade or more of indoctrination by the Farmers' organizations had developed in Prairie farmers a consciousness of their political strength, and a deep sense of loyalty to their co-operative associations, together with a mighty resentment—both sectional and vocational—against the wealth and power of central Canada.[24]

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[23] United Farmers' Guide, September 15, 1921.

[24] W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party, 61-7.

in Nova Scotia, where old political feuds and loyalties were a potent factor in community life, the Farmers' invasion of the political field was frequently a stumbling-block in the way of economic co-operation. There is some reason to believe that the "political entanglements" of the United Farmers helped to prevent the healthy growth of co-operative organizations during the early 1920's.[25] Conversely, the farmers, by their insistence upon collective economic action may have forfeited the political support of many individualist, capitalist-minded voters.

However, these problems in 1920 were beyond the ken of farm leaders in Nova Scotia. They saw farmers in the West and in Ontario taking an increasing interest in the development of co-operative organizations. Through co-operatives, founded on principles developed in Great Britain, farmers hoped to keep a larger share of agricultural earnings in their own hands, and out of the clutches of the ubiquitous "middleman". The great grain-handling co-operatives of the West, a major business enterprise formed and financed by farmers, demonstrated the ability of farmers to manage their own marketing by collective action.[26]

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25 An opinion voiced by S. J. MacKinnon, Antigonish, and Waldo Walsh, Kentville, both of whom were long associated with the Nova Scotian Department of Agriculture. MacKinnon interview August 20, 1966. Walsh interview, August 8, 1966.

26 W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party, 12.

In Ontario, where farming operations, in their diversity, were more like those carried out in Nova Scotia, the United Farmers' Co-operative Company by 1920, had an annual turnover of twenty million dollars.[27] Collective action by apple producers in Nova Scotia had brought about a very substantial reduction in shipping rates on apples shipped to United Kingdom ports;[28] in addition, vigorous representations made by the apple growers had persuaded the Dominion Government to build a plant for processing the Valley apple crop, when access to their British markets was disrupted in 1914.[29]

The enthusiasm which sparked the agrarian co-operative movement was sometimes a liability to the farmers in their ventures into the mercantile world. In Pictou County, for example, a co-operative organization to handle flour, feed, and fertilizer, was set up in 1916. Rev. Mr. Fisher a Presbyterian minister in Merigomish, and Alex D. McKay of Haliburton Bridge, were two of the initiators of the project. Within three years, however, the country-wide movement was in grave financial troubles, due to unwise buying, careless accounting, and over-expansion. Farmer members,

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27 L. A. Wood, Farmers' Movements, 12.

28 S. A. Saunders, Economic History, 37-9.

29 R. J. MacSween, 1770 Vernon St., Halifax. Interviewed May 6, 1966.

because of a double-liability clause in the by-laws of the company, were called upon to pay twice the amount of their original subscription; a committee of farmers, appointed late in 1919 to act as receivers, sold enough stock-on-hand to pay the co-operative's debts and wound up the business.[30] Of wider significance to the Farmer movement was the consumers' co-operative organization created by the United Farmers of New Brunswick in 1918. This co-operative--Maritime United Farmers, Ltd.,--had, by 1920, a paid-up capitalization of $268,000, and was operating twenty-three chain (member) stores, in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Capital in the stores was owned locally, but the system was under the financial control of a central buying office in New Brunswick. Post-war deflation and insufficient capitalization brought about the failure of a number of stores after 1920, and forced re-organization of the company in 1922.[31]

Such problems, proceeding fron inexperience, over-optimism, and the vagaries of the business cycle, afflicted the Farmers' Co-operative ventures in Ontario and the West

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30 Information on this early farm co-operative was supplied by M. D. McCharles, Pictou, C. A. Maxwell, Mt. Thom, and John A. MacQuarrie, Lorne, Pictou County. McCharles interviews, June 6, July 8, 1966. MacQuarrie interview, September 4, 1966.

31 L. A. Wood, Farmers' Movements, 304.

also. The depression of 1920-1923, and the resulting shrinkage of farm incomes, and loss of trade, forced the closing of a number of Ontario co-operative stores in 1922.[32] In the Prairie Provinces, the great Grain Growers' Co-operatives, with their more ample stores of experience and of capital reserves, were better fitted to meet the time of testing; even they, however, were forced to cut back on services to members.[33]

The organization of local clubs by the United Farmers had political purposes--at least at the beginning--quite as important as the avowed objectives of improving community spirit and local conditions. In spite of later efforts to minimize the vigor and intensity with which the United Farmers threw themselves into politics in 1920, it is quite obvious that the leaders and organizers of the party, on the local and provincial levels, made an all-out effort to challenge the political control held by merchants and professional men in Halifax and the county towns. In their onslaught on the Nova Scotian "establishment," the farmers were encouraged by the political successes of Farmer candidates in other provinces in 1919. The United Farmers of Ontario shocked the world of Canadian politics by winning a majority of seats in the provincial election of

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32 W. C. Good, Farmer Citizen (Toronto, 1958), 236.

33 L. A. Wood, Farmers' Movements, 314-21.

1919, while Farmer candidates were victorious in federal by-elections in Saskatchewan, Ontario, and New Brunswick. Nova Scotian farmers were able to gain an insight into the nature of the agrarian movement in Ontario by reading the Farmers' Sun, the mouthpiece of the Ontario farm movement, which had a considerable circulation in Nova Scotia. There was a direct link between Nova Scotia and the Grain Growers' Guide, the highly influential voice of the western farm movement: George Chipman, it seems, was instrumental in launching the United Farmers' Guide, the voice of the Maritime farmers' movement which began publication in Moncton in 1919. There is good reason to believe that the United Grain Growers of the West gave considerable financial backing to the Maritime newspaper venture, although the editor of the latter paper, aware of Maritime regional prejudices, strenuously denied that any such aid had been received.[34]

The attempt to organize an occupational third party in Nova Scotia, along the lines of the Western and Ontario farmers' movements, had to be tailored to fit the needs of Nova Scotian rural dwellers. Except for the apple growers of the Annapolis Valley, and milk producers near Truro,

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34 United Farmers' Guide, December 1, 1921. L. A. Wood refers to financial aid given by the Western journal (Farmers' Movements, 302). W. R. Shaw, once Associate Editor of the United Farmers' Guide, has referred to this aid in a letter to the present writer. See also Senator C. E. Tanner's speech reported in the Eastern Chronicle, March 12, 1920.

Halifax, and other urban centres, the majority of farmers in the province were, in 1920, subsistence farmers, dependent on woods work, commercial fishing, and part-time work in industry for a large percentage of their cash income.[35] Another source of income for the people, and, for political parties, a means of assuring voter interest and allegiance, was the abundance of small "government jobs" available. "Many farmers," the United Farmers' Guide complained, "have valued a job as overseer, road master, inspector, supervisor, or whatever . . . above the improvements of roads . . . /and/ have compromised themselves by taking such jobs."[36] There is no doubt that these part-time farmers were, all too often, questionable material out of which to build an idealistic and energetic movement. Many of them, the less energetic and enterprising members of their families, were left to eke out a penurious existence in the country, while their livelier brethren went off to town or to the "Boston States." Dependent as they were on the "crumbs from the table" of government, or local entrepreneurs, the small farmers tended to look with suspicion on any radical movements that might dry up this trickle of largesse. Along with a tendency to be ultra-conservative in politics, they, as true provincials, had a deep distrust

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35 S. A. Saunders, Economic History, 61-2.

36 United Farmers' Guide, February 9, 1921.

of "foreign" influences, and of "do-gooders" among the more prosperous members of the farming community.

These shrewd and suspicious individualists, clinging to their old ways for fear that a change might make things worse, made poor grist for the political reformer's mill. They could, however, be stirred into action by a leader of their own kind, one who had some prestige, some experience in politics, and who could seize upon local issues. Such men were able to win the support of rural voters, for a time at least, when they combined their local appeal with a call for a "crusade" against the evils of urban life.[37] And the organizers of the Farmers' movement needed all the help they could muster, from Heavenly and earthly sources, in their endeavours to create a completely new organization in a few months.

The farmers of the Prairie Provinces were able to use their own grain companies as nuclei for political action. In the West the United Grain Growers' Company, independent of Government control or assistance, was able, through its newspaper, the Grain Growers' Guide, to spark the growth

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37 This "religious" presentation was probably less valuable in Nova Scotia than in the United States or Alberta, where farmers combined religious fundamentalism with a powerful sense of the dignity of their vocation. Professor Morton has spoken of the "secular evangelism" of men like H. W. Wood and J. S. Woodsworth in Canada. Oscar Handlin and Irwin Unger have found similar tendencies toward religious identification in the American Farmers' movements. See "Reconsidering the Populists," and "a Critique of Norman Pollack's 'Fear of Man'" in Agricultural History, April, 1965, 68-74, 75-80.

of the ideas of populist democracy, direct legislation, and a third party.[38] Nova Scotian farmers had no organization of comparable independence which could serve as a base for a new party. On the local level, the Agricultural Societies in Nova Scotia were strictly non-political and were subsidized by the provincial government. They could not serve as political organizing units at the grassroots level, as did the Farmers' Clubs in Ontario. On the provincial level, the existing organization, the Nova Scotia Farmers' Association, also subsidized by the provincial government, concerned itself largely with technical matters, and, to a degree, with influencing legislation. Farmers generally agreed that the Association could not and should not sponsor or encourage a particular political party. But the Association's annual meeting in January, 1920, held in Kentville, provided a meeting-place for many of the more progressive and politically-minded farmers. No doubt some spadework was done before the Farmers' Association meeting; on January 15, two weeks before the meeting, a Sydney Daily Post headline announced: "Cape Breton Farmers Decide to Enter Politics." A number of farmers, at the meeting, declared themselves to be "rigorously hostile to the machine methods known to be in vogue in connection with Provincial politics."[39]

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[38] W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party, 17.

[39] L. A. Wood, Farmers' Movements, 345.

Immediately after the close of business, the delegates to the Association meeting or, at least, a majority of them representing almost all the counties in Nova Scotia, adjourned to a nearby hall, where, after some debate, they resolved to form a Farmers' Party "along the lines of the United Farmers of Ontario and the Farmers' Associations of the West as well as of New Brunswick."[40] W. O. Creighton of Pictou County was selected as chairman of an organizing committee. Two Annapolis Valley men were appointed to attend the convention of the United Farmers of New Brunswick. The United Farmers' Guide, published in Moncton, was adopted as the official publicity organ. The possibility of affiliating with the Labor Party was broached, but majority opinion indicated that farmers were not ready for such affiliation.

The farmers bid to form a third party in Nova Scotia found its inspiration in agrarian discontent in the province and in the political success of Farmers' parties in other provinces. The nucleus for a farmers' political organization in Nova Scotia, as in Ontario, was formed by discontented Liberals and frustrated Conservatives. The Liberal Party, under the spiritual guardianship of Joseph Howe and the temporal direction of George Murray, had dominated provincial politics since 1896. Since 1912, however, Premier Murray had become very cautious in his approach to new

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[40] Halifax Morning Chronicle, January 30, 1920, Canadian Annual Review, 1920, 677.

legislation. Possibly because of failing health, Murray experienced real difficulty in coping with wartime and post-war problems such as electrification, highway construction, and labor troubles.[41] The long Liberal reign produced a plethora of politicians and would-be politicians, eager to root one another out of the way for scraps of power and patronage from the Liberal trough. The weaker or less lucky candidates resented their opponents' success. This collection of Liberal malcontents had its counterpart among the Conservatives, but disaffection among the Tories stemmed from a sense of defeatism. Although their share of the popular vote, and their number of seats in the House of Assembly had increased steadily since the 1901 election, by 1919 many Conservatives were weary of beating their heads against the apparently impregnable wall of Liberal solidarity. Since 1911, a Conservative government at Ottawa, with a Nova Scotian at its head, had attracted potential leadership material from the provincial party. The specter of bad luck which seemed to afflict the party had brought about the defeat of provincial leader C. E. Tanner in 1916. He found haven in the Senate; his successor, W. L. Hall, did not seem capable of revivifying the party. The growth of popular support for the Conservatives, in spite

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[41] Roselle Green, "The Public Life of Honorable George H. Murray," unpublished M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1962, 207-8.

of their inferior organization and leadership, is itself an index to the public disapproval of Liberal inadequacy and arrogance.[42] A number who later joined the new party viewed it as an outlet for their thwarted political ambitions. Some of these men, such as A. J. MacGillivray of Antigonish County, were experienced in county politics, but found their way to higher places in the Liberal Party blocked by cliques of urban professional men and merchants, who clung tenaciously to the positions at the top of the ladder. It is difficult to estimate the degree to which self-seeking opportunism among the farmers' champions was tempered by genuine reforming enthusiasm. The problem might be solved more easily if the Nova Scotian farmers' party had passed through the fiery crucible of administrative responsibility, as E. C. Drury's party did in Ontario.

With the help of the United Farmers' Guide, and of "personal evangelism" among the farmers, the organizing committee appointed at the January meeting stirred up enough interest and support to justify the calling of a founding convention for the new party. Elected president

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[42] See J. M. Beck, The Government, 161-7, 351-2, for an assessment of the Liberal and Conservative parties from 1901 to 1925. The Conservatives' share of the popular vote increased from 41.7% to 48.8% between 1901 and 1916. Their share of seats in the Assembly rose from 5.3% to 30.2% during the same period. Certainly, public support for the Liberals had declined substantially. But the Conservative Party, lacking a strong leader or a vigorous program, seemed to have little hope of upsetting the Liberals.

at the opening of this convention was H. L. Taggart, a dairy farmer of Fort Belcher, Colchester County; Fred Chipman of Annapolis, who had been chosen as secretary in January, continued in that post. A constitution was adopted unanimously--apparently, a large part of this constitution had been made up at the January meeting. The convention, held in Truro on April 14, 1920, was undoubtedly one of the most uproarious provincial conventions held in the province since Confederation. A Cape Breton newspaper editor was ejected from the meeting when John A MacDonell of Judique, denounced him as "an outspoken and bitter enemy of the farmers."[43] D. G. McKenzie, styling himself "delegate for the salt-robbed farmers of Malagash,"[44] attacked the provincial government for underhandedly selling out farmers' mineral rights for the benefit of capitalist friends of the administration. It is doubtful if Mr. McKenzie's plaint won much immediate support from other than Cumberland County delegates. Of more general interest was

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[43] New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, April 16, 1920. H. R. Brown, Wallace Bay, Cumberland County, a spectator at the convention recalled this incident. Brown interview September 10, 1966.

[44] The Halifax Herald of April 30, 1920, tells of a group of landowners from the Malagash district of Cumberland County protesting to the provincial government against the alienation to the Crown of salt and potash rights, with insufficient compensation to the landowners. In May, 1920, the Legislature amended the Crown Lands Act, removing the confiscatory measures and permitting compensation to landowners for losses sustained. Popular indignation had changed the Act, but it still could be used as anti-Liberal campaign material.

the address of J. J. Morrison, secretary of the United Farmers of Ontario. It does not seem as though the old doctrinaire agrarian from Ontario caused much of a stir during the afternoon session—in a rather colorless speech, he emphasized the need for an "effective development of agrarian self-consciousness."[45]

During the evening session, J. J. Morrison became involved in a hot argument which flared up as a result of violent opposition by many farmers to the introduction of a standard eight-hour working day in agriculture or industry. John A. MacDonald, from Hants County, read to the meeting a prepared resolution attacking the eight-hour day, for its inflationary effect on prices of goods which farmers bought. This resolution "fell like a thunderbolt upon men who have been talking for months about labor-farmer alliance."[46] It was particularly distasteful to a group of visiting delegates from the Independent Labor Party, who were granted permission to speak to the convention in support of a Farmer-Labor political alliance. I.L.P. representatives, A. R. Richardson of Cape Breton, and J. S. Wallace of Halifax, protested that the approval of the resolution would be an insult to labour aspirations,

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45 L. A. Wood, Farmers' Movements, 303, speaks of J. J. Morrison as a tiresome speaker but Hector Hill, of Truro, recalls Mr. Morrison as very effective on the platform. Hector Hill interview, May 8, 1967.

46 Sydney Record, April 15, 1920.

and would kill any hope of joint political action.

On the basis of the rather garbled accounts of the rumpus aroused by J. A. MacDonald's resolution, a few observations may be made. A fundamental difference in attitude toward working hours made itself evident, along with elements of sectionalism. A. R. Richardson, in defending the eight-hour day, was so imprudent as to remark that many farmers worked in the summer and loafed all winter. A Kings County delegate snarled in answer that "nobody from Cape Breton had any right to talk about loafers in the /Annapolis/ Valley."[47] J. J. Morrison's attempt to smooth things over drew from A. R. Richardson the retort that he preferred to be "hauled over the coals" by a Nova Scotian rather than an outsider. The Labor men warned that the farmers needed the labor vote to get into power. To bolster their arguments, they declared that the United Farmers' administration in Ontario would wither away without the support of Labor members.[48] So far as the convention was concerned, though, pleas of unity were made in vain,—delegates heckled Joe Wallace's attempt to read the I.L.P. platform and passed a resolution condemning any attempt to introduce the eight-hour day into agriculture. Chairman H. L. Taggart was unable to quell

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Sydney Daily Post, April 16, 1920.

the tumult, and the meeting broke up without the formality of adjournment.[49]

It is clear that serious vocational and sectional disagreements were revealed at the United Farmers' convention. The Halifax Citizen, attempting to minimize the quarrel, accused the provincial daily papers of exaggerating the farmer-labor animosity at the convention. "Secretary Morrison of the U.F.O. made it clear," said the Citizen, "that Farmers could not succeed without Labor." But the eight-hour altercation had been organized by "tough-hided political fakirs . . . Liberal or Conservative politicians . . . or camouflaged Unionists . . ." masquerading as United Farmer delegates to keep Farmer and Labor apart.[50] Whether by shrewd guess or private information, the Citizen was not far off the mark. There is good reason to believe that John A. MacDonald acted as the unwitting tool of Premier Murray by proposing the controversial resolution. Reportedly, in this Machiavellian intrigue, the Premier ordered a provincial employee to ensure that the attempt at political marriage of the farmer and labor groups should not run smoothly; John A. MacDonald, a Conservative and a former president of the Nova Scotia Milk Producers'

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[49] Ibid., also, H. R. Brown, Wallace Bay.

[50] Citizen, April 30, 1920. Also United Farmers' Guide, April 28, 1920.

Association, was selected as the unwitting axeman— he was respected by the farmers, and his political leanings made it unlikely that he would be suspected of collusion with the Liberals.[51]

The question arises as to whether farmers themselves at any time regarded the anti-labor vote of April 14 as being a decisive expression of farmer opinion in respect to joint political action. Two weeks later, at the organizing convention of the United Farmers of Cape Breton, there seems to have been general agreement that the question had been left to the provincial executive for a decision.[52] In any case, the United Farmers' hand was forced when the provincial government, rather unexpectedly, announced that an election would take place late in July.[53] Quite likely, Premier Murray intended to get a mandate from the people before the United Farmers were able to build up a strong organization, and the choice of a date meant that voting day would find many farmers too busy with haying and cropping to take time to cast their ballots.

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51 The provincial employee in question told this story, long afterwards, to H. R. Brown, Wallace Bay.

52 Sydney Record, April 29, 1920.

53 Although the Assembly's life would not expire until 1921, Premier Murray had set a pattern, in the previous three elections, by letting the Assembly go the full five years before going to the people. See J. M. Beck, The Government, 262, 351-2.

The election announcement probably acted as a spur to the organization of United Farmers local organizations. During June, county organizations were formed in Cape Breton, Cumberland, Colchester, Antigonish, Annapolis, Hants, and Pictou Counties. Strong county associations were of particular importance to the United Farmers, since the provincial organization did not enter the election as an organized political party. The U.F.N.S. headquarters, at Truro, hampered by lack of funds, took little part in the election beyond extending its blessing, laying down a set of principles for candidates to follow, and providing speakers on occasion.[54] Like the Ontario farmers a year earlier, the Nova Scotia farmers "fought the election constituency by constituency in a soldier's battle."[55]

The autonomy under which the county associations operated permitted them to make alliances with labor and veterans, or to refuse to do so, depending on local conditions. As it turned out in every county, except one, where both United Farmers and I.L.P. candidates were nominated, some degree of co-operation existed between them. The lone exception was Hants County where John A.

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54 Canadian Annual Review, 1920, 678. The executive decided early in June, to set up the United Farmers' head office in Truro. See the New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, June 11, 1920.

55 W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party, 83, 103. Also, see Appendix A.

MacDonald and Walter Aylward, United Farmers' nominees, refused to countenance any joint action with Labor candidate W. V. Davidson.[56] John A. MacDonald was consistent if not co-operative, since he had presented the anti-labor resolution at the April convention in Truro. In Cape Breton, A. R. Richardson, former I.L.P. president in Cape Breton, and a vociferous I.L.P. representative at the United Farmers April convention, was nominated to contest the seat for the United Farmers.[57]

The Colchester County convention, which saw R. H. Smith and H. L. Taggart nominated for the United Farmers, was likely the largest and most enthusiastic of all the Farmers' conventions. Labor delegates who attended could get from the United Farmers neither sympathy nor co-operation, but only a cool assurance that the farmers "were not radically opposed to the Labor movement."[58] An attempt to organize Halifax County farmers met with small success. Farmers seem to have resented the presence of Labor representatives and speakers at the Dartmouth meeting; they

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[56] Halifax Herald, July 13, 1920.

[57] Sydney Record, June 12, 1920. Halifax Herald, June 14, 1920, Mr. Richardson's action seems like flagrant opportunism. It has been said that he had become too unpopular with the I.L.P. to have any chance of being chosen by that party as a candidate. This opinion was expressed by J. A. MacIntyre, 30 Louisa St., Sydney, interviewed on July 9, 1966.

[58] Halifax Morning Chronicle, July 6, 1920.

resented the Labor Party's patronizing offer of free organizers even more. The opposition to farmers entering politics was led by Mr. Sedgwick of Musquodoboit. He spoke of farmers' traditional attachment to the old parties, and doubted that labor could provide much help in a campaign.[59]

The nomination of D. G. McKenzie and G. N. Allen as United Farmer candidates in Cumberland County was soon followed by an agreement for co-operation, in Cumberland between the U.F. candidates and Archie Terris, I.L.P. nominee. A similar arrangement was concluded in Pictou County. Alex D. McKay, a farmer of Haliburton Bridge, agreed to carry on a joint campaign with Henry Fraser, I.L.P. candidate, and Mrs. Bertha Donaldson, nominee of the Great War Veterans' Association.[60] A. R. Richardson, in Cape Breton, was aided in his campaign by workers for the I.L.P. and G.W.V.A. In Halifax County, Peter Kuhn, of Dartmouth, was nominated as an "independent farmer" candidate, supported by Labor.[61] It seems likely, though, that Mr. Kuhn was merely a Labor man masquerading as a farmer to get some farm votes—he can hardly be classed

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59 Halifax Herald, June 28, 1920. Halifax Citizen, July 9, 1920. Mr. Sedgwick's solution for the ills of government was to fire 200 government employees at Halifax, and 2000 at Ottawa.

60 Pictou Advocate, July 16, 1920.

61 Halifax Herald, July 2, 1920.

as a bona-fide United Farmers' candidate.

The task of organizing an United Farmers' branch in Antigonish County received the aid of Mr. Pratt, an organizer for the United Farmers of Manitoba. Mr. Pratt's eloquence at the organizing meeting late in June, induced Antigonish farmers to contribute about three hundred and sixty dollars toward the operation of the local branch. The two candidates whose campaign would be financed by this generous sum were A. J. MacGillivray and Fred Irish.[62] A prominent lumberman and farmer, A. S. MacMillan, turned down United Farmer attempts to draft him as a candidate and ran on the Liberal ticket instead.[63]

In Guysborough County, D. P. Floyd came out under the banner of the United Farmers. The roster of United Farmers' aspirants was completed by the nominations of V. B. Leonard and E. C. Shaffner in Annapolis County, and of Glidden Campbell and Amedée Robichaud in Digby County.[64] [See Appendix C for a complete listing of candidates.]

In little more than six months, the farmers of Nova Scotia had created a political party which aroused

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[62] Antigonish Casket, July 8, 1920.

[63] G. N. Joudrey, "The Public Life of A. S. MacMillan," unpublished M.A. thesis, Dalhousie, 1966, 17.

[64] Annapolis Spectator, July 8, 1920. Digby Weekly Courier, July 16, 1920.

sufficient interest and support to place fifteen candidates, who would challenge the old parties in nine of the eighteen electoral districts in the province. They had enthusiasm, but little money. In several constituencies, they fought alongside allies of a dubious nature—labor union men. At the beginning of the campaign they had to face the ridicule and venom of both Liberal and Conservative newspapers. Candidates were damned by the old parties as turncoats and renegades. If, as has been suggested, they were fighting "soldiers' battles," they were a leaderless, hastily recruited army, ill-supplied and subjected to constant sniper fire in enemy-held territory.

CHAPTER II

GROWTH OF THE INDEPENDENT LABOR PARTY IN NOVA SCOTIA

The United Farmers' "crusade" for political and economic recognition in Nova Scotia sprang suddenly into being in 1920 largely in imitation of similar efforts in other parts of Canada. But the attempts of organized industrial workers to achieve political representation began as early as 1886. Two elements that were to be characteristic of labor in politics for forty years were prominent at the beginning—the leaders of the movement usually came from Great Britain, and the rank-and-file support was in the coal-mining areas of Cape Breton, Cumberland County and Pictou County. Independent candidates, fielded by the miners' union, the Provincial Workmen's Association (P.W.A.), were uniformly unsuccessful in their attempts to win seats in the provincial Legislature or in the House of Commons. Liberal candidates, sponsored by the P.W.A., met with some success but they were not labor party candidates.

The formation of a genuine Labor Party in Nova Scotia did not take place until 1919. Of a number of causes for

the postwar emergence of a Labor Party, four are particularly significant. First, a stimulus and a pattern for the building of a Labor Party in Nova Scotia, as in the rest of Canada, were supplied by the British Labor Party, constantly expanding in power and influence. Also, wartime experiences in mine, factory or battlefield endowed Canadian workers with a heightened sense of their vocational prestige, drawing out their capacities for leadership and disciplined organization. Thirdly, the coal miners, the largest single group of industrial workers in Nova Scotia, set their own house in order after a period of internal disunity, and strove to make common cause, for political ends, with industrial workers in Sydney and Halifax. Finally, the all-pervading wave of "radical Socialism," emanating from Russia after the overthrow of Czarist corruption and injustice, served as a "shot in the arm" to Labor's plans and ambitions.

The Provincial Workman's Association, the coal miners' union which was, at least, godparent to the infant beginnings of labor's participation in provincial politics, came into existence in Springhill in 1879.[1]

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[1] Records of the Provincial Workmen's Association, Department of Labor, Ottawa. The (unpaginated) transcript of notes from the PWA Records was obtained from Miss J. B. Wisdom, R.R.1, Egerton, N.S. Also Eugene Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects of the Nova Scotia Coal Industry (Toronto /1927/), 15.

The growth of the coal industry aided by tariff protection and railway construction, along with industrialization in Nova Scotia and Quebec, was accompanied by the establishment of new P.W.A. lodges (union branches or locals) throughout the Nova Scotian coalfields. For the first twenty years of its existence, the P.W.A. devoted most of its efforts in seeking improvements in miners' working conditions, rather than increased wages.[2] These efforts to win better conditions involved P.W.A. officials in negotiations with the coal companies and also with the provincial and federal governments. At first, changes in legislation were sought by meeting with government representatives, seeking the aid of members of Parliament, and petitions to the House of Assembly. By 1886, however, the mood of the P.W.A. in political questions had drastically changed. Going to the government with hat in hand was both a humiliation and a useless effort. Direct political action was therefore favoured by some elements in the union. At the 1886 semi-annual session, Grand Master Thomas Johnstone made a lengthy plea on behalf of the decision which lodges had taken to enter the political field in Cape Breton, Cumberland and Pictou Counties:

If workingmen are to have their proper place in

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[2] John Moffatt, Grand Secretary of the P.W.A. for nineteen years, voiced this opinion. (From J. B. Wisdom notes).

> society and be accorded their position in the management of the affairs of the nation, they must first demonstrate the extent of the political influence they are able to wield . . . there is no class legislation about it any more than about other movements that have been met with no such cry . . . The P.W.A. does not propose to form a workingman's party as opposed to parties already existing . . . /but/ the workingmen claim the privilege of electing a candidate from among themselves to represent in Parliament the class to which they belong, and all classes . . . Politicians have suggested that men from the working classes lack the necessary brains and culture . . . The present action may convince such parties that nature has been more impartial in distribution of her gifts than has hitherto been supposed.[3]

The union-sponsored candidates who contested the provincial election of 1886 in Cumberland and Pictou Counties were defeated by large majorities.[4] Apparently, none ran in Cape Breton. In spite of these inauspicious beginnings, however, two Liberal candidates, endorsed by the P.W.A., were elected in Cape Breton in the 1890 provincial election although their fellows in Cumberland County suffered defeat.[5]

In spite of the Grand Master's denial that the association proposed to form a new party, opposition to any official involvement in politics grew within the ranks after

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3 Report of Annual Session, Truro, April 9, 1886.

4 Report of Annual Session, Truro, October 10, 1886, also Harold A. Logan, History, 95.

5 Report of the Annual Session, Truro, October 21, 1890. Also Rev. Philip Mifflin, "History of Trade Unionism in the Coal Mines of Nova Scotia," M.A. thesis, Catholic University of America 1951, 17. Also see Harold A. Logan, History, 96.

1886. The 1889 session of the Legislature saw the passage of a Bill establishing Schools of Mining, along with a Bill to extend the franchise. By the provisions of the new Franchise Act every man earning an annual income of two hundred and fifty dollars, and every man living in a Coal Company house, received the vote.[6] By 1892 a number of delegates to the Grand Council were claiming that continued P.W.A. participation in politics would probably injure the Association. It is obvious that the astute Liberal Premier W. S. Fielding had "drawn the teeth" of a potential labor party by conciliatory legislation. Some delegates may have been "encouraged," by Liberal influence of one kind or another, to voice objections to union-sponsored candidates in provincial elections. In any case, the P.W.A. had to wage a fight for survival, during the years 1897 and 1898, against the incursion of the Knights of Labor. The internal strife introduced into the P.W.A. by the Knights' activities, together with the shutdown of several mines, reduced the number of P.W.A. lodges from sixteen to three and brought the Grand Council to a state of near-bankruptcy.[7]

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6 Report of half-yearly Session, April, 1889.

7 Harold A. Logan, History, 96-101. Quite likely the supporters of political action were influenced by the struggle then going on in the British Trade Union movement. A number of trade unionists sat in the House of Commons after 1885, as Liberal representatives. After 1890, Keir Hardie of the miners' union, and other militant leaders, advocated the formation of a new political party for labour. See H. M. Pelling, A History of British Trade Unionism (London, 1963), 102-4.

Under these circumstances political activity lost any appeal which it formerly had for some of the miners.

During the period from 1900 to 1909, the P.W.A. regained some of the ground it had lost in the battle with the Knights of Labor.

> Corresponding with the upward trend in the price of coal, which became marked at this time, the Association put forward its demands for wage increases, proceeded to insure their permanence by means of trade agreements covering periods generally of two and three years, and sought through the closed shop to guarantee the union against being undermined by non-union men. . . . In the fall of 1907, the statement was made that the collieries had advanced to complete organization for the first time in the history of the province.[8]

A number of wage increases were won by the P.W.A. in the seven-year period from 1900 to 1907. The Association made use of the Miners' Arbitration Act of Nova Scotia and, after 1900, of the federal Conciliation Act, in the settlement of difficulties with the coal producers. In 1904, however, the P.W.A. was unsuccessful in its fight against a reduction in wages in the Sydney steel plant. The defeat of the steel strike was a deathblow to the P.W.A. lodges among the steel-workers. Particularly galling to both coalminers and steelworkers was the fact that the miners continued to work while the steelmen, who also belonged to the P.W.A., were on strike.[9]

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[8] Harold A. Logan, History, 104, 107.

[9] Ibid., 106.

The P.W.A. resumed political activity in 1904, when Stephen B. MacNeill, Grand Master, was nominated as an Independent Labor candidate to contest Cape Breton County in the federal election. But very few miners heeded the slogan of union supporters of their candidates—"Take off your coat and poll your vote for Stephen B. MacNeill!"[10] Mr. MacNeill polled only 869 votes—about 13% of the total cast for Alex Johnson, the victorious Liberal.[11]

With Stephen B. MacNeill as Grand Master, and John Moffatt as Grand Secretary, the P.W.A., during the years from 1905 to 1915, continued to seek favorable legislation from Premier G. H. Murray's Liberal administration. The workers' regard for the government at Halifax, however, had been reduced by government failure to enforce properly the Compulsory Arbitration Act of 1888. Furthermore, the provincial government, in answer to a Company request, had sent troops into Sydney to keep order during the 1904 steel strike.[12] The P.W.A. began to attempt to influence the Dominion government especially in connection with the two important questions of coal tariffs and the immigration of

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[10] James A. McIntyre, 30 Louisa St., Sydney, a longtime union official, recalled this election slogan.

[11] Ibid., also H. A. Scarrow, Canada Votes (New Orleans, 1962), 25.

[12] Harold A. Logan, History, 106. Also E. M. Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 19. The militia has been used twice during the '80's to maintain order, during strikes in Westville and in Lingan. But it does not seem that the workers resented their presence very much until they were used in 1904.

alien labor. With a view toward obtaining a broad political backing in order to impress the national government, the P.W.A. became affiliated with the Canadian Federation of Labor in 1909.[13]

A very controversial piece of legislation enacted by the Federal Parliament in 1907, the Industrial Disputes and Investigation Act, forced union attention to focus on the Dominion government as an arbitration force.[14] While there was much union criticism of the Act, a Conciliation Board appointed under its provisions obtained a general wage increase for the miners in 1908.[15] The increase, however, was smaller than the men had wanted, and some classes of workers suffered a reduction.

> Their resentment added to the growing dissatisfaction with the P.W.A. The influence of recent immigrants from Great Britain, accustomed to a more vigorous unionism, was already tending in the same direction. Many of the men apparently felt that they had insufficient control over the officers [who were elected by delegates' vote] and that the Union's financial plight at this time revealed inherent weakness.[16]

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13 Harold A. Logan, History, 113-4.

14 Commonly known as the Lemieux Act, after Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, Minister of Labor. W. S. Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labor, has been given credit for the formulation of the Act. See F. A. McGregor, The Fall and Rise of Mackenzie King (Toronto, 1962), 30, 233.

15 Harold A. Logan, History, 107-8, E. M. Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 19-21.

16 E. M. Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 21.

The bargaining procedures of the P.W.A. came to be regarded with suspicion. Negotiations between Grand Secretary Moffatt and Coal Company officials were conducted in secret, while miners' delegations waited dumbly to hear the results.[17] A few Nova Scotia miners, who had worked in the coalfields of Western Canada, had become familiar with more militant and sophisticated bargaining procedures utilized by the Western Federation of Miners.[18] Skilled miners imported from Great Britain by the coal companies had been brought up in the hard-bitten tradition of British unionism.[19] To all those dissatisfied with the P.W.A., an alternative presented itself, in the form of the United Mine Workers of America, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor.

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[17] Joseph Steele, "The Provincial Workmen's Association," unpublished M.A. thesis, St. Francis Xavier University, 1960, 7-0.

[18] Maurice "Blue" MacDonald, Glace Bay, is one of several people who mentioned experience in western mines as a factor in this connection. Maurice MacDonald interview, December 28, 1966.

[19] Harold A. Logan's comment that "at the close of World War 1 Scottish radicals locally known as Clydesiders, came into the district, and numbering among them men of ability, experience and zeal, took their places naturally as propagandists and leaders among the miners," See Trade Unions in Canada (Toronto, 1948), 200. Most of the Clydesiders, if not all, were in the area before World War 1, in the opinion of most old residents. While Britishers like J. B. McLachlan took a leading part in union activity, (see E. M. Forsey's tribute to McLachlan in Economic and Social Aspects . . . 87), Newfoundlanders like Silby Barrett, and native Cape Bretoners like Alex S. MacIntyre were also strong union leaders.

The United Mine Workers were active in organizational work in Canada in 1907. Their attempt to replace the P.W.A. as the recognized bargaining agent for Nova Scotia miners caused a decade of bitter strife, suspicion and violence in colliery towns. This vicious rivalry undermined any viable political activity. By the spring of 1909 about 3000 miners had joined the U.M.W., perhaps 4000 remained in the P.W.A., while the remainder were outside the Trade Union movement entirely. The U.M.W. called a strike in July, 1909, with the object of forcing the Company to grant equal recognition to U.M.W. and P.W.A. Pits in which the majority of men had agreed to join the U.M.W. were idle, while P.W.A.-controlled pits continued to hoist coal. On the second day of the strike,

> there were disturbances at No. 2 colliery, when non-strikers were going to work. A magistrate read the Riot Act . . . and the Manager hastened to ask the Mayor of Glace Bay to call for troops. The Mayor refused and his offer of five hundred special Constables were turned down.[20]

Glace Bay Mayor John C. Douglas did not consider the threat to public order serious enough to warrant calling in troops. Judge Finlayson, of Sydney, however, was more amenable to Company requests. In reply

> to his requisition, over five hundred troops were sent in. The P.W.A. joined in the request for troops, and the relations between the two unions

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20 E. M. Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 24.

were henceforth marked by intense bitterness.[21]

This intense union rivalry discouraged the development of a viable Labor political movement in Cape Breton. Potential political leaders were at each other's throats and thus had little time or inclination to channel worker's discontent into political action.

The progress of the "Big Strike of '09" was marked by violence and distress, particularly in the Glace Bay, Inverness, and New Waterford areas. Strikers and their families were, in many cases, evicted from Company houses. A band of strikers from Glace Bay marched on the town of Dominion where the miners were predominantly P.W.A. members. The march was turned back, near the bridge which marks the boundary between the towns, by soldiers manning machine guns behind barbed-wire barricades. In this case, the presence of the military likely prevented a serious riot in the town of Dominion.[22]

The Company imported many strikebreakers from the rural areas of Cape Breton, from other parts of Canada, and from

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[21] E. M. Forsey, ibid., 24. Also Joseph Steele, "The Provincial Workmen's Association," 58.

[22] William MacKenzie, Brookside St., Glace Bay, one of the marchers, has given this account. A. S. MacKenzie, Merigomish, and Dan MacDonald /Dancer/ of 8th St., Glace Bay, both of whom witnessed the happening, have described it in substantially the same way. William MacKenzie interview, December 27, 1966. Dan MacDonald interview, December 30, 1966.

overseas.[23] The Company's private police force, spies, and agents provocateurs carried on a vigorous campaign against the U.M.W. At least two men are known to have been killed; two thugs, who were among a number hired by a mine superintendent to break up a U.M.W. meeting, were shot down in self-defense by a Thiel Detective Agency employee who masqueraded as a U.M.W. man.[24] Residents of the mining towns tell of a number of unexplained disappearances during and after the Big Strike.[25]

Less sensational, but often severe, were the troubles of strikers' families during and after the strike. In spite of financial assistance, to the amount of more than one million dollars, sent in to District 26 by the International Union,[26] evicted families suffered real hardship.

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23 E. M. Forsey says that outside labour was imported from as far away as Bulgaria /see Economic and Social Aspects, 25./

24 Joseph Steele, ibid., 61. Patrick M. Nicholson, a parttime union organizer in Glace Bay, tells of the shooting in a taped interview which is in the Xavier Junior College Library, Sydney, N.S. Tim Buck describes the incident in his book, Thirty Years, The Story of the Communist Movement in Canada (Toronto, 1952), 10-11. J. B. Wisdom notes also mention it.

25 One gruesome incident will suffice—a Glace Bay medical man was told, by an old miner on his deathbed, that he, along with another man, had killed a strikebreaker and stuffed his dismembered body into a furnace to destroy the evidence.

26 E. M. Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 26.

during the winter of 1909-10. At that time was born the expedient of the Community Soupbone—a shank of beef which was circulated from house to house for days at a time, each housewife being permitted to boil it a set length of time before it went to the next family.[27] In Inverness, a U.M.W. organizer—Mr. Neilson—was fined five-hundred dollars by a magistrate, for giving a relief order to a striking miner's family; his action, in encouraging an employee to continue on strike, was called a violation of the Industrial Disputes and Investigation Act.[28]

By 1911, the attempt to win recognition of the U.M.W. was crushed in the Cape Breton and Cumberland coalfields. P.W.A. men, who continued to work, received wage increases from both the Dominion Coal Company and the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company. The use of outside labor to maintain production and of company police and paid informers to discourage U.M.W. activity brought about a P.W.A. victory. In 1915, the Charter of District 26, U.M.W. was withdrawn. J. B. (Jim) McLachlan, treasurer of District 26, and many other active U.M.W. men, were blacklisted—the coal companies would not hire them. In addition, the

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[27] Patrick M. Nicholson (see 24 above) is one of many who spoke of this. There may be a flavor of authenticity to the story.

[28] Labor Gazette, December 1909, 682. Also Maritime Labor Herald, Glace Bay, October 14, 1921.

Dominion Coal Company practiced various forms of discrimination against many who were rehired.[29]

The Dominion Coal Company, in its anti—U.M.W. propaganda, attempted to persuade the miners that the P.W.A. should be retained as a purely Canadian Union in contrast to the "foreign" U.M.W.[30] This appeal to the miners' patriotism may well have been a less effective antidote to militant unionism than the fairly widespread suspicion that the U.M.W. was tainted with the same violence as the old "Molly Maguires" society in the U.S.A.[31] The P.W.A., in turn, was little more than a company union after 1911. Its Grand Master, John C. Moffatt, was regarded by U.M.W. sympathizers as a traitor to unionism. The Glace Bay Standard, a Conservative newspaper sympathetic to the U.M.W., suggested that Moffatt was a barrier to industrial peace in the area.[32] It was easy to conclude that Moffatt, known

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29 E. M. Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 25. William Matheson, of Stellarton, a former union organizer says that men suspected of union activity would be put in bad places in the pit, "where a man would starve to death," or given a horse that would refuse to pull.

30 E. M. Forsey, 23.

31 William MacKenzie, Brookside St., Glace Bay. The "Molly Maguires" were members of a secret labor society responsible for the bloody intimidation of Pennsylvania miners in the 1870's. See Stein, Davis and others, Labor Problems in America (New York, 1940).

32 J. B. Wisdom notes, also Patrick M. Nicholson.

to be a staunch Liberal, had acted in collusion with the Liberal government of Premier Murray, to keep his position as head of the dominant union. Furthermore, the Laurier government had sent in troops at the request of a Judge appointed by that government, after Conservative John C. Douglas had refused the Company request for military intervention. At least one old-time labor leader believed that the use of troops, and the apparent collusion between the Coal Company and the government, caused a good deal of resentment against the Liberal Party.[33] Against this opinion, however, we must put the fact that the Liberal candidates in the 1911 federal election won more votes, in all of the mining areas (except Inverness), than they did in 1908.

The World War brought an increase in the demand for coal; and a very heavy enlistment of miners for military service caused a shortage of labour in the pits. Miners received an increase of wages in 1916. Many of the men, believing this increase inadequate, formed a new rival to the P.W.A., known as the United Mine Workers of Nova Scotia. In 1917,

> the efforts of a royal commission supported by an appeal to the patriotism of the workers resulted in

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[33] Joseph Steele, Atlantic Ave., Sydney. See also C. B. Wade, "History of District 26 United Mine Workers of America," a typewritten document in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia. (Hereafter referred to as P.A.N.S.)

> a union of the two bodies into a new organization called the Amalgamated Mine Workers of Nova Scotia . . . /This organization/ had only existed a few months when it cast its lot with the United Mine Workers of America, and District No. 26 became once more a reality.[34]

The official recognition of the U.M.W. by the coal operators of Nova Scotia took place in 1919, after a referendum in which 98% of the miners voting declared their wish to join the U.M.W.[35] Possibly the organization of all the miners in one strong union helped to direct their thinking toward the building up of an independent labor party for political purposes.[36] With the ending of inter-union rivalry, more time and energy could be put into political activity. But the Cape Breton Independent Labor Party was formed more than a year before the U.M.W. was recognized in Nova Scotia--in November 1917.[37] Furthermore, as early as 1911 an organization called the "Direct Labor Representation Party" aided John T. Joy, of the Longshoremen's Association, "the first Labor Candidate in Halifax," in his attempt to win a seat in the Provincial Legislature.[38]

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34 Harold A. Logan, History, 145.

35 Labor Gazette, Ottawa, vol. XIX, 307-8.

36 Angus F. MacDonald, Wood Ave., New Waterford has suggested that the formation of the U.M.W. had this effect. MacDonald interview, July 17, 1966.

37 The Sydney Daily Post, November 14, 1917.

38 The Halifax Citizen, July 11, 1919, June 25, 1920.

Mr. Joy was probably the first bona-fide Labor Candidate to run in a Nova Scotian Provincial election in the twentieth century.[39]

In addition to their lone attack on the Liberal citadel of provincial politics during the wartime decade, Labor men attempted to win representation in municipal affairs. In Glace Bay, in 1915, a Labor Party or "club" was organized to support labor candidates in the town elections. The founders of the party intended to attack the liquor interests and bootleggers who had won control of the town council. The party entered candidates in every ward and a number of their men were elected.[40] This was a greater accomplishment than it appears; there were peculiar difficulties in the way of those who wished to enter municipal politics in the Cape Breton mining towns. First of all, only ratepayers were eligible for election; most of

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[39] It should be noted that Patrick Cosgrove and J. B. Strickland offered themselves as "Labor" candidates in the provincial elections of 1911 and 1916. However, there is reason to believe that both men were actually acting as political agents for E. M. "Ned" MacDonald, the Liberal M.P. for Pictou County. The shrewd and wily "Ned" induced the two men to run, and paid their expenses, in the hope that they would attract a substantial percentage of the traditionally Conservative miners' vote in the County. (The source of this information was Clifford Rose, Almont Ave., New Glasgow, a former secretary of the Trades and Labor Council of Pictou County. Rose interview, August 12, 1966).

[40] Related by John Morrison, Hillside St., Glace Bay, a member of the first Labor Club. Interviewed December 30, 1966.

the miners lived in company houses, paid no property taxes, and so were not qualified. Secondly, if a ratepayer was found who had paid his taxes, he might be subject to intimidation if his opponent was favoured by the Coal Company; if the candidate himself was not vulnerable, his supporters might be.[41] In Halifax, three Labor men out of five who had run for office, were elected to the City Council in 1919.[42] Perhaps municipal politics was "a poor arena in which to gain the sweeping objectives of labor."[43] But municipal politics could provide a certain basic training, for labor men, in political techniques. And, in at least one American city—Milwaukee--a Labor Party had been able to win control of the city administration and keep it for two years.[44]

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[41] In one instance, a mine manager held a council seat; his sister was a teacher in a public school in the district. With an almost diabolical subtlety, she held a mock election or opinion poll in her classes, asking the children whom they would support if they had the vote. All of the miners' children who declared themselves for the manager's opponent went home the next day to find that their fathers had been fired from their jobs. Dan MacDonald, 8th St., Glace Bay, recalls this incident very vividly.

[42] Citizen, April 28, 1920.

[43] E. J. S. Shields, "History of Trade Unionism in Nova Scotia," unpublished M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1945, 90.

[44] H. M. Pelling, America and the British Left (New York, 1957), 91.

The Canadian trade union movement, during the first quarter of the twentieth century, suffered from a sort of schizophrenia with regard to political involvement. The British tradition of independent political action was opposed by the growing American influence, which held to a non-political business unionism. The Canadian Trades and Labor Congress (T.L.C.), the most powerful Labor organization in the country, had to deal with perennial demands from some of its members, that it should take the lead in organizing a political party which would seek to place labor representatives at the various seats of government. In 1917, the T.L.C. national convention in Ottawa recommended "the organization of an Independent Labor Party for Canada upon the same lines as the British Labor Party has been organized.[45] The adoption of this recommendation was clearly a victory for the "British" element in unionism. In Nova Scotia, where British-born unionists had become "the backbone of the labor movement."[46] it was natural that such sentiments met with the approval of most labor leaders.[47]

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45 Harold A. Logan, History, 284. Sydney Daily Post, September 28, 1917. The choice of name is significant—the Independent Labor Party was the Labor Party left-wing in Great Britain.

46 Opinion of Forman Way, former Labor M.L.A. in an interview on August 2, 1966. The same thought is expressed in J. M. Cameron, Political Pictonians, 155.

47 See Stein, Davis, and others, Labor Problems, 410-11, for the formation of Labor Parties in the United States during the same period.

In this province, as in other parts of Canada, there was a growing feeling of discontent with the old political parties; they "had become organizations to further class interests prejudicial to the general public interest."[48] The formation of the Union government, in 1917, significantly weakened old political ties. And the Union government was often regarded as both oppressive and corrupt. At the 1917 T.L.C. convention, many speakers attacked wartime conscription as a denial of democratic rights.[49] It is doubtful that conscription, as such, was a vital issue in Nova Scotia where the voluntary enlistment rate, particularly among miners, had been extremely high. In Sydney, President John C. Watters, T.L.C. president, was driven from the platform by a barrage of rotten eggs when he attempted to stir up anti-conscription feeling at a public meeting.[50] Even if there was little anti-conscription sentiment, people who had a sense of social justice wondered why the conscription of young men for "cannon-fodder" was not accompanied by a conscription of wealth. Prevailing high prices

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[48] Carleton Library Edition, The Rowell-Sirois Report (Toronto, 1963), 132.

[49] Sydney Daily Post, September 24, 1917. Harold A. Logan, History, 371-2.

[50] Sydney Daily Post, August 21, 1917. Also Canadian Annual Review, 1917, 420. The Halifax Herald, October 22, 1917, credited returned soldiers and sailors with breaking up Watters' meeting.

and the conviction that many profiteering businessmen were making fortunes out of the war aroused feelings of "hatred and disgust" for the Meighen-dominated government which condoned such things.[51]

If we are to judge from the newspaper accounts of the time, the rabid, xenophobic ravings of Unionist supporters, before the 1917 Federal election, must have sickened right thinking people. "How would the Kaiser vote?"[52] screamed the (Unionist) Sydney Daily Post.

> The program of the men who control the Liberal machine is to seize the reins of office with the aid of a solid Quebec, and of the Germans and Austrians that hold the balance of power in scores of Western communities . . . English-speaking Canadians must stand behind Sir Robert Borden.[53]

The Daily Post even invoked a name that was ordinarily anathema to its Conservative columns: "Premier Murray," it blared, "is known to be pro-conscription and pro-union!"[54] The Daily Post had particular reason to "foam at the mouth" in 1917, since a new political force—the Independent Labor Party (I.L.P.) of Cape Breton Island—entered two

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[51] Forman Way used these words to describe the anti-Unionist feeling.

[52] Sydney Daily Post, August 20, 1917.

[53] Ibid., November 28, 1917.

[54] Ibid., December 10, 1917.

candidates in the Federal election.[55]

The one hundred delegates at the founding meeting of the Cape Breton I.L.P. selected J. B. McLachlan, Scottish-born union official, as president of the new I.L.P., and Patrick M. Nicholson as vice-president. Some delegates, representing an Amalgamated Mine Workers local, opposed the entrance of Labor candidates into the Federal election field in wartime and spoke of the lack of time in which to organize the party for the election. The majority, however, chose to nominate John A. Gillis, a steelworker, and Robert Baxter, Scottish-born miner, as candidates.[56]

The platform adopted by the new party included these principles:

(1) Equal suffrage for all citizens over nineteen years of age;

(2) Direct legislation through the use of the initiative and referendum;

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[55] A former union organizer, and part-time journalist, Patrick M. Nicholson has claimed the credit for calling the founding meeting of the I.L.P. In a taped interview filed at Xavier Junior College, Sydney, he stated that a Liberal M.P. for Cape Breton South-Richmond, George Kyte, revealed to him that the Unionist organization intended to "appoint" Kyte and John C. Douglas, a Conservative, to represent the constituency after the election. Disgusted at this "put-up job," Mr. Nicholson through the columns of an independent newspaper, the Labor Leader, called on Labor delegates to meet in the Greenwell Hall, Sydney, to establish a Labor Party and give people a chance to have their say in the choice of a candidate. Delegates "from every union in Cape Breton" came to the meeting.

[56] Sydney Daily Post, November 14, 1917.

(3) The abolition of electoral deposits and of property qualifications for Members of Parliament;

(4) The abolition of the Senate and the Legislative Council;

(5) The termination of appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England;

(6) Payment of old age pensions to all people over sixty;

(7) Payment of adequate veteran's pensions;

(8) Free education, and free text books in all schools;

(9) Conscription of all public utilities, including banks, railways, mines, factories, and communication services to win the war.[57]

Except for clause number five, this platform was practically identical to that used by the Trades and Labor Congress, since 1898, in its efforts to influence legislation in every part of Canada.[58] In its faith in direct democracy, its distrust of privilege and the existing political system, it was linked with reforms which discontented prairie farmers were also beginning to propose.[59]

While most of the planks in the platform are self-explanatory, numbers two and five call for a brief explanation. The use of the initiative would permit the introduction of legislation by the electorate--by the "write-in" vote of a specified number of citizens. By voting in a

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57 Ibid.

58 Harold A. Logan, History, 189.

59 W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party, 15.

referendum, the electorate could authorize the adoption or rejection of legislation by the government. While the intention of number five is quite evident, its origin at this time is rather obscure. During the first decade of the century, Canadian labor unions had taken at least two cases to the Judicial Committee seeking legal protection for their right to strike and picket. This right seemed to be threatened by Canadian court decisions. One such appeal had been successful; another later appeal had not.[60] As late as 1923, however, at the T.L.C. convention, "plans were considered for . . . supporting an appeal to the Privy Council" when a Montreal judge granted a permanent injunction against picketing of a certain business establishment.[61]

The sprouting of a new crop of labor newspapers in the province was both a symptom and a cause of burgeoning class-consciousness among workingmen. At least six labor journals were founded in Nova Scotia between 1910 and 1923. Sydney had the Canadian Labour Leader (monthly) and the Labour Leader (weekly). The first-named was the official organ of the Sydney Trades and Labor Council. The Pictou

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60 Harold A. Logan, History, 233-5.

61 Ibid., 239-40. The opposition of Cape Breton labor to such appeals was apparently not T.L.C. policy at the time. It may have been connected with the aggressively anti-monarchical and anti-aristocratic frame of mind which found expression so often in the Labor press.

County Trades and Labour Council had the Eastern Federationist (weekly) as its mouthpiece; another Pictou County paper, the Workers' Weekly, called itself the official organ of all unionized labor in the area but was primarily a miners' paper.[62] Halifax workmen could read the Citizen, founded in 1919 with the blessing of the local T.L.C.[63] The very militant Maritime Labor Herald of Glace Bay, was the official organ of the United Mine Workers, whose financial support it enjoyed.[64]

In its first issue, the editor of the Citizen proclaimed the purpose of a labor journal:

> When the Halifax Labor Party is formed, this journal hopes to be especially helpful, by education and agitation, in advancing the cause of labor in the political realm, to support labor candidates, to give publicity to the labor platform of principles . . . The Citizen hopes to be a link in the journalistic chain that will bind together the labor men of Canada in a common brotherhood, united upon a common platform. . . . /The editor urged imitation of the British labor movement/. The power and glory of British labor is its labor press, and to the extent and degree that Halifax labor follows the progressive lead and energetic spirit of the trades unionists of Great Britain, will also come to Nova Scotia that success and advancement which has made British labor the synonym for progress

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[62] Robbins Elliot, "The Canadian Labor Press Since 1867," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, vol. 14, 1948, 220-45.

[63] Citizen, May 9, 1924.

[64] E. J. Shields, "History of Trade Unionism in Nova Scotia," 52.

> and leadership in the industrial, social and political realms of thought and activity.[65]

Militant labor unionists were convinced that a conspiracy existed, among bankers, industrialists, and the newspapers which they allegedly controlled, to misrepresent the purposes of labor and to divide the working class. The Citizen warned that a body calling itself the "Labor Press," which ran anti-labor advertisements in the Halifax Herald, was really subsidized by employers and perhaps by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association.[66]

Suspicion of the "capitalist press" caused the United Mine Workers to bar some reporters from their annual convention in 1921.[67] Newspapermen from the Halifax Herald and the Morning Chronicle were denied admission; their papers had "magnified trivial incidents and misinterpreted salient facts" in previous accounts of labor activities.[68] A Citizen correspondent was inspired to attack the anti-labor Press in verse:

> If you try to better the state of working men,
> Who starve and toil for nothing in a sweating, filthy pen,
> They'll shout you are dishonest and you're talking lawlessness
> Because you touch the pockets of the Prostituted Press.

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[65] Citizen, May 9, 1919.

[66] Ibid., August 15, 1919.

[67] Citizen, September 2, 1921.

[68] Ibid.

If anyone be active for the freedom of his class,
They'll chase him up and hound him and bawl him like an ass,
They'll try to railroad him to jail or hang him, nothing less,
Because he hits the owners of the Prostituted Press![69]

It is difficult to estimate the authenticity of the "persecution complex" which afflicted labor leaders in the years after 1917. The virulent jingoism, xenophobia, and distortion of truth displayed in many newspapers during the war caused many Canadians to lose faith in the daily Press. In Nova Scotia, as in the rest of Canada, foreign-born citizens were often objects of suspicion. As the ultimate example of absurdity and injustice, Lunenburg County "Germans," whose ancestors had been in Nova Scotia for more than 150 years, were distrusted and sometimes discriminated against as potential "servants of the Kaiser." The activities of wartime censors had made it plain that Government—and logically, any powerful organization—could manipulate the news to serve its purpose. We may assume that part of the "persecution mania" was manufactured by radical labor leaders who wished to strengthen working-class solidarity by arousing a feeling of oppression among the workers. Their task was made easier, particularly among miners and steelworkers, by the memories of eviction, blacklisting, company spies and bullying policemen.

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[69] Ibid., September 2, 1921.

The tide of wartime hysteria, near its height in the late months of 1917, was swollen anew by the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. "Respectable," property-owning people in Canada, as elsewhere, were dismayed by the success of the Bolshevik uprising. Socialists, and radicals generally, were heartened by it. An American historian has commented:

> The anti-war and uncompromisingly anticapitalist position of the Bolsheviks had an electrifying appeal to American radicals . . . Bolshevism was a success and hence an enormous challenge and stimulus . . . for a time. Socialists of the most varied persuasions were pro-Bolshevik.[70]

The observation applies equally well to Canadian radicals. In Ottawa a Vice-President of the T.L.C. suggested that steps be taken immediately "to form an organization of a Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils in Canada somewhat on the plan of the organization in Russia."[71] T.L.C. president John C. Watters declared it was the duty of labor to refuse to work and promote a general strike, if wealth was not conscripted as well as men.[72]

Radical Socialist views seem to have become increasingly influential in the labor Press. A letter in the Sydney Daily Post quoted a "Marxist diatribe" found in a labor

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[70] William Leuchtenburg, The Perils of Prosperity, (Chicago, 1958), 67.

[71] Canadian Annual Review, 1917, 419-20.

[72] Ibid.

paper sold on the streets of Sydney:

> Every artifice of working-class society is used to accentuate the terror of the awful conflict [the world war, presumably]. . . . profit-hungry munitions and food gamblers, and money and loan sharks bury hideous financial fangs still deeper into the life-blood of future generations . . . all government must pass into the hands of the real wealth producers of the world . . . for the purpose of enabling humanity to move forward to a civilization that is based upon the freedom of labor from all rule, robbery and torture.[73]

Not too surprisingly the Daily Post attacked such sentiments as the work of German propaganda, "setting class against class . . . no better than Bolshevists Lenine [sic] or Trotsky."[74] The Daily Post's resentment of Labor's entrance in politics was heightened by the fact that the Labor move made an election necessary tin Cape Breton South-Richmond. The agreement between Liberals and Conservatives, to share the constituency by acclamation, apparently broke down. George W. Kyte and W. F. Carroll were entered in the race by the Liberals.[75]

Baxter and Gillis were not the only Labor candidates in the federal election of 1917. In Halifax, Ralph Eisnor,

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[73] Sydney Daily Post, November 28, 1917. The labor paper was not identified.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Sydney Daily Post, November 20, 1917. On November 9, the Halifax Herald surmised that W. F. Carroll might run for the new Labor Party. Mr. Carroll was already an M.P. for Cape Breton South-Richmond. Possibly, his reluctance to be left "out in the cold" shipwrecked an agreement between Liberals and Conservatives.

president of the local Trades and Labor Council, ran under the sponsorship of that organization. It is arguable, though, that Eisnor was not a "simon-pure" Labor candidate, since the T.L.C. also endorsed the Liberal candidate, Dr. Blackadder. Liberals and Labor, in fact, held joint campaign meetings in Halifax. In one such meeting, Mr. Eisnor attacked the Conservative Government's "carnival of profiteering and corruption," while it refused to conscript wealth. Another speaker, Joseph S. Wallace, argued that Canadian conscription would be unnecessary if the United States would send enough troops overseas.[76]

The explosion of the munitions ship Mont Blanc, which snuffed out hundreds of lives in Halifax, also snuffed out any chances the Lib—Lab. combination might have had at the polls. Obviously, an election could not be considered in the stricken city; Government party candidates A. K. MacLean and P. F. Martin were declared to be elected by acclamation.

In the three-cornered fight in Cape Breton South-Richmond, the election saw the new Labor Party come at the bottom of the poll:[77]

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[76] Halifax Morning Chronicle, December 4, 1917. Halifax Citizen, July 11, 1919. Joe Wallace soon became the "stormy petrel" of the Labor Party. He was a Liberal in 1917, as he stated in the preface to A Radiant Sphere (Moscow, 1964).

[77] Sydney Daily Post, December 16, 1917.

		Civilian	Military	Total
John C. Douglas	Union	6150	1923	8073
R. H. Butts	Union	5771	1874	7645
W. F. Carroll	Lib.	6421	269	6690
G. W. Kyte	Lib.	6473	265	6738
Robert Baxter	I.L.P.	3644	23	3667
J. A. Gillis	I.L.P.	3593	22	3615

It seems quite likely that the I.L.P. men saved the Unionists from defeat. The figures show the Liberals well ahead in the civilian vote. In the neighbouring constituency of Cape Breton North, where there was no I.L.P. candidate, Liberal D. D. McKenzie defeated his Unionist opponent by more than 800 votes. The diversion of 3000 I.L.P. votes may well have robbed Carroll and Kyte of a similar victory.

The I.L.P. candidates won a plurality of votes in some of the mining towns, and took a substantial vote in Sydney. Of twenty-two Labor candidates across Canada, Baxter and Gillis earned the highest percentage of the popular vote.[78] With an infant organization, operating under the difficult conditions of the wartime election, they had done very well. Possibly, as one observer suggested, the loyal support and publicity of the Labor Leader newspaper had won many votes for the I.L.P.[79] In any case, the election results

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[78] H. A. Scarrow, Canada Votes, 28.

[79] Truro Daily News, December 19, 1917.

encouraged in labor leaders the belief that a staunch core of working-class support could be built in Nova Scotian industrial centers to challenge the old, "capitalist" parties. Strong unions had been formed by the coal miners, by the steel workers in Sydney, and by the shipyard workers in Halifax. Such unions might foster, as they had in Great Britain, a sense of unity and of crusading idealism which would forge the workers into a weapon to free "the masses from the rule of banks and great corporations." Arthur Henderson, Ramsay MacDonald, Sidney Webb, and other labor leaders in Britain were successfully creating such a political organization.[80]

In Canada, as in Britain and the United States, a growing sense of public irritation and anxiety, fostered by gloomy economic prospects, led many people to distrust the status quo. Nova Scotia shared in the postwar industrial recession. The prosperity and good wages of wartime industry soon faded away. Government reports for the year 1919 painted a gloomy picture: "In all the history of coal mining . . . in Nova Scotia, we have not gone through a year of more extreme depression."[81] The cessation of wartime manufacturing in the province,

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[80] Francis Williams, The Rise of the Labor Party (London, 1949), 299-302.

[81] JHA, 1920. Appendix 34, Report of the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines.

together with a great, widespread depression in the steel industry, led to serious unemployment. For example, men who had earned fifteen dollars a day in the Trenton shell shops found themselves working for a dollar and twenty-five cents a day on Municipal relief projects.[82] During the winter of 1919, the Nova Scotia Steel Company plant at Sydney Mines closed its doors bringing temporary unemployment to 1000 men.[83] A Royal Commission investigating labor unrest blamed industrial unemployment on the lack of ocean tonnage and reluctance of investors to risk their capital. The skyrocketing cost of living and "widespread profiteering in necessities" were additional causes of public uneasiness.[84] During 1919, a general strike, involving 3000 employees in miscellaneous trades, occurred in Amherst in support of the metal workers of that town.[85] A protracted strike for the right of collective bargaining began in the Halifax Shipyards in June, 1920.[86]

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[82] Clifford Rose, Almont Ave., New Glasgow.

[83] Halifax Morning Chronicle, February 3, 1919. It seems that the Sydney Mines steel plant was not permanently closed until late in 1920. See E. M. Forsey, Economic Aspects, 42.

[84] Canadian Annual Review, 1918, 506.

[85] Labor Gazette, Ottawa, vol. XIX, 689.

[86] Citizen, June 4, 1920.

"Returned men"—soldiers and sailors discharged from the armed forces—grew sullenly dissatisfied with their lot. They remembered not only the stinking mud of the trenches and the constant presence of death, but the negligence of a wartime administration which had armed them with Ross rifles that failed to fire and shells that failed to explode. They saw too many civilians who had amassed comfortable fortunes from wartime contracts. The veterans came back to a land that was in the grip of growing unemployment and insecurity; after the first excitement of homecoming and civic welcomes wore off, they found themselves rewarded with inadequate pensions and benefits by a stingy government. In many cases, veterans could not return to their pre-war jobs, which had been filled by "civilians."

Government, employers, and the churches—what we may conveniently call the conservative forces of the country—were beset with fears of a Bolshevik uprising such as had occurred in Russia. A Halifax newspaper cartoon portrayed their apprehensions: under the heading "Fertile Soil," a sinister, bewhiskered figure hands Bolshevist propaganda to a gaunt returned soldier with no pay and no job.[87] Headlines shrieked of Red atrocities in Russia, of revolutionary language on the tongues of strike leaders in

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[87] Halifax Morning Chronicle, January 5, 1919.

Glasgow, Belfast, and Manchester.[88]

Novelist John Dos Passos has said that, after 1917, some people caught Socialism as others caught influenza. The spread of the "Socialist virus" in North America, during the year after the Armistice, was seen as the cause of general strikes in Seattle and Winnipeg, and of a policemen's strike in Boston. Taking their cue from the Minister of the Interior, Arthur Meighen, and Labor Minister Gideon Robertson, newspapers generally censured the Winnipeg General Strike as a seditious conspiracy to establish Soviet rule and class war in Manitoba. The "Red Scare" propaganda was not without effect. In Glace Bay, a mother tearfully begged her son not to go west on the "harvest train" of 1919—the Bolsheviks would surely kill him in Winnipeg.[89] A priest in the same mining town denounced the imprisoned Winnipeg strikers as a "gang of blackguards who . . . resorted to looting, burning, and shedding of blood."[90]

In the psychological atmosphere of the "Red Scare," it was almost futile for labor leaders like T.L.C. President Tom Moore to declare their "opposition to Bolshevism and all its works."[91] No doubt, as Professor

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88 Ibid., January 30, 1919.

89 This incident is recalled by Maurice (Blue) MacDonald, Glace Bay.

90 Halifax Herald, April 30, 1920, quoting Dr. Thompson.

91 Canadian Annual Review, 1919, 447.

Kenneth McNaught has stated, the officers of the T.L.C. were "primarily staunch defenders of craft unionism and the Gompers tradition."[92] But the T.L.C., in 1917, had already given its blessing to the formation of a labor party.[93] In any case, the steps taken by unions in Nova Scotia toward independent political action brought down on their heads the suspicion of Revolutionary Socialist plotting.

> A new era is upon us—the greatest epoch in the history of mankind—the awakening of the proletariat and of Halifax labor has awakened /sic/ just as surely and just as swiftly as our British brothers. . . . Shall the labor men follow the lead of their brothers in the Old Country and take their places in the army of reconstruction that is some day going to storm the citadel of vested rights and privilege?[94]

The Halifax Citizen rose to these clouds of oratory in referring to the T.L.C. convention in Halifax in February, 1919 which had resolved on the formation of an Independent Labor Party for Nova Scotia. Language of this sort, indicative of the millenarian spirit of the times, was common in the speeches and writings of labor people. Their

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92 Kenneth McNaught, A Prophet in Politics (Toronto, 1959), 103. Samuel Gompers, long-time President of the American Federation of Labor, was resolutely opposed to the formation of labor parties in the United States.

93 Harold A. Logan, suggests that this was in the nature of a temporary aberration on the part of the T.L.C., and that the continuing policy of the Congress, before and after 1917, was to encourage the organization of strong provincial labor parties. See History, 284-5.

94 Halifax Citizen, May 1, 1919.

statements were pregnant with a sense of mission; the emotional overtones, and promises to change the world were easily misunderstood and misinterpreted. In actual fact, the full account of the T.L.C. convention was hardly calculated to arouse fears of a workers' armed attack on Province House:

> From February 27 to March 4, 1919, a T.L.C. convention was held . . . for the purpose of considering questions affecting workingmen of Nova Scotia and to devise ways and means of uniting the labor men of this province, as there will be unity and co-operation in advancing the interests of the workers, as well as adding strength and solidarity in agitating for, and securing better living and working conditions . . . It is the first time an attempt has been made to bring together in one conference representatives of the trade-unions of Nova Scotia . . . nearly every branch of Nova Scotian industry was represented . . . /the meeting/ convened on the same day as the Nova Scotia Legislature opened . . . delegates visited the House of Assembly . . . a radical change is needed there . . . /delegates carried away/ impressions of a pathetic and amusing nature . . . not one labor man sat in the historic hall to represent the working people . . . to introduce labor legislation, or guard the toilers' interest against vested interests and corporate monopolies.95

The sixty delegates present— one from each union— discussed and adopted a platform embracing the following principles: a forty-four hour week; government ownership of all public utilities; the abolition of the Legislative Council; free textbooks and free, compulsory education; the abolition of the contract system on all public works;

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95 Ibid.

the exclusion of Asiatics from Canada; old age, sickness, and unemployment pensions; equal pay for men and women. A motion to support Government sale of beer was defeated.

In general, these principles were similar to those adopted by the Cape Breton Independent Labor Party in 1917. They reflect the official policy of both the Trades and Labor Congress and the United Mine Workers' Canadian Districts.[96] Their adoption, as the set of principles to guide a provincial labor party, was apparently endorsed "by all three shades of political opinion present: straight-line partyites, independent laborites and socialists of both conservative and radical ideas."[97] The framers of the platform seem to have been slightly confused as to whether they were preparing to contest the Provincial or Dominion fields. While most of the planks were obviously aimed at Halifax, the exclusion of job-hungry Asiatics would come under Dominion jurisdiction. Although there was no clause dealing with abolition of appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England, the platform of the Independent Labor Party of Canada contained it, as the Citizen noted.[98] The clauses dealing with weekly hours of work, and of

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96 Harold A. Logan, History, 189-90. Canadian Annual Review, 1919, 500.

97 Halifax Citizen, May 1, 1919.

98 Ibid., September 19, 1919.

government assistance to the aged, ill, and unemployed were not as visionary as many people afterward claimed; the majority Report of the Royal Commission on Industrial Relations made similar recommendations in 1919.[99]

The United Mine Workers, the largest labor union in the province, added its voice to the cry for a provincial Labor Party.[100] When the party was organized on April 8, 1920, with Joe Wallace, Halifax Socialist, as secretary, I.L.P. branches were in existence at Amherst, Stellarton, Springhill, Truro, Glace Bay, Sydney Mines, Sydney, and Halifax.[101]

But the new Nova Scotia Labor Party had its problems. One of the most serious of these concerned the threat of the One Big Union(O.B.U.). The O.B.U. was fundamentally a rebellion of western unions against the eastern-controlled, conservative T.L.C. It was opposed to political action, relying instead upon industrial strikes to gain the ends of labor.[102] The O.B.U. became, for a time, quite powerful in the colliery towns of Pictou County, and Cape Breton,

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99 Canadian Annual Review, 1919, 506-7.

100 Ibid., 501. Also, Labor Gazette, 1919, 1071.

101 Halifax Citizen, April 16, 1919.

102 Harold A. Logan, History, 371, 383. While many O.B.U. leaders in the West were British, they obviously disagreed with the application of British union methods to Canadian conditions.

threatening the dominance of the U.M.W.[103] The Workers' Weekly, apparently, became converted to the One Big Union idea, and intimated that O.B.U. strength was gaining in Halifax.[104] Being connected with the T.L.C., the Halifax Citizen was moved to warn Nova Scotian unionists against the heretic. The O.B.U. was a "secessionist movement, which will result, if given support, in division of our ranks."[105] The O.B.U., with its bias against political action, may have significantly weakened the position of the I.L.P. in certain areas of Nova Scotia.[106] The doctrinal differences between the T.L.C. and its rebellious offspring did not hinder the older organization from criticizing and exposing the false stories on the Winnipeg Strike. The arrest of Ives, Heaps, and other strike leaders, "carried off to some unknown Siberia," was evidence, said the Citizen, "that Prussianism is in power in Canada."[107]

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[103] William Matheson, Stellarton, a former O.B.U. organizer.

[104] Quoted in the Citizen, November 14, 1919.

[105] Citizen, May 1, 1919.

[106] Insofar as the O.B.U. was successful in weakening the U.M.W., by its attempts to bring about a general strike and to attract U.M.W. members into the O.B.U. ranks, it weakened the staunchest bulwark of the I.L.P. But the O.B.U. was no longer an effective movement after 1922, and probably had little real influence on the decline of the I.L.P. (See Harold A. Logan, Trade Unions in Canada (Toronto, 1948), 326-30, for the decline of the O.B.U.)

[107] Ibid., June 13, 1919.

> However, much labor held aloof from the methods of the men conducting the strike in Western Canada, their sympathies will now certainly go out to them . . . a vicious press propaganda has blackened the strikers and their cause . . . The Government . . . must shorten the work day, increase wages, and give labor some measure of control over industry.[108]

In August, 1919, at a mass meeting in Halifax, F. G. Tipping contradicted the "Poisoned Press" view of the strikers as a "bunch of Bolshevics [sic] bent on overturning the existing order by violence."[109] The real cause was the workers' desire for recognition of union labor. The policemen of Winnipeg, members of a T.L.C. affiliated union, had not gone on strike; but the Police Commission had fired them when they refused to sign an anti-labor statement. The government had changed the law of the land in forty minutes—with the approval of D. D. McKenzie, Liberal M.P. from Cape Breton North-Victoria. Of five "Russians" arrested, one was a veteran of the Canadian Army, wounded twice at the Somme. An anonymous letter in the Citizen assailed the "amended Immigration Act . . . an unrighteous . . . un-British and unjust decree . . . conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity by the Union Government."[110]

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[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid., Kenneth McNaught speaks of an "F. Tipping," who was a Dominion Labor Party candidate in Manitoba in the 1920 provincial election. (See A Prophet in Politics, 140).

[110] Citizen, August 29, 1919.

Workingmen in New Glasgow were told, by a former employee in the Parliament Buildings, that American financier J. Pierpont Morgan had come to Ottawa to make sure that the Canadian Government would take all action necessary to crush the Winnipeg General Strike.[111] In 1920 the educational committee of the Nova Scotia Labor Party, believed it necessary to enter candidates in the provincial election "to educate the working-class to the necessity of preparing for the new social order."[112] The results of the Ontario provincial election, in October, 1919, were encouraging—the "greedy professional politicians" there were defeated by E. C. Drury, "a practical farmer, a man of affairs, knowledge, keen insight, and far-seeing diplomacy,"[113] who had formed a farmer-labor coalition government. In Great Britain, the Labor Party had scored numerous victories in municipal elections. Mindful of these working-class

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[111] Clifford Rose, Almont Ave., New Glasgow, recalled this story; Tim Buck alludes to J. P. Morgan's influence in Canada and the Russian Revolution (Toronto, 1967), 66. William Matheson of Stellarton, claimed that the failure of the Winnipeg General Strike was a crucial factor in crippling militant labor and the Labor Party in Canada. He has contended that union success in the General Strike would have enhanced labor power and prestige and unified the country's labor force behind a political party that could win control of Parliament. However, an obvious comment is that the O.B.U. was opposed to political action.

[112] Citizen, June 4, 1920.

[113] Ibid., November 14, 1919. E. C. Drury, had not been chosen as leader until after the election. See Farmer Premier-Memoirs of the Honorable E. C. Drury (Toronto, 1966), 87.

triumphs, the Nova Scotia Labor Party prepared to fight an election.

From some points of view, the time was suitable for launching such an enterprise in Nova Scotia. The P.W.A., with its Liberal associations, was a thing of the past. The provincial Conservatives, disorganized and lacking in leadership, offered weak opposition to the Liberal administration. The growing strength and good relations of the T.L.C. and the U.M.W. seemed to prove that the labor movement had achieved province-wide solidarity and support in industrial areas. In one sense, however, the time was ill-chosen. The labor movement was endangered from within by the offensive of the One Big Union, an organization resolutely opposed to political action. From outside the movement, it was harried by the Old Regime—by the old political parties, the business community, and the churches, who saw the forces of Red Revolution in workers' organizations. However, labor would not enter the contest without allies. A number of local branches of the Great War Veterans' Association signified their desire to unite with the Labor Party to upset the Murray Government.[114] If the Laborites were to replace the weak and disorganized Conservatives in Nova Scotia's party grouping, it was also necessary to get the support of the rural voters.

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[114] Citizen, July 11, 1919, April 9, 1920. Also Sydney Daily Post, June 9, 1920.

Obviously, the co-operation of the organized farmers must be sought in a campaign to arouse the voting public from its time-honored allegiance to the Conservative and Liberal Parties.

CHAPTER III

UNEASY ALLIANCE

"When you shoot at a king, you must kill him." The proverb applies as well to new political parties as it does to assassins. The "Farmer-Labor" political alliance which tried to unseat the Liberal Premier G. H. Murray in 1920 was woefully short of armament but not of ammunition. It had no central organization, no common manifesto, and scanty finances. Only good luck, Liberal disunity, and Conservative despair, coupled with the reforming spirit of the times, permitted them to scramble as high as they did in their unprecedented approach to the throne.

The Farmer-Labor Party was not only a new political force in the Province, but it was also a new kind of political creation. In contradistinction to the "old-line" political parties, it boasted a definite ideology—one might say, two ideologies. It is arguable that the greater part of the Progressive creed did not influence the voters a great deal. But the new party's promises of increased government aid almost certainly seduced many

supporters from the Liberal and Conservative camps, and influenced most of the "loose fish" who swam with the prevailing current of Nova Scotia politics. Naturally, active supporters of the old parties looked on the interloper, during 1920 and 1921, with the same feelings as must have afflicted a medieval community threatened by bubonic plague. It must be noted, though, that provincial Conservatives, soon recovered from their initial aversion. Official Tory circles suddenly came to regard the Farmer-Labor movement as a beneficial, or at least a harmless force, which would weaken in time the Grits and save the Tories from waging a hopeless battle. In the Dominion election of 1921, however, the Conservatives, occupying a strong position instead of a weak one, railed at the Farmer-Labour group even more fiercely than did the Liberals.

The campaigns of abuse and innuendo waged against the third party during the first two years of its existence were inspired by Liberal and Conservative uncertainties about the new voting groups in the electorate, as well as by fear of the ideas spread by the new movement. No one was sure how women or returned soldiers would vote.[1]

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[1] Dr. MacLellan, of Rawdon, has described the consternation caused by the appearance of female names on the voting lists. One of the old Hants County Liberals, (who was a militant bachelor), refused to try to predict how any member of the opposite sex might vote; "She's a woman, and they're the devil!" was his formula for avoiding conjecture on the subject. MacLellan interview, August 7, 1966.

The peculiar arrogance of Nova Scotian Liberals, and their conviction that their party was destined by Heaven to run the government in Halifax, caused bitter feelings when "deserters" from Liberal ranks gained high places in the Farmer-Labor movement. A newspaper editor poked fun at the mixture of political backgrounds displayed by three United Farmer directors from Kings County: "The first [was] a hard-shell grit, the second a crazy Torry [sic] and the third has been on both sides of the fence. They make an ideal trinity."[2]

The reaction of the Nova Scotian "establishment" to the attempt to create a new political entity was based, to a great extent, on the fear that the comfortably entrenched position of a relatively few families and individuals, in Halifax, Sydney, and the county towns, would be threatened. This conservative uneasiness usually found expression in the form of an anxious concern for the people's virtue: Nova Scotians must be protected against contamination by ideas emanating from Moscow, the United States, Britain, or even Western Canada. While a fraction of this solicitude was motivated by a genuine feeling for the simple virtues (and vices) of rural and small-town society, most of it found its source in apprehension that ordinary Nova Scotians might begin to think independently in economic

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[2] New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, April 20, 1920.

and political matters.

An especially fearful ogre, in the eyes of Nova Scotian Liberals and Conservatives, was the possible alliance of Farmer and Labor, to form a strong political party. The likelihood of such an alliance increased after Premier Drury came to an understanding with Labour members-elect in Ontario in 1919.[3] Labour attempts to woo the organized farmers continued, even after their lukewarm reception at the United Farmers convention at Truro. The election manifesto of the Independent Labor Party contained at least two clauses which could be construed as a sop to agricultural prejudices: it advocated the formation of co-operative organizations, among producers and consumers, and it called for taxation of land values, rather than taxes on industry.[4] "What is the difference between taxing land and taxing land values?", a Halifax editor asked pertinently.[5] The proximity of the words "land" and "tax" may have caused many farmers' hackles to rise, in spite of Labour spokesmen's efforts to explain that they meant unimproved land, retained for speculative purposes. "A tax on land . . . is unfair to farmers, [who are] already exploited," the

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3 A good deal of Farmer-Labour co-operation existed during the 1920 campaign in Ontario, and some joint Farmer-Labour nominating conventions were held, see Farmer-Premier, 85.

4 See Appendix B.

5 Halifax Herald, July 10, 1920.

Manifesto of the Independent Labor Party asserted.[6] However, this stand on taxation, met with the approval of the United Farmers' Guide, which argued that the Union Government tried to obtain all of its revenue from tariffs, neglecting to tax income, corporate profits, inheritances, and unimproved land held for future increment.[7]

The question of taxation was a rather minor part of the campaign waged by Liberal and Conservative papers to convince farmers that the safer, "British" way to prosperity lay with the old parties rather than with a "class" movement. "Farmers," said the Halifax Morning Chronicle, "are really capitalists, . . . have been extensively aided by the Murray government . . . and are not foolish enough to swallow any labor rot and socialistic propaganda."[8] In the opinion of the Morning Chronicle editor, "Labor and farmer elements . . . are as incapable of mixing as sugar and salt . . . the farmer's a capitalist, and Organized Labor's at war with all capitalists."[9] The Halifax Liberal organ even quoted Shakespeare, via the New York Times, to assert that a third party would be

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[6] Canadian Annual Review, 1920, 683. Also see Appendix B

[7] See cartoon in issue of April 28, 1920.

[8] Issue of July 10, 1920.

[9] Issue of July 13, 1920.

> Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
> Into this breathing world, scarce half made up.[10]

In the columns of the Pictou Advocate, a Liberal paper, the new party was labelled a

> wide conspiracy financed by Socialists and Bolshevists . . . Alex McKay . . . accepting the irresponsible politics of Fraser and Donaldson . . . consciously or unconsciously preaches the same doctrine as Lenine [sic] and Trotsky in Russia. . . . The boys whose sacrifices in the war and whose bodies lie in France did not give up their lives in order that Canada should be handed over to Socialists and Bolshevists such as Fraser and McKay and Rose Henderson.[11]

Even if Liberals did not often use such rhetoric, they apparently deemed it a legitimate tactic to brand the Farmer-Labor people with the Red smear.

About mid-July, 1920, Liberals professed horror at the discovery that their "auld enemies" the Tories were abandoning them to a solitary defense of the established order. "Conservatives have . . . sold their political birthright for a mess of utterly intangible pottage," cried the Morning Chronicle.[12] Indeed, the Tories were seeking queer company. The Sydney Post suddenly discovered that

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[10] Morning Chronicle, July 19, 1920.

[11] Pictou Advocate, July 23, 1920. Mrs. Rose Henderson, Labor organizer from Montreal, aroused much animosity by her outspoken support of Socialist ideas.

[12] Issue of July 20, 1920.

the Nova Scotia Farmers' Party "does not offer anything like so radical a policy as the Agrarians of Ontario and Manitoba. They favor better schools, and abolition of the Legislative Council, as do the Conservatives."[13] While the Post had obvious misgivings about the Independent Labor Party, the Halifax Herald became wholeheartedly converted to Progressive ideas. Praising all candidates opposed to the Grits, and proclaiming blithely "Never mind the Ghosts of the Old Order," the Herald burbled that "Independent Liberals, Farmers and Workingmen all over the Province are agreed that such a monopoly of power (Thirty-eight years in power, seven lawyers and one merchant), is not in the public interest."[14] On the constituency level, Conservatives attempted to make "deals" with the United Farmers in Kings and Colchester Counties, at least. Both attempts, however, were unsuccessful.[15] The United Farmers' Guide indignantly rejected such entanglements with the "discredited representatives of the old regime."[16]

Even in the heat of the campaign, the Guide frequently

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[13] Issue of July 15, 1920.

[14] Issues of July 19, July 24, 1920.

[15] Halifax Herald, July 13, 1920, also United Farmers' Guide, July 21, 1920.

[16] In the issue of July 21, 1920.

reminded its readers that political action was not the primary aim of the organized farmers, but was a step toward better community spirit and sufficient reward for rural effort.[17] The set of principles drawn up by the directors of the United Farmers of Nova Scotia, for the guidance of candidates, seem to be a reasonable and moderate program. The important points in this platform may be summarized as follows:

> Advancement of agricultural resources; increased teachers' salaries; better facilities at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, together with the teaching of agriculture in schools; simplified highway expenditures; uniform municipal assessment, and equitable taxation of mines and forests; reforestation; encouragement of co-operative enterprise; abolition of the Legislative Council; sixty day notice for all provincial elections; banning of the manufacture, import and sale of intoxicating liquor as a beverage.[18]

Of these relatively innocuous proposals, the call for stricter liquor control was most likely to be resented—outwardly, at least—by the Labor unions, whose members had called for more liberal liquor laws. In advocating the abolition of the Council, the United Farmers were only

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[17] As in the issue of July 14, 1920. The United Farmers candidate in Pictou County allegedly made a startling avowal of his own lack of enthusiasm for politics in a campaign speech, saying that he had reluctantly accepted the nomination, and certainly would not have done so if he had thought there was any chance of his being elected. (From the Pictou Advocate, July 23, 1920).

[18] United Farmers' Guide, June 16, 1920. In this issue also is announced the selection of Truro as the location of the Party head-office.

adding their voices to a cry that had been raised often since Confederation.19

While the U.F.N.S. platform was substantially the same as that if the United Farmers of Ontario, the Ontario platform also contained clauses favoring direct legislation and proportional representation. Although the Nova Scotia platform did not mention such proposals, they were given favourable treatment in the United Farmers' Guide. To many Liberal partisans, this proved that the credulous Nova Scotia farmers were tools of the Grain Growers' associations of the west. The Maritime Farmer, a farm journal published in Sussex, New Brunswick, warned that the United Farmers' Guide, directed and financed from Winnipeg, was the propaganda weapon of "a Western clique of Grain Growers, dominated by T. A. Crerar, that was trying to trick Maritime farmers into supporting the Western Grain Growers for the benefit of Western farmers only."20 To these charges, Editor Grassie Archibald of the Guide replied that the Maritime Farmer, with the connivance of the New Brunswick government which subsidized it, was attempting to

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19 J. M. Beck, The Government, 244-51, gives an account of the many attempts to do away with the Council.

20 Quoted in the United Farmers' Guide, April 21, 1920. Similar articles from the Maritime Farmer were reprinted in the Pictou Advocate, April 2, 1920.

discredit the United Farmers' organization.[21] As for the allegations that the Guide was a puppet in Western hands, Archibald declared that

> The owners of the Farmers' Guide are the United Farmers Co-operative Companies of New Brunswick, the United Fruit Companies of Nova Scotia, and the Grain Growers' Guide of Winnipeg, All shares are owned by farmer co-operative organizations, except six single one hundred dollar shares, owned by Mr. Crerar and four or five other persons . . . to qualify them as directors.[22]

Norman Lambert, secretary of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, attempted to rebut the charge that Western farmers were oppressing Maritime farmers by keeping the costs of feed grain and wheat at a high level. In the United Farmers' Guide for April 21, 1920, Mr. Lambert pointed out that the three head officials of the Central Nova Scotia Milk Producers' Association—H. L. Taggart, R. H. Smith, and Hugh Dickson—were all active supporters of the United Farmers. It must be admitted, however, that the influence of Western and Ontario people and ideas was quite noticeable in the columns of the Guide. Grain Growers' Guide writers and contributors, including George Chipman, Norman Lambert, and J. A. Stevenson, were frequent contributors to the United Farmers' Guide. W. R. Shaw, assistant editor of the latter journal, has described as

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[21] United Farmers' Guide, April 28, 1920.

[22] Ibid., April 21, 1920.

"very considerable" the financial control and ideological influence exerted, by the Western journal, on the United Farmers' Guide.[23]

The idea of occupational representation--that only farmers could adequately represent farmers--had been promulgated by Henry Wise Wood in Alberta, by W. C. Good and by J. J. Morrison in Ontario, in 1919.[24] Election cards, speeches, and letters to the newspapers indicate the existence of this doctrine in the Maritimes. "The people of Nova Scotia and the Eastern Provinces generally must expell [sic] from the Legislature and the House of Commons the bands of extravagant, inefficient Lawyers, [and] Professional Machine Politicians who have for the last forty years shamefully wasted the resources of our country in riotous, foolish, legislation . . . we must select our next legislators, from farm and workshop," one zealous correspondent declared.[25] There were constant attacks against the "lawyers monopoly" of representation in Legislatures and Cabinets. One writer, who was president of the Colchester

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23 W. R. Shaw to the writer, August 8, 1967. Professor W. L. Morton lists these gentlemen as writers and contributors in the Grain Growers' Guide. (See The Progressive Party, 107).

24 W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party, 107.

25 W. B. Fawcett, Sackville, to the United Farmers' Guide, April 21, 1920.

United Farmers, was especially bitter. "If there is no United Farmer candidate in your constituency," he warned, "don't vote for a lawyer . . . on the same grounds as in the old English law /by which/ a butcher, on account of his associations with innocent blood could not sit on a jury . . . lawyers defend criminals and are employed by liquor sellers and mortgage and loan companies which are bleeding the people, including veterans."[26] A United Farmers' advertisement in the Antigonish Casket was virtually a clarion call to class feeling:

> Farmers will submit no longer to the dictation of a small clique of lawyers and businessmen in the Town of Antigonish. . . . Public life was for the Lord's own chosen people the lawyers. . . . They might admit a merchant occasionally, and once in a while a doctor, but farmers were numbered among the outcast.[27]

Even the Conservatives attempted to profit by the anti-lawyer feeling. One of their advertisements in the Herald urged Halifax voters to support the Tory candidates "Archibald, Brenton, Gillis, Power and Stevens. (No Lawyers)."[28] While Labor speakers bemoaned the predominance of lawyers in politics, as did the Labor manifesto, their most bitter attacks came after the creation during 1920 by legal and financial hocus-pocus, of the giant British Empire Steel

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[26] H. P. Blanchard to the Guide, July 14, 1920.

[27] Casket, July 8, 1920.

[28] Issue of July 26, 1920.

and Coal Company (Besco). As for the war veterans, their existence as a separate branch of the Progressive movement became more shadow than substance soon after the first flurry of enthusiasm which saw the nomination of D. W. Morrison and Mrs. Donaldson. Both the Sydney and Halifax branches of the Great War Veterans' Association refused to become officially associated with any political party in the provincial election. Obviously, the Veterans' efforts were, from the beginning, closely linked to the campaign of the Independent Labor Party in Pictou County and the coal-mining areas of Cape Breton and Cumberland. Outside these areas the veterans were content to stand on the political sidelines.

In general, the most vigorous campaigns of the United Farmers were waged in the areas where their organization was strongest, and victory seemed most probable. These areas were Colchester, Hants, Cumberland, Pictou, Antigonish, and Cape Breton counties. Outside speakers at Farmer meetings included Mr. Pratt from Manitoba, R. J. MacMillan of the United Farmers' Co-operative Company of Ontario, and at least one speaker from the United Farmers of New Brunswick.[29]

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[29] Mr. MacMillan, in Nova Scotia, was pinch-hitting for President Burnaby of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, who had found it impossible to fulfill speaking engagements in Nova Scotia. The Independent Labor Party also imported outside talent. Mayor Angus MacBride of Brantford, Ontario and J. W. Bruce of the Plumbers' International Union, helped conduct the I.L.P. campaign.

United Farmers seem to have held their own in many of the joint debates which were a feature of Nova Scotian elections. "Some farmers," said the Guide "are developing speaking power out of sheer necessity."[30] One of the most fluent of the United Farmers' candidates—A. J. MacGillivray, Antigonish, appealed to farmers' suspicion and jealousy toward Liberal A. S. MacMillan, who was a successful lumberman, as well as an agent for the Cross Fertilizer Company. In a parody on the Catechism, Mr. MacGillivray asked "who made the world? [answer]—A. S. MacMillan! How many persons are there in A. S. MacMillan? [answer]—Three: A. S. MacMillan, farmer; A. S. MacMillan, lumberman; A. S. MacMillan, fertilizer-man!"[31] In fact, Mr. MacMillan, attempt- to refute insinuations that he was fleecing the farmers, inserted in the Casket, an advertisement claiming that he made little profit on his fertilizer business.[32]

Of the more tangible stuff which helps to win elections the Farmer-Labor group seem to have had precious little. In Colchester County, by report, commercial expediency caused local businessmen to contribute five thousand dollars to the United Farmers' campaign fund.[33] There may

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30 Ibid.

31 Recollection of Angus MacPherson, St. Andrew's, Antigonish County. Interviewed September 20, 1966.

32 Issue of July 22, 1920.

33 As claimed in the Halifax Herald, July 28, 1920.

have been similar contributions elsewhere, on a smaller scale. But most of the new party's funds came from voluntary contributions and from the proceeds of Farmers' Picnics, Labor Day picnics, dances and "socials." However, in spite of slim purses, the Farmer and Labor organizations seem to have been remarkably efficient, with organizers appointed in nearly all polling districts where they had a candidate. In Colchester County, where the farm vote was traditionally Liberal, the full weight of the Liberal organization swung to aid the United Farmers.[34] In Annapolis, Digby, and Antigonish, where no Conservative candidates appeared, the United Farmers obviously received a good deal of support from Conservatives. This support, of course, was of questionable value, since, in strong Liberal areas, it likely deterred many Liberals from supporting the new party, as they might have if it had not acquired "a Tory smell."[35]

As for the Farmer-Labor candidates themselves, their former political affiliations are not always known with certainty. A. J. MacGillivray was a Liberal; so were

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34 Stated by Hector Hill, Truro, on May 8, 1967. Farmers of the county had long been frustrated by Conservative victories in the county. There was no Liberal candidate in Colchester.

35 The Sydney Post, on July 19, boasted of Conservative influence on Farmer-Labor nominees in Antigonish, Pictou, Digby and Annapolis.

R. H. Smith, G. N. Allen, D. P. Floyd and W. J. Aylward. J. A. MacDonald, H. L. Taggart, D. G. McKenzie, Archie Terris, and, probably, Alex McKay, were Conservatives. The custom of selecting candidates by race or religion, traditional in some constituencies, was apparently followed, although some Labor speakers denounced the introduction of religion into politics.[36] In Digby County, one Acadian was nominated by the United Farmers, as was usual there. In Antigonish, one Catholic, A. J. MacGillivray, and one Protestant, Fred Irish, were nominated. One Catholic, Joe Steele, ran for the Independent Labor Party in Cape Breton, as did Catholics Joe Wallace and P. J. Healy in Halifax.

In all, eleven Labor candidates were nominated, and sixteen Farmers. In Annapolis, Antigonish and Digby, the fight was between Farmers and Liberals only. In Guysborough, two Liberals faced one Farmer and one Independent Conservative. Colchester saw a two-way fight between Farmers and Conservatives. In Cape Breton, Cumberland, Halifax, Hants, Inverness, and Pictou, Farmer and/or Labor candidates contended against both Conservatives and Liberals. In six constituencies, Victoria, Richmond, Kings, Queens, Lunenburg, Shelburne, and Yarmouth, Liberals and Conservatives faced each other in the time-honored way, without interference from candidates of the new

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36 Morning Chronicle, June 14, 1920.

parties. Two Independent candidates were nominated, one in Guysborough, one in Yarmouth. The appearance of the Farmers and Labor men on the scene resulted in a total of ninety-nine candidates, of all persuasions, seeking election to the forty-three seats in the House of Assembly.

Throughout the campaign, the theme of class struggle, at least in the sense of "poor man versus rich man" was followed, usually, by Farmer and Labor people. The most common Liberal defence was an exposition of the many good things G. H. Murray's administration had done for farmers and workingmen. The retort that workingmen and farmers wanted to run the government themselves, since they made up the bulk of the population was answered by silence, by derision, or by the cry of "Bolshevism." A. J. MacGillivray was not alone in questioning an opponent's integrity. In Pictou County, Farmer and Labor speakers attacked Liberal R. M. McGregor as a wealthy capitalist and a director of the Nova Scotia Steel Company.[37] In answer, veteran Liberal politician E. M. MacDonald accused Alex McKay of wartime profiteering in farm produce.[38] An anonymous writer in the Halifax Chronicle cruelly charged that J. A. MacDonald, United Farmers' candidate in Hants,

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[37] Acadian Recorder, July 28, 1920.

[38] Eastern Chronicle, July 23, 1920.

> a Tory in disguise . . . [had been] ardent for conscription for the 'Other Man's Son' in war . . . as president of the Milk Producers . . . he got a couple of cents added to the price of milk to the wives and kiddies of the married man who was overseas fighting in his son's place . . . The advance in price was based on the plea that the Grain Growers of the West had boosted the price of grain.[39]

Politicians have often indulged in such personal attacks on their opponents. However, one new political football made its first appearance in the 1920 election: Premier Murray had taken the administration of roads and bridges out of the hands of the municipalities in 1917, appointing a bipartisan Provincial Highways Board.[40] Murray's plans to improve and expand the provincial highway system, spending thirteen million dollars, met with mixed reactions. Conservative leader W. L. Hall opposed the highway expansion program as prohibitively expensive. While some Labor spokesmen seem to have seen the need of a better highway system, farmers were usually content with the horse and the steam locomotive as means of transportation. At least one United Farmers' branch passed a resolution "that all candidates in the coming local election be asked to pledge themselves to oppose the Auto."[41]

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39 Halifax Chronicle, July 23, 1920.

40 J. M. Beck, The Government, 307, 191N.

41 C. A. Maxwell, Mt. Thom, related this in a letter to the writer.

Many rural people, regarding the automobile as an unattainable luxury, useless in winter, were also resentful of the policy by which the roads had been "taken from the people" as editors of country weeklies liked to claim. The complete centralization of control of the highway system in Halifax was obviously a political plum by which the government's contractor friends would grow rich, and farmers be placated by a few days "on the road" at election time.[42] Farmer candidates were tapping the anti-Halifax feeling, never too far from the surface of Nova Scotia politics. Anti-Halifax arguments had always found receptive audiences in the Nova Scotian hinterland. This fact of political life clearly influenced the strategy of farmer propagandists in 1920.

In spite of the vigorous campaign which preceded it, the election of 1920 appears to have been remarkably quiet and decorous. The weather was fine and warm throughout the province on July 27, 1920—election day. It is possible that this gave an advantage to the traditional parties over the United Farmers. Undoubtedly, many farmers took advantage of the fine weather to make hay, and could not take time off to vote. Of course, many of them would probably not have cast their ballots for a Farmers' candidate anyway,

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[42] Annapolis Spectator, May 13, May 20, July 1, 1920. Digby Weekly Courier, April 23, 1920.

even where one was in the running.

The Colchester County United Farmers, consistent in their demand for political purity, required all candidates and workers to take a signed pledge to abstain from any suspicion of bribery or corruption. As a result, H. L. Taggart, victorious United Farmers' candidate in Colchester, was able to boast that he had "won the election without one dollar or one drink of rum . . . a precedent for Colchester County and for the province."[43] For the cynical-minded, this electoral purity had its origin in the limited financial resources of the Farmer-Labor alliance, rather than in a change of heart in the voters. The scarcity of material inducements to vote may have also contributed to the relatively small proportion who actually exercised their franchise in most areas. A number of newspapers remarked on the light vote, particularly on the widespread reluctance of women to use their newly-won privilege.[44] Many women refused to vote; many who did go to the polls looked, said the Halifax Chronicle "like a small boy going to his first circus."[45] While the Sydney Post expressed

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[43] United Farmers' Guide, July 28, 1920.

[44] Truro Daily News, July 28, 1920.

[45] Halifax Chronicle, July 28, 1920. A similar observation was made in the Annapolis Spectator, July 29, 1920.

amazement at the heavy vote in Cape Breton, and the efficiency of the Labor organization in getting out the vote, the editor of the Halifax Herald bewailed electoral apathy, claiming that hardly 40% of those on the lists went to vote.[46]

Neither of the Conservative organs had cause to rejoice over the election results. Two Conservatives and one Independent Conservative were elected, along with twenty nine Liberals.

In Annapolis and Digby, two of the counties where a Farmer-Liberal two-way fight occurred, the Liberals won by large majorities, with the Farmers winning a plurality in only a few polls. In Antigonish, however, in a very tight race, a Liberal and a Farmer were elected, and a Liberal and a Farmer defeated. Liberals defeated, by large majorities, Conservatives in Victoria and Queens along with Farmer and Independent candidates in Guysborough, but could take only one of the two Yarmouth seats, losing the other to an Independent Conservative. In Colchester's dry election, where neither liquor nor Liberals were in evidence, United Farmers defeated their Conservative opponents by a respectable number of votes. Richmond County voters

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[46] July 28, 1920.

elected two Tories over Premier Murray and his Liberal running-mate. Mr. Murray, however, was elected in Victoria County, his old "home" riding, though by a smaller majority than in previous elections.

In constituencies where there was a straight two-party contest between the old parties, the Liberals won eleven seats, the Conservatives two. In two-way contests between an old party and a new party, the Liberals lost one seat (Antigonish) and the Conservatives lost two (Colchester), which they had occupied at dissolution.

In the three (or four)-way melees, among Liberals, Conservatives, Farmers, and Labor people, the Tories were uniformly unsuccessful. Only in Cape Breton and Cumberland, though, were they, and the Liberals, utterly crushed by a Farmer-Labor landslide. In Halifax where voting was light all around, there was not a very great spread between the votes received by the Conservatives at the bottom of the poll, and Farmer-Labor people who occupied the midway position between them and the victorious Liberals. The Liberals won handily in Inverness, with a lone Labor man coming in at the tail of the poll. In a close fight in Pictou County, two Farmer-Labor candidates and one Conservative were beaten by three Liberals, while a woman who ran on the Labor-Veteran ticket failed to win the female vote, and forfeited her election deposit.

Hants County's rather complicated campaign, in which the United Farmers refused to co-operate with the Labor candidate, resulted in a split representation, one Farmer and one Liberal being chosen by the voters. The hapless Labor man was at the bottom of the heap, with a Conservative and a Farmer, the other losers, far above him. So where all three parties were engaged, Liberals took eleven seats, Conservatives none, others (Farmer-Labor or Independent) eight. Of the latter eight seats, five had been Conservative at dissolution and three had been Liberal. The Liberals took one seat from the Conservatives. In summary, the Conservatives gave up seven seats, and the Liberals four, to the new party or to an Independent. Six Farmers and five Independent Labor men were elected, two Conservatives, one Independent member, and twenty nine Liberals.*

The United Farmers' Guide regretted that the Conservatives had not been wiped out in the election, so that "oblivion would bring forgetfulness."[47] The Guide noted that only two of the elected Liberals were farmers; of the other twenty-seven, lawyers and merchants made up the majority. "Farmer and Labor members will have to fight

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[47] Issue of August 4, 1920.

* A summary of election results is given in Appendix D.

these friends of the exploiters of the country's natural resources," said the Guide.[48] (It was an accurate prediction). While the Guide maintained, with some validity, that the Liberals had won most of their victories in counties where the United Farmers were not yet fully organized, it also indicated the significance of a rural-urban division:

> The opposition of towns situated in agricultural districts towards Farmer candidates was most noticeable. This was in contrast to the industrial towns, which showed sympathy to the farmers. The hostility of the towns to the surrounding country communities . . . possibly has had more than a little to do with fostering the organized movement of the farmers. The cleavage may become more decisive.[49]

The Halifax Citizen made a similar observation, noting that the Labor vote had elected the Farmers in Cumberland and Cape Breton.[50] In Colchester County, R. H. Smith "regretted that the Farmers' Party had neglected the town of Truro," which had given four times as many votes to the Conservatives as to the Farmers.[51] The Annapolis Spectator believed that the Farmers "did not sufficiently credit the sentiment of the towns in preferring not to have farmers

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48 Ibid.

49 Ibid. W. L. Morton has observed that the United Farmers of Ontario failed to win the town vote - Progressive Party, 28.

50 July 30, 1920, also Alex D. McKay's speech reported in the Citizen, June 24, 1921.

51 Truro Daily News, July 28, 1920.

represent them."[52] The rural-urban alienation is noticeable in Inverness, where Laborite J. J. MacNeil won a large majority in Inverness town, but scanty support in the rural areas. In Hants County, the people of Windsor gave a much larger majority of their votes to the Liberals than they had in 1916.

One would expect this rural-urban division to be most significant in areas where the greatest disparity occurred between urban expansion and rural depopulation. An examination of the Census figures, as given in the Appendix at the end of this work, bears this out to a certain extent. The following table shows the percentage of rural decrease and of urban increase during the period from 1901 to 1921, in some counties where the rural-urban division was said to have affected the voting substantially:

County	Rural	Urban
Antigonish	— 42%	+ 13%
Pictou	— 27%	+ 54%
Colchester	— 11%	+ 13%
Hants	— 3%	+ .3%
Cumberland	— 15%	+ 44%
Inverness	— 11%	+ 86%
C. B. South	— 3%	+ 62%

The dislike of the rural population for the increasing

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[52] July 29, 1920.

dominance of the urban centres must have contributed to Farmer success, or near-success, in Antigonish, Pictou, Cumberland, Colchester, and Cape Breton South. In these five areas, except Colchester, there was a large spread between the rate of rural depopulation and the rate of urban increase. In Colchester, the spread was substantial, though less than in the other four areas. In Hants, Halifax, Annapolis, Kings, Lunenburg, and Digby, the spread between rural decrease and urban increase was rather small. In those counties, (with the exception of Hants, where one United Farmer was elected), the Farmers were either defeated rather badly or could not muster enough support to run a candidate. The same is true of Guysborough, where the urban population decreased along with the rural, and of Victoria and Richmond, where no urban centres existed. The point is that farmers who saw their own countryside losing its population to nearby urban centres, supported the Farmer candidates who were trying to restore the "vanished grandeur" of rural life, and refused to support candidates of the urban workingmen. And many urban voters, resenting the attempt of "hicks from the sticks" to win a place in the political "sun," balked at voting for Farmer candidates.[53]

While the cleavage between the countryside and the

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[53] See notes 49 to 53. There was a widespread resentment, in the country towns, of farmers in politics.

town (particularly the market or non-industrial town) was a significant factor in some Farmer-Labor losses, there were other local factors involved. In Annapolis, neither Farmer was from the western part of the country.[54] In both Digby and Annapolis, Farmer candidates were harmed by the "unsolicited and unwanted support of the Tories," which "unwholesome association" was used against them by Liberal candidates.[55] The Labor defeat in Halifax, which caused some surprise in other areas, was brought about, according to the Citizen, by the "apathy of the workers," and also by the fact that a number of Labor leaders had left Halifax to seek employment elsewhere, as a result of the long strike in the Halifax Shipyards.[56] Joe Wallace, a Labor candidate, recognized the difficulty of organizing the white-collar workers and the scattered industrial workers of Halifax, who lacked a common bond of employment and a class-consciousness such as miners and steelworkers had. But Mr. Wallace, in bitter retrospect, charged that the Halifax Liberals, with the connivance of some British Empire Steel and Coal Company officials, bribed two of the other Labor candidates to "sabotage the slate."[57] Whether

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[54] Annapolis Spectator, July 29, 1920.

[55] United Farmers' Guide, August 4, 1920.

[56] July 30, 1920.

[57] Joe Wallace in a letter to the writer, December 13, 1966.

or not this accusation is correct, there is reason to believe that the radical statements of Joe Wallace and other Labor speakers, caused great uneasiness to some workers. The Citizen found it necessary to deny that the I.L.P. platform was "Bolshevist or ultra-radical, as some conservative trade-unionists would declare."[58] It is also likely that the Labor Party's program met with the disapproval of the Catholic clergy in Halifax diocese, as it did in Antigonish. Shortly before the election, the Antigonish Casket attacked the

> Socialistic imitation of the English Independent Labor Party . . . full of Socialist quack-nostrums . . . single tax, government ownership of houses, referendum, initiative and recall . . . preached by anti-religious forces in England.[59]

It is clear that clerical disapproval of the Labor program did not prevent industrial workers from giving large majorities to Farmer and Labor men in Cape Breton, where a large proportion of the people were Catholic. Labor solidarity was strong in the Cape Breton industrial area, though. In the mining districts particularly, many clergymen were looked upon as allies of the Coal Company, and their "interference" was resented. In Antigonish, the

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[58] Issue of July 30, 1920.

[59] Casket, July 22, 1920. Fear of clerical censure probably influenced the Antigonish U.F.N.S. branch to take the anti-labor stand which is so noticeable in its election cards.

victory of United Farmer A. J. MacGillivray, over Liberal A. S. MacMillan, was allegedly brought about by Protestant-Catholic dissension over schools in the town of Antigonish.[60] But examination of the voting results, as given in the Casket, does not bear this out. While the Liberals defeated the Conservatives in Antigonish town by fewer than one hundred votes in 1916, MacMillan and Chisholm had a majority, in the town, of more than 450 votes in 1920, while MacMillan's personal vote was nearly double that of his two opponents. MacGillivray's votes came from the rural areas. Apparently, Antigonish town, like other market towns, had no intention of submitting to "farmer domination."

The "town vs. country" pattern held true in Pictou County only to a certain extent. Miners in Westville, Thorburn and Stellarton turned in large votes for Farmer Alex D. McKay and Labor candidate Henry Fraser. The other towns, and the rural areas of East Pictou, returned Liberal majorities. It is noteworthy that Alex D. McKay, disgusted with the trickery of Liberal organizers, campaigned but little in East Pictou; in the western part of the county where he was better known, he gained a majority of votes in the rural areas. Henry Fraser was believed elected until

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60 G. N. Joudrey, "The Public Life of A. S. MacMillan," 18. This was also the opinion of H. M. MacDonald, Inspector of Schools, Antigonish when interviewed on August 4, 1967.

the morning after the election, when a ballot box, which had apparently been lost in the town of Pictou, was discovered. It contained enough votes to elect Liberal R. M. MacGregor. While many Labor men maintained that the Liberals had stuffed the ballot box, they lacked legal and financial resources enough to bring about an investigation or recount.[61]

The Farmer and Labor victory in Cumberland County, involving the defeat of Colonel Layton Ralston, a distinguished wartime military leader, was said to have been caused by "local issues," primarily the dispute over mineral rights in the Pugwash-Malagash area as much as by superior organization.[62] Another prominent Liberal, E. H. Armstrong, owed his defeat to his personal unpopularity and political obtuseness. His conqueror in Yarmouth, Howard Corning, a successful farmer and a man of magnetic personality, had won a seat in 1911 for the Conservatives, but had lost it in 1916. Running as an Independent Conservative in 1920, Mr. Corning did not have, as was traditional in the riding, an Acadian as a running-mate. (It has been suggested that Acadians, in Yarmouth County at least, resented the anti-French

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[61] Clifford Rose, New Glasgow, and "Jock" Wilson, Stellarton, recalled this incident. See also J. M. Cameron, Political Pictonians (New Glasgow, 1968), 157.

[62] Halifax Chronicle, July 26, 1920; Pictou Advocate, July 30, 1920. This was also the opinion of W. E. McConnell, Meadowville, Pictou County, in an interview on July 10, 1966.

attitude which the federal Conservative Party had displayed in 1917).[63] As an Independent, Mr. Corning was able to play down his Conservative associations. It is very likely that he would have stood for the United Farmers, had they been organized in Yarmouth County. At least one newspaper predicted, at the time of his election, that he might be leader of the United Farmers in the Legislature.[64]

One task which the Farmer-Labor representatives faced after the election was one of composing their differences and building up a strong Opposition group in readiness for the coming session of the Legislature. This chore was complicated by the distrust of the Farmers for Labor and by the barely-submerged residue of Liberal-Conservative friction within the United Farmer Party itself. It was necessary too to expand and reinforce the Farmer and Labor organizations, in order to be prepared for the Dominion election, and for by-elections which might occur. And there were signs that the Liberals, at least, were thoroughly alarmed by the show of Farmer-Labor strength. James A. Fraser of New Glasgow, shrewd veteran of many political battles, served notice that the new party would meet a more vigorous Liberal machine in the next round:

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63 Opinion of Judge Patterson, Truro, who was a personal friend of Howard Corning. Patterson interview, October 8, 1967.

64 Sydney Daily Post, July 31, 1920.

> The organization of the Liberals . . . came down to them from 1917. It was not made to keep Murray in power—in fact, thousands /of Liberals/ are pretty well fed up with the Murray government—but to wage war on the Union government, which cannot be long delayed. We . . . could not afford to have the Murray government defeated . . . we had to preserve our own power for the approaching battle with the Union government.[65]

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[65] New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, July 23, 1920.

CHAPTER IV

DISINTEGRATION AND DECLINE

In their brief period of glory, the Farmer-Labor group in Nova Scotia had reason to be optimistic with regard to their future prospects. For a new party they had done astonishingly well in the Provincial election. With a Conservative revival unlikely, it looked as though the "Progressive" group, by maintaining a united front and perfecting their organization, could emerge victorious in the next trial of strength. They had already achieved one of their goals—farmers and workingmen would be represented in the Legislature by men of their own occupational groups, who would endeavour to bring forward laws that would benefit the common people. The organization of farmers' community clubs and co-operatives would create a sturdy rural society made up of informed, vocationally conscious, thrifty, and independent people. At the same time, the trade union movement, by extending its membership and by education, would foster an urban producers' movement working for the betterment of all the people. Such an idealistic picture

as this perhaps does not reflect the facts—though the tenor of statements in the United Farmers' Guide and the Labor press indicates that the picture is not too much overdrawn.

Perhaps many of the United Farmers, at least, felt a sense of relief that they did not have to form a government as the Farmers had in Ontario; but the Labor men, inured to the give-and-take of union politics, betrayed a truculent confidence in their own role as leaders of the workingclass. Neither group could have had a premonition of the forces that would wreck their Party: economic depression; procedural wrangles and Liberal obstructionism in the Assembly; the Phoenix-like rebirth of the provincial Conservatives; rural suspicion and disillusionment; finally, prolonged industrial warfare in the steel and coal areas. Nor did the Nova Scotian Farmer-Labor group feel for long the heartening influence of Progressive successes elsewhere. By 1923, the United Farmer administration was thrust out of power in Ontario, the membership of the Farmers' organizations everywhere was sadly depleted, and the Progressives in the Dominion Parliament were weary of being outfoxed and outmanoeuvred by Mackenzie King and Arthur Meighen.

It is true that the Progressive forces got two scraps of encouragement in 1921. Ten United Farmers, enough to wield a virtual balance of power, were elected to the New Brunswick Legislature. Also, in the federal election of 1921, sixty-five Progressives, including one New

Brunswicker, won parliamentary seats. But the tide of electoral success was running out for Nova Scotian Progressives during the eighteen months which followed the "haying-time" election of 1920. In a crucial federal by-election, in the United Farmer bastion of Colchester, Captain Hugh Dickson, Farmer-Labor candidate, was defeated, in September, 1920, by Conservative F. B. McCurdy, who had been appointed to Premier Meighen's Cabinet. Dickson was nominated by United Farmer and Independent Labor Party delegates and aided in his campaign by the Liberal organization as well as by Progressive workers. The Liberals did not field a candidate. Joe Wallace of the I.L.P., R. W. Burnaby of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, and T. W. Caldwell, Progressive M.P. from New Brunswick, took part in Captain Dickson's campaign.[1] On the Conservative side, Arthur Meighen and George Foster made personal appearances in the County. The Sydney Daily Post declared the pivotal issue in the by-election was "free trade versus Protection."[2] But the Conservatives relied less on abstruse discussion of such national issues than on a warning and a promise to Colchester voters. On the one hand, voters were assured that the "organized class fanaticism" of Farmer-Labor

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[1] United Farmers' Guide, September 1, 1920. Sydney Daily Post, September 16, 1920. Hector Hill, Truro, states that the Liberal organization worked for Dickson.

[2] Sydney Daily Post, September 14, 1920.

people would plunge the country into Bolshevism.[3] On the other hand, it was made very clear that F. B. McCurdy, as Minister of Public Works, would be in a position to bring a great deal of public money to the area, as well as the prestige of Cabinet representation.

The Conservative Colchester Sun's frenzied cry, that "political workers for the opposition candidates . . . declare themselves to be admirers of Russian Bolshevism and sympathizers with Russian Bolshevist leaders,"[4] was treated with scorn by James A. Fraser of New Glasgow:

> What does the editor of the Colchester Sun know of the deviltries of Bolshevism anyhow? . . . Captain Hugh Dickson used to be a good tory and a fine fellow, now it is 'away with him, crucify him' . . . political high priests gathered together in Truro, would crucify the Lord afresh if it would win them an election.[5]

The results of the election, in which the turnout of voters was very large, showed that Captain Dickson had gained a slightly higher percentage of the vote in Truro than the United Farmers had won there in July. Even after allowing for the difference, Truro gave almost five times as many votes to McCurdy as to Dickson while barely one-half of the rural and village vote went to Dickson. The

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[3] Ibid., September 20, 1920.

[4] Quoted in the New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, September 17, 1920.

[5] Ibid.

farmers of Colchester, it was argued, "had been bribed by McCurdy's promises to waste money on his constituency in order to ensure an empty honor for himself and a reflection of dishonor on those who elect him."[6] The election results were no great surprise to the Eastern Chronicle, which had supported the Farmers:

> Every well-known Conservative speaker, worker, heeler, and election manipulator from Niagara to the sea was pressed into service . . . the United Farmers could have won, had they 'stuck' united. But . . . they proved in many cases merely human when the 'devices' of politics were requisitioned.[7]

Obviously, the new party had won only a grudging and temporary allegiance from many farmers in July. One Colchester resident has told of his mother's asserting when going to the polls in the provincial election: "I'm only voting for Bob Smith /the Farmer candidate/ because he's a Liberal!"[8] There was a good deal of truth in the observation made by the editor of a Conservative newspaper that

> as far as the Maritime Provinces are concerned, Agrarianism as a political force has revealed itself as nothing more than a reinforcing auxiliary of whichever of the two traditional parties has either tacitly or openly joined hands with it.[9]

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6 United Farmers' Guide, September 15, 1920.

7 New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, September 21, 1920.

8 Hector Hill's recollection.

9 Sydney Daily Post, October 14, 1920.

It was said after the by-election that McCurdy had gained many Liberal votes in the constituency "in revenge for the Farmer-Labor attitude in the provincial election."[10] Resenting sanctimonious Progressive assertions of moral superiority, many "traditional" Liberals balked at supporting Dickson, who was allegedly a "rather weak and unattractive candidate."[11] Conservative organizers took advantage of this irritation; on the principle that "the devil you know is better than the devil you don't know," they persuaded many farmers to back McCurdy. In brief, the federal Conservatives were efficient and united; the Progressives, while comparatively efficient, were not united.

Some indication of the division of opinion in Progressive ranks is given by the public censure voiced by M.L.A.-elect Gilbert Allen of the United Farmers' action in running a candidate against McCurdy. Allen charged that the Farmer-Labor group was not yet well enough organized to enter the federal arena; it would, with no hope of victory, be opposing a man who could bring "progress . . . and government money" to the province.[12] Gilbert Allen was merely exercising the right of independent criticism, a right jealously guarded by many simon-pure Progressives. But the United Farmers' Guide charged--and

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10 Halifax Citizen, September 24, 1920.

11 Hector Hill interview

12 Quoted in the United Farmers' Guide, September 15, 1920.

Allen denied—that a Liberal organizer, Brenton McNab, had influenced Allen to speak against Dickson's entry. In the controversy, the Guide carefully avoided reproving Gilbert Allen for speaking out independently. On this occasion, as on many others, Progressives demonstrated their distaste for the unanimity of opinion enforced by the "evil" political system they opposed. Their regard for the sanctity of free opinion and expression was admirable but it made very difficult the problem of maintaining a united political front.

A glaring demonstration of the evils of machine politics was provided, in the Guide's opinion, by the victory of E. H. Armstrong (who was later Premier of the Province) over Zenas Bower in a provincial by-election in September of 1920:

> The people had no choice . . . the Halifax political machine simply asked Mr. Smith to resign, and told the people of Shelburne County to elect Mr. Armstrong . . . Not only was no regard paid to the wishes of the electors . . . in the selection of a candidate, but they were told to elect a man discredited in the Community where he was best known. There was no chance for free thinking people to organize either. Bower was able to convince some, where he had a chance to state his case. But . . . he was opposed not only by the Murray machine, but by the added power of those usually opposed to the Murray government . . . vested interests . . . whose life blood is drawn from the exploitation of the fishermen and small farmers of Shelburne County.[13]

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[13] Ibid., September 22, 1920.

Editor Grassie Archibald's indignation against the "vested interests" in Shelburne County obviously referred to the people complacently designated the "best elements of the Conservative Party," in the columns of the Halifax Chronicle. No Conservative candidate was nominated. Mr. Bower, who had run as a Conservative-Farmer-Labor-Fisherman candidate, was apparently the last-minute choice of those elements in Shelburne County (including the infant United Farmers' organization) who were determined to oppose Armstrong. In spite of assistance in the campaign from Howard Corning and Labor speakers from Cape Breton and Halifax, Bower was defeated by more than seven hundred votes. It appears that Mr. Bower, a lumber operator, was disliked outside the town of Shelburne. Certainly E. H. Armstrong's majority, won with the help of old-line Tories, was much larger than F. E. Smith, his predecessor, had won in July.[14]

It is possible that some leading Conservatives were astute enough to perceive that Armstrong's political clumsiness would be a handicap to the Liberal group in the House of Assembly. The Evening Mail printed a letter attacking the former Mines Commissioner for his high-handedness in the Malagash salt dispute and in the government's neglect to pay back wages due to Colchester County miners. Furthermore, said the Mail correspondent, the Labor Party in Cape

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14 Halifax Chronicle, September 3, 1920.

Breton owed its election victory to the miners' wish to express their opinion of the administration of the Mines Department by Armstrong, "its late incumbent and chief obstacle to its legitimate progress."[15]

The activity of the Farmer-Labor group, and of Howard Corning, in the by-election, was not calculated to create good relations between them and E. H. Armstrong. But it must have strengthened the cordiality already existing between Corning and the Progressives. Corning's links with the Conservative Party became firmer during the 1921 session of the House of Assembly as he was associated with Doctors LeBlanc and J. A. MacDonald, the two Conservative M.L.A.'s, in the formation of a three-member "People's Party" in the House.[16] In fact, the Independent member from Yarmouth was likely the key figure, until his untimely death, in the Conservative "infiltration" of the United Farmers of Nova Scotia.[17] The co-operation and good feeling between the "People's Party" and the Progressives in the House of Assembly are as striking as the animosity between the Liberals and the Progressives.[18]

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15 Halifax Evening Mail, August 30, 1920.

16 United Farmers' Guide, May 2, 1921.

17 The United Farmers' Guide, September 8, 1920, warned farmers against the "infiltration" of Tories.

18 Joe Steele's recollection of this is illuminating: "The only men on the Liberal side of the House who treated us /the Labor M.L.A.'s/ like gentlemen were R. M. Macgregor and John A. McDonald." (Joseph Steele, Atlantic Avenue, Sydney).

At the opening of debate in the 1921 session of the Legislature, J. Welsford MacDonald, Liberal member from Pictou, was rebuked by H. L. Taggart, Farmer member from Colchester, for "throwing that objectionable word 'Bolshevist' across the floor of this House."[19] Such open displays of Liberal spite and suspicion seem to have abated before long; the "venomous assaults . . . carefully staged, on the Progressives" that were master-minded by H. H. Stevens and Dr. J. W. Edwards in Ottawa had no sustained counterpart in the Nova Scotian Assembly.[20] But the leadership of the Liberals by E. H. Armstrong and his elevation to the Premiership in 1923 assured the Progressives of one implacable enemy. An exchange of letters between Armstrong and William Chisholm, Liberal member from Antigonish, indicates the attitude of two prominent Liberals toward the "interlopers."

> [Chisholm to Armstrong]— I was delighted to read of the flaying you gave the arch hypocrite Corning and the ill-mannered, coarse and ignorant cheap skates from Cape Breton County! [Armstrong to Chisholm, in reply]— I quite agree . . . [it is] just as well to handle some of these fellows without gloves . . . they have absolutely no appreciation of any other method of legislative discussion. Treating them like Legislators or Statesmen would seem like a burlesque. They dismally fell down on the passage of the Address on Friday last. In fact, seven of them stood up and voted against the Address.[21]

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19 Halifax Citizen, March 18, 1921.

20 United Farmers' Guide, July 15, 1921.

21 Chisholm to Armstrong, March 11, 1922. Armstrong to Chisholm, March 14, 1922, vol. X, E. H. Armstrong Papers, P.A.N.S.

It is very difficult to say whether many Liberals shared such acute feelings of hostility toward the Farmer-Labor members. But the blunt and occasionally profane language of some Labor members invited criticism; many of the measures introduced by them were attacked as being ultra-radical, as impracticable, or, in the way of politics, were voted down simply because they were Opposition measures. And the resulting frustration and discontent embittered the new members against the system. In defence of the Farmer members' neglect to "address the House in strictly ancient form," the United Farmers' Guide asserted that it was much more important to "attend to the business of the country honestly and efficiently."[22] Yet this defence of the representatives' actions in the House availed little. The public, impressed by rumours and newspaper anecdotes concerning the "uncouth ways" and general ineffectiveness of the Farmer-Labor members, lamented the futility of electing such people.

What sort of organization did these much-maligned Farmer-Labor members have in the House of Assembly? In answer, it is clear that they stopped somewhat short of the type of alignment Professor Morton has called "fusion," the creation of a common "political organization."[23] Yet their

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22 United Farmers' Guide, March 30, 1921.

23 W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party, 100N.

organization was somewhat closer than a superficial coalition. One former Labor member, Forman Way, has stated that the Farmer and Labor people met in common caucus, at least to discuss all important questions.[24] But Joe Steele has claimed that he was never invited to attend a caucus of the United Farmers.[25] It is clear that the co-operation between the United Farmers and the Independent Labor members was sporadic at best, and that it deteriorated after 1923. Before the opening of the 1921 session, D. G. McKenzie was chosen as leader of the joint Farmer-Labor Opposition in the House of Assembly, while the Labor group selected Forman Way as their spokesman on matters pertaining especially to Labor.[26]

If we look at the legislation which the Farmer-Labor group attempted to place before the House it is very evident that the proposed measures embodied a wide-ranging program of social and economic reform. Some of the proposals made by Progressive members seem to have been hastily conceived and poorly prepared. A few "notices of motion," by Joe Steele and R. H. Smith at least, were spontaneously devised and presented without consultation with the rest

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24 Forman Way interview.

25 Joseph Steele interview.

26 Mr. Waye (sic) is called "Chief Whip for the Farmer Labor opposition" in C. B. Fergusson's Directory of the Members of the Legislative Assembly (Halifax, 1958), 358.

of the Progressive group. While much of the proposed legislation was at least innocuous and, in the main, intended to benefit the people, it was almost invariably opposed by all the intransigent Liberals just as it was supported by the tiny Conservative group. It may be that Corning and his two followers genuinely favored the Progressive measures for their inherent worth. More likely, they chose to support the measures which they knew the Liberals would bury anyhow in order to conciliate the Progressives. The Conservative support was more noticeable in view of the fact that some of the Progressives frequently voted with the Government. In the 1921 session, A. J. MacGillivray and A. R. Richardson usually supported the Government against resolutions brought in by Howard Corning or by other Farmer-Labor members. A. J. MacGillivray was often absent from the list of those voting. When he <u>was</u> present, neither members of his party nor their allies could rely on his support. Early in the 1921 session, Corning's attempt to speed up Supply to allow for repairs to country roads was ruled "out of order" by the Chair. The Chair's ruling was supported by Richardson and MacGillivray along with John A. MacDonald (U.F.) although all the other Farmer-Labor members voted against it.[27] Only a week previously, John A. MacDonald had been the only United Farmer opposing an almost identical

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[27] <u>JHA</u>,1921, 82.

resolution brought in by Corning.[28] Joe Steele's effort, to inaugurate an enquiry into the feasibility of introducing unemployment insurance, old age pensions and health insurance, was blocked by a lengthy government amendment. The Liberals deemed it "inefficient and impractical . . . /if/ applied only to the Province of Nova Scotia," but expressed the approval of the House for a Federal enquiry.[29]

The Government's decision to shunt this "welfare legislation" into limbo was opposed by ten Farmer-Labor members, and by Howard Corning and Dr. J. A. MacDonald. A. J. MacGillivray did not vote. But, three weeks later, Gilbert Allen's relatively innocuous Resolution, which would have brought the appointment of liquor vendors under the control (practically) of the Veterans' Association, was supported by all the Farmer-Labor members and their three allies. R. H. Smith's Resolution that Assembly debates dealing with the province's Federal Aid Roads should be printed verbatim was quashed by the Liberals aided by A. J. MacGillivray and A. R. Richardson. Resolutions brought in by D. W. Morrison and Forman Way concerned with amendments to the Hours of Labor Act got the three month's hoist as did D. G. McKenzie's attempt to amend the Public Highways Act. D. W. Morrison's attempt to have a Commercial

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[28] Ibid., 56-7.

[29] Ibid., 69-71.

Coal Agent appointed by the Government was defeated. In all of these votes A. J. MacGillivray's name is absent.[30]

The pattern of legislative activity in the first session was followed during the other four sessions in which Farmer-Labor members took part. Joe Steele's attempt to bring forward a Resolution advocating free education for all children—with "free books and tuition, plus free food, clothing and shelter if necessary"—was forestalled by Prorogation of the House in 1922.[31] During the 1923 session, A. J. MacGillivray who could talk for the United Farmers though he often neglected to vote for them regaled the house with a discourse on rural education:

> The rural schools are in regrettable condition. School consolidation is necessary in rural districts. Children must be inculcated with a love of rural life. The government should appoint a Minister of Education . . . and a non-political curriculum committee to prescribe a rural curriculum . . . Children must learn in school how to make rural life pleasant and profitable.[32]

In spite of his fine words A. J. MacGillivray gave no aid to the Progressives' efforts to better public education. His support of the Liberals in the House stemmed from his old allegiance to that Party; it could be that he was under the pressure of "ledger influence" for it is known that he

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30 JHA, 1921, 69, 236, 157, 174.

31 Halifax Citizen, July 14, 1922.

32 Halifax Herald, April 23, 1923.

came under financial indebtedness to his former opponent, A. S. MacMillan, at some time subsequent to 1920.[33] Like A. J. MacGillivray, A. R. Richardson was a disgruntled former Liberal. Both he and MacGillivray made formal declarations at the end of the 1925 session that they planned to "return to their first love, the Liberal Party."[34] A. R. Richardson's relations with Cape Breton Labor men, always "rather lukewarm,"[35] reached the breaking point in 1923, when, at a mass meeting of miners in Glace Bay, Richardson was denounced as a

> Judas to the cause of labour . . . who should either resign his seat or walk over to the other side of the House to take his place among the flunkeys of the British Empire Steel Corporation.[36]

Richardson's reply, in essence, was that Forman Way and Joe Steele should also resign since they were becoming the pawns of "Red Radical revolutionaries" who were taking over the Labor movement.[37]

A. R. Richardson's cries of "Red Revolution" were not without foundation. Reference has already been made to the bitter conflict between the U.M.W. and the One Big Union

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[33] G. N. Joudrey, "The Public Life of A. S. MacMillan," 18-19.

[34] Joseph Steele interview.

[35] To quote Forman Way.

[36] Halifax Herald, April 9, 1923.

[37] Ibid., April 7, 1923.

(O.B.U.) for the right to represent Nova Scotian miners.[38] A third faction, which appeared in the field of Union activity in 1922, was the Workers' Party of Canada. While the Workers' Party looked to "the same ultimate goal as the O.B.U., viz., the overthrow of capitalism and the capitalist class, the entire method of procedure /was/ opposed to that of the O.B.U."[39] While the One Big Union aimed at the creation of a single all inclusive industrial union of wage workers in every locality, the Workers' Party sought to take over existing unions by "boring from within" and then having them affiliate with the Red International Labor Union in Moscow.[40] The Workers' Party was highly successful in its takeover of some U.M.W. locals in Cape Breton. In other industrial areas it seems to have been less effective, except in Halifax; there, under Joe Wallace's fiery direction, the Workers' Party took over, for a time, the local branch of the I.L.P.[41] During the years 1921-25 the provincial Labor movement was being torn asunder by conflicting factions. To make matters worse, from the Labor point of view, this internecine conflict was taking place while the direction and control of the steel and coal industries,

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38 See pp. 71-3 above.

39 Harold A. Logan, Trade-Union Organization, 410.

40 Ibid., 409.

41 Joe Wallace, A Radiant Sphere, 5.

the Halifax Shipyards, and the Eastern Car plant at Trenton, were being consolidated in the hands of a single industrial combination. This combination, the British Empire Steel Corporation, was the largest industrial corporation in Canada.[42] With its head office in the financial capital of Montreal and its link with British and foreign investment houses, Besco was an ideal "whipping boy" for Marxist orators and an apparent proof positive that huge industrial combinations, to keep the workers in slavery, were an inevitable concomitant of capitalism. The impersonal and callous attitude shown by the new syndicate in dealing with the workers was an unpleasant contrast to the attitude of the old companies. Besco's executives were not always heartless money-grubbers and some of its policies were forced on it by unavoidable circumstances. But the confrontation between a huge corporation and a class-conscious Labor group, during a period of economic depression, created an atmosphere of intense hostility and suspicion in the industrial areas. The struggle between Besco and the coal and steel unions provided a backdrop to the death of the Independent Labor Party as a viable political force.

The first round of the long contest between Besco and its employees began in 1921. The United Mine Workers had been successful, during 1920, in winning (with the aid of

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[42] Eugene Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 39.

Conciliation Boards) reasonably generous wage increases from almost all the coal operators in Nova Scotia.[43] During the first year of Besco's existence a raise was won from the new company by the U.M.W. This was the first "Montreal Agreement" and was brought about largely by the Federal Government's intervention.[44] But "very great reductions in coal and steel demand, and a fall in prices"[45] influenced the Company, in mid-December, 1921, to give notice to the U.M.W. that wages would have to be cut, by more than one-third. The arrogant attitude of Besco's chief negotiator in the ensuing discussions and a flagrantly biased decision of the Appeals Court of Nova Scotia strengthened the miners' distrust of the Company and the Courts of Justice.[46] Strike action by the U.M.W. was considered unwise in the wintertime. Furthermore, no aid could be expected from international headquarters; President John L. Lewis was preparing for a strike by the United States' miners in the spring. Consequently, J. B. McLachlan hit upon the expedient of a slowdown strike in which the miners

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43 Ibid., 52.

44 Ibid., 55. U.M.W. representatives had to go to Montreal to meet with the Company's executives; hence the term "Montreal Agreement."

45 Ibid., 45.

46 Eugene Forsey calls the decision of the Judges, of whom one was a former solicitor for one of Besco's constituent companies, "a piece of sharp practice."

would "work with their coats on." The slowdown was fairly effective in reducing production in the Glace Bay pits where McLachlan's influence was greatest; its effects, however, were almost negligible elsewhere.[47]

A second Montreal Agreement was reached between Besco and the U.M.W. executive in March, 1922, but it was rejected by a twenty-to-one vote in a miners' referendum. This "Montreal Agreement," which accepted a wage cut of approximately 29% was based on the "Gillen Award"—the majority report of a conciliation Board which was chaired by U. E. Gillen. By June of 1922 the United Mine Workers, meeting in convention in Truro, were calling for the "complete overthrow of the capitalistic system and the capitalist State."[48] In August, contrary to the orders of the U.M.W. International Headquarters, J. B. McLachlan, and the other left-wing extremists who had gained control of the Union executive called all the miners out on strike. The strike ended after three weeks with an increase for the men through the mediation of Gordon S. Harrington (a Conservative lawyer working in the interests of Labor) and Rev. Clarence McKinnon.[49]

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47 Eugene Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 56-7.

48 Halifax Citizen, July 7, 1922, also Rev. Philip Mifflin, "History of Trade Unionism," 53.

49 Ibid., 57-60.

The militant radical spirit shown by large sections of the provincial Labor movement after 1920 had wide-ranging political implications. Farmers, many industrial workers, and the general public were alarmed by the increasingly violent temper of Labor utterances. Many people who had supported Farmer-Labor candidates in 1920 repented their action. They became convinced that they had helped to create a Frankenstein that would rend the fabric of society and create in its place a godless, Bolshevist edifice. Farmers, their incomes reduced as a result of the depression which had begun in late 1920, bitterly resented union attempts to win higher wages. The Farmers' political movement was damaged by an ideological controversy between the "practical politicians" and the "group-government theoreticians." E. C. Drury in Ontario, and T. A. Crerar in Federal politics, wished to build up a disciplined political party, containing all liberal forces along with the farmers, that would strive to win political power in the usual way. H. W. Wood, in Alberta and J. J. Morrison, in Ontario, stubbornly fought for a "simon-pure" farmers' party which would take part in politics (a sort of necessary evil) only to win a share of political representation in proportion to their numbers; along with the elected representatives of other economic groups, they would institute a stable, "non-political" government. The mock-warfare of government and opposition would disappear and the members of the

"group-government" would concentrate on passing legislation reflecting the wishes of their constituents.[50]

The ideas of group government were promulgated in the columns of the United Farmers' Guide. A common reaction of the Nova Scotia farmer to the controversy was "A plague on both your houses!" If he had supported the United Farmers in the Provincial election he was chagrined by their members' inability to procure legislation that would aid him in his economic troubles. Even worse, he was disillusioned and disgusted by their apparent collaboration in the "underhanded" attempt by M.L.A.'s to increase their indemnities at the people's expense. The daily press was quick to take advantage of the apparent cupidity of the new party's representatives. In spite of the "incompetence and weakness" of the Farmer-Labor party's

> Legislative Champions at Halifax . . . they have succeeded in more than doubling their own parliamentary salaries . . . [they] became parties to an illegal device whereby an additional $800 was paid to each of them, without legislative warrant and without executive authority.[51]

Thus the Sydney Post proclaimed the members' fall from grace. Letters from farmers printed in the United Farmers' Guide were severe in their condemnation of the "salary grab," as it came to be called. A Hants County Local of

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[50] W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party, 150-1.

[51] Sydney Daily Post, November 18, 1921.

the U.F.N.S. protested against the

> action of our local representatives for acquiescing in the largely increased salaries of Executive Councillors, as well as the attempt to double up their own, in view of the fact that their election expenses were largely defrayed by our association.[52]

A Margaree farmer condemned the "self-interest and greed" of the Farmer-Labor members for unanimously passing the resolution to increase their sessional indemnities from $700 to $1500, and giving Executive Councillors a boost from $4500 to $6000 dollars:

> What is the matter with the Farmer-Labor group, who professed themselves to be such champions of economy, self-sacrifice and public service, and who, to their shame, did not lift a finger in protest of these unwarranted increases?[53]

The Pictou County United Farmers passed a resolution

> expressing the keenest regret with the action of our representatives at Ottawa and Halifax in increasing and endeavouring to increase their salaries . . . when the wages of all working men are being rapidly reduced and the price of farm products has reached a low level.[54]

D. G. McKenzie also endeavoured to explain the increased indemnity in statements released to the Press:

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[52] United Farmers' Guide, July 15, 1921.

[53] Ibid., August 1, 1921.

[54] The action of the Pictou County meeting is all the more significant in view of the fact that Forman Way addressed the meeting attempting to justify the increase in indemnity and to describe the pleasant relations existing between Farmer and Labor representatives. Minute Book, U.F.N.S., Pictou County Branch, June 20, 1921.

> The Farmers have been misrepresented by the press . . . the increase never came to a vote in the House . . . United Farmer members would have opposed any increase in salary so soon after an election. An extra allowance had been made to members for a number of years out of the contingency fund, to meet the increased cost of living. . . . It was never complained of until some capital could be made of it to help destroy agricultural influence politically. . . . Sufficient remuneration for the members /is necessary/ as farmers and laboring men in general could not afford to represent a constituency with all the expenses that go along with public life without a remuneration that would cover such expenses. It would mean that only the rich could afford to go into politics.[55]

Editor Grassie Archibald of the Guide agreed, in essence, with Mr. McKenzie. But Mr. Archibald pointed out that the greatest objection voiced to the salary grab was that members of elected assemblies "should not raise their own salaries without consulting those who sent them there."[56]

There can be little doubt that the "salary grab" was a disastrous blow to the farmers' confidence in their representatives.[57] As D. G. McKenzie stated, a $300 allowance had been paid out of the contingency fund for some years without its becoming public knowledge. With the $700 indemnity, this rewarded assemblymen with the sum of $1000 for their labors in Halifax.[58]

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55 Pictou Advocate, September 2, 1921.

56 United Farmers' Guide, October 1, 1921.

57 H. R. Brown, Wallace Bay, and Amos Tattrie, River John, among other farmers, were of this opinion.

58 J. M. Beck, The Government, 268-9.

The increase of the indemnity to $1500 in 1921 was done by resolution, as had been customary, rather than by statute. United Farmer and Labor members claimed that they had been hoodwinked into signing a "round-robin" giving their consent to the increase; Joe Steele named E. H. Armstrong as the originator of the round-robin, as he wanted Assembly sanction for the raise in Cabinet salaries. In 1922, the assemblymen voted to reduce the indemnity to $1000. But the damage, to both Liberals and the Farmer-Labor group, had already been done. It is significant, in this connection, that Premier Drury opposed any increase of the sessional indemnity in the Ontario Legislature being aware that the United Farmers' administration would be accused of hypocrisy and greed if it sanctioned any such "raid on the Treasury."[59] Moreover, the increase which members of Parliament in Ottawa had given themselves was said to have caused "discontent and suspicion of law and government among returned men and the public in general."[60]

The erosion of farmers' trust in their representatives, which stemmed from the "salary grab," might have been checked by a vigorous educational campaign by the United Farmers' Guide. But the Guide, after 1921, became more and

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[59] The Canadian Magazine, volume 55, 1920. Sir John Willison's column.

[60] O. D. Skelton, in Queen's Quarterly, Autumn, 1921, 90.

more apathetic toward Farmer involvement in politics. Sympathetic consideration and comment on the work of United Farmer members in Parliament and in the Legislative Assembly marked the limits of the Guide's politicking. In this trend toward political neutrality the Guide was following rather than trying to form the views of the farmers. At the 1921 Convention of the United Farmers of Nova Scotia, held in Truro, it was apparent that delegates' enthusiasm for independent political action had significantly cooled. The delegates, few in number in comparison with those at the first convention a year before, agreed that

> The resolution to organize for 'political purposes' passed at the April 1920 meeting, did not reflect the actual purposes of the United Farmers. It was amended to read 'for social, co-operative, educational, and political purposes.' The remarks of the delegates indicated that it was not the hope of any narrow, selfish class advantage which was actuating Nova Scotia farmers, but . . . the development of the agricultural profession and art in keeping with its true dignity and importance.[61]

Apparently, many delegates resisted the attempt to downgrade political action because the chairman's casting vote was necessary to pass the resolution. But the victory of the "non-political" faction, even by a small margin, indicates the trend of farmers' thinking. If the promotion of commercial co-operation was to be the biggest work confronting the organized farmers as H. L. Taggart declared

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61 United Farmers' Guide, April 6, 1921.

then politics had to be a secondary consideration.[62] Obviously, the attempt to create a body of loyal supporters for a co-operative store or shipping club would be hampered severely if the United Farmers' organizer was suspected of being merely an agent of the new political party.

In an organizing drive carried on during the winter of 1920-21 by the United Farmers, the creation of new local clubs for the purposes of community improvement and commercial co-operation was accomplished in Pictou, Hants, Annapolis, Colchester, Inverness, Victoria, Antigonish and Guysborough counties. Some of this organizational work was done by a full-time organizer from Truro but a great deal was accomplished by enthusiastic volunteers. A Pictou County farmer compared the new clubs' requests for speakers to "the heathen in distant lands asking for more missionaries to give them the Gospel."[63] Co-operative stores were set up in Windsor, Antigonish and Truro. The attempts to organize new clubs in the Annapolis Valley and along the South shore, however, met with little or no success. Though Grassie Archibald pointed out that political success, in New Brunswick, had followed the establishment of successful farmers' co-operatives,[64] his observations did not hold

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62 Ibid.

63 W. E. McConnell, Meadowville, in the United Farmers' Guide, March 23, 1921.

64 United Farmers' Guide, October 7, 1920.

true in Nova Scotia. In the Annapolis Valley, where co-operative fruit companies had been of very great benefit to farmers, they turned a deaf ear to United Farmers' political propaganda.

CHAPTER V

COLLAPSE

Although the United Farmers were turning away from politics during 1921 they still retained enough interest in political action to make a show of contesting the Dominion elections at the end of the year, as did the Labor Party. The Farmers nominated candidates in six constituencies. In Antigonish and Hants the candidates ran under the United Farmers' label. In Inverness, Cumberland, Pictou, Cape Breton South-Richmond, and Cape Breton North-Victoria, Farmer-Labor nominees were selected at joint Farmer-Labor conventions. In Halifax, Joe Wallace and Dr. Hawkins were known as Labor candidates. It is noteworthy that no United Farmer candidate ran in Colchester County, formerly the Farmers' stronghold.[1] In only one constituency, Inverness, was a Farmer-Labor man spared the necessity of opposing candidates from both of the old parties. Rather curiously,

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1 Colchester County farmers were probably disheartened by Dickson's failure to win the 1920 by-election from McCurdy.

in view of the Progressive animus against professional men representing farmers and workers, three Farmer or Labor candidates were "doctors." Dr. Kendall in Hants, and Dr. Hawkins in Halifax, were medical men. Dr. McIsaac, of Antigonish-Guysborough, was a veterinary surgeon (and a disgruntled Liberal). E. C. Doyle, contesting Cape Breton South-Richmond for the United Farmers, was a carpenter. Isaac MacDougall, in Inverness, was a labor expert. The United Farmer candidate in Pictou, R. M. Reid, a Scottish emigrant, was a farmer; M.A. MacKenzie, running in Cape Breton North Victoria, could be called a part-time farmer. J. B. McLachlan, E. C. Doyle's running-mate, was miner, labor-organizer and farmer. Joe Wallace's associations with Labor were well-known. Quite naturally, the Liberal and Conservative press made frequent use of the argument that the Progressive Party, against its declared principles, was selecting candidates from outside its vocational groupings. E. C. Doyle was called an "opportunist . . . /who was/ an opponent of the Farmer-Labor Party until he failed to get the Liberal nomination in Richmond County last year."[2] In the battle of McKenzies in Cape Breton North Victoria, D. D. was vitriolic in his Nomination Day attack on M. A., whom he called "a tailor with political ambitions . . . a

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[2] Sydney Record, October 15, 1921.

Vulcanizer and nonentity."[3] The United Farmers' Guide had to admit the truth of the criticism that some Farmer candidates were men little different from the candidates of the old parties:

> It is true, in one or two cases . . . that they were seeking a new way into public life. . . . Some /Farmer/ conventions were 'fixed' . . . there are bound to be Judases . . . Farmers' conventions must seek candidates and eschew every candidate who is seeking endorsement.[4]

Even if the Farmer-Labor candidates had all been zealous, capable, and reluctant to seek office, as the Progressives wished, their course would have been difficult. The national platform of the Progressives, with its condemnation of the tariff system, laid the United Farmers open to attack from Conservative sources. The national leader of the Progressives was said to be misled by foreign influence; H. W. Wood, the Progressive theoretician from Alberta, was a native of Missouri. The Sydney Daily Post railed.

> at the Agrarian-Socialist ticket . . . a conspiracy of treason to the basic industry of Cape Breton. . . . Mr. Crerar's Western friends want farm machinery and coal placed on the free list . . . asking the coal miners of Cape Breton to vote themselves out of employment . . . the Agrarian campaign is sectional, disruptionist, anti-national. T. A. Crerar is under the dictatorship of Wood the autocratic Missourian.[5]

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[3] Sydney Post, November 24, 1921. (The word "Daily" was dropped from the paper's name at this time).

[4] United Farmers' Guide, June 16, 1922.

[5] Sydney Post, October 27, November 2, 3, 9, 1921.

To the Halifax Herald, the Progressive movement was inspired by Moscow:

> The United Farmers of the various provinces constitute nothing more or less than provincial soviets. They are trying to set up a Dominion Soviet at Ottawa, with Mr. Wood of Alberta or somebody else as dictators.[6]

The Herald harped on the great difference between Western farmers, who "wanted only to export wheat" and Eastern farmers, "who find their markets near home, in industries built by protection."[7] An election card inserted in the Casket by the Antigonish-Guysborough United Farmers blamed the decline in the rural population on government extravagance and high tariffs; protection had brought wealth only to "manufacturers and railroad contractors."[8] The Herald jibed in reply:

> How does Dr. McIsaac intend to prove that farmers, if elected, will practice economy? Will he prove it by the salary grab last spring in Halifax? Or by the carnival of increased expenditure and debt in Ontario? . . . Dr. McIsaac has no remedy /for population decline/ . . . People went to the United States because /it/ was protection-prosperous.[9]

Farmer-Labor people attempted to answer the charges.

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[6] Halifax Herald, October 18, 1921.

[7] Ibid., November 21, 1921.

[8] Antigonish Casket, November 17, 1921. Large fortunes had been accumulated by a few Antigonish men in railroad contracts obtained during the Laurier administration.

[9] Halifax Herald, November 3, 1921.

At a poorly attended meeting in Pictou, "Progressive" speakers attacked the domination of Parliament by lawyers and doctors and by "servants of the big coal and steel merger" like E. M. MacDonald, the Liberal candidate for Pictou, and Thomas Cantley, the Conservative candidate.[10] The United Farmers' Guide tried to prove that the coal industry could get protection, under a Progressive Government, by producing its books and showing protection to be necessary.[11] The Guide called the "flag-flapping attacks on H. W. Wood . . . a proof of the poverty of the Government's case."[12] Attempting to arouse the shades of past heroes, the Guide invoked the

> Spirit of Howe, of Wilmot, of Cole . . . in the yeomen of the Maritime Provinces. [They must] remember that country stands above party . . . fight the oligarchy of manufacturers, lawyers and merchants.[13]

But the Conservatives had more tangible inducements to hold out to the voters. Arthur Meighen's visit to Cape Breton was followed immediately by "an order for rails . . . to the steel merger to give employment for the workless men of Sydney— until after the election." In Annapolis County,

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[10] Pictou Advocate, November 11, 1921.

[11] United Farmers' Guide, November 15, 1921.

[12] Ibid., October 1, 1921.

[13] Ibid., September 15, 1921.

there was "great activity in the construction of public works— until after the election."[14]

In general, Farmer and Labor candidates and supporters in the 1921 election, were on the defensive, rather unsure of themselves in the face of crossfire from both of the old parties. True, T. A. Crerar, accompanied by H. L. Taggart, spoke in Sydney and a few other centres; D. G. McKenzie engaged in controversy with the Antigonish Casket over the Farmers' policy of approving what the Casket called the "unsound, vicious and . . . subversive" techniques of direct legislation— the initiative, recall, and the referendum.[15] But the old parties, locked in a power struggle, do not seem to have regarded the Progressive Party as a threat in Nova Scotia— except in Cape Breton. In Halifax, the Citizen had become, to a large extent, a vehicle for Joe Wallace's wild demands for the abolition of capitalism and a seizure of power by the working classes.[16] Halifax workers were clearly not ready for such a drastic program. But the miners and steelworkers of Cape Breton were of a different temper. Their resentment against the brutal attempt to slash wages by the Company's absentee management fostered a spirit of militant class-consciousness. Organizers and

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14 Ibid., November 1, 1921.

15 Antigonish Casket, November 10, 1921.

16 (See for example, the issues of June 24, October 7, October 21).

propagandists of the newly-organized Communist Party of Canada, who came to Cape Breton in the summer of 1921, carried out an educational campaign designed to enlist a revolutionary proletariat dedicated to the struggle for socialism.[17] The "hostility of the miners toward the capitalist press" brought about the organization of a Labor paper in Glace Bay, the Maritime Labor Herald. A majority of stock in the company which published the newspaper was to be held by Labor organizations.[18] M.L.A. D. W. Morrison was a director of the Maritime Labor Herald publishing company which selected British-educated W. U. (Billy) Cotton, a dedicated Communist, as its first editor. A frequent contributor to the Labor Herald's columns was J. S. Woodsworth, the apostle of Western Canadian Socialism, who made the first of several visits to Glace Bay in 1920.[19]

During the first year of its existence, the Maritime Labor Herald was relatively moderate in its attacks on

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[17] Tim Buck, in Thirty Years—1922-1952, 30-4. Mr. Buck, in telling the story of the Communist movement in Canada, gives some information on the Workers' Party and the activities of the Trade Union Educational League in Nova Scotia.

[18] Halifax Citizen, June 24, 1921.

[19] J. S. Woodsworth was regarded by the miners and steelworkers with a respect and affection that can only be called veneration. John MacKinnon, a Glace Bay miner, remembers with pride that he carried Mr. Woodsworth's luggage from the train to the hotel, when he first visited the area shortly after the Winnipeg General Strike. Farmers, too, sought his advice—C. A. Maxwell, Mount Thom, has told how he and several other Pictou County farmers boarded Mr. Woodsworth's train in Stellarton, late at night, to learn his views on matters of economics and social justice.

capitalism and its praise of the "workers' paradise" in Russia. The influence of moderate Labor leader Silby Barrett, as president of the Labor Herald Company, may have been a factor in restraining the tone of the paper's utterances. In its first issue, editor Cotton announced that the

> producing classes of the community have taken up the industrial and political question and placed candidates in the field for the Dominion elections . . . because our employing class and their political law makers, the Liberals and Conservatives have shown their incapacity to provide for the happiness, prosperity and employment of Canadian citizens.[20]

In its awareness that the support of all workers and farmers had to be sought if Farmer-Labor candidates were to win their elections, the new paper appealed to the religious and humanitarian susceptibilities of the people. The Bible and the papal encyclical on labor were quoted to show that the Farmer-Labor candidates stand "for the practical application of the ethics of Christianity in the arena of our national law making body."[21] But Carroll, Kyte, Douglas, and R. S. MacLellan, the Liberal and Conservative candidates, were

> attorneys administering a Pagan system of Law . . . the lawyer makes it his business and his living to take fees for enforcing non-Christian laws . . . on a loving Christian population . . . our laws have come down to us from the pagan tribes of Germany, or from the slave-holding Roman Empire,

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[20] Maritime Labor Herald, October 14, 1921.

[21] Ibid., October 29, 1921.

J. B. McLachlan called Liberal W. F. Carroll a liar for labelling McLachlan a "godless man." Further, in a public letter to Carroll, the fiery McLachlan recalled how

> in the winter of 1909-10, you made a little money working for the Dominion Coal Company. That Company was evicting the wives and children of striking miners and they required lawyers to do their dirty work for them. . . . Father Fraser /the Catholic pastor/ had to give the basement of his church as a refuge for a large number of families.[22]

The Maritime Labor Herald called Mackenzie King's Industrial Disputes and Investigation Act, "Canada's Fugitive Slave Law" since it permitted the courts to levy a fine on anyone who encouraged an employee to go or continue on strike. Cotton alleged that E. M. MacDonald, M.P. for Pictou, encouraged Mackenzie King, in 1909, to bring about the prosecution of Mr. Neilson, a U.M.W. organizer in Inverness. Neilson was fined five hundred dollars with the alternative of a three month jail term for giving relief orders to the families of striking miners. "Christ takes people to heaven for feeding the hungry," said Cotton, "and the Grits put them in jail for doing the same thing."[23] Following a different line of attack, J. W. Madden, Sydney lawyer and political orator, was said to have told a Conservative meeting in Richmond County that the Farmer-Labor Party, if elected, would nationalize women as well as other

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22 Ibid., November 5, 1921.

23 Ibid., October 14, 1921.

property, so that "a man's wife would be everybody's wife, and men would not know their own children." The Labor Herald drew from this the sarcastic inference that "only the strong rule of the lawyer tribe keeps farmers true to their wives."[24]

Along with their crusade against the "lawyer tribe" as lackeys of the Company, labor writers and speakers tried to persuade rural people that the interests of farmers and wage earners were almost identical. Their efforts might have been successful and Cape Breton Island might have returned four Progressives to Parliament had not public confidence in J. B. McLachlan's integrity been shaken by a dramatic revelation made by W. F. Carroll a few days before the election. At a public debate with McLachlan in a Sydney theatre, Carroll produced a letter in which McLachlan was accused of betraying the miners by accepting a 33 1/3% wage cut providing Besco officials would say nothing about it until after the Dominion election. The letter, supposedly written by Dave Ryan, a former U.M.W. officer in Thorburn, to Donald "The Boo" McIsaac in Glace Bay, was branded as a

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[24] Ibid., November 12, 1921. Stories of the nationalization of women under the Communist government in Russia were common. The 1919 Labor Gazette, Ottawa, printed a supplement stating that the local Soviet in the Russian city of Saratov had decreed, in 1918, that all women would be proclaimed the property of the nation. The Halifax Citizen, September 24, 1921, called this a piece of "fallacious anti-Bolshevist propaganda" on the part of the Government of Canada.

libel by both Ryan and McLachlan.[25] Its effectiveness in turning many workers against McLachlan, and against the Labor Party is said to have been great.[26] Mr. McLachlan's accusations that the letter was forged lost much of their force because he failed to bring a libel action against Carroll. No such suit was begun, said the Maritime Labor Herald, because two U.M.W. legal advisors—John A. Walker and G. S. Harrington—warned that it would be very expensive, and would weaken the U.M.W. by alienating Liberal miners.[27]

The results of the 1921 election were summed up acidly by Joe Wallace: "The public decided to try the Liberals before hanging them."[28] The Conservative Party, with its unpleasant wartime associations and its insistence that high tariffs would solve the postwar depression and unemployment, was crushed in Nova Scotia. Of the Farmer-Labor group, Isaac MacDougall, in Inverness came closest to victory. Attracting Conservative votes along with Farmer-

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25 Maritime Labor Herald, December 10, 17, 1921. Sydney Post, December 6, 1921.

26 Isaac MacDougall's statement, that "over-night the miners and steelworkers turned in large numbers against McLachlan," may be slightly extravagant. But many other observers believe that Donald "the Boo's" letter was a crucial factor in reducing McLachlan's following.

27 Maritime Labor Herald, December 17, 1921. John Walker and Gordon Harrington took an active part in the revival of the Conservative Party in Nova Scotia.

28 Halifax Citizen, December 9, 1921.

Labor votes, he was defeated by only 700, his Liberal opponent winning 4800 votes to MacDougall's 4100. In Cape Breton North-Victoria, M. A. MacKenzie lost out to D. D. McKenzie by more than 3000 votes. While McLachlan and Doyle won more votes than the Conservatives in Cape Breton South-Richmond, Liberals Kyte and Carroll were elected with very comfortable pluralities over the Farmer-Labor men. In the Liberal sweep of all of the seats in Nova Scotia all other Progressive candidates were severely defeated; those in mainland constituencies were snowed under, several of them losing their election deposits.[29] Mackenzie King's policy of being "all things to all men" had paid off; with the assistance of the moneyed interests who had abandoned Arthur Meighen as an unsafe shield against the agrarian-socialist threat, King was able to attract middle-of-the-road, conservative voters.[30] Many people who believed in the Progressive program of social reform voted Liberal simply because they doubted that the Farmer-Labor people had a chance to win. In Hants, some Progressives voted Liberal "in sorrow that their vote might count against Mr. Kendall . . . they sacrificed (the Progressive Party) to hurl the Meighen government from power."[31] W. O. Creighton, a leader

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29 Halifax Herald, December 7, 1921. E. J. Shields, "History of Trade Unionism," 86. Pictou Advocate, December 9, 1921.

30 W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party, 125-7.

31 United Farmers' Guide, January 16, 1922.

in the United Farmers' movement in Pictou County, declared that many who "believed in the platform and policy of the Progressive Party would have voted for Reid, if he had any chance."[32] Indeed, the slump in rural support for United Farmer candidates was very marked. In Cape Breton South-Richmond, for example, the Farmer-Labor men took a very heavy vote in the mining districts, a light vote in Sydney, and received practically no support in the rural polls. A large majority of votes were cast for Isaac MacDougall in Inverness town but few in the countryside. Undeniably, the farmers had lost faith in their own party.

The waning of farmer enthusiasm for independent political action was reflected in the drastic decline of membership in the United Farmers of Nova Scotia. By 1922, the membership had fallen from its 1920 high of 2500 to 254.[33] The few delegates who attended the annual meeting of the U.F.N.S. in 1922 determined to close the central office in Truro and to concentrate on the organization of co-operatives for buying and selling goods. "It was a mistake," said one delegate, "to have gone right into politics,"[34] while C. P. Blanchard maintained that "political action was needed for farmers to get their wants." But

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32 Pictou Advocate, December 16, 1921.

33 J. M. Beck, The Government, 168.

34 United Farmers' Guide, July 15, 1922.

Blanchard's plea fell on deaf ears. Delegates listened instead to guest speaker J. J. Morrison from Ontario. Already disturbed by E. C. Drury's attempts to merge the Ontario farmers with other groups Morrison advised Nova Scotian farmers to give up political action and work in other ways for the "development of the rural community and of agriculture as an industry."[35] By September, 1922, the Guide was admitting that many farmers were convinced that political organization was only "a ruse to pull political chestnuts out of the fire for the Western Grain Growers."[36] From politics the United Farmers turned to efforts to build up an interprovincial co-operative organization. Indeed, special efforts were necessary to keep the breath of life in the Maritime United Farmers' Co-operative. Since its establishment in 1920, that organization had lost thousands of dollars partly because of deflated prices resulting from the agricultural depression.[37] In 1922, United Farmer members supported, in the Legislatures of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, a Bill which authorized the re-organization of Maritime United Farmers' Co-operative to place it in a firmer financial position. The failure of a number of co-operative stores in Nova Scotia in 1921, caused both by

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35 Ibid.

36 Ibid., September 15, 1922.

37 Ibid.

inept management and by involvement in the financial difficulties of the Maritime United Farmers, was another blow to rural faith in the Farmers' movement.[38] But the survival of some stores and the growing importance of bulk purchases of feed, flour, and fertilizer, by farmers' co-operatives, helped to revitalize the commercial activities of the farmers.[38A] The educational and promotional work of Dr. Hugh MacPherson and other Extension workers from St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, was aided by community leaders like Alex McKay and W. A. Gunn, together with government employees such as Waldo Walsh and Malcolm MacCharles, in building co-operative organizations of great financial benefit to farmers. The active participation in the co-operative movement of clergymen like Dr. Hugh MacPherson, Dr. M. M. Coady, Father "Jimmy" Tompkins, and Rev. J. D. Nelson MacDonald, lent prestige and protection to the movement. The influence of hostile merchants, drovers, and farm supply companies on farmers' co-operatives was restrained, in Nova Scotia, by the influence of public-spirited priests and ministers. In New Brunswick, though, where the clergy took little or no part in the co-operative

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[38] R. J. MacSween, 1770 Vernon St. Halifax, and S. J. MacKinnon, Highland Drive, Antigonish, both mention the failure of the stores as a severe trial to the Farmers' Co-operative Movement.

[38A] S. J. MacKinnon, Antigonish, W. E. McConnell, Meadowville, had told how bulk buying of flour and fertilizer, by farmers' co-ops, resulted in savings of 50% to farmers.

movement, government employees attempting to organize co-operatives were often in danger of losing their jobs.[39]

While it is only one of the causes or symptoms of the slackening of farmers' political momentum, it is significant that the rejection of political entanglements was regarded, by the fieldworkers from St. Francis Xavier University, as an indispensable key to the success of farmers' co-operatives.[39A] It is not surprising that some of the United Farmers' representatives in the Legislature, finding their support in the countryside dwindling away to an insignificant minority, sought shelter in one or the other of the old parties. The provincial Conservative Party, which made an astonishing comeback after 1921, was the more appealing refuge. The federal Conservatives, no doubt fearing extinction of the Tories as a political force in Nova Scotia, were instrumental in calling a provincial convention of Conservatives in Truro in 1922. The convention selected W. L. Hall, as Provincial leader, over H. W. Corning and Thomas Cantley. A full-time organizer was appointed and wealthy manufacturer Frank Stanfield assured the Party of financial support.[40]

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[39] S. J. MacKinnon, Antigonish.

[39A] Ibid.

[40] Ernest R. Forbes, "The Rise and Fall of the Conservative Party in Provincial Politics," 2, 3, 5N.

The revitalized Conservatives adopted the tactic of posing as champions of "Maritime Rights" and honest government. The defeat of the federal Conservatives in 1921 made it possible for a "Maritime Rights" movement to denounce a Liberal administration in Ottawa for its neglect of the Maritimes. A series of public meetings in Halifax, to win public support for the "Maritime Rights" agitation, was supplemented by a publicity campaign in the Halifax Herald. In the Provincial Legislature, H. W. Corning introduced a resolution (prepared by the "Maritime Rights" group) calling for a referendum on Nova Scotia's secession from the Dominion.[41] Corning's resolution argued that Nova Scotia was prevented from selling its products in Central Canada by high freight rates but was unable to keep Ontario and Quebec from dumping their products in Nova Scotia. The establishment of Nova Scotia as an independent, self-governing British dominion, would allow the province to regulate the tariff to fit the needs of its own people.[42] A long, insipid resolution introduced by Liberal leader Armstrong, as an amendment to Corning's resolution, blamed the ills of Nova Scotia on its neglect by the Federal Conservative Party since 1867.[43]

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41 Ibid., 9, 10.

42 Ibid., 9-12.

43 Ibid. Also JHA, 1923, Part 1, 259.

In the vote on Armstrong's amendment, only McKenzie and Terris, of the Farmer-Labor group, supported Corning. While the Executive of the Conservative Party later dropped Secession as a policy it had served the purpose of thrusting the Conservatives forward as champions of provincial rights.

Even more effective in strengthening the Conservative position in the public eye was the stand taken by the party in supporting the coal miners in their 1925 strike. During 1922 and 1923, the blustering radicalism of U.M.S. leaders and their newspaper alienated many people including industrial workers who were sympathetic to the miners. During 1922 the executive of District 26, U.M.W., sought affiliation with the Red International of Labour Unions in Moscow.[44] The International Board of the U.M.W., early in 1923, refused to sanction any such affiliation contending that the R.I.L.U. was a Union-wrecking movement.[45] J. B. McLachlan shocked moderate Labor men and the public in general by attempting to negotiate a fifteen-million dollar distress loan by the Canadian government to Russia; the loan was to be used by the famine victims.[46] While Lenin accepted the offer for the

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44 The RILU was formed in July, 1921, by the Third (Communist) International to aid in the propagation of Communist doctrine in labor organizations throughout the world. (See Harold A. Logan, Trade Unions, 330).

45 Canadian Annual Review, 1922, 53-5. E. M. Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 60.

46 Canadian Annual Review, 1922, 53-5.

Soviet it was spurned by the Canadian Government and condemned by the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada.[47] McLachlan was now regarded by Besco, the provincial government, and the International Board of the U.M.W., as a potential leader of a violent revolution. Along with the other officers of District 26, McLachlan was deposed during 1923 for calling the miners out on strike in sympathy with striking Sydney steelworkers.[48] He was removed from the scene entirely in October, 1923; in a Supreme Court trial at Halifax he was found guilty of seditious conspiracy and of "causing disaffection among the subjects of the Crown."[49] His specific offense was a criticism of the action of Provincial policemen, mounted on pit-horses, who had charged into a crowd of church-goers in Sydney during the steel strike. He was sentenced to a two-year term in Dorchester penitentiary in spite of the efforts of defense lawyers Gordon S. Harrington, A. D. Campbell, and John A. Walker.[50]

McLachlan's deposition and imprisonment constituted a double blow to his prestige and authority among the miners.

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47 Ibid. Also E. J. Shields, "History of Trade Unionism," 54.

48 E. M. Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 61. Maritime Labor Herald, July 7, 1923.

49 Maritime Labor Herald, August 25, 1923.

50 Ibid., November 23, 1923. Also, John A. Walker interview.

He still kept the respect and affection of many of them, as was shown by the large crowds that welcomed him, in both mainland and Cape Breton colliery towns, upon his release from prison in 1924.[51] But they now had cause to doubt his power as a union leader and as a politician. He had promised, in one of his bursts of oratory in 1921, not to accept any Company offer which "would not give every man a bottle of whiskey in his pay-envelope."[52] But his fulminations against the Company and the lawyers had gained little for the men, and a jail term for himself.

The Halifax Citizen swung persistently toward the right during 1922. By April, 1923, Joe Wallace had been beaten in the struggle for control of the Halifax labor movement. The Citizen began to proclaim itself in each issue to be "absolutely opposed to Communism." But, while condemning the Workers' Party as a divisive force and a "political mulligan, modelled after . . . the First International,"[53] it could not condone the conviction of J. B. McLachlan on "trumped-up" charges. Editor Weeks of the Citizen called for another Joseph Howe to defend free speech in Nova Scotia as McLachlan's conviction showed it to be in

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[51] Antigonish Casket, March 13, 1924.

[52] Recollection of Maurice "Blue" MacDonald, Glace Bay. The promise was lent additional force, perhaps, by the fact that Mr. McLachlan was a teetotaller.

[53] Halifax Citizen, April 7, 1922.

danger.[54] The Citizen was sympathetic in its description of the mass meeting held in Halifax in 1924 to celebrate McLachlan's release from prison.[55] But it steadily opposed the boring-from-within tactics of the Workers' Party and the "Red raving . . . of imported firebrands."[56] Staff writer Joe Smallwood attempted to justify the singing of the "Red Flag," the Socialist anthem, at Labor meetings; Ramsay Macdonald had sung it at an I.L.P. meeting in Britain, said Smallwood.[57] But, in describing the 1923 defeat of the "Progressive Party" in the Ontario elections, the Citizen blamed the "waving of the Red flag . . . by some Labor leaders" as a factor in losing the support of farmers amd Conservatives.[58]

The waving of the Red flag, figuratively, by May-day parades, pro-Communist speeches, and inflammatory articles in the Maritime Labor Herald, turned a great many people against Labor's political arm. Especially important was the revulsion shown by people with regard to the hostility or indifference toward religion displayed by many radical Labor leaders. The Nova Scotian workers and farmers,

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54 Ibid., November 2, 1923.

55 Ibid., March 14, 1924.

56 Ibid., May 18, 1923.

57 Ibid., May 9, 1924.

58 Ibid., July 6, 1923.

Catholic and Protestant alike, had a strong inclination toward a sort of religious fundamentalism. While cherishing their religious divisions and quarrels even more than their political ones, they united to resist attacks on things of religion by people they regarded as "godless." As the early pro-religious pose of the Maritime Labor Herald indicates, the miners were particularly susceptible to a religious approach, J. S. Woodsworth is said to have regarded the Cape Bretoners as "religious radicals" while Joe Wallace was rather astonished to discover that the religious question was "of burning interest" to the Glace Bay miners in 1922.[59] In Halifax, a writer in the Citizen blamed the loss of membership in the Labor Party on the "radical, revolutionary Socialist speakers . . . who preached materialism and Darwinism, and compared the Trinity to 'spooks'."[60] Obviously, many industrial workers had reluctantly heeded radical agitators because ministers of religion had very often sided with employers against the just demands of workers. But the people would more readily heed clergymen who would be sympathetic to workingmen's needs and wants. Such clerical understanding and leadership became common after 1921.

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59 Ibid., May 12, 1922.

60 Ibid., April 20, 1923. Labor leaders Joe Steele and Dan McKay described in similar terms the resentment felt by Cape Bretoners for Mrs Rose Henderson's hostility toward religion.

A Presbyterian minister in Glace Bay told of the change of heart among clergymen:

> In the 1909 strike, my friend the Reverend Dr. Thompson and myself and a few other clergymen . . . did all we could to break up that strike. We believed at the time that we had good and sufficient reason for doing so. . . . We learned since that labor agitators are not necessarily troublesome or reckless characters . . . that coal company officials are not all saints . . . in the main, labor leaders are honest and sincere . . . they have a right to be heard.[61]

It is true that clergymen had not always been anti-Labor before 1920. Father Fraser, in New Aberdeen, had helped the families of evicted miners in 1909. But men of the cloth became more positively pro-union after 1921. During the steel strike of 1923, for example, Father Viola's fenced-in field at Whitney Pier provided the only safe place where union members could hold a meeting, without interference from soldiers and Company spies.[62] On the other hand, a left-wing historian of the U.M.W. has asserted that clergymen made up an important part of the "secret service system" which provided the Chief of the Besco police with information about Communist meetings.[63] Clearly, however,

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61 Rev. D. M. Gillies, in the Sydney Post, August 11, 1922.

62 This was the recollection of labor leaders Dan McKay, Doane Curtis, and Emerson Campbell (see Xavier College Library, Sydney, for a discussion of labor history among these three men, recorded by faculty members of Xavier College).

63 C. B. Wade, "History of District 26, U.M.W., 1919-41".

Protestant ministers and Catholic priests usually worked for the cause of Labor during the 1920's. At least part of their motivation was a desire to counteract the growing power of atheistic Communism. In the Halifax area, Rev. Harold Roe and Rev. Neil Herman took an active part in Labor organization. Rev. Herman even addressed a May Day celebration held in New Glasgow under Labor Party auspices.[64] In Windsor Plains, another minister, Rev. W. C. Perry, stood by the Negro plaster workers who were "ridiculed, reviled and threatened" when they joined in a strike for better conditions.[65] A program of adult education in economics, labor history, and consumer co-operation was instituted in the Cape Breton industrial areas by St. Francis Xavier University in order to neutralize the propaganda of the Maritime Labor Herald and the Trade Union Educational League. This counter-offensive by the churches was combined with pulpit denunciations of Bolshevism, its agents and its manifestations.

As Nova Scotian farmers had turned from political activity to a reliance on economic self help and on the old political parties, so the labor movement came to change its orientation. Not only was the influence of clergymen a factor in redirecting the focus of the U.M.W. The opposition

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64 Halifax Citizen, May 9, 1924.

65 Ibid., June 13, 1924.

of the U.M.W. International to a Labor Party was manifested by the International's deposition of McLachlan and his supporters.[66] There were reportedly a number of other occasions when John L. Lewis showed his disapproval of the attempt to create a Labor Party. The lack of support from the International in 1923, was, to many old P.W.A. men, a proof of their long-held conviction that the U.M.W. was only a "collecting agency for the American Unions."[67] Some of these P.W.A. men were probably among the supporters of the One Big Union which won a following among miners and steelworkers. In Sydney, an O.B.U. man arranged for financial aid to be given to the Steelworkers' Union when their International headquarters repudiated the debts run up by the Local in the 1923 strike.[68] In Pictou County, two U.M.W. locals voted to change their affiliation to the O.B.U. and the Company agreed to divert union dues to the O.B.U. from the U.M.W.[69] The U.M.W. International's failure to give financial aid to the miners during their brief strike early in 1924 helped to "make an opening for the O.B.U."

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66 John L. Lewis' action in deposing the District 26 officers was prompted, ostensibly, by their flouting the Union Constitution. But many miners regarded it as an indirect attack on the Labor Party.

67 Doane Curtis tape-recording.

68 Ibid.

69 Halifax Citizen, October 3, 1924.

in Cape Breton.[70] The opposition of the O.B.U. to political activity was certainly a factor in weakening the Labor Party. The loss of energetic leadership was another development of serious consequence to the Labor movement. Many workingmen were forced to leave Nova Scotia during the hard times to seek employment elsewhere. A few influential Labor leaders, like Arthur Pearson in Halifax, returned to Great Britain.[71] Several hundred workers were blacklisted by Besco for their participation in the 1923 steel strike.[72] To the rhetorical question, "Has Nova Scotia a large population?", the Halifax Citizen answered ironically: "Yes, about one million, in various parts of the United States. Some five hundred thousand still remain in Nova Scotia."[73] The Citizen's campaign for Maritime Rights, for greater use of the ports of St. John and Halifax, and for government policies which would halt the population drain from the province, coincided with, if it did not precede, the espousal of similar policies by the Conservative Party.

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70 E. M. Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 62-3. J. B. McLachlan blamed O.B.U. agitators for the fire which seriously damaged the Maritime Labor Herald printing plant in 1924. See E. J. Shields, "History of Trade Unionism," 61.

71 Halifax Citizen, March 10, 1922.

72 Many steelmen, like Dan McKay, had to go to Gary, Indiana, to get a job, since Besco's agreements with other Canadian steel producers prevented blacklisted men from working in any Canadian steel plant.

73 Halifax Citizen, December 9, 1921.

The Farmer-Labor M.L.A.'s found themselves fighting the Conservatives' battle for them in the Assembly. After Howard Corning's death in 1924, the two lone Conservatives in the House were leaderless. During the 1924 session the majority of Farmer-Labor members continued to vote with the Conservatives on a number of Resolutions including Corning's Bill to abolish the Legislative Council.74 A great deal of time was spent during this session in dealing with petitions concerning Church Union. Many Presbyterian congregations, not wishing to join with the Methodists to become part of the newly-formed United Church of Canada, petitioned the Legislature for permission to retain control of their churches and church property. Most certainly the United-Presbyterian tug-of-war caused bitter feelings in many areas, dividing families, and shattering congregations. While the Farmer-Labor members split their votes on Church Union petitions, so did the Liberals. No coherent voting pattern can be established in this case.

The 1925 session of the Legislature might well be called the "coal-strike session." During most of the session, the Conservatives and most of the Farmer-Labor members hammered at the Government for its ineptitude and heavy-handedness in dealing with the miners' strike in Cape Breton

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74 JHA, 1924, Part 1, 124-5.

and for its notorious gerrymander in Cape Breton.[75] The Liberals, led by Armstrong, seemed to have a death-wish upon them. All of their actions in dealing with the coal-strike and the sufferings of miners' families seemed to be calculated to facilitate the destruction of their administration. They had lost two men whose advice if followed might have averted part of the calamity which fell on the Liberal Party in 1925. R. M. MacGregor died in 1924 while the ailing George Murray had retired in 1923.

An indication of the magnitude of the problem faced by Armstrong's Government in 1925 is given by newspaper accounts of the turmoil in the Cape Breton coalfields:

> (New York Times) The widespread condemnation of the Liberal Party's regime . . . is asserted to be caused by the Government's dilatory policy with regard to the strike in the Cape Breton colliery district, which has been under way for five months, has been marked by violence, and has seriously affected economic conditions throughout the Province.[76]
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> (Sydney Post) Besco is trying to reduce 40,000 of the people of the Province to a state of slavery. The General Manager of that organization has actually boasted his power to starve employees into accepting a wage reduction.[77] Miner Davis (has

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75 The redistribution of seats in Cape Breton and Richmond counties was a flagrant attempt to "hive" the miners into one constituency, and reduce acadian voting power in Richmond County (see the Antigonish Casket, April 9, 1925. Also J. M. Beck, The Government, 239. Also JHA, 1925, 91, 102).

76 Quoted in the Halifax Herald, July 2, 1925.

77 Sydney Post, April 25, 1925.

> been) killed by a Company policeman at the Waterford powerhouse. One thousand miners marched on the plant, and were charged on by mounted police, without warning. A Company store has been completely looted in North Sydney, by men, women, and boys. Everything from handkerchiefs to barrels of flour taken. One town policeman who tried to interfere was stoved by the Crowd . . . Houses and buildings owned by scabs have been burned . . . 300 regular troops of the Royal Canadian Regiment and Royal Canadian Dragoons leave Toronto for Cape Breton.[78]
>
> (Maritime Labor Herald) Armstrong is trying to crush the miners down to a coolie level. . . . He will send men with 18-inch knives on the end of a gun to convince them you ought to work.[79]

While Conservative and Labor newspapers exaggerated the incendiarism and violence to a degree, their accounts of the situation were much closer to the truth than the head-in-the sand attitude of the Liberals. The same may be said of the contrast in attitude toward the suffering of coal-miners and their families. Besco officials R. M. Wolvin and J. E. McLurg, early in 1925, attempted to force the miners to accept a 10% wage reduction by cutting off their credit at the Company stores. Many mines had been only running part-time for several months and more than 1500 people dependent on them began to suffer acute hardship.[80] Attempts by Premier Armstrong and by the Federal Department of Labour to mediate in the dispute failed because of Besco obstinacy.

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[78] Ibid., June 12, 15, 16, 1925.

[79] Maritime Labor Herald, January 3, 1925.

[80] E. M. Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 67.

The U.M.W. executive called the miners out on strike in March, 1925. Distress among the people of the mining towns soon became very severe. Citizens' Relief Committees, Labour organizations, churches, and charities throughout Canada contributed funds to ward off destitution in the mining towns. International U.M.W. President John L. Lewis visited the area in April. He concluded that the Company was attempting to destroy the U.M.W. and authorized the payment of $10,000 weekly by International headquarters to relieve distressed miners' families. Twenty thousand dollars was given by the Provincial Government to the Red Cross for relief of ill-health in the mining districts.[81] An offer of special aid was received from a distant and rather unexpected source— the Russian Miners' Union offered the sum of $5000 to relieve the sufferings of their comrades in Cape Breton. The offer was refused by J. W. MacLeod, U.M.W. President and by the Citizens' Relief Committee.[82]

Premier Armstrong and his government refused to admit that a state of emergency existed in the mining towns. In the face of appeals for aid to the starving miners made by clergymen and municipal officials, the Liberals stubbornly maintained that Conservative and Labor organs were grossly

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[81] E. M. Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 70-72.

[82] Maritime Labor Herald, April 4, 1925. Halifax Herald, March 21, 1925.

distorting the situation for political purposes. A. S. MacMillan of Antigonish, now a Legislative Council member, was asked by Armstrong to investigate reports of miners' suffering; MacMillan reported that suffering was largely "among shiftless families who had saved nothing for a rainy day."[83] His testimony was reinforced by R. M. Wolvin's amazing action in urging relief organizations to hesitate before aiding miners' families; such aid, he argued, would only help miners to stay on strike longer and cut down on the market for coal in the coming winter.[84] In the House of Assembly, Liberal members were berated by United Farmer John A. MacDonald for their derisive laughter at Forman Way's description of miners' sufferings.[85] In the House of Commons at Ottawa, the Liberal M.P. for Lunenburg, William Duff, assured the Members that reports of mine distress were much exaggerated. After his assertions were attacked by J. S. Woodsworth, Duff, in a master-piece of self-contradiction, claimed that D. W. Morrison, Glace Bay mayor and Labor M.L.A., was deliberately allowing women and children to starve for political purposes.[86]

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[83] Ernest R. Forbes, "The Rise and Fall of the Conservative Party in Nova Scotia," 48N.

[84] Sydney Post, April 27, 1925.

[85] New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle, March 10, 1925.

[86] Ibid., April 10, 17, 1925.

Early in the strike, United Farmer D. G. McKenzie had attempted to have the Provincial Government make a substantial direct contribution to relieve the distress of starving miners. His attempts had been defeated. Of the Liberals, only Welsford MacDonald of Pictou, voted with the Opposition and the Conservatives. The Attorney-General warned that Government "must investigate carefully before committing itself to the expenditure of the people's money."[87] But the Government had to spend a great deal of the people's money in attempting to keep law and order during the strike. Not only did several hundred Provincial police have to be paid by the Government of Nova Scotia but the soldiers as well. The Halifax Herald estimated the costs of the strike to the Nova Scotian taxpayers to be more than $6600 a day—a figure which included the loss of coal royalties along with the cost of troops and police.[88] In addition, the burning of the mine surface buildings in New Waterford and the danger of flooding in several mines because of the withdrawal of

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[87] JHA, 1925, Part 1, 39, 49.

[88] Halifax Herald, July 8, 1925. The issue of July 4 quoted a telegram from the Federal Minister of Labor to John L. Lewis, in which it was said that "about 1000 troops" were in the area. Pressure from the Trades and Labor Congress helped to bring about an amendment to the Militia Act, whereby the militia could be called out, in local disturbances, only by the Attorney-General of a province, and the Provincial Government was made responsible for the expense involved. (See Canadian Annual Review, 1924, 179). Also Harold A. Logan, History, 252N.

maintenance men made it seem possible that coal production, employment, and royalties, would suffer for years as a result of the strike. The Provincial Government could not settle the strike. The Industrial Disputes Investigation Act (Lemieux Act), which provided conciliation machinery, had just been declared ultra vires by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.[89] Premier Armstrong's attempts to replace the Lemieux Act with Provincial legislation calling for compulsory arbitration was opposed by some Liberal M.L.A.'s, by Trade Unions, and by most employers except Besco.[90]

A Conservative victory in the 1925 Provincial election was a foregone conclusion. The Liberal government's only tactics in the campaign were to charge that the Conservatives were working with Communists, and that their leader, E. N. Rhodes, was "shackled to Arthur Meighen and the Ontario interests."[91] The Liberals' insinuation that Rhodes was foisted upon Nova Scotians by "Ontario interests" was,

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89 Harold A. Logan, History, 227N.

90 E. M. Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 73. JHA, 1925, 245-6, 269. Pictou M.L.A.'s R. H. Graham and Welsford MacDonald voted against Armstrong's proposed legislation. A. J. MacGillivray, R. H. Smith, and A. J. Richardson supported it.

91 Halifax Morning Chronicle, June 25, 1925.

perhaps, not without some foundation. The competent but uninspiring W. L. Hall had been deposed as Conservative leader by a "decree" of the Conservative candidates and the provincial convention. E. N. Rhodes, Speaker of the House of Commons before he lost his Cumberland County seat in the 1921 election, accepted the invitation of the Conservative executive to lend his oratorical powers and his "charisma" to the provincial Conservative Party.[92] The Conservatives' strategy was to present Mr. Rhodes as the "white knight" who would solve the problems of depopulation, depression, and industrial conflict.

The Conservatives' assumption of the guise of "workingman's champion" was supported by the pro-Labor record of the Conservative M.L.A.'s elected in 1920. In addition, lawyers Gordon S. Harrington, John C. Douglas, and John A. Walker, noted for their Labor sympathies, were Conservative candidates in the election. The Conservative platform showed a favourable attitude toward the social legislation which Labor had so long demanded. Labor M.L.A. Archie Terris, in 1923, had joined the stampede toward the Conservatives by agreeing to run with Conservative endorsement

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92 J. M. Beck, The Government, 176-7. The suggestion that Rhodes came into provincial politics as the "hatchetman" of the provincial executive, and especially of Halifax Herald publisher Dennis, to preside over Hall's political demise, has been stoutly denied by Conservatives.

in the next Provincial election. In Halifax, the Conservatives had an "understanding" with Labor officialdom that Labor would not oppose the Conservative candidate in a Federal by-election early in 1925.[93] The Halifax Citizen, as early as 1922, talked of the futility of contesting elections when the Labor Party was disorganized and apathetic. Proof of the Citizen's contention was supplied by the poor showing made by Labor candidate J. J. O'Connell in a federal by-election in December, 1922. In losing to Liberal R. E. Finn, Mr. O'Connell received fewer votes than Labor candidates had won in Halifax in the elections of 1920 or 1921. By 1925, the Citizen was very cool toward the nomination of Labor candidates. While a Halifax branch of the Canadian Labor Party was organized in 1922, as an antidote to the rather moderate Independent Labor Party,[94] its lack of vitality and unity was shown by several attempts at reorganization and by the withdrawal of Trades and Labor Congress support.[95]

The Communist sympathies of the Canadian Labor Party were attacked by the Sydney Post early in 1925 and the Post went on to direct a broadside against the local Labor M.L.A.'s:

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93 Halifax Citizen, February 27, 1925.

94 Ibid., June 15, 1922.

95 Ibid., April 3, June 12, 1925. The T.L.C. decided to withdraw its support because of the strength of the Communist element and radical propaganda in the C.L.P.

> Just what politics the four individuals may represent who were swept into the Legislature from Cape Breton on a wave of discontent five years ago, few would undertake to say. One . . . has fallen from grace, and had lapsed into a species of Grit Ishmaelite. Another is a recent convert to the O.B.U idea. The other two describe themselves as members of the I.L.P. All four have failed, not through lack of will but lack of experience, knowledge, judgment and capacity. But their election was worthwhile as a demonstration of the futility of a spent movement.[96]

The Post obviously lumped A. R. Richardson, the "Grit Ishmaelite," together with the Labor representatives. Richardson and MacGillivray had already shown their intention of returning to the Liberal ranks. In leaving the United Farmer ranks they could hardly be accused of deserting the ship; their ship had disappeared from under them. At a sparsely attended provincial convention in 1924, the United Farmers eschewed all participation in political ventures.[97] However, in 1925, at least four county conventions of Farmers "formally decided to co-operate with the Conservatives in the provincial election."[98] D. G. McKenzie ran in Cumberland as a Farmer-Conservative candidate; he had come to an agreement with his old party at the same time as Archie Terris. Farmer M.L.A. John A. MacDonald also announced his support of E. N. Rhodes in order to "replace

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96 Sydney Post, April 23, 1925.

97 Canadian Annual Review, 1924, 356.

98 Sydney Post, June 27, 1925.

a decrepit Provincial government by a virile and progressive one."[99] One of the more able and aggressive leaders of the United Farmers' political movement, H. L. Taggart, was forced to abandon his farming operation because of financial reverses; he went to Olds, Alberta, in either 1925 or 1926.[100]

The swing of farmers to the Conservatives was facilitated by the inclusion, in the Conservative platform, of most of the planks from the 1920 platform of the United Farmers. The Conservatives promised increases in teachers' salaries, the teaching of agriculture as a school subject, the conservation of natural resources, and the abolition of the Legislative Council.[101]

With the advantages of vigorous leadership and an enlightened legislative program designed to appeal to farmers and workers, the Conservatives were able to crush the Liberals and Labor men in the election of June 25, 1925. Voting was very heavy; more than 450,000 votes were cast, showing the extraordinary interest of the people. More than 60% of these were for the Conservatives. The Liberals took only 36.3%. Ten Labor candidates, who ran in Pictou, Halifax,

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99 Ibid., May 7, 1925.

100 C. B. Fergusson, Directory of M.L.A.'s 335-6. Also, Hector Hill, Truro, N. S.

101 Ernest R. Forbes, "The Rise and Fall of the Conservative Party in Provincial Politics," 19.

and two Cape Breton constituencies, took only 2.8% of the provincial vote. Only three Liberals were elected—two in Antigonish, and one in Victoria. Only in two wards in Glace Bay did Labor candidates D. W. Morrison and Forman Way have a plurality. Way and Morrison were the only Labor candidates who received more votes than their Liberal opponents and they were also the only Labor men who did not lose their deposits. In Halifax, Pictou, and Cape Breton Centre, Labor candidates took pitifully small votes. Terris and McKenzie were elected in Cumberland, as Labor-Conservative and Farmer Conservative respectively. No United Farmers' candidates contested the election.

In summing up the election results, the Halifax Citizen deplored the "pig-headed ambition" of some Labor leaders who had made the working-class look ridiculous by forcing the entrance of Labor candidates in a hopeless cause. "Labor gains little by direct political action," declared the Citizen "unless well enough united and organized to get power."[102]

The Rhodes administration was able to keep some of its promises to the people. The Legislative Council was abolished in 1929. The hated Provincial Police were disbanded. The Cape Breton coal strike was settled within six

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[102] Halifax Citizen, July 3, 1925.

weeks after the election, partly through the intervention of Rhodes and Harrington.[103]

Although the Conservatives, through their leader, attacked the monopoly of ministerial appointments by the legal profession, four out of the five salaried portfolios in the Rhodes administration were held by lawyers.[104] Aside from this, perhaps, it was unavoidable necessity, the Conservative Party in the province showed a flexibility and willingness to deal with public discontent through inquiry, compromise, and legislative action. The Liberals showed no such flexibility or understanding. It is clear that very many of the discontented people who backed Farmer-Labor candidates in 1920 changed their allegiance, probably with relief, to the reform-conscious Conservatives in 1925. The Conservative Party was safe and traditional, socially acceptable, and it did not attempt to "educate" people into accepting a complicated philosophy.

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103 E. M. Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects, 78-9. Halifax Herald, August 7, 1925. There was a feeling of suspicion among the miners that J. W. MacLeod, U.M.W. District President, who was an ardent Conservative, conspired with the provincial executive of the Conservative Party to prolong the strike so that it could be used as a weapon in the election. There were some grounds for the belief— A letter from Harrington to Mr. MacLeod, advised the U.M.W. executive not to accept a reasonably favourable offer from the Company early in 1925, on grounds that "a prolonged strike would get rid of the Wolvin management." See "The Rise and Fall of the Conservative Party," 53N. Also Angus F. MacDonald interview.

104 J. M. Beck, The Government, 93-4.

The United Farmers, as a political force, were dead and buried long before the 1925 election. The Labor Party, usually under the name of the Canadian Labor Party, continued to contest elections in Cape Breton, with a uniform lack of success, during the late 1920's. Its demise, in 1931, was followed by a revival of the Independent Labor Party in Cape Breton. Regular monthly meetings of this I.L.P. were held in the Cape Breton colliery towns until it became affiliated with the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Cape Breton during the early '30's.[105] By acting as a nucleus for the formation of the C.C.F. in Cape Breton, the I.L.P. acted as a link between the political and social discontent of the post-war period and the dissatisfaction aroused by the Great Depression.

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[105] Angus F. MacDonald, Wood Avenue, New Waterford. Also E. J. Shields, "History of Trade Unionism," 89.

EPILOGUE

If it is regarded primarily as a political movement aspiring to a position of power, the Farmer-Labor movement can only be classed as a failure. It never achieved political power in Nova Scotia. The United Farmers were snuffed out, politically, after a brief and rather checkered existence. While the Labor Party maintained a sickly life for several years after the Farmers' passing, its influence was negligible. And yet the efforts of farmers and workers, in politics, were not in vain. The success of the Farmer-Labor people in 1920 was the "hand-writing on the wall," as far as the old parties were concerned; if Liberals and Conservatives failed to recognize the popular demands for social legislation, and to give proper recognition to the position of farmers and workingmen, their very existence as political parties was threatened.

So, while the Farmer-Labor group never achieved power, its influence on politics in Nova Scotia was of some consequence. Its leavening action on provincial politics was similar to that of the Progressives, or, later, of the C.C.F.,

on federal politics. Abolition of the Legislative Council, more equitable taxation, reforestation, better pay for teachers, and encouragement of co-operative enterprise, were all policies which the United Farmers advocated in 1920. All of these were adopted as policies, and some of them implemented, by the Conservative and Liberal parties in the years that followed. The same may be said of some Labor Party measures such as unemployment insurance, old age pensions, government housing, and minimum wages.[1] The question must be asked--if social welfare legislation, democratic voting methods, and dislike of "privilege" in government had so much appeal for the people in 1920, why did voters almost immediately turn against the parties that first brought these policies into the field of politics? The common answer is that naturally conservative, tradition-loving Nova Scotians reject an old established party only as a last resort and in extraordinary circumstances.[2] Yet, the Farmer or Farmer-Labor parties were also rejected by voters in other provinces of Canada, even in the "progressive" Western provinces and

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[1] Many Labor proposals could actually be implemented only by federal action, or combined federal-provincial action. For this and other reasons, it was a long time before an Unemployment Insurance scheme was put into effect.

[2] W. L. Morton has referred to the "immemorial conservatism" and "steady ways" of the Maritime Provinces. (The Progressive Party, 83, 127). From this rule, Professor Beck finds an exception in the heavily-industrialized areas of Cape Breton, with their strong unions and large foreign-born element (See The Government, 169).

Ontario. Admittedly, the success of the Progressive movement in the West was much greater and more long-lasting than in Nova Scotia. But both the United Farmers and the various Labor parties were essentially protest movements. In the West, they expressed the revolt of farmers against the old National policy, post-war inflation, and the return to a free market in wheat after the termination of the Wheat Board. Even in the West a traditional party, if sufficiently agrarian, could defeat Progressivism as the Liberals did in Saskatchewan.[3] In Ontario where the social structure was more complex than in the West, an agrarian party was barred from office, unless it could obtain the help of organized Labor, as E. C. Drury was able to do. In the Western provinces, with the exception of Alberta, the organized farmers turned from politics to economic action, with the organization of the Wheat Pools.[4] A similar rejection of politics occurred in Ontario, where the United Farmers, after their political defeat in 1923, veered from political action to educational and co-operative work.

Certainly, the nature of the farmers' resentment in Nova Scotia was very similar to that of Ontario farmers—both groups were irritated, and worried, about rural depopulation, government neglect of the farmer, and the accepted

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[3] W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada, 211, 232.

[4] Ibid., 212.

dominance of political and social life by the industrial and professional classes. But the Nova Scotia farmers were inferior, in both leadership and in organizational discipline, to their peers in Ontario and the West. The United Farmers' movement in Nova Scotia can hardly be called a "grassroots" movement, as was the United Farmers movement in Ontario in its beginnings in Manitoulin.[5] The inspiration for the Farmers' Party in Nova Scotia was largely from outside the province—through the speeches and newspaper propaganda from New Brunswick and Ontario, together with electoral success there. It is easy to say that the successful Farmer and Labor candidates were opportunists, taking advantage of local conditions and temporary political aberrations to get into positions of prominence. And yet, opportunism is the stuff of which successful politicians are made. If the ranks had held fast and a united and disciplined party organization had been maintained, McKenzie, Way, and their colleagues might have demonstrated enough generalship to build a party which would have replaced the weakened Conservatives. But, as incentives for the formation of the United Farmers came from outside Nova Scotia, so did some of the causes of

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[5] J. M. S. Careless has expressed the view that the Western Progressive movement was not essentially agrarian in its origins, but was bound up with the rise of Winnipeg as a prairie metropolis, providing intellectual leadership for the Progressive movement (J.M.S. Careless, "Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History", C.H.R. 1954, 19). But this view does not adequately explain the strength of the Farmers' movement in Ontario and Alberta.

their decline—the defeat of the Ontario Farmers, and the scandal associated with the conviction and trial of Peter Smith, Provincial Treasurer in the U.F.O. administration, were especially harmful to the movement in Eastern Canada. The failure of Nova Scotian Farmer-Labor members to win favorable legislation in the House of Assembly could have increased the determination of their rank-and-file followers to build a strong Farmers' Party that would crush the Liberals. Instead, it made them more resolved to support the Conservatives. The "scandal" of the increased indemnities for M.L.A.'s was hardly serious enough to justify the displeasure which it aroused among farmers; there was a touch of hypocrisy in the storm of virtuous indignation that arose from the rural areas. Many of those protesting had, probably, pocketed a bottle of rum or a five-dollar bill for their vote in previous elections. It should be said, however, that voters saw little wrong with a bit of bribery at election time. Many regarded it as a demonstration of democracy and good-fellowship on the part of the candidate. Others even saw it as a voters' right to share in the largesse of political parties. Yet all would unite to condemn an elected official who was caught dipping into the public purse.

It is difficult to estimate the actual strength of class feeling and its importance in the rise of the Farmer-Labor movement. The frequent attacks on the great power

and influence exercised by the legal profession probably met with far more approval in Labor ranks than among the farmers. Many farmers were almost as accustomed to dealing with the small-town lawyer as with the country doctor and found it very difficult to look on him as a soulless, grasping tyrant. The labor-union man, though, with a stronger sense of class division, tended to regard the lawyers, in general, as allies and servants of the employer group.[6] Both farmer and worker outside of Halifax were easily aroused to resentment at the disproportionate influence which the business and professional community of Halifax exercised in Provincial affairs. But rural voters could be easily convinced, as they were in 1925, that one of the old parties was ready and able to stop government "corruption" and rural depopulation, even when most of its candidates were business and professional men.

The obvious explanation for farmers' and workers' reluctance to stand for public office is the demands on money

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[6] However, the proportion of lawyers and doctors in the House of Assembly did not change significantly between 1916 and 1925. Fifteen lawyers were elected in 1916, twelve in 1925. Obviously, the voting public was not convinced that lawyers would not make good representatives. (See J. M. Beck, The Government of Nova Scotia, Appendix M.) Professor Mallory has referred to the distrust of lawyers manifested by labor men and farmers—"the abiding belief of the North American frontier . . . that plain men could make plain law and dispense plain justice better than the professionals . . . the man with the dinner pail has sought the same objective . . . hence the devotion to such legislative gimmicks as the initiative and referendum." See J. R. Mallory, "The Lawyer in Politics," Dalhousie Review, October, 1950, 230.

and time which it entails. In addition, the average farmer had less opportunity to get a higher education than the town dweller who lived close to schools. Members of a farm family who received a higher education promptly left the farm; urban workers' children who won a high school education abandoned the ranks of labor. Farmers like H. L. Taggart, or R. H. Smith, who won success in the political field, were regarded with some suspicion by rural people. If the farmer representative was well off, he was under a cloud of mistrust as one who was overly sharp in his business dealings. If he was poor, the people preferred an apparently prosperous candidate, on the supposition that he would not fill his pockets at public expense. As a rule, Nova Scotian primary producers, (or "crofters," as Joe Steele called them), preferred to subsist in the state of "quasi-colonialism" to which C. B. MacPherson refers.[7]

Viewed in this light, the political independence of

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[7] In the case of Alberta farmers (and indeed those of the West generally), Professor MacPherson argues that the western prairie region, after 1880, was a colony of Eastern Canada, subordinate to the interests of eastern Capital. The resistance of the federal government to the anti-monopoly and anti-tariff demands of Western farmers led the farmers to organize their own political parties as a vehicle of regional and vocational protest. (See C. B. MacPherson, Democracy in Alberta (Toronto, 1953), 5-10. But Nova Scotian primary producers lack the unifying factor of a monolithic one-crop economy, which is provided in the West by the production and sale of grain. The problems of Nova Scotian farmers and fishermen are "so diffuse that combined action to improve their lot is rendered extraordinarily difficult." (J. M. Beck, The Government, 169).

Nova Scotian rural voters in 1920 was as astonishing as the return to traditional ways was inevitable. The political solidarity and enterprise displayed by unionized industrial workers is less surprising. In Springhill, Glace Bay, and Pictou County, they possessed a strong labor-union organization, a community of interest, and a tradition of combined action for seeking from Government and the Company, satisfaction of their needs. But their decline as a political force is not so easily explained. The fear of Communism, the increasingly favorable attitude of the clergy and of the Conservative Party, all eroded the confidence of workingmen in their own party. Lawyers, like Harrington and Douglas, were no longer ogres, but friends and allies. In a time of unemployment, suffering, and hunger, workers rejected the British-type Independent Labor Party and plumped for politically independent unions that would lobby any party that was in power. The coal miners, after their unpleasant experiences with the U.M.W. International in 1923, preferred to go along with the American system and avoid the displeasure of John L. Lewis.

One factor in the decline of the Labor Party was the discovery that the farmers were a broken reed--their support was never dependable. It is very true that many--probably most--farmers and fishermen distrusted the labor unions and the Labor Party. Their views on wages and prices, on hours of work, on Daylight Saving Time, and (to an extent) on

Prohibition, were quite dissimilar. The only common grounds on which they could meet were the encouragement of co-operatives, of direct voting procedures, and of common dislike for lawyers and merchants. This was not enough. Not only were the interests of farmer and worker divergent in many ways, but there are indications that the business community, in Nova Scotia as elsewhere, began with some vigor to seek farmer support against organized labor. Government aided in this endeavour as the increasing number of agricultural fieldworkers actively encouraged a greater rapport between farmer and businessman.[8] It is safe to assume that the farmers' interest in co-operative organizations caused some concern to businessmen who saw inroads on their profits. It was not difficult to convince farmers—particularly the bigger farmers—that they were, after all, businessmen, and that the idea of political co-operation with "greedy" Labor men was only a mirage.

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[8] Waldo Walsh, Malcolm McCharles, and S. J. MacKinnon all of whom were associated with the Department of Agriculture in the 1920's, have noted this trend. The Minutes of the United Farmers of Nova Scotia, Pictou County branch, bear out the assertion. In 1925, for example, the principal of the Agricultural College spoke to the Pictou County farmers on the necessity of co-operation between the farmers and businessmen of the community. During 1928, representatives of urban Boards of Trade courted the farmers' support. (Minutes of the United Farmers of Nova Scotia, Pictou County Branch, December 5, 1925, December 6, 1928). There was a similar tendency on the part of the business community in the United States. (See Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York, 1955), 124-5.

One of the most striking developments in the growth of the United Farmers was their failure to obtain a substantial degree of backing in the Annapolis Valley, the province's chief agricultural region. The agricultural co-operatives of the prairie provinces and of Ontario had preceded or accompanied the growth of farmers' political action. The farmers of the Annapolis Valley also had well-established co-operative organizations to market apples and other farm produce. But the nature of the marketing problems differed very greatly between the apple business and the wheat business. The apple producers were assured of a market in Great Britain, their storage and transportation problems were more easily solved than those of the prairie farmer and governments had usually been very good to them. For the most part they had become capitalist-minded "farmer aristocrats" accustomed to prosperity. Also, examination of the census figures (see Appendix C) shows that the rural population in the Annapolis Valley counties—Hants, Kings, and Annapolis did not decline significantly from 1901 to 1921, nor did it suffer from a sharp decline in relation to the changes in urban population there during the period. Valley fruit farmers, secure in the prosperity and prestige of their specialized branch of agriculture, had little reason to protest against a benign government.

While the United Farmers' movement was essentially a protest movement, its complaint was not only against present economic injustice. In its concern for reforestation, for

conservation of natural resources, and its attempt to convince the farmer of his own importance in the life of the nation, it was fighting a rearguard action against the onslaught of urbanization and financial interests. To a considerable degree, the Labor movement served a parallel purpose; the Halifax Citizen carried on a long fight for the preservation of streams and forests as places of recreation for the worker, and as part of the natural heritage of all Canadians. Their warnings were often in vain, as rivers were handed over to hydro-power interests and forests parcelled out to the pulp companies. They may have helped avert even greater waste and destruction of provincial resources than actually occurred.

In this matter of conservation, as in other matters, the Farmer-Labor movement attempted to be the "voice of the people." Its great service was to warn, to remind the traditional parties that government involved more than maintenance of law and order and the collecting and spending of public money. In a decade when provincial governments were growing in power at federal expense, Liberals and Conservatives were forcibly reminded (although the Liberals were slow to catch on) that persistent neglect of popular needs could lead to electoral defeat. The intermittent attempts by the Farmer and Labor Press to promote a political union of the Maritime Provinces to resist the domination of Ontario broke on the reef of regionalism. The call for

"Provincial Rights" was a more familiar tune to Nova Scotian ears and it was an appealing chorus when sung by the Conservatives in 1925. Like a respectable and once prosperous family that has "come down in the world," Nova Scotians preferred to remain in genteel poverty and dignified isolation rather than be led astray again by radical political movements. Their position, however, was not merely one of ultra-conservative defeatism; a certain shrewdness, or cynical realism, kept them from supporting a party which like the federal Progressive Party, might shrink from the responsibility of forming an Opposition. The electorate was willing to use the threat of a third-party "swing" as a lever to force the old parties into assuming a more active role, especially in provincial politics. In spite of its inherent paradoxes and its occasionally quixotic efforts, the Farmer-Labor crusade brought a breeze of cleansing air to the stuffy atmosphere of provincial society and politics.

APPENDIX A

UNITED FARMERS' POLITICAL PLATFORM

DRAWN UP ON JUNE 9, 1920

BY THE FARMERS' BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN TRURO

(As printed in the United Farmers' Guide, June 16, 1920)

Whereas it is essential in the interest of good government that the farmers of this province should take an active part in shaping the legislation of the province in order to ensure clean and efficient government and equal justice to all citizens and

Whereas the organized farmers all over the Dominion have always placed principle above party and without partisan prejudice used their best efforts in securing the most efficient and economical administration of provincial affairs

Be it resolved

1. that we stand for advanced agricultural resources.
2. that we stand for a general increase of grants to teachers; that the subject of agriculture be regularly taught in the common schools. That facilities be provided at the Agricultural College of Nova Scotia

equal to those of MacDonald or Guelph. That dormitories be built to accommodate students attending the college and that a special agricultural course be required as part of our teacher training courses.

3. that we stand for simplifying the method of expending public money on roads, reducing the overhead expenditure and providing greater efficiency in administration.
4. that a more equitable distribution of taxes be adopted looking to securing increased revenue from our mines and forests and that a system of uniform municipal assessments be adopted.
5. that a definite and comprehensive policy of reforestation be adopted and a policy equally effective looking to the conservation of timber and protecting our mineral wealth and water powers from purely speculative exploitations.
6. that we favour legislation that will facilitate the extension of co-operative agencies in agriculture to cover the whole field of marketing including arrangements with consumers' societies for the supplying of foodstuffs at the lowest rates within the minimum of middleman handling.
7. that the Legislative Council be abolished.
8. that no provincial elections shall be held without giving to electors sixty days' notice and that seats made vacant be filled by the holding of by-elections within ninety days after the vacancy has been made.

9. that we stand for the prohibition of the manufacture, importation and sale of intoxicating liquor as beverage in Nova Scotia.

APPENDIX B

LABOR PARTY PLATFORM

(From the Halifax Citizen, July 16, 1920)

1. Public Ownership of all Public Utilities and Natural sources of Wealth. Public Ownership of Banking and Credit systems, Life, Health and Fire Insurance Companies, and Government Ownership and Operation of Cold Storage systems.

2. Democratic control of Industry. Equal Pay for Equal Work; Minimum Wage for Women and Minors, Equality of Opportunity for Men and Women Politically and Economically.

3. Equal Pensions, irrespective of rank, for Disabled Soldiers and Sailors, or their Widows and Dependents, to be based on the necessity of maintaining the Pensioners economic position in Society.

4. The Guarantee to every Child from birth to maturity of the material Necessities of life and an unlimited Education, with the Educational system to be changed to conform with the ideal of Co-operation instead of the system of Competition. Pensions to Mothers with Dependent Children and Old Age Pensions to all.

5. Abolition of Election Deposits and of Property Qualifications for voting and holding of Public Office.

6. Proportional Representation, with Grouped Constituencies and Direct Legislation through the Initiative, Referendum, and Recall.

7. Reduction of the Tariff to reduce the Cost of Living, with increase of Income Tax and Inheritance Tax, and a Tax on Community-Created Land Values to pay the expenses of the Community.

8. No Standing Army for Canada.

9. Abolition of the Canadian Senate and the Nova Scotia Legislative Council.

10. Amendment of the British North America Act so that decisions of the highest Court of Appeal in Canada shall be final in all matters, civil and political.

APPENDIX C, TABLE 1

(From the Census of Canada, 1911, 527)

	Population 1911		Population 1901		Change	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Nova Scotia	306,210	186,128	330,191	129,383	-23,981	+56,745
Annapolis	15,739	2,842	16,965	1,877	-1,226	+ 965
Antigonish	10,175	1,787	12,091	1,526	-1,916	+ 261
Cape Breton N & Victoria	17,000	12,888	16,813	7,837	+ 187	+5,051
Cape Breton S.	15,472	37,880	16,645	18,442	-1,173	+19,438
Colchester	16,924	6,740	18,907	5,993	-1,983	+ 747
Cumberland	21,609	18,934	23,322	12,846	-1,713	+6,088
Digby	18,920	1,247	19,172	1,150	- 252	+97
Guysborough	15,431	1,617	16,586	1,734	-1,155	- 117
Halifax City & County	28,580	51,677	29,024	45,638	- 444	+6,039
Hants	15,565	4,138	15,945	4,111	- 380	+27
Inverness	21,090	4,481	23,720	633	-2,630	+3,848
Kings	18,018	3,762	18,794	3,143	- 776	+ 619
Lunenburg	27,804	5,456	27,657	4,732	- 147	+ 724
Pictou	16,220	19,638	22,105	11,354	-5,885	+8,284
Richmond	13,273	-	13,515	-	-242	-
Shelburne & Queens	19,162	5,049	22,491	1,937	-3,329	+3,112
Yarmouth	15,228	7,992	16,439	6,430	-1,211	+1,562

APPENDIX C, TABLE 2

(From the Census of Canada, 1921, 346)

Provinces, counties or census divisions	Population 1921	Rural 1921	Urban 1921
CANADA	8,788,483	4,436,361	4,352,122
Nova Scotia	523,837	296,799	227,038
Annapolis	18,153	15,356	2,797
Antigonish	11,580	9,834	1,746
Cape Breton	86,296	22,675	63,621
Cape Breton N.	22,511	7,599	14,912
Cape Breton S.	63,785	15,076	48,709
Colchester	25,196	16,815	8,381
Cumberland	41,191	19,630	21,561
Digby	19,612	18,382	1,230
Guysborough	15,518	13,892	1,626
Halifax	97,228	30,957	66,271
Hants	19,739	15,465	4,274
Inverness	23,808	19,171	4,637
Kings	23,723	19,263	4,460
Lunenburg	33,742	26,626	7,116
Pictou	40,851	16,183	24,668
Queens	9,944	6,967	2,977
Richmond	12,577	12,577	-
Shelburne	13,491	10,315	3,176
Victoria	8,814	8,814	-
Yarmouth	22,374	13,877	8,497

APPENDIX D

PROVINCIAL ELECTION RESULTS, NOVA SCOTIA 1920

From the Canadian Parliamentary Guide (Ottawa, 1924), 425-7.

Provincial - July 27, 1920

County	Candidates		Votes
Annapolis	O.T. Daniels	L.	3630
	F.R. Elliott	L.	3330
	V.B. Leonard	Far.	2512
	E.C. Shaffner	Far.	2463
Antigonish	Wm. Chisholm	L.	2059
	A. J. MacGillivray	Far.	1804
	A.S. MacMillan	L.	1725
	F. R. Irish	Far.	1706
Cape Breton	D.W. Morrison	(G.W.V.A. & Lab.)	9830
	Joseph Steele	Lab.	9800
	Forman Way	Lab.	9407
	A.R. Richardson	Far.	9177
	W.F. Carroll	L.	6471
	D.A. Cameron	L.	5729
	A.B. MacGillivray	L.	5334
	N. MacDonald	L.	5270
	N.R. McCarthur	C.	2809
	A.C. MacCormick	C.	2749
	E. MacK.Forbes	C.	2343
	C.B. Smith	C.	2338
Colchester	R.H. Smith	Far.	3533
	H.L. Taggart	Far.	3420
	W.R. Dunbar	C.	3213
	R.H. Kennedy	C.	3096
Cumberland	G.N. Allen	Far.	4934
	D.G. McKenzie	Far.	4766

County	Candidates		Votes
Cumberland	Archie Terris	Lab.	4716
	J.L. Ralston	L.	4486
	R.S. Carter	L.	3215
	V.B. Fullerton	L.	2659
	G. McL.Rogers	C.	2470
	P.L. Spicer	C.	1864
	E.C. Leslie	C.	1714
Digby	J.W. Comeau	L.	3165
	H.W.B. Warner	L.	2997
	G. Campbell	Far.	1835
	A. Robicheau	Far.	1692
Guysborough	J.C. Tory	L.	2619
	C.W. Anderson	L.	2359
	D.P. Floyd	Far.	1483
	J.A. Dillon	Ind.	1309
Halifax	H.G. Bauld	L.	6554
	Robt. Finn	L.	6285
	J.B. Douglas	L.	6057
	A.D. Burris	L.	5936
	J.L. Connolly	L.	5817
	J.B. Archibald	C.	4045
	R.A. Brenton	C.	3860
	F.W. Stevens	C.	3642
	F.A. Gillis	C.	3595
	E.L. Power	C.	3263
	J.A. Wallace	Lab.	3409
	R.A. McDonald	Lab.	3369
	P.J. Healy	Lab.	3336
	P.M. Kuhn	Far.	3165
	J.H. McKenzie	Lab.	3157
Hants	J.W. Reed	L.	3035
	J.A. MacDonald	Far.	2179
	Albert Parsons	C.	2083
	W.J. Aylward	Far.	1594
	W.V. Davidson	Lab.	998
Inverness	D. MacLennan	L.	3461
	J.C. Bourinot	L.	3204
	M.E. McGarry	C.	2643
	Malcolm H. McKay	C.	2081
	John J. McNeil	Lab.	1763
Kings	H.H. Wickwire	L.	4917
	John A. McDonald	L.	4705
	J.E. Kinsman	C.	3622
	C.R. Bell	C.	3437

County	Candidates		Votes
Lunenburg	J.J. Kinley	L.	4900
	A.H. Sperry	L.	4795
	F.W. Verge	C.	3270
	L.J. Hebb	C.	3237
Pictou	R.H. Graham	L.	6696
	J.W. Macdonald	L.	6287
	Robt. MacGregor	L.	6056
	H.D. Fraser	Lab.	6012
	A.D. MacKay	Far.	5984
	Bertha Donaldson	(G.W.V.A. & Lab.)	2930
	John Bell	C.	4416
Queens	J.W. Smith	L.	1737
	G.S. McClearn	L.	1607
	W.L. Hall	C.	1485
	Robt. Smith	C.	1316
Richmond	J.A. MacDonald	C.	1921
	B.A. LeBlanc	C.	1823
	G.H. Murray	L.	1761
	G.R. Deveau	L.	1728
Shelburne	Robt. Irwin	L.	1917
	F.E. Smith	L.	1774
	W.T. Brannen	C.	1623
	W.H. Currie	C.	1379
Victoria	G.H. Murray	L.	2078
	A.G. Buchanan	L.	2013
	Philip McLeod	C.	1209
	G.M. Matheson	C.	1109
Yarmouth	H.W. Corning	C.	3416
	A.R. Melanson	L.	3207
	E.H. Armstrong	L.	3052

TOTALS

	Elected	%
L.	29	67.4
C.	3	7.0
Far. - Lab.	11	25.6

Popular Vote

L.	154,627	44.4
C.	81,044	23.3
Far. - Lab.	112,283	32.3

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