

THE AGRARIAN RESPONSE TO INDUSTRIALIZATION

THE AGRARIAN RESPONSE  
IN PRAIRIE CANADA  
TO INDUSTRIALIZATION AND URBANIZATION: 1900-1935

By  
BRUCE ALAN GRACIE, B.A., M.A.

A Thesis  
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

McMaster University

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (1976)  
(Sociology)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY  
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: The Agrarian Response in Prairie Canada to  
Industrialization and Urbanization: 1900-1935

AUTHOR: Bruce Alan Gracie, B.A. (Hon.) (Trent University)  
M.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. R. E. Blumstock

NUMBER OF PAGES: ix, 302

## ABSTRACT

Just as the period after 1871 has been described as the era of the sturdy yeoman, as that period in Canadian history interspersed between the days of early settlement and the industrial revolution, the thirty-five year span from 1900 can be delineated as an age of cyclical fluctuation between hardship and prosperity as a trend toward urbanization and industrialization accelerated. One segment of the population affected to a significant degree by these changes was the prairie grain producer, whose existence was influenced most dramatically by needs to adapt to changing circumstances while at the same time safeguard the status of agriculture and rural life from the encroachments of urban and industrial values. What evolved from this situation was the development of a spirit of protest which reflected disaffection with a national tariff protection policy of domestic industry and the monopolistic practices of the railroads, grain companies, financial institutions, and middlemen. In short, grain producers and their organizations pointed to the uncontrolled power of eastern manufacturing, industrial, and political interests in fostering an unstable prairie economy and maintaining the West's political subordination to the East.

Essential to determining the nature and implications of farmers' actions during this period of heightened grievance are the processes by which a distinctive and identifiable agrarian belief system arose and was coalesced through organizational participation. Within one-crop producing areas, low prices, the relatively high cost of manufactured goods, and high capital costs combined to magnify the vulnerability of middle-income grain farmers and to lead them toward demands for funda-



mental reforms. The study, therefore, focuses to a considerable extent on the historical roots of the farmers' economic and political efforts to control a dependency on the vicissitudes of a domestic and world market while rendering accountable an institutional structure centred in the industrial East.

Two distinctive patterns emerged from these efforts. A shrewd awareness of the techniques of agricultural improvement, business methods, and pressure politics attests to the successes the agrarian movement achieved; conversely, the failures it encountered in reaching a consensus on the means of attaining its goals can be attributed in part to what Richard Hofstadter has labelled the "soft side" of the farmer's existence - agrarian "radicalism" and agrarian ideology - for the rhetoric and resentments which developed were as much a function of regional parochialisms, divergent political histories and immigration patterns as the relativity of belief systems. Beyond this, the single economic interest of the prairie grain grower, the subordinate status of the West, and a parliamentary system of government which prevented the emergence of an agrarian bloc as a significant force in national politics, all conspired to precipitate the farmers' eventual political demise. Yet within the prairie provinces themselves, farmer-controlled governments exerted considerable influence which the farm lobby continued with the appearance of broadly-based coalition parties in Saskatchewan and Alberta after 1935. In order to assess and measure this influence effectively, however, the analysis of the formative years of the agrarian response to industrialization from 1900 remains

indispensable.

As a means of differentiating among various types of social movements, the frame of reference employed by Neil Smelser with its unique set of determinants proved useful for the task. These determinants - strain, conduciveness, precipitating events, generalized belief, mobilization for action, and social control - may be utilized as heuristic devices to sensitize the observer to the subtleties of agrarian behaviour. Through the emergence of agrarian economic, educational, and cooperative organizations to the demands for direct legislation and political action, farmers' efforts were concentrated on rendering the values and goals of rural agricultural society achievable by creating new rules, procedures, and norms. As such, the farmers' impact on the economic and political history of the West may be viewed, not as an effort to radically transform Canadian society, but to ensure that agriculture would remain viable in a highly heterogeneous economy.

In utilizing historical data and certain insights drawn from the discipline of sociology, it is possible to provide the practitioner and the student of Canadian agrarian history with a more complete understanding and appreciation of the contours of agrarian disaffection. This exercise in turn provides important insights into the foundation of urban-rural and farmer-government relationships, as well as of the association between agriculture and such socio-economic groups as organized labour. The evolution of agrarian protest and the formation of group action and ideology, furthermore, are significant examples of how the forces of change may operate to accelerate the dual processes of adaptation

and disaffection, and, ultimately, influence the institutional and social development of society as a whole.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express a special note of appreciation to my thesis supervisor, Dr. R. E. Blumstock, whose encouragement as well as extensive comments and insightful suggestions on earlier drafts have made the completion of this study possible. An expression of gratitude is also directed toward Dr. Richard Allen, whose extensive knowledge of the history of Western Canada and his stimulating comments led to a more complete understanding of the subject matter contained within these pages. I am as well indebted to members of the advisory committee, Dr. Hans Mol and Dr. Howard Brotz, for their helpful assistance. For her perseverance and patience, I offer my thanks to my typist, Linda Armstrong. Finally, to my wife whose understanding and forbearance helped me survive the many tribulations which arose during the production of this study, I express my affectionate appreciation.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DESCRIPTIVE NOTE . . . . .	ii
ABSTRACT . . . . .	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	vii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
CHAPTER 2: REGIONALISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF AGRARIAN UNREST IN WESTERN CANADA . . . . .	23
The Canadian Prairies as a Regional Focus . . . . .	30
Agrarian Discontent in the Context of Canadian Social Development . . . . .	37
CHAPTER 3: IDEOLOGICAL AND STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS OF AGRARIAN UNREST . . . . .	50
The Concept of Ideology and the Development of the Agrarian Perspective . . . . .	58
The Concept of Populism and Agrarian Ideology . . . . .	65
Stratification Analysis and Agrarian Unrest . . . . .	77
Summary . . . . .	86
CHAPTER 4: THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF FARMER DISCONTENT IN WESTERN CANADA: THE ORGANIZATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL PHASE . . . . .	97
The Background of Agrarian Unrest . . . . .	99
The Grange and the Patrons of Industry . . . . .	101
The Patrons of Industry in Manitoba . . . . .	104
The Grain Growers' Associations: Their Impact and Organization . . . . .	107

Experiments in Cooperative Marketing . . . . .	115
The Tariff Issue and Demands for Political Action . . . . .	127
CHAPTER 5: THE POLITICAL PHASE OF AGPAPIAN REVOLT . . . . .	153
The Farmers' Platform and the Agitation for Political Action . . . . .	161
The Grain Growers Enter Politics . . . . .	179
The Rise and Fall of the Farmers in Federal Politics: A Summary . . . . .	206
CHAPTER 6: THE RISE OF THE WHEAT POOLS AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF BELIEF AND ORGANIZATION . . . . .	226
Grain Marketing and the Rise of the Wheat Pools . . . . .	229
The C.C.F. and Social Credit in Western Canada . . . . .	240
Religion and Agrarian Ideology . . . . .	256
Summary . . . . .	262
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION . . . . .	272
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	284

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Within the traditional framework and established goals and objectives of Canadian political and economic life, there have emerged, from time to time, new movements which have centred on the need for re-defining or re-orienting the values and structures which no longer seem appropriate or reliable. By clarifying goals and presenting more viable alternatives to reach them, new social movements do not merely identify problem areas, but provide channels for remedial action. To prairie wheat producers at the turn of the twentieth century, established political and economic practices could not accommodate agrarian priorities - such practices were conceived and dominated by interests centred in the urban and industrial East and geared specifically to protect manufacturing and industrial concerns at the apparent expense of the agricultural community. Historically, Canada has been a primary producer, involved in supplying raw materials to both domestic and foreign markets. Given this emphasis, policies were developed to ensure that competitive encroachments which threatened the extension and maturation of a viable manufacturing sector were circumvented. The dominant political parties in Ottawa consequently embarked on a programme to encourage Canada's industrial growth, but there was often disagreement over the means by which this could be achieved. The Liberals appeared to favour a policy of preferential trade schedules; the Conservatives were convinced that a protective tariff barrier was the only means to close off access to the nation's domestic market by foreign competitors. In both cases, these policies meant higher prices for consumers

separated from the industrial East by great distances. At the same time, however, an unregulated grain trade and exorbitant rates charged by the railroads to store and ship agricultural products distant from terminal ports precipitated the extreme disaffection of prairie wheat producers who had little or no control over prices. Furthermore, the vicissitudes of the market and the weather made one-crop farmers even more dependent on policies specifically formulated in the interests of agriculture. Prairie governments, for the most part, responded favourably to agrarian demands within the limits of their constitutional prerogatives, but a lack of sufficient capital in provincial treasuries and the demands of political expediency often restricted the role these governments could play in protecting the farmer. As a result, western farmers were forced to develop their own economic and political structures to ensure their continued viability in a country dominated by eastern "interests". This study addresses itself chiefly to an analysis of these structures and the factors which contributed to their successes and failures.

One of the objectives of this thesis, therefore, will be to examine the historical relationship between prairie agriculture and Canadian industrial development. By the turn of the century there emerged from this relationship a realization among western grain producers that the rapid and at times turbulent change attending urbanization and industrialization threatened the very foundation of agrarian society. The next thirty-five years, moreover, witnessed the coalescence of the agrarian reform movement: strategies were



devised and patterns developed which centred on the need for adequate political representation, for economic protection of the farmer, for accountability among those who wielded sufficient power to control and regulate industrial activity, and for some assurances that agrarian problems could be solved on essentially agrarian terms. Evolving from this situation was a dynamic interplay between indigenous rural expressions of belief and modes of adaptation to the techniques and exigencies of modern farming - the analysis of this particular relationship remains as a further objective of this study. An attempt will be made to show how the expectations and values of farmers, although by no means perfectly consistent and uniform throughout the prairie provinces, varied significantly from the political and moral codes of the industrial working class and the masses in the cities. This in turn permits a more concise understanding of the role of agrarian reformism in the economic and political development of the West.

One of the severe limitations of the analysis of political and economic phenomena in Canada has been the absence of any systematic effort to trace the development of the thought and action of prairie grain producers in their efforts to modify the status quo. Studies of such phenomena have often been unidimensional in character, concentrating their attention on the rise of third parties or the economic framework within which new movements arise. In both cases, farmer support for these movements as a continuous phenomenon has been minimized, giving rise to the unavoidable conclusion that the political direction, on a left-right continuum, of a new expression

of protest, was more important in explaining its support than the actual configuration of ideas and beliefs of its partisans, as these are rooted in the more commonplace demands of accommodation to a geographic, cultural, and social environment.

Two among many examples of this emphasis are C. B. Macpherson's analysis of the rise of Social Credit in Alberta<sup>1</sup> and S. M. Lipset's study of the rise of the C.C.F. in Saskatchewan.<sup>2</sup> Macpherson, for instance, has argued that the movement's success was predicated on the relationship between its populist political philosophy which laid emphasis on the existence of a homogeneous social interest and the necessity of implementing the unanimous general will of the people, and the petit bourgeois populist ideology of its supporters, i.e. illusions of independence and insecurity reflected in a general desire for economic prosperity, freedom, and security. Although Macpherson attempts to explain the historical circumstances and precedents which had predisposed the mass base to adopt certain strategies and to seek certain remedies to its problems, his premises are ultimately contingent upon his analysis of the nature of Alberta's political experience. As a consequence he assumes that Alberta's quasi-colonial status and its homogeneity in class composition, which precipitated the rise of Social Credit, are reflected in the attitudes and beliefs of the electorate. Taken one step further, one is led to infer that to understand the ideology of Social Credit is to discern the nature of its partisan base. In a somewhat similar vein, Lipset's study is premised on the conclusion that the

the movement embraced a socialist philosophy and that this leftward orientation was shared by the majority of Saskatchewan voters. Again, the position presented in this thesis is that the specific label a party adopts does not necessarily reveal either the sources of that party's support or its particular programmes. In both instances, the depth and complexity of the agrarian response has been severely underestimated. It is this gap in the literature which can only be rectified by tracing the development of this response and the variety of factors which had some impact in establishing and giving substance to the agrarian viewpoint.

For purposes of analysis, the emergence of a distinct and specific agrarian perspective will be viewed as the outcome of two, discrete, but inter-related, impulses. On the one hand, the extreme vulnerability to market and price conditions and to the vagaries of nature created among farmers a response predicated on an apotheosis of agrarian virtues and based on a sentiment of deprivation relative to other sectors of the population; on the other hand, the commercialization of agriculture precipitated an increased awareness of the need for adopting an essentially pragmatic approach to the business of farming. In the first instance, the populist heritage of the agrarian response centred on the rural suspicion of the city and a belief in the moral superiority of rural life, making it very difficult to sustain urban alliances. What this indicates is that any argument which views the farmer as a special category of an urban working class essentially fails to come to grips with this important element

of agrarian ideology, for farmers continually believed that it was fundamentally impossible for urban dwellers to understand the breadth and distinctiveness of the rural viewpoint. This does not imply that farmers could not sympathize with the problems of the working classes, however, nor does it deny that in some instances certain common bases of agreement could be reached, but it does indicate that the experience of working the land away from the apparent encumbrances of city life gave farmers a relative and specific point of view which contrasted sharply with the life experiences of the urban worker.

This point is central to the analysis of agrarian protest for two reasons. First of all, it is important to recognize that rural values, stressing the primacy of agriculture and rural life styles in opposition to urban conditions, are not independent entities divorced from economic and structural factors. Rather, it must be seen that these values derive from economic and social conditions which generate and develop a world view which allow us to coherently understand the behaviour of farmers. The structural conditions underlying the growing of wheat in one-crop regions gave farmers a perspective and relative viewpoint qualitatively different from farmers in diversified crop areas. The rhetoric and values in both areas may have been similar, but the meaning attached to these values varied according to the particular experiences encountered in production as well as in life style. Variations within one-crop areas as well may be explained in terms of structural conditions.

Secondly, it is apparent that although urban and rural, or

more broadly, metropolis and hinterland, may be contrasted and compared in many instances, the relationship between these categories cannot always be viewed as a simple dichotomy between the exploiters and the exploited. Farmers and urban workers did in fact combine politically on several occasions despite important differences in perspective and outlook and at no time did rural areas display complete unanimity as to how farming problems could be approached. Internally, the agrarian community was stratified according to farm size, income, degree of mechanization on the farm, and to some extent, style of life. Farmers were affected similarly by a dependency on the weather and an international world market, but it was primarily among middle-income grain growers that the frustrations inherent in one-crop farming were most deeply felt. The metropolis/hinterland approach fails to account for these important differences in its preoccupation with exposing adversary relationships between rural and urban areas. The potential for allies in town and enemies in the countryside thus contributes to a necessary qualification to this perspective, but of equal significance are non-economic and socio-cultural differences which had the effect of further reducing the possibility of conceptualizing farmer protest as a unified and active movement in opposition to an "exploitative" metropolis.

This suggests that agrarian protest cannot be explained either as a manifestation of economic-interest-group politics, or as a defensive movement of a rural petty bourgeoisie, for both perspectives fail to come to grips with the reasons underlying the specific and

often divergent forms of economic and political protest adopted by prairie farmers with similar economic interests. Furthermore, these explanations do not lead to a more subtle understanding of what precipitated the growth of farmers' movements or why they failed. In addition, it is unconvincing to simply argue that a particular manifestation of agrarian unrest is more likely to occur when economic difficulty faces a large proportion of farmers at once.<sup>3</sup> There are examples of agrarian movements receiving their impetus in times of economic crisis to be sure, but such a generalization cannot be applied universally. D. S. Spafford, for instance, has cited a number of examples of agrarian splinter groups arising and declining during the relative prosperity of the decade prior to 1914.<sup>4</sup> Hence, it is necessary to look beyond depressions to the long-term structural situation of the prairie farmer, for economic and political explanations in themselves do not capture the full magnitude of agrarian unrest. In addition, although the Great Depression of the 1930's precipitated farmer agitation, it was not a farmers' party which mobilized the agrarian community, but broadly-based coalition parties in Saskatchewan (Cooperative Commonwealth Federation) and Alberta (Social Credit Party) which attempted to combine urban elements with reform objectives in the rural areas. Farm leadership in the C.C.F., including such notables as George Williams, Louise Lucas, Violet McNaughton, and J. H. Brockelbank, envisioned the need for social change in the very fabric of society and as such, did not feel compromised by the presence of urban reformers. Yet, as in the case of the Social

Credit Party, the rural partisan base of these movements displayed tendencies suggesting that industrial and urban reform would be tolerated only to the extent that agrarian problems were accorded priority. This suggests a need for a thorough examination of the basis of grass-roots politics.

This also implies that there may be little congruence between the programmes proposed by a movement's leaders and the felt needs of its supporters - a movement may simply identify sources of strain and propose solutions which no other party or organization can accommodate in terms of its structure or philosophy. For this reason, arguments which stress an apparent affinity between the beliefs and principles espoused by the spokesmen of a movement and the actual belief system of a group of supporters may be subject to qualification. This point is well illustrated by Richard Allen's contention that the agrarian belief system coincided with the ideology of the social gospel.<sup>5</sup> Although the demand for religious significance and meaning undoubtedly had a pervasive effect on the conceptions farmers developed in the course of their political and economic experiences, there is little definitive evidence to indicate that the two levels of thought and action converged. Even though several agrarian leaders openly subscribed to social gospel ideals, the quest for meaning within the mass base could easily have been satisfied through alternate religious expressions which could transpose other-worldly concerns into secular legitimations. There remains some doubt, furthermore, that the urban-orientation of social gospel prescriptions could apply equally in a

rural context, precisely because farmer alliances with urban reform movements were difficult to sustain.

Nevertheless, in this particular case, the logical sequence of events leading to the rise of a reformist surge on the prairies appeared to dissipate any significant sources of differentiation between social gospel ideals and the aims and tactics of the farmers' movements. Yet precisely because it is not reform per se but agrarian behaviour that is to be explained, the selection of an interpretative typology will necessarily vary according to the purposes of the research problem. A framework is therefore required which can account for the development of the agrarian response as such and which avoids the assumption that the farmers' movements were necessarily reformist or arose as a reaction to an exploitative metropolis. One such framework which could be used for this purpose is set forth by Neil Smelser in his Theory of Collective Behaviour.<sup>6</sup> He refers to agrarian political movements repeatedly as examples of the uninstitutionalized mobilization for action that he calls "norm-oriented". Norms are prescriptions for behaviour. Frustration and anxiety giving rise to social movements occur when individuals can no longer achieve the ultimate goals and values upon which society rests by obeying the familiar norms. Value-oriented social movements, by contrast, seek to change the goals and ultimate values themselves.

The basic problem causing agrarian anxiety was that after the turn of the twentieth century changes in the economic system suddenly prevented farmers from achieving independence and the good life on the



farm. At least three broad alternatives were available to farmers who recognized that they were caught in this situation and who valued farming as a way of life. They might change their goal and adopt the values of accumulation and achievement most often associated with an industrial and urban life style. This posed a serious dilemma for the farmer, for more people depended on the land than could earn a sufficient living under the prevailing economic conditions. Embracing the dominant materialist culture might also be accomplished by migrating to the city and finding employment, as thousands of European immigrants were doing during this period. Rural depopulation had already become an issue in Ontario, but in the West, particularly in grain producing areas, the deep psychological meaning that the land offered to people raised on it precipitated an even greater sense of attachment to rural values.

A second option for farmers could be found in the possibility of radical transformation through the substitution of new values around which society could be organized. Such an attempt could have taken one or more of several forms: religious revivalism, millenarianism, moral revitalization, secular or religious communal sectarianism, political revolution, and undoubtedly others. In any form, these would have been value-oriented movements. They can arise, according to Smelser, only when all other avenues of relief are perceived to be closed. Grain producers, however, were not likely to choose this course of action, primarily because the business of farming necessitated coming to terms with some of the more important practices and

values underlying the market system.

Discontented farmers chose a third route, a norm-oriented social movement specifically structured on the premise that rural ideas and values could prove dominant through the creation of new rules, procedures, and norms. The crucial factor which mobilized farmers in prairie Canada was the early development of beliefs that explained the farmer's troubles. These explanations referred to the extraordinary power wielded by monopolistic capitalists in abusing their power in the market system: railroad owners, grain elevator operators, land monopolists, mortgage companies, bankers, and the producers of goods used on the farm. Populist rhetoric stressed the need for "the people" to exercise greater control over their own economic and political destinies and for measures to neutralize the abuses to the capitalist market system. As such, accountability became the key objective for agrarian organizations in mobilizing their membership around new norms and procedures.

While it was reasonably clear to most agricultural associations what the goals of a farmer-oriented reform movement should be, such unanimity of opinion was not to be found in the strategies and methods which were to be employed in the process of making these goals achievable. As one tactic for destroying or regulating the activities of the monopolists proved ineffective, a new approach was quickly adopted. For example, improving life on the farm and promoting better farming techniques were strategies superseded by cooperative buying and selling operations designed to improve the farmer's

position in the marketplace. Concomitantly, demands for direct democracy and direct political action were increased when cooperativism alone could not totally fulfill the farmers' expectations. Smelser has noted this tendency toward tactical shifting as a dominant characteristic of collective behaviour - the eventual failure of the farmers' political efforts attests to an inability to agree on the means to achieve their objectives. However, their failure to sustain their own structures and organizations on a large-scale must be balanced by the fact that wheat producers were able to develop a co-ordinated approach to the business of farming itself. Because the commercialization of agriculture necessitated the adoption of sound techniques and practices in the operation of farming, organizational participation had the effect of informing farmers of the options and alternatives available to them. The effectiveness of the farm lobby in later years attests to the fact that this important lesson in political strategy had been well understood.

The Smelser typology of movements, emphasizing as it does the stress that gives rise to the movement and the solution the movement seeks, is not the only possible approach. One could differentiate movements by the social origins of their members, the manner in which the members are organized, the specific target group, and the relationship between the disaffected group and the power structure. Yet whatever the specific method of investigation, caution must be exercised to avoid, as part of its terms of reference, assumptions which tend to prejudice the way in which "facts" and events are organized. The

metropolis/hinterland approach, for example, immediately assumes the existence of an adversary relationship between the "exploiter" and the "exploited" - a whole range of important qualifications to this general theory may be overlooked or de-emphasized as a result. Smelser avoids this problem by utilizing the methods of historical comparison and hypothetical construction to test the validity of his assertions. By so doing, the possibility of discovering subtle yet significant relationships between variables has not been circumvented. This point, furthermore, is well illustrated in the study of the complexities of agrarian behaviour, for it is in this context that a wide range of correlations may be found that are not easily recognizable using a narrowly defined approach.

Another methodological issue which may be raised at this point is the manner in which these relationships may be conceptualized in the analysis of particular phenomena. When Smelser uses "stress" as a concept to explain the rise of social movements, it is not implied that stress necessarily causes the emergence of a norm-oriented movement. Similarly, if regional parochialisms are viewed as a major source of constraint in the agrarian movement, the former are not being assumed as the cause of the latter. In this case, regional particularisms are being used in much the same manner as Weber utilized Puritan religion as the affecting or independent variable in the analysis of the emergence of a spirit of rational capitalism.<sup>7</sup> What Weber attempted to do was to make explicit the affinity that existed between a particular vision of the world and a certain style

of economic activity. In short, Weber considered his study of the Protestant ethic to be a contribution to the understanding of the manner in which ideas become effective forces in history. Similarly, the analysis of agrarian discontent must necessarily consider the affinity which existed between particular visions of the world and the particular styles of protest activity (based on specific regional differences) which set farmers' movements apart from other reformist organizations and which internally differentiated farmer protest as a whole.

An important consequence of Weber's thesis is that in historical development, intellectual forces can exert an independent influence in the sense that they cannot be understood merely as the consequence of practical-institutional forces. What this means is that we can arrive at an understanding of a broader network of circumstances which shape the lives of individuals through a recognition of the existence of independent forces. Concomitantly, human action is never completely free, since it is conditioned by intractable circumstances which the individual did not create and which he cannot escape. For example, the depression which occurred in the 1920's and 30's was not planned, intended, or willed. It happened as a result of countless decisions and actions, conditioned by circumstances affecting the world monetary system. Hence it can be observed that in a sense an interpretation of history is "a comment on the historical process and on that system of historical necessity which conditions human activity at any given moment."<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the

fact that human behaviour is highly conditioned does not presuppose a total measure of determinacy, for in any given situation, the possibility for choice, decision, and innovation exists. An individual is free to choose among a number of alternative courses of action, although the decision to exercise this freedom varies widely among men.

In explaining why a particular course of action was chosen among available alternatives, the analyst refers to a number of determining factors, among which the background and personality of the actor as well as his assessment of the field of societal forces within which he acts are said to be of decisive importance.<sup>9</sup> At this point Weber contributes to the discussion by pointing out that freedom has nothing to do with arbitrariness because it rests on an evaluation of the situation.<sup>10</sup> This evaluation, furthermore, will be rational in the sense that the means selected will be conducive to achieving the desired end. Rational action here serves as an ideal type and not as the reality image of action itself. It is the deviations that must be explained in terms of the non-rational elements which enter into the situation.

In short, the observer of human interaction and behaviour who is interested in historical analysis must be critically aware of the importance of striking a balance between theories of absolute freedom and rigid determinism. In considering, for example, the rise of William Aberhart to the leadership of the Social Credit Party in Alberta, his accomplishment must be measured not in terms of his

being swept along by the forces of inexorable necessity, but because of his refusal to be governed by a situation which seemed to call clearly for inaction or resignation. On the one hand, Social Credit had never before been tested against the realities of Canadian political life and there was nothing to suggest that an essentially religiously-inspired movement could be transformed into a viable political entity. On the other hand, Aberhart had not created the conditions that made possible a seizure of power; the depression was a critical factor. What Aberhart did was to recognize hidden possibilities in the situation and act accordingly. It is significant to add, however, that although Aberhart was free to act according to his assessment of the situation, his conduct was guided by the limitations of his role as fundamentalist preacher and then as leader of the Social Credit Party.

One residual implication of this process is related to the problem of sequence in historical investigation, i.e., the question of whether circumstances precipitated the emergence of Aberhart as leader of Social Credit or whether he directed circumstances himself.<sup>11</sup> In order to determine the relationship in this case between the structural components of a situation of unrest and the emergence of a leader, and concomitantly, to estimate the significance of Aberhart in relation to his followers, we are necessarily obliged to assess the supportive, negative, or neutral attitudes and values of the Alberta community as a whole. It is therefore important to obtain clues to attitudes and values of various social groupings by analysing

popular literature of the period (newspapers, pamphlets, documents, etc.) as a test to the extent of Aberhart's popular support. In a similar vein, the configurations of values and attitudes in Saskatchewan and Manitoba are important clues to determine the extent to which political and economic developments were consistent with prairie practices generally or attributable to specific regional or provincial particularisms. It is then possible to locate sources of cleavage and consensus which are crucial in assessing the impact of agrarian disaffection in the history of Western Canada.

Given these contingencies, the task of reconstructing the events and circumstances which generated the emergence of specific forms of farmer protest becomes less problematic. As mentioned, the frame of reference has gained insights from the fields of collective behaviour and social movements and is organized in part around hypotheses developed by Neil Smelser. Specifically, Smelser's argument that there are six important determinants for any episode of collective behaviour, and that their unique combination constitutes a necessary and sufficient condition for a specific type of collective behaviour, provide a useful focal point for analysing agrarian unrest in Canada. Briefly, these determinants are as follows: structural conduciveness, i.e., the set of conditions which permit or encourage an episode of collective behaviour; structural strains, i.e., the impairments in social conditions which lead to social unrest; a generalized belief system, which identifies the sources of strain and proposes certain responses; precipitating factors; mobilization



of the participants for action, and especially the behaviour of the leaders; and finally, the operation of social control, which arches over the other determinants and constitutes the counter-determinant aspect of any episode of collective behaviour.<sup>12</sup>

While Chapter 2 will expand on the themes in Canadian historiography and focus on the role of regionalism in shaping the way in which western Canadian history has evolved, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will concentrate on elucidating the components contributing to the development of the agrarian response to industrialization. These components in particular are generally related to Smelser's set of determinants: the analysis in Chapter 4 is specifically concerned with identifying the conducive and precipitating factors and the role of strains in coalescing farmer opinion around the need for organization in an economic sense; Chapter 5 analyses these factors in relation to the emergence of demands for political action and participation; Chapter 6 continues with observations on the successes and failures of the farmers' movement as a whole. Underlying this presentation in Chapter 3 is a discussion of the ideological and structural components comprising the emergence of an identifiable agrarian belief system which, in a qualitative sense, differentiated the thoughts and action of middle-income prairie grain producers from other groups in the population. Finally in Chapter 7 a general appraisal of the significance of agrarian unrest will be given. Since the agrarian political and economic movement, as a distinct and recognizable entity, lost much of its impetus and raison d'etre after 1935 with

the appearance of broadly-based coalition parties and the institution of various economic measures favourable to the agricultural community (measures contained, for example, in the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act and the Wheat Board Act), the period from 1935 to the present will be discussed only in terms of the impact of the key formative period (1900 to 1935) on later forms of activity. To understand current vestiges of agrarian unrest, the legacy of an earlier period of normative reconstruction remains indispensable.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Macpherson, C. B. Democracy in Alberta. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962 edition.
2. Lipset, S. M. Agrarian Socialism. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1968.
3. For instance, see Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. The American Voter: An Abridgement. New York: Wiley, 1964, 220.
4. Spafford, D. S. "'Independent' Politics in Saskatchewan Before the Nonpartisan League", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XVIII(1), (1965).
5. Allen, Richard. The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971; Richard Allen, "The Social Gospel as the Religion of Agrarian Revolt", in Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook (eds.), The West and the Nation: Essays in Honour of W. L. Morton. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976, 174-86.
6. Smelser, Neil. Theory of Collective Behavior. Glencoe: Free Press, 1963. Richard Hofstadter adopted a method of categorizing the tendencies of farmers by their "soft" and "hard" dispositions. The former includes agrarian "radicalism" and agrarian ideology, while the latter is concerned with such issues as agricultural improvement, business methods, and pressure politics. According to Hofstadter, one way of understanding agrarian movements in the United States is to observe which aspect of these two tendencies is uppermost at a given time. Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform. New York: Vintage, 1955, 46-7ff.
7. Weber, Max. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Trans. by Talcott Parsons. New York: Scribner, 1958.
8. Butterfield, Herbert. History and Human Relations. London: Collins, 1951, 71.
9. Cahnman, Werner J. and Alvin Boskoff (eds.). Sociology and History. New York: Free Press, 1964, 5.
10. Weber, Max. The Methodology of the Social Sciences. Trans. by E. A. Shils and H. A. Finch. New York: Free Press, 1949.
11. For analyses of the role of leadership and its importance see Sidney Hook, The Hero in History. New York: John Day Co., 1943; Hans Gerth, "The Nazi Party: Its Leadership and Composition", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 45 (1940), 517-41; Walter Z. Laqueur, Young Germany: A History of the

German Youth Movement. New York: Basic Books, 1962.

12. Smelser. op. cit., 12-21.

CHAPTER 2  
REGIONALISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF AGRARIAN UNREST  
IN WESTERN CANADA

Canada's efforts to secure national boundaries and develop into a distinctive political and economic entity after 1867 has been complicated by one dominant tendency: the formation of explicit regional parochialisms resulting, from among a number of antecedent conditions, federal government policies which were devised, paradoxically, in the interest of preserving and expanding Canada's political nationhood. This chapter will explore the roots and substance of this propensity in relation to the emergence of the prairie wheat economy as a prelude to a detailed examination in the next chapter of the expectations and values of grain producers which arose as a result of their particular life experiences. These experiences in turn can be viewed as the outcome of the events and circumstances accompanying the settlement of the West.

The National Policy, a collective term denoting those federal objectives which after the middle of the nineteenth century were directed in complementary fashion toward the creation of a trans-continental Canadian nation, has been identified as one of the most significant precipitating factors leading to the establishment of the wheat economy in Western Canada.<sup>1</sup> This policy, at no time constituting a deliberate attempt on the part of federal authorities to develop a regional way of life based on agricultural production, nonetheless came to rely heavily on the expansion of the western frontier for the growing of wheat. The economics of grain production was such that it could attract settlers to farm the land from more populous regions of Eastern Canada and from abroad, and by so doing

prevent American absorption of the Canadian plains areas and of potentially significant stretches of the northern Shield and forest as well.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, railway, land, and immigration policies became inextricably intertwined with the efforts to create a Canadian nation, of which the development of the prairie wheat economy formed an integral part.

It may be inferred from the foregoing that the expansion of the West simply formed an extension of the overall effort to achieve national sovereignty and residually, to create a unified national identity. Yet the preoccupation with a nationalist theme has produced both expectations and discouragements out of keeping with realities.<sup>3</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, the growing demands on government in an industrializing, urbanizing society greatly enlarged the activities of the provinces and territories<sup>4</sup>, producing particularist and regional identifications which had little or nothing to do with a nationalist perspective. People in these regions or provinces, delineated as they were by geography, economics, and history, developed a consciousness of their own identity in terms of a certain community of purpose. According to one analyst, such community of purpose may be a matter of economic self-interest, or it may be a matter of racial preservation and cultural survival.<sup>5</sup> In either case, in the course of time these regions will develop their own nomenclature, their own sense of difference from other regions, and their own mythology. That this regional theme should attract the attention of various students of political and economic history is compatible with a number of factors

which have tended to separate the country rather than unite it. For example, geographical segmentation, the north-south orientation of many regional economic patterns and the related problem of sustaining east-west lines, the Anglo-French duality, and the lack of positive popular commitment to a strong federal union, have all operated to consolidate and sustain regional differentiation.<sup>6</sup>

What this theme of regionalism may suggest is an environmentalist approach - an approach which in many respects takes its cue from Frederick Jackson Turner in his analysis of the significance of the American frontier in shaping the social and institutional fabric of the United States.<sup>7</sup> In the 1920's and 1930's the frontier thesis gained some degree of prominence in Canadian historiography as a method of explaining Canada's development. With regard to Canadian political parties, F. H. Underhill utilized the Turnerian perspective in tracing their development in terms of the conflicts between western agrarian areas and eastern business interests.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, A. S. Morton found this approach useful in analysing the dominant power of the environment in the extension of settlement into the Prairie region.

In a somewhat more modified form, A. R. H. Lower, while acknowledging the importance of the frontier, nonetheless asserted that Canada's history may have been affected, if not equally, at least partially, by European influences which gave a certain character to the development of Canadian democracy.<sup>10</sup> While Turner, by contrast, argued that it was precisely the destruction of European social

patterns by the frontier which fostered the development of American democracy, Lower and others were not as anxious to dismiss the impact of the Old World altogether.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, it has been pointed out, with reference to Western Canada, that

. . . our institutions, habits, and general outlook have been shaped, not only by our material environment, the frontier, but by our past experience and the whole body of acquired tradition. Environment has largely conditioned our economic tradition, our political ways of life. The history of Western Canada cannot be explained in terms of either of these factors alone.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, according to this observer, the westerner's ostensible predisposition towards radicalism may be explained in terms of the interplay between indigenous patterns of behaviour shaped by the frontier and factors which reflect traditional sources of antagonism between urban and rural interests. The conflict between West and East may therefore be viewed, from this perspective, as a necessary outcome of the struggle between the producers of primary products selling in the open market and the producers of secondary products selling in a closed market.

Although considerable debate has marked the application of the environmental approach to Canada's social, political, and economic development, it has exercised an important influence on Canadian historiography. From the early environmental approaches of F. H. Underhill, E. H. Oliver, A. S. Morton, and A. L. Burt, through the modifications proposed by Lower, Stanley, Fred Landon, and W. L. Morton, one major theme has remained dominant: the history of Canada may be viewed in terms of the role of native indigenous forces in



giving shape and substance to the country's institutional development. Yet despite the relative merits of environmentalism and its implementation, there has been a tendency at times to view the development of Canadian society in highly moralistic terms as the conflict between sound native democratic forces and elements that clung to privilege, exploitation, and empty Old World forms. In a provocative essay, J. M. S. Careless noted that in so doing, environmentalists often oversimplified the antagonism between pioneer agrarian interests and exploitative urban centres. As a result, major Canadian movements for political change might be viewed too narrowly in the light of frontierism.<sup>13</sup> For instance, Progressivism of the 1920's might be explained simply as the crusade of western forces of pioneer individualism launched against privilege and urban business domination. Yet, as Careless notes, "it could also be shown . . . that Western Progressivism was not based on self-sufficient pioneer farmers but on organized grain specialists engaged in a highly complex kind of agriculture, whose goals involved not the triumph of individualism but the replacement of a set of unfavourable government controls centred in the tariff with another represented by Wheat Boards and government provision of major services."<sup>14</sup>

What this suggests is a need for a larger perspective - a perspective which does not ignore the contributions of environmentalism but one which broadens the horizon of our historical understanding. One possible approach may be found in what Careless calls "metro-politanism", a position which does not look to the forest-born

frontiers for its perspective of Canadian history but looks from developing eastern centres of commerce and industry.<sup>15</sup> The frontier in effect is developed by a metropolitan centre of dominance which supplies its capital, organizes its communications and transport, markets its products, and, in many ways, provides the basis for its culture. Furthermore, as one of the leading exponents of this position argues, metropolitan centres continuously dominate and exploit frontier hinterland areas whether in regional, national, class, or ethnic terms.<sup>16</sup> To illustrate this point, A. K. Davis notes that Confederation and western agricultural settlement were competitive responses by Montreal and Toronto business interests to the immense industrial expansion of the United States in the 1850's and were greatly stimulated by the American civil war of 1861-65.<sup>17</sup> Canada's National Policy was therefore formulated as a means of counteracting the American threat and in its crystallized form in 1870, focused on the availability of public funds for private business expansion by means of a heavily subsidized transcontinental railroad (the C.P.R., completed in 1885), a low-cost homesteading land policy, encouragement of immigration to the West, federally financed research farms to adapt farming technology to the semi-arid western plains, replacement of the Hudson's Bay Company imperium in Rupert's Land by public government (accomplished in 1870), and above all, a protective tariff to reserve this vast developmental undertaking for British and Canadian capital against the Americans.<sup>18</sup> As far as the West is concerned, then, its social evolution may be seen as a series of pivotal turning points precipitated

by social antagonisms between different cultural and economic interest groups, especially between hinterland and metropolis as manifested in the conflicts between prairie populism and the eastern financial establishment.<sup>19</sup>

But as compelling as this approach may be in explaining the sources of antagonism within the prairie hinterland against the power of urban centres of domination, it becomes rather sterile, particularly in the hands of some recent practitioners such as Davis.<sup>20</sup> It does not lead to a more subtle understanding of what caused the agrarian revolt, why it employed the tactics and rhetoric it did, what people joined it, and what people opposed it. In this respect, it is important to any systematic analysis of agrarian unrest to uncover not only the political and economic circumstances which precipitated an adversary situation between East and West, but also discover the factors contributing to the development of a generalized belief system which provided farmers with an explanation of their role in the prairie wheat economy. Specific events are then interpreted in terms of the framework arising out of the reciprocal interplay between belief and action. In this manner assumptions concerning the actions of farmers as being necessarily based on an adversary relationship arising from eastern exploitation are avoided and the particular contours of agrarian behaviour become defined as developing in a more or less consistent manner from the circumstances accompanying the farmers' organizational efforts. This in turn leads to a broader understanding of why farmers chose the courses of action

they did.

The fact that the western agrarian movement evolved, however, to such a point of economic and political organization is to be explained by the conditions of rural isolation and market vulnerability which gave the prairie grain producer an outlook and attitude qualitatively different from those engaged in a similar type of enterprise in other parts of the country and from those involved in other forms of agricultural production. The essential individualism of the wheat farmer of the prairie region found an expression in collective forms of activity - activity which has often been misconstrued as a commitment to socialism or to the principle of collectivism itself, rather than as a commitment to pragmatic ends. This point serves as an operating premise throughout this study and will be developed further in later chapters.

#### The Canadian Prairies as a Regional Focus:

That the western prairie region should be one of the major centres of conflict, particularly during the first three decades of the twentieth century, is attested to by the fact that in no other period in Canada's history did farmers' organizations have such a pervasive impact on the question of whether national interests should take precedence over legitimate regional priorities and objectives. The protection of eastern manufacturing interests from the encroachments of foreign competition acted to the direct detriment of an area

which relied upon inexpensive goods and services as a means of ensuring that the production of wheat and other cereal grains could be a profitable enterprise. That the farmers found themselves in a disadvantageous position, is also attributable to the monopoly of large grain companies and the C.P.R., who together dictated the conditions of sale of the farmers' wheat. By forcing grain growers to sell their product to the representatives of these companies, who in turn established grain elevators at the request of the railway, the elimination of competitive buying and selling of wheat to small individual buyers or of operating directly with the market in Winnipeg was effectively confirmed.<sup>21</sup> As a result, bitter resentments were aroused and in the three prairie provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, a series of farmer-controlled structures were developed with the purpose of not only consolidating farmer opinion but also dealing with the economic, commercial, and political concerns of the grain growing community.

One of the inevitable outcomes of this situation was the formation of a strong sectional sentiment in protest against the subordinate status of the prairie hinterland, a circumstance which tended to mark the region as a distinct socio-cultural and political entity, although its distinctiveness can partly be attributed to a variance on values widely disseminated in the larger culture as a whole. In fact, one of the earliest expressions of prairie resistance to the domination of Central Canada can be found in Louis Riel's struggle to prevent the annexation of the Northwest in 1869. Riel

and his Metis confreres did not object to union with Canada as such, but to the possibility that such a union could mean the absorption of the Metis as a distinct cultural entity. This resistance was only the first stage of a process which continued in the agitation of the agrarian sector for the control and elimination of monopolies and unfair business practices of eastern commercial interests and reached its zenith in the utopian politics of Social Credit and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.). As W. H. Morton shows, what the West did was to provide a favourable environment for the development of this latter stage: heavy indebtedness, distrust of prevailing political methods and economic conventions, a sense still surviving from the frontier of the possibility of a second chance and a new life, - or at least the old life in new terms - and a tradition of protest, and the weakness of the old political parties.<sup>22</sup>

Why the West, in the absence of traditional solidarities, provided such a fertile ground for protest activity may be traced for the most part to the unprecedented growth and expansion of the Canadian nation in the first three decades following the turn of the twentieth century. Technological changes and the accompanying concentration of population in nations contiguous to the North Atlantic precipitated demands for raw materials and overseas food supplies. With interest rates the lowest in recorded history in 1897<sup>23</sup>, abundant supplies of mobile capital were available with the purpose of profitable areas of exploitation. Furthermore,

... increases in the world supply of gold associated

with technological and geographical discoveries contributed to advances in prices which altered cost-price relationships in favour of the countries that produced raw material and raw food. The relative inferiority of unalienated lands in the United States placed a progressively mounting premium on those available for homestead or purchase in the prairie provinces of Canada.<sup>24</sup>

What this meant in practical terms was that the prairie region became the geographic centre of the Canadian investment frontier, which in turn hastened the establishment of a massive structure of capital equipment without which the large scale production and marketing of wheat would have been impossible. This included not only the equipment of the farms but also the equally indispensable equipment of the market centres throughout the region and of the transportation routes between.<sup>25</sup> Demands for capital equipment in the prairie region enabled other provinces, with the exception of the Maritimes, to vastly expand their industrial and manufacturing activity, for tariff policy had foreclosed the possibility of purchasing goods and services from American suppliers at lower prices. Although the objectives of federal tariff constraints had indeed been realized, the higher prices charged by the Canadian supply industry became a source of continuing grievance among western grain producers. The dependence relationships which developed as a consequence of this situation helped to reinforce the belief that the interests of Central Canadian business concerns took precedence over the needs and priorities of Prairie Canada.

Meanwhile, the population of the prairie provinces had increased from a total of 419,512 in 1901 to 2,353,529 thirty years

later in response to the economic opportunities which had accompanied the expansion of the wheat frontier.<sup>26</sup> Even though the actual percentage of the rural prairie population had declined by 13 points during this period, the number of farms had increased dramatically from 55,200 at the turn of the century to 288,100 by 1931.<sup>27</sup> However, after 1935 the available statistical data indicate that a period of gradual entrenchment in growth had occurred with the consolidation of farm holdings by lease and purchase into larger farm units.<sup>28</sup> What these data suggest is that the period of agricultural expansion in the West had come to an end which, combined with the decline of organizational participation by farmers in both the economic and political spheres, marked the period from 1900-1935.

It should not be inferred from the foregoing, however, that the region evolved in a linear progressive fashion along a scale of underdevelopment and development. The legacy of farmer unrest in Western Canada lies in the grain producers' experience with significant irregularities in climatic and geographic circumstances, market fluctuations, and frequent changes in economic conditions which affected profits, costs, prices, and incomes. For example, by 1913 the prairie provinces faced serious economic difficulties when the investment boom which had characterized the early years of the twentieth century came to an end, although its severity was abated somewhat by the demands for foodstuffs during the First World War. Despite the wheat acreage increase by 80% between 1913 and 1919,<sup>29</sup> and the accompanying accretion of output, the wartime boom was



attended by an inflationary spiral of prices which intensified in the months succeeding the armistice of 1918. The peak of the boom came during the first half of 1920 and a sharp recession thereafter carried prices drastically downward.<sup>30</sup> In the agricultural sector the prices of farm products fell by one-half and the price of wheat fell by almost 60%. By contrast, prices of manufactured goods fell only by one-third and the Canadian cost of living index by less than 20%.<sup>31</sup> A rising gap between the expectations of grain producers and actual conditions became readily apparent. Furthermore, the economic distress which characterized the early part of the 1920's formed the context within which major political and organizational developments were crystallized.

Relative prosperity did return to the prairie region after 1924 with the combination of good crops, improvement of cost-price relationships, the establishment and growth of market centres, railway construction, and the increased opportunity to use mechanized equipment in agricultural operations. Yet it could not be concluded that the prairie region had returned to the same level of pre-war prosperity: the wheat frontier was no longer of unique importance as new investment possibilities coincided with new industrial demands and control of economic activities became less of an exclusive federal concern. With natural resources eventually falling within the constitutional purview of the provinces by 1930, the federal government assumed less and less of a role in ensuring the continuing expansion and viability of the wheat economy. Provincial legislative control and responsibility

did ensure that agrarian problems could receive prompt attention within its constitutional prerogatives, but matters such as large-scale agricultural relief programmes and regulation of the grain trade itself demanded a federal presence. This point was amply illustrated during the depression of the 1930's, for it became abundantly clear that only the Dominion government with its financial resources could prove adequate to the task of providing massive relief to the drought and debt-ridden prairie region. Occurrences since that time bear testimony to this dependence.

That the farmers of the wheat producing areas of the prairies responded to the pressures of an emerging grain economy in a particular fashion is thus related partially to the relationship of the economic structure of the West to national policy considerations which predicated the emergence of Canadian economic self-sufficiency as a whole. But of equal significance in the analysis of this agrarian response are the actual processes which gave prairie farmers an outlook and perspective qualitatively different from other agricultural producers and other sectors of the population. The cross-cutting cleavages and polarizations which aligned grain producers behind certain forms of organizational activity provide a further basis of differentiation which, taken together, reinforced what Morton calls a particular regional bias.

### Agrarian Discontent in the Context of Canadian Social Development:

In addressing himself to one of the apparent omissions in historical writing in Canada, S. R. Mealing makes the point that no important attempt has been made to base an analysis of our history on class, nor is there any weight of research to suggest that such an analysis is possible.<sup>32</sup> That such is the case is supported by evidence which suggests that in Canada there is a lack of polarization of voters along class lines, in either their voting behaviour or their political opinions.<sup>33</sup> To some extent, it may be argued that the conditions of life in this country have permitted the deflection of potential class hostility into other areas. Among the conditions that have been proposed to account for this situation are the absence of a feudal tradition (despite a transplanted seignorial system in New France), the possibility for great economic expansion in an unpopulated country rich in resources, the existence of an open and extensive frontier which could absorb both the malcontents and those whose opportunities were limited in more settled regions, the influx of a large number of immigrants which reinforced cleavages along ethnic and religious rather than class lines, and the presence of conflicting interests and different rates of development of the various regions in Canada which channeled internal conflicts in geographical terms.<sup>34</sup> In short, these factors have been seen to combine to accentuate regional-ethnic and regional-economic cleavages, especially with reference to Canadian political party formation and party

alignments.<sup>35</sup>

It is important to note in this regard that two elements in Canada's social structure which have shown a particular reluctance to adapt to the prevailing party structure are western wheat-belt farmers and certain pockets of British, eastern European, and Scandinavian immigrants.<sup>36</sup> Their impact on party structure has emerged through the interplay of economic and ideological factors; in the case of the farmers, an ideology encompassing prairie populism as a response to the coercions of a growing monopoly capitalism was adopted, while the above immigrant groups espoused a transplanted version of social democracy.<sup>37</sup> As far as the former group, the farmers, were concerned, their outlooks and attitudes were at least partially the outcome of their particular vulnerability to natural disasters, to international market fluctuation, to a dependence on outside financial assistance, and to the vagaries of geography and a concentration on one crop. In this situation, farmers experiencing similar situational pressures and similar frameworks for living may be expected, within broad limits, to perceive their world in a similar fashion. Whether the perception of the world in a similar manner is consistent with the development of an agrarian class consciousness is a question which begets no simple answers. In other words, although similarity of circumstance is a necessary condition for class-conscious behaviour, it is not sufficient to explain either the nature of the stratification system in which the farmer is a party, or to account for the possibility of cross-cutting cleavages which may effectively eliminate the potentiality

for consensus among this segment of the population. It would appear to be essential, therefore, to explore the relationship between ideology (as imprecise as this term appears to be) and the development of various expressive patterns which have characterized the behaviour of prairie grain growers in an earlier period of normative reconstruction.

To this situation must be added a continuing temptation to simply explain the position of western farmers in terms of the struggle of a significant under-class in society with a powerful and dominant capitalist class, and to view the farmer as an important and special category of the urban industrial working class and the farmers' movement as an appendage to a large working class political movement.<sup>38</sup>

That such a characterization can lead to mistaken assumptions and oversimplifications is attested to by the fact that in a region such as the Canadian prairies in the early decades of this century, divided as it was into agricultural and industrial sectors, there existed an agrarian stratification system which was separate and distinct from the urban.<sup>39</sup> Within relatively homogeneous agrarian communities, differentiation is more often based upon income, farm size, and the degree of mechanization on the farm, while in urban areas, often noted for their social and cultural diversity, income as well as status and power criteria are used with greater frequency to distinguish between individuals and social groups. What this meant in effect was that consensus was difficult to achieve, not only within the farming community as a whole, but also between the rural and urban sectors of the population. To suggest that farmers and workers

hold comparable relationships to the production process may be true, but given the source of antagonism for both groups<sup>40</sup> and the inherent distrust that farmers historically have displayed towards organized labour<sup>41</sup>, there inevitably develop numerous conflicts of interest which cannot easily be overcome. It must be remembered that agrarian discontent was largely generated as a direct response to the incipient effects of urbanism and industrialism, a circumstance which, by its very nature, tended to arouse suspicion among the farmers of anything even remotely connected to a newly emergent system and way of life. Viewed in this light, farmer hostility to the urban working classes is understandable, if not totally justified.

Yet when the attitudes of farmers are taken against the values underlying rural life in Canada which had gained prominence throughout the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, the hostility and anxiety precipitated by industrialism become all the more intelligible. Farming as a vocation enjoyed what could be called a "sacred" aura, a circumstance based on the belief that farmers, as the suppliers of raw products, were the foundation upon which the material as well as the moral well-being of the nation rested. Industrialization threatened this image, for the world of the small individual enterprise and the not too highly organized life was being eclipsed by a form of business and government which required industrial discipline and engendered a managerial and bureaucratic outlook. Populist agitation became the manifestation of this discontent and was centered against monopolies and special privileges in both the

economic and political spheres, against social distinctions and the restriction of credit, and against a situation in which a system of incentives and rewards was being replaced by a system which simply demanded the production of sufficient goods and services regardless of the needs and wishes of an agrarian community. Of course, one of the essential ironies of this situation was that the very activities the farmers pursued in attempting to defend or restore the values they admired brought them closer to the techniques of organization they feared. Nevertheless, the history of farmers' movements in Western Canada demonstrates quite clearly that organization and cooperative activities were approached in essentially pragmatic terms, in terms which meant that prairie farmers were prepared to embrace or tolerate, if not completely support, cooperative institutions as long as they promised to attempt to solve agrarian problems on agrarian terms.<sup>42</sup>

This account of the tendency of the agrarian sector to approach various issues and problems from a pragmatic perspective does not mean to imply that all questions relating to the attendant effects of Canadian industrial expansion were faced with the same degree of critical scrutiny and clear recognition of the farmers' interests vis-a-vis society at large. In fact there is evidence to suggest that in some cases there was a marked propensity in rural areas to believe that the relationship and struggle between the farmers and the wider society could be reduced to the existence of some single conspiratorial force, whether it be the force represented

by big business, corrupt politicians, the liquor interests, or the Catholic Church.<sup>43</sup> In some instances, of course, the evils, which commanded the attention of farmers and like-minded reform elements at the "grass-roots" of Canadian political life, did in fact exist in some form or another and it is the merit of this reform-conscious sector that it was among the first to point out the real and serious deficiencies in the economic system and was prepared to take the initiative in making improvements. The organized farmers' essential weakness was their tendency to adopt direct democratic devices as a means of accomplishing their moral objectives, included among which were the elimination of economic and political practices which they considered inequitable or immoral. This situation has led one observer to comment that the social gospel, that religious system calling for men to find the meaning of their lives in seeking to realize the Kingdom of God in the very fabric of society, coincided to a remarkable degree with the ideology of agrarian revolt.<sup>44</sup> That religion did in fact have an independent effect on the agrarian Weltanschauung is not at issue but the question of whether social gospel ideas had an enduring and pervasive effect upon the development of agrarian ideology at both the elite and grass-roots level requires thorough investigation. Even though it must be recognized that the social gospel was not a utopian conception arising independently of values embedded in a rural culture, it cannot be inferred that it exercised an exclusive influence, for a concern with maintaining rural values and a belief in the supremacy of agriculture<sup>45</sup> also formed part of the agrarian perspective.



This situation requires explanation and is a point to be explored in a later chapter.

From the foregoing it is clear that as prairie Canada emerged as a distinct socio-cultural, economic, and political entity, its fortunes were governed by a variety of factors which affected the ways in which its population responded and related to the surrounding environment. Western grain producers gave substance to a prairie identity and helped to transform the region into an area separate and distinct from the rest of Canada. Accordingly, the following chapter will concentrate on identifying the impulses underlying the development of the western agrarian perspective in the context of the processes and circumstances under which ideas and belief systems emerge. In Smelser's terms, the development of a generalized belief structure enables the participants of organized movements to identify sources of strain in a system and envisage an overall cure.<sup>46</sup> In addition, the agrarian perspective will be examined in relation to the stratification patterns indigenous to rural areas as a means of explaining the sources of differentiation between urban and rural sectors and within the farming community itself.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Fowke, V. C. The National Policy and the Wheat Economy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957, 281.
2. Ibid., 283.
3. Careless, J. M. S. "'Limited Identities' in Canada", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. L(1) (March 1969), 1-10.
4. Ibid., 5.
5. Stanley, G. F. G. "Regionalism in Canadian History", Ontario History, Vol. LI(3) (Summer 1959), 163-71. Similarly, B. Y. Card makes the point that "... the regional point of view is vital in understanding social change and in attempting to create a valid theory of human behaviour and society". The Canadian Prairie Provinces from 1870-1950: A Sociological Introduction. Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1960, ix.
6. Careless, op. cit., 3.
7. See F. J. Turner. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", in The Frontier in American History. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920, 1-38.
8. Underhill, F. H. "The Development of National Political Parties in Canada", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XVI(4) (December 1935), 367-87.
9. Morton, A. S. History of Prairie Settlement. Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, VII, part 1, Toronto: Macmillan, 1938.
10. Lower, A. R. M. "The Origins of Democracy in Canada", Canadian Historical Association, Annual Report (1930), 65-70. Despite this recognition, Lower did continue to stress the power of the environment to change old institutions and give them new form and spirit. At the same time, in his Colony to Nation, emphasis was placed on the organizational and controlling power of eastern metropolitan centres such as London and Montreal in affecting the course of events in Canada. A. R. M. Lower, Colony to Nation. Toronto: Longmans, 1964, and Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada. Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, IX, part I, Toronto: Macmillan, 1936.
11. One of the leading exponents emphasizing the importance of European tradition is Louis Hartz in his The Liberal Tradition in America. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955. See also Louis Hartz et al., The Founding of New Societies in the History of the United States, Latin America, South Africa, Canada and Australia. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World,

1964. In a similar vein, see Gad Horowitz, "Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism in Canada: An Interpretation", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. XXXII(2) (May 1966), who adopts the Hartzian perspective in his examination of the sources of ideological differences within Canada's political parties. In emphasizing ideology per se, rather than the impact of regionalism, Horowitz, like Hartz, sees Canada's political development in terms of the importation of various ideological strains or "fragments" "thrown off" from the mother country in Europe. By contrast, S. D. Clark has argued that it was precisely the weakening of traditional, European-inspired institutions in Canada which produced a new, pragmatic, individualistic, and radical society. S. D. Clark, The Developing Canadian Community, 2nd ed., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968.

12. Stanley, G. F. G. "Western Canada and the Frontier Thesis", Canadian Historical Association, Annual Report (1940), 105-14.
13. Careless, J. M. S. "Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History", in Approaches to Canadian History, Ramsay Cook, Craig Brown, and Carl Berger (eds.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967, 74.
14. Ibid., 74-5.
15. Ibid., 78. Careless further notes that metropolitanism can be directly linked to the exponents of the "Laurentian School" of Canadian historiography, notably D. G. Creighton and H. A. Innis.
16. See A. K. Davis. "Canadian Society and History as Hinterland Versus Metropolis", in Canadian Society: Pluralism, Change and Conflict, R. J. Ossenberg (ed.). Scarborough, Prentice-Hall, 1971, 6-32. According to Davis, "hinterland" means, in the first instance, relatively underdeveloped or colonial areas which export for the most part semi-processed extractive materials - including people who migrate from the country to the city for better educational and work opportunities. Hinterland may also usefully denote urban under-classes as well as rural peasantries and rural proletariats. "Metropolis" signifies the centres of economic and political control located in the larger cities. Further, the term may indicate urban upper-class elites, or regional and national power structures of one sort or another. For Davis, this model assumes that there is a conflict of interest between metropolis and hinterland and that there is a tendency on the part of hinterland groups and interests to fight back eventually against

their metropolitan exploiters in order to gain regional or national recognition. 12-13.

17. See Ibid., 18ff. and A. K. Davis, "The Saskatchewan CCF", Our Generation, Vol. 6(4) (June 1969), 56.
18. Davis. "The Saskatchewan CCF", op. cit., 57. See also Fowke, op. cit., passim, and C. Schwartz, The Search for Stability. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1959.
19. Morton, W. L. The Progressive Party in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950. While interpreting Progressivism in the light of a frontier agrarian background, Morton nonetheless concedes that metropolitan forces exerted considerable influence.
20. By contrast, H. A. Innis' rather overlooked contribution to the concept of metropolitanism stems from his argument that the belief system of a region was not simply an expression of local circumstances, nor an overlay of an adversary relationship. Deeply rooted concepts of man and nature are transmitted through the system, although they assume different expressions in different settings. See, for example, H. A. Innis "Significant Factors in Canadian Economic Development", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XVIII(4), 1937.
21. Moorhouse, Hopkins. Deep Furrows. Toronto: McLeod, 1918, 37-38. W. A. Mackintosh, Agricultural Cooperation in Western Canada, Toronto: Ryerson, 1924, 8; Harold S. Patton, Grain Growers' Cooperation in Western Canada, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928, 14; Hugh Boyd, New Breaking: An Outline of Cooperation among the Farmers of Western Canada, Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1938, 19-20.
22. Morton, W. L. "The Bias of Prairie Politics", Transaction of the Royal Society of Canada, Vol. XLIX, Series III, Section Two (June 1955), 64.
23. Report of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1940, Book I, 66ff.
24. Fowke, op. cit., 71.
25. Ibid.
26. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Census Reports, 1951.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid. From a total of 300,500 farms in 1936, for example, the

number had declined to 248,700 by 1951.

29. Report of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations.  
op. cit., 90-1.
30. Fowke. op. cit., 78.
31. Report of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations.  
op. cit., 113.
32. Mealing, S. R. "The Concept of Social Class and the Interpretation of Canadian History", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XLVI(3) (September 1965), 212.
33. Alford, Robert R. Party and Society. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963; Mildred A. Schwartz, Public Opinion and Canadian Identity, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.
34. Lipset, S. M. Agrarian Socialism. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Edition, 1968, 15-16.
35. Alford. op. cit., Chapter 9.
36. See F. C. Englemann and M. A. Schwartz. Political Parties and the Canadian Social Structure. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1967, 135ff.
37. Studies which have attempted to measure the impact of ethnic cleavages on voting behaviour include A. J. Milnor, "Agrarian Protest in Saskatchewan, 1929-1948: A Study in Ethnic Politics", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1962 and A. J. Milnor, "The New Politics and Ethnic Revolt: 1929-1938", in Politics in Saskatchewan, Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (eds.), Don Mills: Longmans, 1968, 151-77. See also Sanford Silverstein, "Occupational Class and Voting Behaviour: Electoral Support of a Left-Wing Protest Movement in a Period of Prosperity", in Agrarian Socialism, op. cit., 451-60.
38. See J. N. McCrorie. "The Saskatchewan Farmers Movement", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1967, and his "Change and Paradox in Agrarian Social Movements: The Case of Saskatchewan", in Ossenberrg, op. cit., 37ff.
39. In this regard, see T. H. Marshall. Class, Citizenship and Social Development. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1965, 140.
40. McCrorie makes the point that while workers are involved in conflict within a given industry, farmers are entangled in conflicts between industries. In addition, the historical solution

for the workers was to gain bargaining power over wages and working conditions within an industry, while that of the farmers was to gain control over other industries. Furthermore, the worker eventually acquired bargaining rights within an industry; the farmer eventually took over (through cooperative enterprises) some of the industries with which he was in conflict, integrating them into his farm operation. In this case, the farmer may have become the employer of the worker. McCrorie, op. cit., 41.

41. This point can be illustrated by referring to a C.C.F. Farm Committee report which attempted to explore the underlying reasons for this distrust. Among its conclusions were the following: 1) the average farmer will not believe that organized labour is willing to cooperate with agriculture; 2) the farmer who is working long hours, seven days a week, trying to produce to the limit of his capacity, has no patience for the continued demands of labour for higher wages for less work; and 3) the farmer believes that organized labour is developing into a one-track pressure group, all out for its own benefit. Ontario C.C.F. Provincial Council, Farm Committee Report, F. V. VonPilis, Chairman, October 4-5, 1952. C.C.F. (Ontario Section), Box 2, McMaster University Archives. It has been argued that farmers probably held a social position more analogous to small businessmen in the cities. This point has merit insofar as the application of economic indicators are concerned; however, given the relative points of view developing from a rural and urban context, it would not be fortuitous to rely upon such a comparison in formulating an explanation for the emergence and evolution of agrarian protest as a vehicle for preserving and improving life on the farm.
42. One pervasive argument has been put forward that the Saskatchewan farmers' relationship to the socialist C.C.F. was similarly one of pragmatic cooperation or tolerance and never represented a conversion to C.C.F. ideology. See McCrorie, op. cit., 50 and J. W. Bennett and C. Krueger, "Agrarian Pragmatism and Radical Politics", in Agrarian Socialism, op. cit., 347-63.
43. William Calderwood, for example, noted that as a heavily agrarian society, Saskatchewan had its full measure of the tendency among rural folk to believe in "interests" conspiring against them and to crusade for social and moral conformity. "Religious Reactions to the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XXVI (1973), 103-114.
44. See Richard Allen. "The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt", in Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook (eds.), The

West and the Nation: Essays in Honour of W. L. Morton. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976, 174-86; and The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-28, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971.

45. As Joseph S. Davis has pointed out, the persistent conviction that agriculture is par excellence the fundamental industry and that farmers are, in a peculiar sense and degree, of basic importance in society, is derived from the fact that in the prairie provinces, purchasing power, tax- and debt-paying ability, and consumer spending are heavily dependent upon the volume of agricultural products marketed and the amount of cash income from the farm. "Agricultural Fundamentalism", On Agricultural Policy 1926-1938. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1939, 24-43.
46. Smelser, Neil. Theory of Collective Behaviour. Glencoe: Free Press, 1963, 292ff.

## CHAPTER 3

### IDEOLOGICAL AND STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS OF AGRARIAN UNREST

Agrarian antagonisms generated in the Canadian plains areas by the widespread and severe stresses of industrialization encompassed both ideology and economic demands. What is suggested here is not that industrialism was rejected entirely; indeed, agrarian reformers focused their attacks, not upon the industrial process itself, but upon the particular bearers of this process - in their terms, upon eastern centers of domination and the "big" interests. As such, farmer rhetoric and the programmes designed in the interests of the agrarian community were concentrated on the control of railroads, the falling prices of crops, the rising prices of agricultural implements and machinery, the power of monopolies, and other issues which could be raised and dealt with within the context of industrial society. For the most part, then, farm protest centred on specific economic grievances, rather than on vague, unfocused resentments.

Yet it is important to emphasize that precisely because the focus of attack was concentrated on the apparent inconsistencies and ambiguities of industrialization and urbanization, it was difficult to motivate farmers to accept programmes of change simply through appeals to practical self-interest alone. Underlying the perception of strain in the economic system was an equally important perception of the frame of reference within which these strains had become operative, i.e., the realization that new normative standards could potentially disrupt the regulatory principles fundamental to the operation and persistence of agrarian society as a viable entity. This suggests a set of circumstances identified by Neil Smelser: the



peculiarities of those beliefs that activate people for participation in episodes of collective behaviour involve both the conception of strain and a condition of structural conduciveness, i.e., a condition which permits or encourages collective expressions of disaffection.<sup>1</sup> These are identified by Smelser as "generalized beliefs" which identify the source of strain, attribute certain characteristics to this source, and specify certain responses to the strain as possible or appropriate.<sup>2</sup> Although generalized beliefs may remain latent and exercise no discernible influence on the direction of an episode of collective behaviour, it is significant that among prairie grain producers, beliefs which emphasized the social and moral ubiquity of rural life had a remarkable impact on the form and substance of agrarian protest.

This emphasis on the special virtues of the farmer and the special virtues of rural existence was combined with the assertion that agriculture, as an occupation of significant importance to society, had a particular right to the concern and protection of government. Furthermore, as Richard Hofstadter has argued, because the farmer ". . . lived in close communion with the beneficent nature, his life was believed to have a wholesomeness and integrity impossible for the depraved populations of cities. His well-being was not merely physical, it was ~~moral~~ it was not merely personal, it was the central source of civic virtue; it was not merely secular but religious, for God had made the land and called man to cultivate it."<sup>3</sup> Such extolling of agrarian virtue comes close to a version of what Barrington Moore labels "Catonism" in its insistence upon stressing

the superiority of the organic life of the countryside to the atomized and disintegrating world of modern urban civilization.<sup>4</sup> Correlatively, it is the cornerstone upon which an agrarian ideology was forged and which led to the romanticization of the rural ideal and the populist critique of industrial society.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to note, however, that the farmers' movement was more than simply a collection of narrow pressure groups clinging to the reactionary notion of a virtuous rural Gemeinschaft<sup>6</sup> in the past. It was first and foremost an economic movement making practical demands such as the need for agricultural improvement, the control of monopolies, lower taxes, and provision for credit, and through organizations such as the grain growers' companies, adopted various strategies designed to accommodate to the realities of an expanding agricultural enterprise: cooperation, combination, lobbying, and businesslike methods. In effect, the business ventures of the agrarian movement were in part examples of a conviction held by farmers that agrarian problems could only be effectively dealt with in an industrial capitalist economy on agrarian terms. But when, as in 1917, a decision was made to enter politics, the farmers realized that economic difficulties could not be remedied by non-political solutions alone, although complete unanimity with regards to third party agitation and direct action was rarely achieved. Again, regional, ethnic, religious, and to some extent, class cleavages tended to undermine farmer consensus, even concerning issues considered fundamental to the success of agrarian protest as a whole.

If we are to achieve a broad understanding of the nature of farmer protest, then, we must keep in mind that agrarian ideology, in its most basic form representing a rural populist suspicion of urbanism and "the interests", was combined at times with a shrewd awareness of the advantages of business techniques and pressure politics. It is a situation which has prompted one observer to interpret the Saskatchewan farmers' movement as an essential paradox:

On the one hand, the movement involved a large number of small, independent, capitalistic entrepreneurs. It was rooted within the ranks of the agrarian middle-class who believed, for the most part, in the private ownership of land and the means of production . . . and who produced . . . a cash crop in the pursuit of profit. On the other hand, the same farmers came to attack the owners of other industries having some relation to agricultural production. They vigorously quarreled with banks, and mortgage and insurance companies. They tangled with railway companies, line elevators, and grain merchants. They expressed critical misgivings concerning federal marketing, and trade and transportation policies. They revolted against the political party structure of the nation and questioned, from time to time, the viability and desirability of capitalism. And they threatened, on more than one occasion, to secede from Confederation.<sup>7</sup>

It is indeed possible within the framework of the agrarian perspective, to reconcile a seemingly contradictory acceptance of the principles of a free marketing system combined with a judicious mixture of state intervention and control. As devotees of private property and supporters of the freedom of the individual to produce, western grain farmers could tolerate government regulations and invasions of the property sphere only if these were of direct benefit to their enterprises.<sup>8</sup> What this also suggests is that farmers of

the prairie region were not content to simply accommodate themselves to the exigencies of an expanding market economy without first coming to terms with the question of the role of agriculture in such a system. That such a process of accommodation created apparent inconsistencies in the farmers' attitude towards similarly affected economic groups in the production system such as industrial workers is only to be explained by reference to the particular character of agrarian ideology, for it alone provides the key to understanding the farmer perspective. This does not mean to imply that this perspective existed independently in determining agrarian behaviour. For if we observe that prairie farmers resisted certain forms of commercial enterprise, we do not completely explain this fact by stating that farmers have done so in the past or even that as an economic unit they are the carriers of certain traditions that make this unit hostile to such activities: the problem is to determine out of what past experiences such an outlook arises and maintains itself.<sup>9</sup> Thus the Canadian wheat farmer viewed his world in a particular manner because he was raised in a social milieu whose stratification system, methods of rewards, privileges, and sanctions, provided him with a particular conception and set of expectations as to his role in rural society and in the wider culture as a whole. Given these circumstances, hostility generated towards eastern business interests may be viewed not simply as the manifestation of an apparent traditional agrarian antagonism towards outsiders, but more fundamentally, as the failures of eastern capitalists to adequately deal with the

legitimate concerns of prairie grain growers who were faced with particularly compelling problems during the early decades of the twentieth century. In this situation, grain growers set themselves the task of interpreting changes taking place in their environment in a manner which would ensure the continuing success of wheat farming as a profitable enterprise in a country whose economic priorities were gradually being shifted from agriculture to manufacturing and industrial concerns.

This does not mean, of course, that all farmers approached their difficulties with the same degree of urgency and in complete agreement as to what tactics were to be employed in dealing with problematic issues, particularly among a recently immigrated portion of the prairie farm population whose experience in the social culture of the wheat belt was limited. Although wheat farmers in the three prairie provinces were faced with comparable problems emerging from similar situational contexts, significant differences in identification and self-conception often prevented agreement on many questions, thus underlining the dilemma of viewing farmer protest as a self-conscious, class-oriented movement. For class analysis to be a viable mode of explanation, not only would the category of "farmer" require a more precise definition to satisfy the economic, status, and power criteria for any clear-cut notion of "class", but also the seemingly important differences between grain growing and other categories of farming would have to be minimized. In addition, it is likely, as McCrorie suggests, that only among certain income groups did economic and

political protest become a viable alternative to acceptance of the status quo. Hence an analysis of the dynamics of the stratification system in rural society contributes to an understanding of the points of differentiation between farmers and serves to establish the criteria which may be utilized in investigating the social and structural peculiarities of the rural system.

Before discussing the issue of class, however, it is important to determine the measures which may be used in distinguishing farmer protest from other kinds of protest activity. This may be achieved by examining the "constituent ideas" of agrarian unrest which, as Rudolph Heberle notes, form the foundation upon which group cohesion and solidarity are cemented.<sup>10</sup> These ideas are of interest in this analysis, not only because they influenced farmer conceptions of their role in society, but also because they reveal the very nature of the social milieu which gave rise to them. Agrarian disaffection, generated as it was by economic and political subordination to Central Canada, combined a sense of regional deprivation with populist sentiments stressing the virtues of rural life and a belief that economic self-sufficiency was only possible through the development of agrarian institutions specifically designed to meet the special needs of the region's inhabitants. Populism added a certain flavour to farm protest, although farm leaders realized that populist opinion alone could not sustain the movement for very long. As a result, the search for practical solutions to agrarian problems was embarked upon, setting the stage for a reformist surge which included in its

demands the reduction of the heavy mortgage indebtedness for the farmer, the imposition of direct democracy, and the establishment of free trade. Adequate political representation in Ottawa and in the provincial legislatures was deemed as an essential priority, for as grain growing became increasingly commercialized in the early decades of this century and the price of wheat became increasingly dependent upon world price fluctuations, the prosperity of the farmer was measured, not simply by abundance produced on the farm, but by the exchange value of his products as measured by the supplies and services they could buy.

Under these circumstances, economic survival dictated that farmers learn as much as possible from business about its marketing devices, strategies of combination, and skills of self-defence and self-advancement through pressure politics. Acquiring these tactics did not come easily, for farmers had developed a certain habit of mind and thought predicated on the belief that agriculture would always remain the economic backbone of the nation. Commercial realities upset this image, although it is important to emphasize that agrarian values and populist rhetoric often gave the farmers a sustaining sense of cohesion when the power of monopolies and business and political concerns threatened to engulf the movement. One of the tasks of this chapter, then, will be to outline the essential components of agrarian ideology in an attempt to measure its effect on the attitudes and opinions of the farmers themselves. To assist this task, a few comments concerning the concept of ideology itself would seem

appropriate in an effort to clarify some of the conceptual uncertainties which underlie attempts to show the interconnection between belief and action.

### The Concept of Ideology and the Development of the Agrarian Perspective:

What is meant by the term "ideology" and how it has been used to explain individual and group action are questions which observers of social and political behaviour have found difficult to answer. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, for instance, used the concept to describe the collective thinking that results from the existing conditions of life. "Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, . . . no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life".<sup>11</sup> To Marx and Engels, the prevailing ideology was the collective thinking of the ruling class, and it became the instrument, consciously or otherwise, of class domination. In the Marxian scheme, ideologies become false when changed economic conditions exhaust their usefulness and a new collective scheme of thought is produced by an emergent class. Karl Mannheim, whose pioneer work, Ideology and Utopia,<sup>12</sup>



provides a most important framework for most modern discussions of ideology, accepted the Marxian view that bourgeois ideas of the world were ideological and had no claim to validity other than that they sprang from the bourgeois way of life. But at the same time he went further and argued that the system of ideas that attacked the bourgeois way of life and modes of thinking were likewise a product of social life and had no greater claim to validity. Thus Mannheim defines his "particular" ideology as beliefs which express the interests of a particular social group and as such provides only a partial and distorted view of reality. For Mannheim, a complete image of reality can only be made available by synthesizing all the partial views of specific groups.

Up to this point, the subject-matter referents of the term ideology may be presented as (a) an amalgamation of true and false consciousness; (b) a justification for either revolutionary or reactionary interests and attitudes in political life; and (c) a rationalization of irrational forms of social and psychological motivation. A number of contemporary analysts have interpreted this usage to mean that ideology expresses that point in social knowledge at which "interests" connect up to a picture of reality<sup>13</sup> by linking particular actions and mundane practices with a wider set of meanings<sup>14</sup> in order to make purposeful action possible.<sup>15</sup> Ideologies therefore tend to develop wherever interests are vigorously pursued in order to provide them with meaning, reinforcement and justification. The point to be questioned in this context is precisely why "interests"

(implying the pursuit of material or social advantages) must be clarified by the use of ideological symbolism, for it would seem reasonable to suggest that the development of ideologies coincides with what men believe their interests to be. Concomitantly, it may be inferred that ideologies do not necessarily arise to justify or legitimate men's actions, but arise as a result of men discovering that they have certain concerns in common. The argument becomes a matter of sequence but an important sequence if we are to understand why particular social groups and collectivities follow certain patterns in day-to-day life.

Ideology, when conceived in this way, does not imply the distortion of reality or attempts by certain groups to disguise the real nature of a situation, but rather denotes the way in which everyday experience is viewed from a particular and relative historical and social context.<sup>16</sup> In other words, ideologies are real descriptions of the world from a specific viewpoint. When discussing the antagonisms generated by the agrarian community in Western Canada against eastern business concerns, for example, it is possible to contrast the reality of the farmers to the reality of manufacturers, middlemen, or industrialists who represented another viewpoint among many. Likewise, the reality of wheat farmers may be differentiated from the reality of those engaged in other types of husbandry, for social and historical circumstances often prevented all farmers from viewing events in exactly the same way. When grain growers became particularly adversely affected by a protective tariff, by inequitable

grain marketing practices, and by discriminatory railroad rates, their response was specific to their definition of the situation alone, although similarly affected groups could, of course, find some degree of consistency between their specific interests and those of the grain farmers. Thus, it is possible to notice the periodic recrudescences of an ideology whenever any social group faces over a more or less extended period of time a common problem, purpose, or the need for common action. Furthermore, an ideology most often develops when a group is engaged in conflict with other groups that compel it to define itself and sustain that definition.

What an ideology does in particular is to provide the members of a group with a rationale which helps to define membership, to offer a form of coherent organization for fragmentary experience, to articulate some division of labour and role-structures, and to furnish an appropriate perspective.<sup>17</sup> The Canadian Annual Review, for instance, reports that the Manitoba Grain Growers Association (M.G.G.A.) was perhaps the most successful of the early movements in the Canadian West which sought to bring farmers out of chaotic individualism into a condition of commercial, social, economic, and sometimes political combination.<sup>18</sup> The M.G.G.A. and similar organizations in the other prairie provinces attempted to coherently synthesize experience, purpose, terminology, and future action into one perspective. This perspective did not, strictly speaking, give meaning to a set of independent events, but in actual fact was the events as perceived by the farmers as participants in these organizations.<sup>19</sup> As an

occupational group, the wheat farmers were portrayed by the grain growers' associations as embodying the hard life, as practicing selfless devotion and sacrifice, indicating how crucial they are for the survival of society. Indeed, as Nigel Harris points out:

. . . the farmers' picture may be more fully developed than many because farmers have a greater opportunity to be autonomous, independent: in the division of labour, their product can sustain life longer than that of the enmeshed complexity of interdependent industrial output. It is interdependence which constantly tends to erode efforts to refine a separate ideology. Groups are constantly "re-immersed" in the wider culture because they cannot operate as an independent unit, because they depend on a large number of other people playing their part - therefore farmers depend heavily on suppliers of seed, of machinery of all kinds, on chemical fertilizer, and on buyers of commodities to offload their output. Thus the first tentative steps towards refining a separate view of society relative to the purposes of a given group are checked at every stage, although these checks may be partially overcome where a major dispute activates all members of the group and creates the need for common and sustained group direction. To make an ideology sharper, to deepen its assumptions requires the continuation of just such a major problem, and usually the threat to the existence of the group through great deprivation or sustained hostility by the rest of society.<sup>20</sup>

In this case the farmers in conflict offer evidence for the development of a distinct and clearly recognizable ideology.

The importance of conflict cannot be overemphasized, for it is clear that if the farmers had not found themselves in opposition to monopolists, middlemen, and manufacturers, it is doubtful whether programmes such as the Farmers' Platform, drafted in 1916 and revised in 1918, would ever have been formulated. Such a platform added sustenance to the farmers' cause and laid the basis for the New

National Policy adopted by the federal Progressive Party and the provincial wings of the agrarian political movement. Of equal consequence, however, is the fact that the farmers' proposals would never have taken shape unless they had been first of all construed in their natural state, i.e., the spoken word. The development of such ideas, although often vague and imprecise, was drawn from day-to-day experience and gave farmers a sense of continuity between the past and the future. It is through the process by which day-to-day experience becomes tied to the structure of the common sense world of everyday life that prompted philosopher and sociologist Alfred Schutz to

comment:

All typifications of common sense thinking are themselves integral elements of the concrete historical socio-cultural Lebenswelt within which they prevail as taken for granted and as socially approved. Their structure determines among other things the social distribution of knowledge and its relativity and relevance to the concrete social environment of a concrete group in a concrete historical situation.<sup>21</sup>

Belief systems or ideologies in turn exist and are rendered intelligible by the social contexts within which they occur.<sup>22</sup>

The intrinsic dimension of ideology, furthermore, when viewed with the context of the farmers' life experience, provides us with certain insights into the apparent contradiction between the position of farmers as capitalistic producers in a competitive market situation and farmers as carriers of certain inherent antagonisms towards the very foundation upon which a capitalist economy is based - the city and metropolitan-based institutions. If farmers could, in

good conscience, legitimate success in a capitalist-oriented economy then it is also possible to comprehend the farmers' attitude towards political movements such as the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.). In this latter case the farmers were prepared to support, if not embrace, the C.C.F. if, and only if, farmers' problems were dealt with specifically on agrarian terms.<sup>23</sup> This inevitably meant that under agrarian pressure significant changes were made in the C.C.F.'s original socialist programme, especially those dealing with the nationalization of land and the elimination of capitalism as the basis of the nation's economy. This not only suggests a kind of pragmatism on the farmers' part, but also an unwillingness to come to terms with other groups in the industrial community who did not share the apparent advantages of rural life and the rural spirit.

It is this spirit, forming the basis of a populist agrarian ideology, that gave shape to farmer antagonisms towards Eastern Canadian centres of domination and which gave the commercial, educational, and political activities of the agrarian movement a characteristic cast. As a distinctive agrarian belief system evolved, its social power may be viewed in the light of what Durkheim called the external quality of belief, i.e., that property which appears, according to believers, to transcend the group that carries it and to have an independent existence of its own. This does not assume a mutual exclusiveness between an individual and group level of belief, but it does indicate that, having established a generalized belief system, it was possible to achieve a level of immutability necessary

to sustain individual commitment as the pace of social change accelerated. On an individual basis, the disruption of established routines precipitated by the intrusion of industrial and urban values left the farmer vulnerable and confused; however, through association and the attendant reinforcement of rural ideals the farmer could continue to interpret his social and economic existence in a meaningful way. As a norm-oriented movement, prairie agriculturalists attempted to strike a balance between ideas and pragmatic action as a means of responding to the exigencies of an expanding commercial enterprise. As such, the movement attained practical and workable results. Yet without a sufficient understanding of the contours of agrarian ideology, the series of events and circumstances which made a significant impact on the economic and political destinies of prairie farmers remain largely unintelligible. Accordingly, the next section expands on the principal characteristics of agrarian ideology - in particular in its relationship to prairie populism.

#### The Concept of Populism and Agrarian Ideology:

When confronted with the task of defining populism, political analysts have attached a wide variety of meanings to the term. Interpretations have ranged between views of populism as a syndrome rather than an ideology or doctrine<sup>24</sup>, a situation rather than a theory, an emphasis, a dimension of political culture, rather than a system,<sup>25</sup> One observer speaks of populism as occurring when, under the threat

of some kind of modernization (industrialization), a predominately agricultural segment of society asserts as its charter of political action a belief in community and a Volk as uniquely virtuous. In addition, populism is understood to be essentially egalitarian<sup>26</sup> and against all and any elites, to be backward-looking in its efforts to regenerate the present and confound usurpation and alien conspiracies.<sup>27</sup> It also refuses to accept any doctrine of social, political, or historical inevitability and, in consequence, turns to a belief in an instant, imminent apocalypse mediated by the charisma of heroic leaders and legislators.<sup>28</sup> Others have represented populist mobilization as attempts to simply revitalize integration on the basis of traditional values<sup>29</sup>, or as a hastily constructed rationalization for difficult times<sup>30</sup>, while mass society theorists, such as William Kornhauser, see its origins in a pervasive atrophy in the norms relating to authority.<sup>31</sup> Many place populist activity within the context of metropolis and hinterland, pointing out that it derives from the tension between backward countries and more advanced ones, and from the tension between developed and backward parts of the same country. This tension, furthermore, is the product of differential development, both objectively (in terms of power or cultural influence) and subjectively (in terms of a perceived threat to interest, status, or values).<sup>32</sup>

Added to this wide variety of interpretation of the concept of populism has been its indiscriminate application to such disparate groups as North American cash crop farmers, the early utopian



socialist movement of urban intellectuals in nineteenth century Russia, who believed that both political revolution and the general moral regeneration of the Russian people could and would only come from the mass of the peasants, as well as twentieth century rural and urban movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.<sup>33</sup> The term has also been used on a wider, more extensive basis to include not only whole, organized movements, but also certain elements in organizations, movements, and ideologies of all kinds in which the notion of the "will of the people", and the notion of direct popular contact with political leadership are stressed.<sup>34</sup> It is this usage, combined with a reference to cash crop farmers in their emphasis on egalitarianism and reforms aimed at eliminating perceived deprivations which most closely approximates the situation prevailing on the Canadian prairies in the early decades of the twentieth century. Although there is continuing uncertainty as to the analytical utility of the concept of populism in social science research, it does, nonetheless, serve as a useful heuristic device in identifying some of the more salient features distinguishing the activity of wheat farmers from the activities of other segments of the population.<sup>35</sup>

In order to fully appreciate these distinguishing features, the particular role that wheat farming played in the expansion of the Canadian frontier must be taken into consideration, for this factor alone contributed to the development of a special series of relationships between the farmers and those whose interests were in many instances antithetical to the concerns of the agrarian sector.

To the new Canadian government after Confederation, one of the prime objectives of the settlement of the West was to impede American expansion, for the westward surge of American railroads and settlement in the latter half of the nineteenth century threatened to absorb territory west of the Great Lakes and north of the 49th parallel.<sup>36</sup> In response to this threat, the prairie region required that an economic system based largely on fur trading be replaced by a system of agricultural production based on wheat. Since wheat was a crop which showed a fairly high resistance to drought and which could, in the long run, produce substantial commercial profits, eastern business concerns were very sensitive to the prospects of its utilization as a new export commodity. The possibility for the development of a successful wheat economy was, furthermore, considerably bolstered by the tariff policy of 1879, the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (1880-1885), and the federal land and settlement policies of the last quarter of the nineteenth century which ensured an expanding and captive non-industrial market for Central Canadian industry and which realigned traditional north-south trade patterns on an east-west axis.<sup>37</sup> As the prospects of attaining cheap land in a largely unsettled area began to attract the attention of would-be settlers, large amounts of capital investment from Eastern Canadian and foreign sources were put to use in establishing marketing mechanisms and credit and transportation facilities which would ultimately serve the specific interests of these investors. Combined with the fact that a political party system constructed along eastern lines was

imposed, without modification, by the federal government on the new western provinces, the prairie farmer was faced with an economic and political structure which did not adequately reflect his particular needs and interests, although in time the prairie parties developed their own distinctiveness. The inevitable response of the agrarian community to this situation was distrust and suspicion of those who refused to be held accountable for the myriad of problems which accompanied the commercialization of agriculture. If, in the attempt to adjust and adapt to this system, the prairie farmers considered forming new political parties or nationalizing industries other than their own, it was not so much an attempt to remake industrial society along more humane and enlightened lines as it was an effort to control industrial development in accord with agrarian needs and interests.<sup>38</sup>

As important as these factors are in accounting for the rise of agrarian protest, consideration must also be given to the very nature of wheat farming itself in precipitating demands for popular representation and some measure of protection from monopolists and middlemen. As rural sociologists have observed, farmers in one-crop economies are inherently more vulnerable to outside forces than other men and therefore are likely to feel less sure of their ability to cope with life and more anxious about their futures. In the late nineteenth century, railroads and steamships had just created a new world market at the same time as vast new tracts of land were being cultivated in the United States, Australia, the Ukraine, and South America. Farmers who raised those crops whose prices were determined

on this world market were operating in a larger, more complex, and less predictable economic system over which they had very little control. Moreover, the wheat farmer, more than any other rural group, is economically vulnerable to the vagaries of the price system. As Lipset observes in Agrarian Socialism: "There is no doubt that many farmers in other parts of Canada and the world are in a worse financial position, but few experience the chronic alternation between wealth and poverty . . . The pattern of life of the mixed-crop farmer may be upset by severe depression, but food, clothing, and shelter are secure, and price fluctuations are not so great as in the wheat belt. But it is the 'boom and bust' character of wheat production that unhinges life's plans".<sup>39</sup> Since non-agricultural prices usually fell much more gradually than farm prices, the result was that farmers were the most economically depressed group in the country during periods of deflation.

What this seems to suggest is that wheat farmers, more than any other occupational grouping, experience a profound sense of disadvantage which predisposes them to view their world in very specific ways. With other forms of husbandry they do share certain dilemmas in common: the natural hazards over which the farmer has no control; the capricious beneficence of nature that is itself a hazard; the pressure to grow more to compensate for falling prices; the slim margin of capital that turns a few bad seasons into years of retreat and debt; the dependence on someone else for delivery to market; a seemingly continual discrepancy between the cost of production and

income; and the gap in organization that leaves the individual farmer without bargaining strength against processors.

It would appear at first glance that these combined circumstances provide more than a sufficient condition for the development of protest activity but such is not the case. In many parts of Canada farmers offered token resistance to the rule of monopolies and never reached the level of organizational participation that characterized the involvement of prairie wheat farmers. Regional, ethnic, and religious cleavages, although important, do not totally explain this difference. What seems to provide an index for accounting for this apparent discrepancy in farmer attitudes is a situation of relative deprivation, which means, as V. O. Key points out, an abrupt change for the worse in the status of one group relative to that of other groups in society.<sup>40</sup> The social tensions engendered by unfulfilled expectations characteristic of the "boom and bust" cycle of wheat production offers a partial explanation for this phenomenon, but added to this are the particular frustrations farmers encountered as the pace of industrialization and urbanization quickened during the early decades of the twentieth century. The farmer became increasingly aware that, although his situation might be improving in absolute terms, he was less well off than the urbanites and townspeople with whom he compared himself. Thus it was not only actual deprivation but relative deprivation that fueled farm discontent. As a norm-oriented movement agrarian protest was fostered by strains which created demands for readjustment in the social situation.<sup>41</sup>

To the western farmer, then, his profound sense of disadvantage was coupled with an awareness that the source of his troubles could be located in a metropolitan-dominated infrastructure which was pushing him into the role of second-class citizen. Farmers, who had earlier concerned themselves with increasing production, by the turn of the century were more interested with schemes calculated to increase the return on what they marketed. Implementation of such schemes was not easily accomplished, however, for discriminatory railroad rates, monopoly prices charged for farm machinery and fertilizer, an oppressively high tariff, unfair tax structures, an urban-oriented and inflexible banking system, and undemocratic political institutions all threatened to create an imbalance between the farmers' expectations and the realities of economic life. As a result of this situation, the dominant theme of the period from 1900 to 1914 was the movement of farmers into well-organized and effective associations designed to improve their position in the economic structure of the country and to ensure that they would be provided with an effective voice against the power of monopolies.<sup>42</sup> By 1914, however, as immigration came to an abrupt halt and the threat of a world war became a reality, farmers found themselves squeezed between rising costs of production and high interest and debt charges. An increase in wheat prices did not keep pace with the rapid rise in their expenses and, by 1917, farmers were generally less prosperous than in 1914. The action of the government in raising the tariff and controlling agricultural prices while leaving war profits largely untaxed convinced many

western farmers that the federal political parties were operated for the benefit of the privileged few. By 1917 this agrarian discontent had become sufficiently strong to lead to the issuance of a farmers' political programme by the Canadian Council of Agriculture and the nomination of independent farmer candidates to contest a number of rural ridings in the following federal election.<sup>43</sup> The political phase of the movement was thus coming into being, but as historical events would show, at no time did the decision to enter politics enjoy a workable consensus of opinion essential if the farmers were to become an effective and long-term alternative to the major parties at both the federal and provincial levels.

That the farmers did not always agree on critical strategic and tactical matters cannot simply be attributed to the fact that leadership was faulty in some areas or that some farmers failed to completely understand the subtleties of the issues of the day. More fundamentally, the failure to reach a consensus on important issues may be ascribed to the farmers' lack of commitment to any vision of a new social order other than the one they were hoping to create by modifying the existing system. A well-developed ideology can have a powerful hold on men, but the farmers' ideology, formulated on the basis of everyday experience, reflected such a diversity of background and such a wide variation in the interpretation of similar phenomena that one good crop year often sent many farmers scurrying back to the major parties. In addition, as Peter Worsley notes, the ties generated by a common life-situation were often underlaid by pre-existing

cultural ties imported into the agrarian situation and thus were derived from a "pre-situational" cultural community. Whole districts were settled by people of similar ethnic origin, for whom the common culture of the countries of origin, particularly the "transportable" elements of language and religion, provided ready-made ties around which new associations could be constructed. The older, ethnic culture provided a reference point defining social identity and distinctiveness. Furthermore, such powerful "communal" bonds were particularly strong where such communities had experienced religious or political persecution in the Old World. Ethnic groups thus settled together, and were sustained by a compulsive world-view which already contained a ready-made prescriptive social ethic.<sup>44</sup> Under these circumstances, it became difficult for eastern European immigrants (Ukrainians and other Slavic peoples, and German-speaking groups from southern Russia) to accommodate themselves to the dominant Anglo-American culture established earlier by British, American, Eastern Canadian, and Scandinavian settlers. Consequently, the latter group held competitive advantages over the former in terms of status, income, and organizational and political prominence which tended to reinforce and sustain specific patterns of identification in particular areas within prairie society.

This does not deny that populist agitation for reform was widely experienced by large numbers of wheat farmers, but it does serve to caution the observer into viewing agrarian revolt as the ideological forerunner of such utopian movements as Social Credit



and the C.C.F., or as simply representing an adversary relationship between exploiters and the exploited. The metropolis/hinterland framework, although useful in explaining western resentment towards the metropolitan-dominated East, does, to a certain extent, oversimplify this relationship, for those applying it tend to overlook the existence of cleavages within the rural community structure and to ignore the possible existence of allies to the farmers' cause in urban areas. Labour did, on many occasions, attempt to form coalitions with farm groups, but its failure to sustain such alliances cannot be explained totally as an expression of the hinterland's natural rejection of all things metropolitan but as the tendency among farmers to approach the question of exploitation on agrarian terms only. As workingmen themselves, farmers could sympathize with the legitimate concerns of urban labour, but as capitalist producers, whose attachment to the soil remained supreme, strikes and demands for more pay and for less work were inconsistent with the farmers' ideas as to how the abuses of capitalism could be rectified.

As opposed to many urban socialists in the labour movement who envisioned a radical transformation of existing capitalist relations, farmers as a whole attempted to preserve many forms of private enterprise while at the same time curbing private power and eliminating middlemen through co-operative self-help ventures.<sup>45</sup> Agrarians viewed farmer-owned and farmer-directed cooperatives as a grassroots effort to reinstate man as master of his own economic life and as such were consistent with a rural emphasis that farmers could in fact

take economic matters into their own hands. Farmers also reasoned that in some instances, only the power of government could insure them against the unfair advantages of monopoly. They favoured government regulation and control, or in extreme cases, government ownership, only as a means of retaining for themselves the right to hold property and to do business on a reasonably profitable basis. Again, it was the effort to wrest economic control from middlemen, financiers, and manufacturers who neither worked the land nor lived in the farming community that served as a prime motivation in farmer demands for government interference into the private sector of the economy.

On the surface, it would seem that the antagonisms generated towards the "vested interests" who lived on the profits they extracted from the farmers' labour represents a classic example of the development of sectional class solidarity or more basically, an example of the fruition of agrarian class consciousness in opposition to the class of industrialists. However, it must also be recognized that solidarity was most often expressed in communal, rather than sectional terms, for the farmer often referred to himself as "the little guy" or "the common man". The populist heritage of the agrarian movement is evident precisely as the expression of a rural belief in the moral supremacy of "the people" and as such, serves as a necessary qualification to any analysis which views farmer protest as simply economic-interest-group politics. The economic structure of rural society during this period did place a large number of people in fundamentally the same position, so far as the social relations arising out of

their productive labour are concerned, and correlatively, did lead to the formation of a farm group aware of its common interests, but as such, represents only one dimension in the complex process of differentiating group behaviour. Whether the agrarian community in Western Canada can be adequately designated by economic class criteria alone is a question which must be answered if an understanding of the nature of farmer protest and ideology is to be reached. It has been established that cash-crop production and its associated activities did elicit certain common responses, but it is by no means clear whether these responses reflected the desires and interests of the total agrarian community. It is towards these issues and others that attention must now be focused.

#### Stratification Analysis and Agrarian Unrest:

The fact that a large number of people occupy a similar position in the economic and social structure does not imply that they will become conscious of a common identity and act according to it. Marx understood this problem well in his analysis of the French peasantry:

In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization among them, they do not

form a class. They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interest in their own name . . . <sup>46</sup>

According to Lipset, the transformation of a group from a large mass of individuals, who do not recognize the existence of a basic, common class interest, to a self-conscious class occurs through the intervening factor of organized group action.<sup>47</sup> By contrast, C. B.

Macpherson, in attempting to establish the class basis of prairie politics, noted that similar relationships in the production process and by implication, involvement in various farmer organizations, gave rise to common perspectives among farmers but in the absence of class consciousness and in the presence of a false consciousness of society and of themselves.<sup>48</sup> He bases this assumption on the fact that

western farmers essentially comprise a petit bourgeois<sup>49</sup> class outlook, which is predicated on a condition of insecurity and on their mistaken belief that they are independent commodity producers, which in turn had the effect of expediting the process of exploitation by others and preventing radical behaviour. For Macpherson, petit bourgeois illusions of independence thus become a necessary condition for the failure to realize class interest. It is indeed questionable whether a consistency between class interest and class action can be established, for it does not necessarily follow from Macpherson's analysis that "positive class consciousness" is a logical outcome of the pursuit of true class interests. This does not imply, as Macpherson acknowledges, that there is only one "correct" policy for a class to follow<sup>50</sup>, but he does emphasize that there are limits,

set by its class position, to the policies that have a chance of success. Again, the problem of associating class position with certain specific courses of action is clearly in evidence, for if we view the farmers' approach to the difficulties they faced as a manifestation of false consciousness, then we are in effect denying any actual foundation to the farmers' belief system. Contrary to this position, it must be stressed here, as earlier in the chapter, that ideologies are not disguised descriptions of the world, but rather real descriptions of the world from a specific viewpoint. Given this situation, farmer ideology may be conceived as inconsistent or illusory from Macpherson's specific point of view or from the standpoint of a well-organized system of thought such as socialist ideology, but in terms of the farmers' own world-view, there is very little evidence to suggest that farmers' actions were irrational or inconsistent with the realities of the times.

The assumption that class may be crucial to the analysis of group behaviour is thus affirmed, but whether class consciousness can mean more than class identification, or secondly, whether other sources of cleavage can minimize the impact of class awareness, are questions which have perplexed a number of scholars. In regard to the first issue, Richard Centers has argued that class consciousness means not only consciousness of kind, or consciousness of membership in and feeling of solidarity with a group called a class, but also the possession of common interests and a common political and economic outlook or orientation.<sup>51</sup> Adhering strictly to this definition, it

would be inconsistent to suggest that because individuals identify with a class, that class is necessarily important in determining their behaviour; nor would it be appropriate to argue that they would have class allegiance, or that they would be class conscious. Ironically enough, these conclusions are suggested by Centers.<sup>52</sup> The most obvious weakness of this position is that it assumes that all politico-economic interests are class related, and therefore a focal point for inter-class dissension. Talcott Parsons, for one, has noted, however, that the solidarity of ethnic groupings may be more significant for behaviour than social class.<sup>53</sup> What is suggested here is that social class phenomena are multi-dimensional in nature and that economic relations may not be the only, or most important, basis of group action.

This point of view, briefly outlined by Max Weber and developed more systematically by recent writers, recognizes that, under the rubric of stratification, an economic dimension<sup>54</sup>, a social dimension<sup>55</sup>, and a political power dimension<sup>56</sup> may be distinguished, and that other variables, such as cultural way of life, social mobility, and the ethnic and religious pattern of settlement, are all part of the total picture. Complicating this situation, however, is the fact that most discussions which attempt to analyse the processes by which several dimensions converge, tend to associate these processes with the development and activities of an urban industrial community. T. H. Marshall recognized this problem and points out that

. . . there is a quite different set of conditions

which can produce two or more distinct systems of stratification in one society. And that is when the society as a whole is not a true unit for stratification in terms of a particular dimension, but must be divided into two or more sections or regional areas each with its own stratification structure. The most familiar is a society . . . divided into agricultural and industrial - or rural and urban - sectors. The social status dimension can be applied to both, but the results cannot be combined into a single scale; the question whether a farmer stands higher or lower than a works manager may be quite meaningless.<sup>57</sup>

In the prairie provinces generally, the manner in which agriculture was organized and the productive relations which developed gave rise to an agrarian stratification system which was separate and distinct from the urban.<sup>58</sup>

Some observers have, however, tended to minimize the importance of this distinction. Macpherson, for example, contends that the political movements in Alberta and the western provinces generally are the outcome of two necessary conditions - the quasi-colonial status of these provinces and their homogeneity in class composition, i.e., the predominance of small independent producers.<sup>59</sup> This thesis of class homogeneity is doubtful for two reasons. First of all, homogeneity is not reflected in political action, as revealed by the fact that the winning parties retained close to fifty percent of the votes.<sup>60</sup> Secondly, Macpherson tends to dismiss any significant differences between the town- and country-based petite bourgeoisie. However, the petit bourgeois businessman in the towns and villages, a provider of goods and services at a profit, was also a middleman between the farmer and the economic interests of distant centres of

trade and industry. As the intermediary between the two, the townsman must use accepted business techniques in dealing with city business establishments and is also likely to put them into practice with his farmer customers. The farmer follows different practices in dealing with his neighbour on the farm and often resents the fact that he must adopt new ways in dealing with the villager. Furthermore, he may be especially disturbed by the fact that many small-town merchants have increased their own profits at the expense of the farmer who must negotiate with them largely on their terms for credits, loans, and other services. In times of crisis, such as depression, the town- and rural-based petite bourgeoisie may be united by a common problem of insecurity, but the antagonistic relations between them in other respects greatly reduces the possibility of sustained agreement.<sup>61</sup>

The fact that some farmers, however, had better access to credit, were wealthier or more successful, employed more labour or had more machinery suggests that the perception of various events and circumstances affecting farmers' lives were by no means uniform or indeed, that the category of "farmer" may be too broad a generalization for a complete understanding of the agrarian system of stratification. As Arthur Stinchcombe has pointed out, since agriculture everywhere is much more organized around the institutions of property than around occupation,<sup>62</sup> the use of occupational ratings cannot account for differences among farmers in terms of skill, the amount of land owned or cultivated, or the differential cash value of certain crops. It is not reasonable to assume, therefore, that medium-size farmers



face the same problems in farming as large or small operators, despite a common concern for the security of landownership. In fact, Lipset's study shows that it was among middle-income farm groups that the initial support for the C.C.F. was provided and that poorer, non-Anglo-Saxon, and Catholic segments of the farming community showed little or no interest.<sup>63</sup> It is also evident that the identification and self-conception of the agrarian population as a class (an agrarian class as opposed to an urban working class) by farm leaders was rooted in middle-income groups, for the life experiences of both the prosperous and poorer segments of the farming community gave each group a different outlook on the problems facing agrarians as a whole. The fact that poverty or low income is not a sufficient condition for protest activity is well-documented, and a relative satisfaction with the status quo often characterizes the outlook of well-to-do groups.<sup>64</sup> Among middle-income groups, however, relative deprivation, in many instances, becomes the psychological motivation for dissatisfaction and unrest.

It may be argued, nevertheless, that because certain kinds of farming employ similar methods of operation, differences in outlook and perception would be eliminated or at least reduced. Wheat growing, for instance, is characterized by peak loads of labour at certain seasons - almost continuous work day and night during harvest may be followed by long periods of relative inactivity. Such a distribution of working periods thus exerts a profound influence upon the personalities of the individuals concerned. As mentioned earlier

in the chapter, a dependence on prices and a susceptibility to natural hazards play a prominent role in producing a common sense of disadvantage, but the middle class of agriculturalists, usually operating as fairly small-scale family units, are more prone to the vicissitudes of the market than the poorer farmers who have much less to lose or than the wealthier segments of the farming community whose greater opportunities for large-scale capital investment can lessen the impact of falling prices and rising costs.

It has been noted as well that despite the fact that the society and economy of farmers were remarkably homogeneous and there were few criteria available for conferring status other than by personal managerial qualities and disposition factors, there were additional sources of differentiation.

There was a tendency for men with similar (high or low) credit ratings to associate together for purposes of exchanging labor and other things necessary for the successful pursuit of agriculture . . . In many cases, but by no means all, families and relatives would be drawn into the exchange relationship and the network would develop into a true social group. If the men were of similar credit rating, then we would have something that looked like a "social class". However, as often as not the exchange relationship would be confined to the men, and the same families would participate in other types of associative networks for their social life. The reason why men of similar credit ratings did tend to exchange or associate was simply that such men would have similar ways of operating their enterprises - hence practical grounds for the association would exist . . . [T]hese practical reasons were always more important than any criteria of social status or cultural prestige . . . [A] farmer also could gain on the basis of his length of stay. Families who had been in the region from the beginning -

that is, who had stayed through the disaster years - could gain approbation: we called it "hardship status".<sup>65</sup>

As a whole, single-crop husbandry makes the dependence of the farmer on the price of this commodity a more prominent factor in his political thinking than are prices in diversified farming areas. John Bennett's study of southwest Saskatchewan suggests that, while farmers are stratified by the scale of their enterprise, more important are cultural differences based on the type of agricultural production. As compared with grain farming, the ranching tradition places greater value on remoteness from the urban world and stresses the idea of individualism. These attitudes were fostered, according to Bennett, by the relative economic security of ranching as compared to wheat production.<sup>66</sup> In addition, the 1920 edition of The Canadian Annual Review, in noting the differences between western and eastern farming, points out that as opposed to the western farmer who possessed 160 acres of land or more, his eastern counterpart was usually content with 100 acres or less. Moreover, unlike the wheat farmer in the West whose chances of success depended upon a large harvest, the eastern farmer rotated his crops, varied them in different fields, and almost always realized a return on his efforts.<sup>67</sup> It is these factors among others that made grain growing such a hazardous enterprise and which largely account for the upsurge of populist agitation for reform in wheat-belt areas.

### Summary;

The agrarian community was thus stratified, not only according to type of production, income and farm size, but also in terms of the individual farmer's access to credit, the amount of mechanization, and a style of life dependent on the degree to which each segment of rural society was differentiated in terms of ethnicity, religion, and class. The protest generated on the Canadian plains may be viewed as a manifestation of the insecurity and disadvantages which middle income agrarians experienced in wheat-producing areas due to the nature of one-crop economic activity which placed a premium upon good weather, a relatively consistent domestic and world demand for wheat, a compatible relationship between revenues and cost, and upon federal and provincial awareness and concern for agrarian problems. As the tempo of industrialization accelerated, grain farmers became convinced that certain reforms were an absolute necessity if they were to secure full profits from their labour. They also realized that they themselves would have to acquire a knowledge of successful business practices and techniques if they were to survive in a modern market economy. As a result, they supported such economic measures as tariff reductions, farm cooperatives, reduced freight rates, government-established wheat standards, federal regulation of the grain trade, and the construction of railways under provincial or federal assistance or ownership. Moreover, during the war years, the heavy importation of capital from Eastern Canada to purchase land

and farm machinery, left behind it a heritage of debt which made wheat producers particularly amenable to ideas of rural credit and currency reform.

The effort to restore profits in the face of exploitation and under unfavourable market and price conditions was combined with a particular susceptibility to significant fluctuations in income, leading not only to a fear of losing the land altogether for failure to meet mortgage payments and costs, but generally to a situation of unfulfilled expectations. As compared to the urbanite, the farmer had relatively few opportunities for self-advancement and left him in a state of resentment and bitterness. Urban labour faced many difficulties with which agrarians could sympathize, but populist notions stressing the primacy of agriculture and the moral superiority of the rural way of life effectively reduced the possibility of sustained agreement between the two sectors. This moral framework, furthermore, anticipated a popular concern for certain basic democratic rights, for as the most essential segment of the population and the most deserving of fundamental freedoms, the farmers, representing "the people", translated these convictions into the political sphere when economic reforms alone could not adequately guarantee their recognition in an expanding, heterogeneous society. As such, farmers advocated such democratic reforms as the recall, initiative, referendum and fixed election dates, female suffrage, and the termination of cabinet domination of the legislature. Progressivism embodied these demands at both the federal and provincial levels, and led eventually to an

era of farmer-dominated governments in the West during the 1920's and 30's. If we are to understand why farmers responded to the events of this period the way they did, it is crucial to examine the meaning which grain producers attributed to these events in order to show the reciprocal interplay between circumstance and belief.

As a contribution to an understanding of the nature of belief in the context of the farmers' perception of the need for normative change, it is argued that two levels of thought and action must be identified. On an individual level, day-to-day experience gave rise to a particular image of reality which was relative in time and place to the business of grain production. On a group level, the need for adaptation to a changing socio-economic environment, which produced disjunctions between rising expectations and corresponding rewards as well as actual and relative deprivations and anxieties, precipitated the coalescence of a generalized belief system which sacralized an image of rural existence and identified sources of strain and courses of remedial action. Agrarian ideology, existing at a level independent of the individuals experiencing commitment, combined with methods of pragmatic action to give the movement a particular and characteristic cast.

In succeeding chapters, the processes by which agrarian protest emerged as a direct and logical expression of the problems of the prairie wheat economy will be analysed and the reciprocal relationship between the emergence of the agrarian belief system, conditions of structural strain and conduciveness examined in the

context of precipitating events, mobilization, and social control.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Smelser, Neil J. Theory of Collective Behavior. New York: Free Press, 1962, 80ff.
2. Ibid., 292ff.
3. Hofstadter, Richard. The Age of Reform. New York: Vintage Books, 1955, 24-25.
4. Moore, Jr., Barrington. Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966, 491ff.
5. Numerous examples of the idealization of rural life may be found in the literature of the period. For example, R. W. Armstrong points out that "the capacity for speculation, creative imagination, self-reliance, and resourcefulness all combine to make the rural mind an invaluable social asset". (p. 24). The Salt of the Earth: A Study in Rural Life and Social Progress; 1930, Pamphlet No. 1658, McMaster University Archives. Similarly, Clarus Ager notes that ". . . those engaged in (agriculture) . . . are the most numerous, the most necessary, the most moral, and potentially the most influential class in the community, . . ." (p. 7). The Farmer and the Interests: A Study in Economic Parasitism, 1916, Pamphlet No. 4410, Public Archives of Canada, Manuscript Division, Ottawa, Ontario.
6. In its ideal-typical form, Gemeinschaft literally refers to a complex of effective states, habits, and traditions underlying community. By contrast, Gesellschaft may be viewed as a special type of human relationship characterized by a high degree of individualism, impersonality, and contractualism. See Ferdinand Toennies, Community and Society, Charles Loomis, trans. and ed. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963.
7. McCrorie, James N. "Change and Paradox in Agrarian Social Movements: The Case of Saskatchewan", in Canadian Society: Pluralism, Change, and Conflict, Richard J. Ossenberg (ed.). Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1971, 36.
8. Bennett, John W. Northern Plainsmen: Adaptive Strategy and Agrarian Life. Chicago: Aldine, 1969, 280.
9. For a discussion of this point see Morre. op. cit., 486ff.
10. Heberle, Rudolph. Social Movements. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1951, 13.
11. Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. The German Ideology. R. Pascal (ed.). New York: International Publishers, 1969, 14-15.



12. Mannheim, Karl. Ideology and Utopia. New York: Harvest Books, 1936.
13. Horowitz, Irving Louis. Philosophy, Science and the Sociology of Knowledge. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1961, 79ff.
14. Apter, David E. (ed.), Ideology and Discontent. New York: Free Press, 1964, 16.
15. Geertz, Clifford. "Ideology as a Cultural System", in Apter, op. cit., 64.
16. Many efforts to translate the objective social position of a given individual, social group, or collectivity into its subjective perceptions have often led to the positing of a simple mechanistic determination of knowledge. Although it is certainly recognized here that the development of an ideology is related to the social position of its adherents, it is also recognized, in Berger and Luckmann fashion, that efforts to make sense of the larger significance of people's actions and interactions leads them to occasionally step beyond the confines of everyday commonsense knowledge. For example, the grain farmers of Western Canada, although inevitably hemmed in by the frontiers of their own unavoidably limited experience, nonetheless had occasion to interpret their world from a larger frame of reference. In the economic sphere, this framework allowed the farmer to explain the larger significance of his relationships in the marketplace. Thus, his opposition to a restrictive tariff may be viewed within the context of laissez faire doctrine, a doctrine which permitted him to integrate everyday experience into a larger, meaningful whole. It is this kind of process which Berger and Luckmann label "institutional legitimation". See Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. The Social Construction of Reality. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1967.
17. Lane, Robert E. Political Man. New York: Free Press, 1972, 162.
18. The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs. J. Castell Hopkins (ed.), 1917, 739. (Hereinafter cited as C.A.R.)
19. For a similar view, see Nigel Harris. Beliefs in Society: The Problem of Ideology. London: C. A. Watts, 1968, 41-42.
20. Ibid., 63-64.
21. Schutz, Alfred. Collected Papers, Vol. I. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1962, 149.

22. Borhek, James T. and Richard F. Curtis. A Sociology of Belief. New York: Wiley, 1975, 59-83.
23. Lipset's interpretation of the C.C.F. provides evidence in support of the contention that prairie farmers were prepared to support movements attacking the economic power of eastern big business and preventing the foreclosures of farm mortgages. Furthermore, he emphasizes that both the C.C.F. and the Social Credit Party in Alberta provided a functional definition of the situation within the cultural framework of the wheat belt. Both interpreted the depression of the 1930's as being caused by "eastern capitalism", "vested interests", or "financiers". Within that framework, one could apparently build either a leftist or a rightist ideology. See S. M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1968, 154-156; 187-188. The important point to stress here is that farmers were able to see a certain consistency between their own ideology, formulated at the intrinsic or popular level, and the programmes for action that these movements espoused. The western farmer supported these movements, not out of a commitment to their respective ideological prescriptions, but as a result of their ostensible willingness to deal with agrarian problems in a direct manner.
24. Wiles, Peter. "A Syndrome, Not a Doctrine: Some Elementary Theses on Populism", in Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics. G. Ionescu and E. Gellner (eds.). London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969, 166-179.
25. Worsley, Peter. "The Concept of Populism", in Ionescu and Gellner, op. cit., 215-250.
26. This point of view has been forcefully presented by a significant number of American historians who explain Populism as interest-group politics in the great reform tradition of Jacksonianism, Progressivism, and the New Deal. See Solon Buck, The Agrarian Crusade. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920; Robert Durden, The Climax of Populism. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965; John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931; Walter Nugent, The Tolerant Populists. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963; and C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951.
27. See Hofstadter. op. cit., passim. While Hofstadter argues that American populists were often haunted by non-existing conspiracies, Daniel Bell and others go much further in tracing the links between early recrudescences of populism and the almost hysterical aspects of the anti-communist movement in the

post-World War II period. See Daniel Bell (ed.), The Radical Right. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1964.

28. MacRae, Donald. "Populism as an Ideology", in Ionescu and Gellner, op. cit., 153-165.
29. Stewart, Angus. "The Social Roots", in Ionescu and Gellner, op. cit., 180-196.
30. Minogue, Kenneth. "Populism as a Political Movement", in Ionescu and Gellner, op. cit., 197-211.
31. Kornhauser, William. The Politics of Mass Society. New York: Free Press, 1959, esp. 103-105. While recognizing populism as a mass movement, as a large collective effort outside the existing institutional structure and originating in the felt needs of the normally uninfluential portions of the population, Norman Pollack nonetheless maintains that populism represented a viable effort to transform the American social system. The Populist Response to Industrial America: Midwestern Populist Thought. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962.
32. In this regard, see, for example, Edward Shils. "The Intellectuals in the Political Development of the New States", World Politics, Vol. XII(3) (April 1960), 329-368.
33. See Ionescu and Gellner. op. cit., passim and J. B. Allcock, "'Populism': A Brief Biography", Sociology, Vol. 5(3) (September 1971), 371-387.
34. Worsley. op. cit., 219.
35. One of the more notable errors in conceptualization has been a tendency to minimize the important differences between the farmer and peasant varieties of populism. In those cases where populist movements have been largely agrarian protest movements, they are distinguished from peasant movements by the fact that, unlike the former, the elite of the populist movement is recruited from a different social group than the mass following. A populist movement may move in the direction of peasantism in those cases where the elite of the movement, having attained its immediate goals (national independence, status recognition, etc.), dissociates itself from core populist support and becomes increasingly conservative. See Stewart, op. cit., 187. In addition, according to Barrington Moore, one of the grounds for refusing the designation "peasant" to North American farmers is that the former's system of tenure was a collection of scattered settlements surrounded by cultivated fields. Moore, op. cit., 469.

Mention must also be made of the fact that populist movements originating on an urban base (such as the C.C.F.) will seek to channel rural protest by fusing urban and rural interests into a coalition. The position taken in this analysis is that such an alliance was highly tenuous at the best of times, precisely because farmers could not completely identify with the urban elements in the movement.

36. Fowke, V. C. The National Policy and the Wheat Economy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957.
37. Ibid., Part I. See also McCrorie, op. cit., 44; C. Dawson and E. Younge, Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces. Toronto: Macmillan, 1940; H. A. Innis, The History of the C.P.R. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1923.
38. McCrorie. op. cit., 45.
39. Lipset. op. cit., 47. As Maurice Pinard's analysis of Social Credit in Quebec indicates, the tendency of farmers towards protest activity is directly proportional to fluctuations in farm income, leading to insecurity and uncertainty about their future income. M. Pinard, The Rise of a Third Party: A Study in Crisis Politics. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971, 116-117.
40. Key, Jr., V. O. Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1958, 28.
41. See Smelser. op. cit., 287-91.
42. Participation in the grain growers' movement in fact convinced many farmers that the concentration of wealth and political power in the East had created a government whose only concern was the industrialist. As a result, resentment against the East grew so vehement that a secessionist sentiment at one time spread throughout the prairie provinces. See Grain Growers' Guide, July 5, 1911.
43. As Peter Worsley argues, as long as the farmers' demands were not very radical or extensive; as long as they were confined to particular, largely economic demands and did not cohere to form an overall programme; as long as, negatively, they involved no rejection of the policies and philosophies of the major parties or of the constitutional order, farmers and politicians could follow in classic procedure, the buying and selling of favours. Worsley, op. cit., 227. But populist resentment toward eastern industrialists, merchants, and middlemen encompassed economic, social, as well as political

demands and could not be kept apart in separate compartments. Political agitation leading to the creation of third parties to deal with these demands was the next logical step.

44. Ibid., 224-225.
45. It is interesting to note that as a result of the farm depressions of the twenties and thirties, the case for cooperatives was often made on ethical-moralistic grounds. As opposed to those who abused the capitalist system, those engaged in cooperative activity inculcated Christian values such as service to others, unselfishness and the brotherhood of man. Religious values thus gave the farmers' cause a sense of immutability and transcendence which were used effectively in both questioning the moral character of their exploiters and in uniting uncommitted agrarians. This point is important if we are to grasp the total significance of agrarian unrest and will be discussed in a later chapter.
46. Marx, Karl. The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. New York: International Publishers, 1969, 124.
47. Lipset. op. cit., 57.
48. Macpherson, C. B. Democracy in Alberta: Social Credit and the Party System. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953, 225.
49. In Macpherson's usage, the petite bourgeoisie is comprised of a class of small-scale entrepreneurs who are self-employed and who engage little or no outside labour.
50. For the debate between Macpherson and S. M. Lipset on this issue and others, see Lipset. "Democracy in Alberta", Part I, Canadian Forum, Vol. 34(406) (November 1954), 175-177; Part II(407) (December 1954), 196-198; and Macpherson's reply, Canadian Forum, Vol. 34(408) (January 1955), 223-225.
51. Centers, Richard. The Psychology of Social Classes. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949, 21.
52. Ibid., esp: chapter 12.
53. Parsons, Talcott. "Social Classes and Class Conflict in the Light of Recent Sociological Theory", in Essays in Sociological Theory. New York: Free Press, 1954, 332.
54. According to Weber, an economic class is composed of people who have life chances in common, as determined by their power to

dispose of goods and skills for the sake of income. For Weber, the crucial aspect of a class is, ultimately, the market situation.

55. Weber referred to the status order as communal aggregates differentiated from each other by an estimation of social honour (prestige) as expressed through a distinctive style of life.
56. To Weber, the political order or party refers to groups whose action is oriented towards the acquisition of social power, i.e., towards influencing communal action.
57. Marshall, T. H. Class, Citizenship, and Social Development. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1965, 140.
58. McCrorie. op. cit., 37ff.
59. Macpherson. op. cit., esp. chapters 1 and 8.
60. Pinard. op. cit., 69.
61. The prairie farmers' attitude towards townsmen has been accurately chronicled in western Canadian literature: . . . He had the farmer's deep-rooted sense of injustice over the fact that whenever he bought he had to pay the seller's price, but whenever he sold, the buyer dictated the figure. His gorge boiled none the cooler for the helplessness of his position. Robert J. C. Stead, Grain. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1969 - originally published in 1926, 121.
62. Stinchcombe, Arthur L. "Agricultural Enterprise and Rural Class Relations", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 67 (1961-62), 165-176.
63. Lipset. op. cit., esp. chapter. 8.
64. A number of writers, for instance, have suggested that poverty implies a concern for one's solitary self or solitary family at best and resignation or despair at worst. See, for example, W. G. Punciman. Relative Deprivation and Social Justice. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966, 25-26.
65. Bennett. op. cit., 221.
66. Ibid., 206-13.
67. C.A.R. (1920), 91.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF FARMER DISCONTENT IN WESTERN CANADA: THE ORGANIZATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL PHASE

Many social movements in Canada have had their beginnings in hastily convened, unstable associations and then evolved into institutionalized pressure groups through which grievances are channeled routinely. The early Grange or Patrons of Industry, for instance, stand in contrast with later farm organizations, with their complicated lines of communication to local farm associations, and their intimate and continuous contact with both federal government authorities and provincial political officials. After such consolidation takes place, norm-oriented movements based on generalized beliefs develop only when the pressure group has failed to gain satisfaction for its supporters through routine activity.

As far as the evolution of the West is concerned, early farmers' organizations attempted to simply voice the complaints of those engaged in a developing grain industry, a task considerably complicated by the essentially mercantilistic nature of Canadian economic policy. What this meant in effect was that national economic interests and priorities were given precedence over regional concerns and that agriculture, as part of a commercial complex, was directed toward achieving a balance of exports over imports. The driving force activating this philosophy was the possibility that there was a frontier of investment to be found - a frontier which could provide opportunities for investment at an expanding rate for some time to come. As a concomitant of this there was the investment to be made in providing facilities for the handling of the products of the West, and the profits to be made from the marketing of the staple products

once settlement had begun to take shape.<sup>1</sup>

Given these circumstances, it is possible to recognize three distinct stages in the history of Western Canada which shaped the political and economic destinies of the prairie provinces for years to come. The first stage includes the period up to the 1890's and beyond when the federal government sought to get Canadian farm products, such as wheat, into the American and British markets, while at the same time attempting through tariffs to keep foreign commodities out of Canada. The second stage encompasses the western boom of 1896-1913, when the government made available vast land tracts to railway promoters and underwrote most of the British capital borrowed against the future sale of western land to homesteaders. The government also endeavoured to encourage the construction of railways to deliver raw materials and to open schools, experimental farms, and other services to improve yields and incomes. Finally, a third period must be acknowledged as an era of agricultural political dominance extending from the late 1910's to the early 1930's. Taken together, these periods marking the evolution of prairie society, created a condition of structural conduciveness for the emergence of agrarian protest.

In this chapter, consideration will be ~~given~~ to the events and circumstances which aroused the agrarian community into vehement opposition to tariff and grain marketing policies, for such policies left farmers extremely vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the market. As individuals, farmers were completely helpless; but by the turn of the century the advantages of combination and organization had captured




the imagination of many who wished to curb the power of monopolies, manufacturers, and distant politicians. Farmers' organizations, both educational and commercial in nature, sought to obtain favourable legislation from government and at the same time acquire control over wheat production and distribution. These efforts eventually culminated in direct political action during the late stages of World War I and beyond. The chapter shall close with some comment on the diverse political histories of the three prairie provinces. Different regional approaches to similar economic problems are to be explained, not simply in terms of the expediency and opportunism of the parties in power, but more fundamentally as reflecting the disparate cultural and social alignments and interests of their respective populations.

#### The Background of Agrarian Unrest:

In discussing the origins of the farmers' movements in the West, it is important to emphasize that there are at least three significant sources which can be identified as contributing to its growth and expansion. Many western farmers had earlier been members of the Grange or Patrons of Industry in Eastern Canada or had witnessed the growth of these two farmers' movements in Ontario. Farmers were indoctrinated in the basic necessity for group action, and men like E. A. Partridge and J. W. Scallion were trained for greater work in the West. W. L. Smith, for many years editor of the Farmers' Sun and intimately acquainted with Canadian agrarian movements, was convinced

that "the whole farm movement in the West may fairly be styled as the joint progeny of the Patron movement of Ontario and that like movement which swept across the border from the Western States".<sup>2</sup> A more diffuse and less direct influence was derived from the experience gained through cooperative activity in Great Britain which informed many farmers of the advantages to be achieved through group activity. Finally, agrarian discontent, which for twenty years had been gathering potency in the United States and had come to a head during the period 1890-96, also had an influential effect on the thinking of Canadian farmers. The geographical proximity of the prairies to the American Mid-west, the movement of disaffected American farmers into the Canadian West, and the wide circulation of American magazines and journals in this area brought the crusade against political corruption and economic exploitation closer to the Canadian farmer.<sup>3</sup>

This does not imply that the farmers' movement was completely shaped by extraneous influences. It does indicate, however, that an examination of the heritage of discontent in other areas contributes to an understanding of the reasons underlining the choice of particular tactics or strategies by farmers' organizations in certain regions of the West. For example, membership in the United Farmers of Alberta (U.F.A.) was comprised to a significant extent by expatriate American farmers. Reared in an atmosphere of populism and agrarian discontent, they were well aware of the potential political power of the farmer. This experience, combined with an absence of loyalty towards traditional parties, gave these ex-Americans a political viewpoint different from



anything yet experienced in Canada.<sup>4</sup> Besides American influence, however, Canadian-born immigrants from Western Ontario brought with them political and economic ideas rooted in Ontario liberalism. Almost all the prominent members of the farmers' movement in Alberta were originally Liberal in party politics. The importance attached by the Progressive Party to tariff reform and free trade in the necessities of life was largely the result of this Canadian background.<sup>5</sup> What this suggests is that despite a common concern among farmers for security of tenure and the opportunity for realizing a profit from their labours, their diverse cultural background and experience often prevented agreement on the means to achieve such objectives. In other words, their outlooks reflected a relative and specific point of view established by variations in cultural heritage. Correlatively, these variations may be examined against the background of early agrarian activity, for within these movements are found proposals and programmes for action which to a greater or lesser extent guided the thinking of western agrarians.

The Grange and the Patrons of Industry - The first organized attempt to mobilize Canadian farmers occurred in 1872 with the formation of the Grange or more formally, the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry. This organization was a secret, non-political body giving the farmer the opportunity to associate and unite with others of similar persuasion who faced analogous difficulties in farming practices and procedures. Subordinate Granges, similar to the locals of future farmers' associations met to debate and pass resolutions on matters of agricul-

tural interest. A declaration of principles was adopted which defined mutual protection and instruction as the ultimate objectives; expressed the desire to bring producers and consumers, farmers and manufacturers, into the most direct and friendly relations, to dispense with middlemen, to oppose the tyranny of monopolies and to fight high rates of interest or exorbitant profits in trade; advocated the teaching of practical agriculture and domestic science in the schools and urged a proper appreciation of the abilities and sphere of women as members of the Order; and declared the principles of the Grange to be fundamental to honest government.<sup>6</sup> Credit is given to the Grange as the basic farmers' organization in Canada and became, in the words of one observer, "the tap-root from which all other movements have subsequently developed".<sup>7</sup> However, after the Order reached its zenith in 1879, internal dissensions, disastrous experiments in finance, and a lack of cohesion deriving from the physical distances separating farmers greatly reduced its impact as a vehicle of farmer self-expression during the remaining thirty years of its existence.<sup>8</sup> But despite their shortcomings, the Grange organizations did give their members an opportunity to gain experience in united action.

A second American farmers' organization crossed the border into Ontario in 1889. The Patrons of Industry joined the Grange in promoting such issues as reciprocal trade on fair and equitable terms between Canada and the rest of the world, a reduction in the machinery of government, and prohibition of the bonusing of railways by government grants, but differed from the latter body in encouraging political

activity among its members.<sup>9</sup> While the Patron crusade did illustrate the pressing need for legislative reform, it accentuated on a more fundamental level the basic dilemma of the farmer in a rapidly changing social order. As one observer has noted, the accelerated shift from a predominantly agricultural economy towards an industrial urban society produced a vocal response from the small-property interests of rural Ontario.<sup>10</sup> Unlike urban dwellers, Ontario farmers were unable to abandon classical economic liberalism in favour of collectivist action.<sup>11</sup> Awed by the growth of monopoly capitalism, big government, and organized labour, the farmers, through the Patron organization, stood committed to a traditional anti-protective "impulse". The Patrons' movement was short-lived, however. After a brief flirtation with independent political action, a final attempt to defend anachronistic rural values, Ontario farmers by 1896 had returned to traditional party alliances, diversified their crops from an earlier concentration on grain production, and accepted the changes which accompanied the prosperity of the Laurier era.<sup>12</sup> As S. E. D. Shortt concluded, the Patrons exemplified the problems encountered by agrarian politics in a heterogeneous society and also illustrated the difficulty in reconciling traditional values to an evolving social order.<sup>13</sup>

It is noteworthy that, as an organization, the Patrons were not greatly influenced by American farm politics. As Sharp suggests, Canadian farmers simply responded to similar economic circumstances in the same fashion as their counterparts in the United States.<sup>14</sup> In Ontario, such important issues as declining prices and rural de-

population represented the concerns of many farmers, concerns relative and specific to the region; in the West, the Patrons of Industry expressed the particular aspirations and discontents which were rooted in the experiences of prairie farmers.<sup>15</sup> There is evidence, then, that the farm population of the prairie region developed not only distinctive agricultural procedures and techniques, patterns of local government and social services, and a social and cultural life of its own, but developed, in addition, distinctive social organizations designed to meet their unique economic problems, which represented the commercial aspects of their occupation. An examination of the Patrons in Manitoba supports this contention, for within this organization problems indigenous to grain farming were dealt with within the context of the prairie region.

The Patrons of Industry in Manitoba - As L. A. Wood indicates, after a land boom in 1881-2, there followed a serious depression as artificial values collapsed and drought and frost destroyed a sizeable proportion of the 1883 crop.<sup>16</sup> As discontent spread among farmers, the Manitoba and North-West Farmers' Protective Union was formed and called for the enunciation of policies designed to relieve the farmers of some of their burdens. Specifically, the objects of the Union included the repeal of laws which militated against the farmers' interests, the removal of the tariff, the control of monopolies, the lowering of freight rates, and the expansion of the movement on a local basis.<sup>17</sup> The Union could not sustain itself for very long, but many aspects of its programme were later absorbed by the Patrons of Industry and Manitoba Grain Growers' Association. By 1890, the Patrons had

become sufficiently strong to become a significant agrarian pressure group attacking eastern Canadian manufacturing interests and their counterparts in the grain trade in Winnipeg.<sup>18</sup> As in Ontario, their platform called for free trade, restrictions on immigration, abolition of the Senate, female suffrage and a series of legal reforms. Unlike their brethren in Ontario, however, the Manitoba Patrons were not as anxious to engage in political activity but instead concentrated their energies on initiating self-help programmes. Cooperation thus became an important and viable alternative to independent political action to many western grain growers. It was through cooperation, furthermore, that the farmers' movement in the West achieved its greatest success, for independent politics inevitably ran the risk of co-optation by the major parties or defeat at the polls.

It is unfortunate for the Patrons that they could not resist the temptation to enter the political struggle. By 1894 they had calculated that a widespread disaffection within Tory ranks would strengthen their cause, but a combination of the indifference or outright hostility on the part of the press and dissension within their ranks led to their defeat and eventual dissolution by 1898. The Patrons' response to farming problems did, however, exemplify a growing conviction among prairie farmers that agriculture, as Canada's basic industry, deserved special consideration. In Manitoba specifically, the blending of the prairie experience with Ontario liberalism gave subsequent farmers' organizations in the province a character and a point of view which differed from the viewpoints expressed in

Alberta and Saskatchewan. Middle-class grain growers in all provinces were besieged by similar economic difficulties, but their specific experiences in each province reflected a tradition or a heritage peculiar to each region.

By 1900, however, five years before Alberta and Saskatchewan had become provinces, the farmers were not yet organized in sufficient numbers to have a significant impact in promoting legislative changes at all levels of government, nor were conditions that desperate as to mobilize farmers to a common cause. But in 1901 the West witnessed a major economic crisis which resulted in the formation of the first powerful farmers' movement in Western Canada. As Lipset has noted, in that year the prairies produced 60,000,000 bushels of wheat - almost twice as much as had ever before been harvested. The railroads were unprepared to handle a crop of that size, and almost half of it was lost because there were not enough freight cars to move it before winter. The farmers complained bitterly that the railroads gave preference to the elevator companies in allotting cars.<sup>19</sup> A group of farmers, frustrated and bitter over this situation, decided to form a farmers' organization to protect their rights. As a result, the Territorial Grain Growers' Association (T.G.G.A.) was brought to life on December 18, 1901 in the Indian Head district of what is now the southwestern part of Saskatchewan. It was this organization, called the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association after 1905, which became the first permanent vehicle of agrarian discontent in the West.



### The Grain Growers' Associations: Their Impact and Organization:

With the advent of the T.G.G.A., prairie grain growers were quick to seize upon the opportunity to launch a concerted effort toward improving agricultural conditions in the region. Within two months of the inception of the Association, it was able to hold its first convention with delegates present from sixteen local organizations comprising a total of 500 members. In a later speech, the Hon. W. R. Motherwell, the prime mover and first president of the new body, set forth the objectives of the organization: "With the farmers righteously indignant over their inability to dispose of the 1901 crop, the time seemed ripe for the commencement of a movement looking towards a permanent organization whose duty it would be to press persistently and insisently for an improvement in marketing conditions, transportation, warehousing, and for the introduction of new and amended legislation from time to time as the rapidly changing character of the country seemed to warrant it".<sup>20</sup> Such legislation was aimed initially at the railroads, for under the provisions of the Manitoba Grain Act (1900), western farmers expected an end to the monopoly in grain handling extended to elevator companies by the railway. Under this Act, government weighmasters were to be located at the chief receiving points, and the producer was to have access to the scales. In addition, under the general supervision of the grain trade by a warehouse commissioner, the farmer was granted the right to ship his own grain and to build flat warehouses to facilitate

loading.<sup>21</sup> In short, the control of the railroads in setting what farmers considered unfair prices and exercising exclusive right in the grain trade was the ultimate aim, although the enforcement of this legislation was often lax. Farmers remained convinced that there existed a "silent conspiracy" to defraud them, but the crisis in 1901 brought matters to a head.

The Canadian Pacific Railway, upon which the main burden of the crop fell, was completely unprepared to handle the record crop of that year, as it was reported to have for all purposes in the West a mere 7,000 box cars and from 200 to 300 engines.<sup>22</sup> Only one-third of the crop could be moved before the shipping season closed, with the result that farmers were forced to store the remainder in inadequate facilities. One of the first priorities of the Territorial Grain Growers' Association, then, was to amend the Manitoba Grain Act in such a way that farmers would be protected from the railroad's inefficiency and incompetence in future years. The addition of car distribution amendments to the Act, eventually passed into law at the 1902 session of Parliament, were devised in order to require the local railway agent to apportion cars, where there was a shortage, in the order in which they were applied for. In cases where such cars were misappropriated by applicants not entitled to them, the penalties of the Act were to be enforced.<sup>23</sup> The subsequent failure of the railroads to provide an adequate supply of freight cars, convinced farmers once and for all that their interests were being sacrificed. However, the action of the T.G.G.A. in successfully prosecuting the C.P.R. agent

at Sintaluta for an infraction of the Grain Act in his allocation of cars demonstrated the possibilities of united action. When it became known that the Association had been instrumental in securing the 1902 amendments and forcing the C.P.R. to comply with these regulations, membership boomed. By the end of that year 27 locals had been formed with four agricultural societies affiliating with the parent body.

As membership grew, the news of the T.G.G.A.'s success had spread into Manitoba where a local was established at Virden early in 1903. Two months later, on March 3, 1903, the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association (M.G.G.A.) was formed. The stated objectives of the Association, under the able leadership of J. W. Scallion, an early pioneer in supporting farmers' causes, were "to defend the legitimate interests of the people on the land and to promote the self-development of rural community life".<sup>24</sup> It joined the Territorial Grain Growers' Association in advancing the idea that farmers could be a factor of real importance in the affairs of the nation. Farmers were also encouraged to believe that cooperation was the surest road to individual as well as collective success and that legislation was best secured by and through organization. Because the railways and grain elevator interests were even more vital and necessary to the farmer than the latter's very limited product was to them, the economic dependency of the wheat producer to marketing agencies and transportation companies was surpassed only by a dependency on domestic and world prices and the forces of nature. Given the concern among a majority of farmers by the turn of the century in schemes

calculated to increase the rate of return on what they marketed rather than in measures designed to expand agricultural production, it is not surprising that the grain growers' associations took every opportunity to condemn the actions of monopolies controlled by eastern "big business" and to extol the virtues of concerted action.

The theme for the next several years continued to be one of protecting the farmers' rights against the unfair advantages of monopolistic conditions. Railroads were attacked for charging exorbitant rates; line elevator companies were accused of underweighing, undergrading, and excessive dockage<sup>25</sup> in defiance of legal prescriptions; the Winnipeg Grain Exchange was thought to be a centre of gambling by grain dealers who purchased low and sold high, thus depressing the price for the farmer; terminal elevators were charged with defrauding the farmer of his honest return by judiciously mixing high grade with low grade wheat and selling the mixture at a higher grade; government inspectors were criticized as unsympathetic to the farmers, unduly harsh in their grading, and dominated by the grain merchants; bankers and merchants were disliked for their alleged sharp practices which exacted heavy tolls for agricultural credits.<sup>26</sup> Since credit needed for securing machinery, additional land, and working capital was particularly extensive, prairie farmers often found themselves heavily in debt. Not only did the banking and credit system come into question during this period, but farmers also claimed discrimination in the rates charged for agricultural implements coming into the West. Evidence was cited that comparable hauls in Ontario were less costly.<sup>27</sup>

By identifying the agents promoting the farmers' difficulties, the grain growers' associations were able to increase their credibility as spokesmen for the producers of the West. As long as farmers remained isolated from one another, however, they could only speculate as to the real causes of their troubles. Yet during the early years of the twentieth century, this isolation problem was virtually eliminated as a serious handicap in organization by the advent of better roads, the automobile, and improved communications systems. These innovations were of particular importance in the wheat belt, where the wheat growers' working season could be confined to seeding and harvesting. A significant amount of free time which remained could, therefore, be devoted to the discussion of agricultural grievances. Such discussions acted as a catalyst in expanding the farmers' awareness of the mechanisms by which non-producers could operate in a market economy to the direct detriment of the individual producer. Furthermore, farmers quickly realized that all those who earned their living by selling goods and services to the agrarian community could, under monopolistic conditions, in fact maximize profit by setting price levels at their own discretion. At this stage, government regulatory agencies were under-staffed and ill-equipped to cope with price-fixing in most areas, except in cases where prices were paid to the farmer which were established by market demand. As individuals, farmers could do very little to remedy this situation except to utter a weak, ultimately ineffectual, protest. Organization did, however, provide the farmer with a collective impact in voicing demands for economic

change. A residual consequence of this activity was to legitimize a conviction that agricultural producers were ultimately the most basic and the most moral citizens in society, possessing a wholesomeness and integrity impossible for the depraved populations of cities to realize. By dividing the social order into producers and nonproducers, it was possible to translate the economic activities of the urban and town dwellers as being essentially evil, as emanating from a desire to usurp the rightful status of the farmer. Under the reverberating name of "the people", farm protest reflected a populist belief that morally worthy parties could act together to neutralize monopolistic interests and modify the existing system.

It must be pointed out that it is not possible to represent grain grower opposition to urban, metropolitan interests as a uniform, self-conscious movement throughout the entire prairie region at this time. This was a result of geography as much as indigenous regional factors such as immigrant background. By 1900, Manitoba had 71.3% of her field crop area in wheat, while Saskatchewan and Alberta had 74.3% and only 22.8% respectively. In 1906, these percentages had altered slightly to 64.5% in Manitoba, 64.7% in Saskatchewan, and 24.4% in Alberta.<sup>28</sup> What these figures suggest is that Alberta, with considerably fewer acres of land under cultivation, would be less likely to witness the development of farm organizations representing the interest of wheat growers. However, an upsurge in immigration during the period 1901-1905, especially an influx of farmers already receptive to the idea of organization in the central plains areas of

the United States, increased the demand for representation. Early in 1905, the principles of an organization known as the American Society of Equity were brought to the attention of farmers in the Edmonton area. This association had been formed several years earlier in Indiana and had sought at that time to educate farmers in the methods of "controlled marketing" by means of which they might obtain a better return from the sale of their products.<sup>29</sup>

It was expected that Alberta farmers would rally behind the new movement but such was not entirely the case. Considerable controversy attended the Society's inauguration in Canada, for after Alberta became a province in 1905, many farmers were seeking an organization which would suit, not only their own provincial needs, but also one which would be strictly Canadian. As a result, efforts were expanded to formulate a specifically Canadian agrarian programme and received considerable impetus from an established local of the Territorial Grain Growers' Association at Strathcona. The T.G.G.A., soon to become a local regional association centred in Saskatchewan, had outlived its usefulness in uniting the farmers of the territory. Provincial autonomy precluded such an arrangement, so the need for establishing a distinct farmers' body in Alberta became all the more pressing. In 1906, the Farmers' Association of Alberta (F.A.A.) was founded in response to this need.

To avoid preemption by this nascent association, the American organization changed its title to the Canadian Society of Equity (C.S.E.) and for the next two years they both competed for the support of

farmers in the area. Although they existed harmoniously, it became increasingly evident that the maintenance of both was a hindrance to progressive action and somewhat extravagant in a province whose wheat yield was far below that of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. After continuous effort, the Canadian Society of Equity finally amalgamated in 1908 with the F.A.A. and the combination became, on January 14, 1909, the United Farmers of Alberta (U.F.A.), Our Motto, Equity.<sup>30</sup> Its characteristics were more political than in the other provinces, but this perhaps may be attributed to the influence of the original American Society of Equity. In common with the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association and the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, however, the United Farmers of Alberta continued an agrarian programme calling for the procurement of special freight rates on seed grain, railway loading platforms, and the right to have cars allocated in time as ordered, and in general, the education of farmers along certain economic and social lines. Such activity proved that agrarians could cooperate continuously and effectively and could provide a potentially powerful lobby in opposing national or regional policies, and the actions of middlemen or monopoly interests. It was precisely the development and use of the usual strategies of the business world (combination, cooperation, and pressure politics) which gave the grain growers' movement a significance beyond that of merely reflecting farmers' grievances, suspicions, and resentments. Agrarian ideology, which stressed the importance of farming as an occupation and the moral virtues of rural life, was reinforced and no doubt inspired



many uncommitted farmers to join the movement, but its commercial ventures provided the real strength to the grain growers as an organization.

#### Experiments in Cooperative Marketing:

From the early days of the Territorial Grain Growers' Association, the efforts of the railroads to bolster the monopoly position of the private grain companies and their elevator operations were met with hostility and the resolve to establish one day a cooperative company to handle western grain and to be owned and operated by the farmers themselves. This idea was opposed initially by the top officials of the grain growers' associations for fear of losing the support of farmers and thereby jeopardizing the very existence of the associations themselves. Such fears proved groundless, however, for agrarian antagonism generated toward the private grain companies was more than sufficient to interest a number of farmers in taking economic matters into their own hands. A leading exponent of cooperative marketing, E. A. Partridge, initiated a plan to acquire grain elevators and return the profits of their operation back to the farmer. As a result of his efforts, the Grain Growers' Grain Company, Limited (G.G.G.Co.) was established in 1906 as an agency to receive grain from members and sell it directly on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. Stock shares would cost twenty-five dollars apiece, but in order to maintain some measure of democratic control, not more than four shares might be

obtained by any one person, and shareholders were to be allowed only one vote each at the annual meetings of the company.<sup>31</sup> After making reasonable progress for a period of six weeks the Grain Growers' Grain Co. was suspended from the Grain Exchange on the grounds that certain pamphlets had been issued "offending against the honour and dignity of the Exchange" and "reflecting on the methods adopted by certain members of the trade".<sup>32</sup> In addition, the farmers' company was charged with proposing to distribute profits on a patronage basis in direct violation of by-law 19 of the Grain Exchange, which set a commission of a cent a bushel on all grain sold.<sup>33</sup>

This turn of events persuaded the company's officials that government intervention was the most efficacious means of forcing a revision of the rules of the Exchange. In responding to the company's pressure tactics, the Manitoba government eventually forced the Exchange to readmit the Grain Growers' Grain Co. to full membership and restore its trading privileges, provided it drop its provisions for the cooperative distribution of profits. The company relented to this request, but it had achieved a major victory in forcing both the government and the Exchange to acknowledge its existence as the sole representative of the commercial interests of private farmers.<sup>34</sup> It demonstrated as well that farmers could be motivated to support the principles of organization to an even greater extent if a visible enemy could be identified.

What these actions illustrate is the essential difficulty that a populist-inspired movement experiences in translating abstract

issues (such as the distinction between "moral" producers and "evil" nonproducers) into concrete and pragmatic action. As indicated earlier, farmers could certainly appreciate and support abstract notions emphasizing the virtues of rural existence, but the conditions underlying day-to-day experience in operating a farm as a profitable enterprise dictated that practical considerations be given priority. This suggests that the agrarian movement was infused with an essential pragmatism - a consideration which qualifies any claim that farm protest was a backward-looking, nostalgic reaction to modernization.<sup>35</sup> Farmers were looking for the means to compete more successfully in an encroaching industrial order and to thereby exercise some measure of control over those who would abuse their prerogatives in the market. Although it can be argued that organization only attracted a minority of wheat growers in the region at this time, it must be pointed out that recent settlers in the prairie provinces were initially more concerned with establishing their farms than with economic protest. It is significant, however, that the most important centres of organized activity were among the first to be settled.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the presence of large numbers of immigrants from non-English-speaking countries had the effect of retarding the rapid growth of the movement. As Lipset has noted, these farmers usually settled in ethnic enclaves and had little to do with the English-speaking settlers.<sup>37</sup> Also because the co-operatives required financial investment by their members, the relative lack of support can be attributed to the difficulty in enlisting newly settled districts, where farmers were usually in debt.<sup>38</sup> The farmer-

owned companies were, nonetheless, handling 20% of all wheat grown on the prairies by the outbreak of the First World War - a significant figure considering the financial difficulties that farmers faced.<sup>38</sup>

The one problem which the organized farmers had difficulty overcoming was in establishing and maintaining inter-provincial liaison to coordinate the activities of the associations. Such coordination could assist in unifying agrarian opinion and in discussing common problems. Accordingly, early in 1907 the Interprovincial Council of Grain Growers and Farmers Associations was formed with the purpose of exercising discretionary powers on questions of wide import to the farmers.<sup>39</sup> In addition, the Grain Growers' Grain Co. initiated plans to establish a farm journal which would chronicle not only the various operations within the organizations, but also enunciate the principles for which they stood and advance any cause that might receive their collective support.<sup>40</sup> This journal, christened the Grain Growers' Guide, commenced monthly publication in June, 1908, and with E. A. Partridge as editor, immediately declared its support for a programme calling for the elimination of middlemen and public control and ownership of the operation of grain elevators. The Guide reasoned that large private elevator interests had grown too powerful and as a result of their strong financial backing were in a position to consistently undersell competitors such as the Grain Growers' Grain Co. which had no storage facilities.<sup>41</sup> Largely through the efforts of the Guide and the Interprovincial Council, agitation for government ownership of terminal and inland elevators received the popular

support of all three grain growers' associations.

The problem which remained was one of convincing the Liberal government in the three prairie provinces to take action on this proposal. However, the idea of participating in a system of provincially-owned elevators without a monopoly position which could be acquired only by amendment of the British North America Act was not acceptable to the provincial premiers. They did offer to increase government regulation of the elevators, but this was rejected as totally inadequate by the Interprovincial Council.<sup>42</sup> As a result of this impasse, the grain growers considered it advantageous to apply pressure to the governments singly in the hope of seeking additions to the legislative powers of the provinces. By forcing the respective premiers to assume direct responsibility for appeasing the farmers' demands and thereby risk losing support at the polls, the government of Manitoba became the first to introduce legislation aimed at establishing public ownership in the grain industry. The Manitoba Grain Act, drafted in December, 1909, authorized the establishment of a public line of elevators under a commission, but the members of this commission were to receive their appointment from the government and be removed at its discretion. A petition signed by sixty per cent. of the farmers contributory to a proposed elevator was necessary before it could be purchased, leased or constructed.<sup>43</sup> As the grain growers argued, it was clear from the wording of the Act that a commission so appointed would be under the dictation of the party in power and amenable to all whims of political expediency. Furthermore, they pointed out that

the sixty per cent petition requirement would involve campaigns wherever the farmers sought a government elevator.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, after D. W. McCuaig, president of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, was offered and accepted the chairmanship of the commission, the farmers of the province gave full support to the experiment.

In Saskatchewan, the legislature similarly called for the establishment of a commission to examine proposals for the creation and operation of a system of elevators, which would accomplish the objectives of the farmers. Premier Walter Scott, however, envisioned a plan to organize a system of farmers' mutual elevator companies with financial assistance from the government. D. S. Spafford indicates that this idea had been entertained by Scott several months before the commission came into being.<sup>45</sup> Having privately indicated his opposition to government ownership and receiving the support of his commissioner of agriculture, the Hon. W. R. Motherwell (the first president of the Territorial Grain Growers' Association),<sup>46</sup> it is not surprising that the commission rejected public ownership and recommended instead a system of cooperative elevators owned and operated by the farmers and assisted by generous loans from the government. The Liberal administration subsequently endorsed the recommendations of the commission in a bill which became law in March, 1911. By that act, the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company, Limited (S.C.E.Co.) was incorporated with the executive of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association as its provisional directorate. The legislation provided for the construction, or acquisition, of

elevators when 15 per cent of the necessary capital stock had been subscribed by a "local", the government advancing the remaining 85 per cent. The significance of the establishment of the S.C.E.Co. was that it attempted to do in the elevator field what the G.G.G.Co. had done in selling grain through the Exchange at the standard commission of a cent a bushel - to provide another competitor to private companies and allow farmers to gain first hand knowledge of elevator problems.<sup>47</sup>

In Alberta, the U.F.A. had joined in the agitation for government elevators, but action in that province was delayed partly because of the comparatively recent establishment of the Association and partly because farming interests were less exclusively devoted to grain. In addition, the problem in Alberta was somewhat distinct in that the farmers were anxious to establish marketing connections with British Columbia and the Pacific coast.<sup>48</sup> This delay did, however, give the U.F.A. the opportunity to analyse and assess the operations in the two other prairie provinces. By 1912, the Manitoba experiment in government ownership had ended in complete failure. The provincial government charged that the farmers had failed to accord the operation sufficient patronage to keep it afloat financially at which the Grain Growers' Guide responded by pointing out that the "elevator fiasco" was due to the government's lack of sympathy for the scheme from the beginning.<sup>49</sup> It was then left to the Grain Growers' Grain Co. to take over the elevators and operate them as a farmer-owned chain. By keeping the Manitoba experiment in mind, the project for an independent company in Alberta became patterned after the Saskatchewan

Cooperative Elevator Co., which by the end of its second financial year ending July 31, 1913, was successfully operating 137 country elevators and handling 13,000,000 bushels of grain.<sup>50</sup> The U.F.A. committee studying the methods of financing the Saskatchewan company, however, were anxious to eliminate any possibility of government interference by providing the farmers with full control and responsibility over financial matters. By effectively reducing any chance of obstruction by government, the Alberta Farmers' Cooperative Elevator Company, Limited, established in the summer of 1913, was given the power to sell or lease to any company or make an agreement with any company to control and operate grain elevators in the province.<sup>51</sup> From the outset, the new company marketed its grain through the agency of the Grain Growers' Grain Co. in Winnipeg, with which it became amalgamated in 1917.

The question of government interference in the grain trade is one which is crucial to an understanding of the wheat growers' attitude toward producing optimal efficiency in the market. As we have seen, the farmers' case for government-owned elevators was based on a belief that monopolistic practices in the grain trade were depressing their receipts from marketed grain. But, as W. A. Mackintosh has suggested, regional differences precipitated a differential response among grain growers as to the role government would play in either regulating the trade or in the ownership of elevators themselves. He notes that interference was viewed with much greater suspicion in Manitoba and Alberta than was the case in Saskatchewan. The presence



of a considerable industrial population and of an agricultural population less exclusively devoted to grain growing are suggested as the major reasons for this attitude in these provinces.<sup>52</sup>

This assumption must be qualified on two grounds. Although there is some merit to the suggestion that Saskatchewan was less urbanized and industrialized than the other provinces, comparative statistics indicate that despite the fact that Alberta had a relatively insignificant proportion of her field crop area devoted to wheat in 1900 and 1906 (22.8% and 24.4%), by 1926 that percentage had increased to 67.7%.<sup>53</sup> Conversely, the percentage of the field crop areas relegated to wheat production in Manitoba and Saskatchewan remained relatively even in 1900 and 1906, but by 1926 the area in Manitoba had fallen to only 33.3% while Saskatchewan was maintaining a level of 69.3%.<sup>54</sup> This indicates fairly conclusively that the explanation for an attitude promoting government interference, control, or ownership cannot be found by simply stating that Saskatchewan's agricultural population was more exclusively devoted to grain growing than the farmers of the other prairie regions. If the figures from 1926 are compared, then it would be equally consistent to assume that Alberta, with a large rural population engaged in wheat growing, would also display a tendency toward demanding public ownership. Such was rarely the case, however, in that province.

Secondly, it has been suggested that although Saskatchewan grain growers at one time or another advocated the socialization of railways, terminal and interior elevators, municipal abattoirs,

telephones, and various natural resources, they never indicated a clear commitment to the principle of public ownership.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, there were those among the grain growers who did support government ownership as a matter of principle. For example, E. A. Partridge viewed cooperation as a stepping stone to public control and the domination of the legislatures by the common man.<sup>56</sup> However, D. S. Spafford indicates that the comparative ease with which the grain growers of Saskatchewan were dissuaded from their stated goal of public ownership in both the elevator and telephone disputes suggests that farmers responded to these issues in a manner less indicative of a commitment to collectivist doctrine than to one stressing the efficacy of pressure politics.<sup>57</sup> A doctrinaire stand could be taken at any time, but the grain growers were able to recognize when "matters of principle" required abandonment in favour of practical considerations.

It is this kind of flexibility in the farmers' approach to particular issues which in fact characterized their outlook on cooperative marketing as a whole. S. M. Lipset for one, however, has assumed that the prevalence of cooperation in Saskatchewan provides evidence for the existence among farmers of a left-wing or radical predisposition which eventually culminated in the emergence of the C.C.F. in the 1930's.<sup>58</sup> According to Lipset, implicit in the notion of cooperation is the acceptance of collectivist ideas. Such an assumption is misleading, for the cooperative movement at no time indicated a willingness to initiate basic changes in the structure of existing capitalist relations. Profit-seeking and private entrepre-

neurship were accepted as fundamental facts of economic life - cooperatives were promoted as a means of extending the benefits of capitalist enterprise to as many farmers as possible, while at the same time eliminating or controlling the abuses to the system. Harald S. Patton has described the rationale underlying cooperation in these terms:

[The farmers'] . . . morale as a producer is consciously elevated when, instead of being compelled to accept the middleman's prices and terms, or leave his products unsold, he is able, by cooperation with his fellow producers, to sell through his own agency on a basis of marketing equality. The self-respect which accompanies farm ownership is enhanced when he becomes joint-owner in a large-scale commercial organization, and receives an income as an investor as well as producer. The achievements of prairie farmers in building up two of the largest and most successful elevator companies in Western Canada . . . have not only made the participating grain growers conscious of being businessmen, but have also revealed to them that by cooperation they can engage in "big business" on an even larger scale than that realized by vested commercial interests.<sup>56</sup>

In this sense, then, farmer-owned and farmer-directed cooperatives accentuated the grain growers' commitment to a programme of pragmatic reform in the wheat industry. Their adoption of techniques and strategies of the business world as well strengthened their competitive position in relation to the industrial community as a whole. In another sense, however, cooperatives represented a logical extension of rural values - values which upheld the conviction that in times of economic difficulty, it was every farmer's duty to help those in distress. Cooperative self-help measures strengthened this attitude and added sustenance to their description as the joint entrepreneurship of individuals. The equation of collectivism with

cooperation fails precisely to take into account the nature of rural values and the socio-economic conditions which gave farmers a particular outlook and perspective. This perspective, furthermore, arising out of practical day-to-day experience, was only minimally affected by external ideological considerations. It was only when cooperatives alone proved to be inadequate to deal with fluctuating world market conditions that farmers turned to direct political action. Sharp declines in wheat prices taught them the value of political power, power that could be recognized by the federal authorities in Ottawa.<sup>60</sup>

This does not imply that cooperatives were declining in importance. On the contrary, cooperative marketing enterprises continued to flourish and operate as effective alternatives to private companies in the process of curbing monopoly practices. However, the enhancement of the wheat growers' competitive position in the market was a measure only partially effective for the farmer caught in a complex of production and marketing costs, land values, and interest rates. The grain growers' associations fought successfully on the farmers' behalf for many needed reforms, but they too were necessarily restricted by a limited degree of influence over issues of national import. The protective tariff was one such issue which the wheat grower found most injurious to his economic welfare. The tariff became politically the most conspicuous source of agrarian discontent as well as the symbol of the farmer's anxiety and frustration for years to come.

### The Tariff Issue and Demands for Political Action:

The struggle for tariff reform dates initially from attempts to secure timber and corn preferences in the British market early in the nineteenth century. Although interest in the reform question peaked time and again in years of economic difficulty, it was Macdonald's National Policy of 1879 which brought the issue forcefully into focus. The Policy essentially envisioned the development of a strong and viable Canadian industry protected by government from the encroachments of foreign commodities, particularly those coming into Canada from the United States. The federal Liberals, sensing a growing disenchantment with the tariff policies of the Conservatives, sought to introduce certain revisions which would reduce or eliminate any competitive advantage a particular sector of the population enjoyed from the present tariff structure. Unlike the government, the Liberal Party was in favour, not of a fiscal policy that "developed monopolies, trusts and combinations", but of a tariff for revenue "based on the requirements of the public service".<sup>61</sup> These revisions were left necessarily vague in the hope of pleasing everyone and no doubt contributed to Laurier's election victory in 1896. The issue in fact remained unresolved through the Liberals' first year in office until William S. Fielding, then Minister of Finance, brought down his tariff bill which declared "free trade" to be the ultimate aim of the government. Meanwhile, a special preferential trade schedule would be established with Great Britain and of benefit to the Canadian farmer,

items such as binder twine, barbed wire, and many agricultural implements were to be placed on the free list or at least be subject to a lower tax. Although the farmer had received the measure of relief, partly through the listing as duty-free of articles that he constantly used, but more especially, through the instruments of the preferred rates, the Liberal Party had become a national party with all the powers and responsibilities of government, among them the actual maintenance and elaboration of the National Policy.<sup>62</sup> In consequence, both the Liberals and the Conservatives began to appear more and more in the eyes of the wheat grower as an organized hypocrisy dedicated to getting and holding office and devoted to the sacrifice of agrarian interests for the sake of national prominence.

Promises to the farmers for further reductions in the tariff thus gave way inevitably to an effort by the Liberals to placate the most powerful interests in the country, interests most often associated with the large-scale manufacturers. The pressure of British competition, which some Canadian manufacturers pointed to as the cause of their difficulties, was instrumental in increasing the demand for higher tariff schedules. It was through the Canadian Manufacturers Association (C.M.A.) that these industries pressed the government for changes in current policy. By 1906, the industrial lobby had encouraged the government to introduce legislation calling for the abandonment of the scheme of horizontal reduction in connection with the preferential schedule. Despite the government's assurances to the farmer that reductions on agricultural implements would continue, the

British preferential scheme, which reduced the duty on imported goods by 8.3% in comparison to commodities imported from other nations, had relieved an important burden for the farmers in purchasing certain essential items. Once again the Liberals attempted to institute a policy which could be construed as being beneficial to all parties, but the widening gap between the interests of the C.M.A. and the interests of the grain growers' associations and other farm bodies indicated an ever increasing source of conflict in the future.

Although the revised tariff was intended to lessen the impact of high prices for the farmers on the one hand, and to maintain the protection of Canadian industry on the other, both parties continued their demands for a complete revision of the existing schedule. Spokesmen for the C.M.A. argued that the tariff was detrimental to the establishment of new industries or the development of those already established, while the farmers viewed protection as an unnecessary evil which compelled them to contribute a large percentage of the products of their labour to the privileged and protected classes.<sup>63</sup> The manufacturers, for their part, attempted to circumvent the effects of competition by forming combines and mergers, by which individual companies making the same class of goods consolidated their capital to form new enterprises. Although anti-combines legislation was introduced by the Liberals in an effort to ensure that excessive prices were not being charged to the consumer, the farmers remained unconvinced that the federal government could effectively implement such measures.

Many agrarians believed, therefore, that only through a nationwide organization could they protect themselves from the abuses to the system which the combines represented. They reasoned that it could, furthermore, be advantageous to coalesce farmer opinion throughout Canada as a means of bringing their combined influence to bear towards a common end. Accordingly, the old Interprovincial Council was expanded to include the Dominion Grange, which, in 1909, formed the Canadian Council of Agriculture (C.C.A.).<sup>64</sup> In dealing with issues of national importance to farmers, the C.C.A. set as one of its initial priorities the acquisition of evidence which could be used for the prosecution of trusts and combines.<sup>65</sup> In addition, the C.C.A. attempted to force government policy-makers to acknowledge the overtures of reciprocity which the American government was making at this time on the basis of the Payne-Aldrich revision of the tariff. By lowering the tariff barriers between the two countries, Canadian farmers, particularly in the West, could purchase manufactured goods and natural products at a lower price, but first it was necessary to force the Liberals to consider the measure. Laurier realized that he could ill afford to alienate significant portions of the Canadian populace with an election scheduled for 1911 and hoped to buy time to gauge popular opinion by prolonging the negotiations between the two countries. Meanwhile, farmer delegations from across Canada assembled in Ottawa to force the hand of the government to implement a reciprocal trade agreement immediately, covering all agricultural, horticultural and animal products, agricultural implements and machinery, vehicles and



their parts, fertilizers and spraying materials, illuminating fuel and lubricating oils, cement, fish, and lumber. The delegates also requested a reduction in the British preferential rates to one-half those of the general schedule and free trade with Great Britain within ten years.<sup>66</sup> Even though the government did not acquiesce in all of the farmers' demands, it is significant that in less than two months the Liberals had concluded a trade pact with the United States. The Liberals, who had lost support in Ontario in every election since 1896, who saw their hold in Quebec threatened by the Nationalists under Bourassa, could not afford to lose the support of the agricultural sector. Motivated then, either by agrarian pressure or political expediency, Laurier had unwittingly set the stage for defections from his own party and a rejuvenation of the Conservatives on the national scene.

The so-called "Siege of Ottawa" was significant in the history of the agrarian movement for three reasons. First of all, as Sharp suggests, it revealed that farmers had no great concern for the effect of free trade on Canadian industry. In fact, farmers intended to prevent further industrialization by reversing the trend away from the farms which the protective tariff had encouraged by strengthening industrial development.<sup>67</sup> George F. Chipman, editor of the Grain Growers' Guide, emphatically illustrated this point by arguing that no government could remain democratic if industrialization and urbanization continued to deplete the ranks of the "true democrats of the soil".<sup>68</sup> Secondly, it showed exactly where the strength of the

farmers' movement could be found. As J. C. Mills points out:

The Siege was marked by the continued dominance of the West . . . The call for the march on Ottawa came from the organ of the Dominion Grange, but the western [grain growers'] associations at once took up and largely took over the project. The West had an easy majority of delegates at the Siege itself. Western farmers came from three closely cooperating associations, while the East was represented by various groups unaccustomed to united action. In the deliberations of the C.C.A. itself, the West was represented by three affiliates, the East by one. The majority of resolutions were of much greater interest to the grain growers of the West. The Siege continued the dominance of the C.C.A. by the West, begun even before the National organization came into being.<sup>69</sup>

Finally, combined with the presence of prairie dominance in the movement was the existence for perhaps the first time of a sense of cohesion and solidarity among farmers, particularly western wheat growers. The Toronto Globe reported that western farmers belonged to a new generation, one that had a strong, if unproved, belief in the power of governments to amend all abuses by assuming the functions of those who had been guilty of oppression.<sup>70</sup> Concomitantly, wheat producers believed that no group in the economy should receive special concessions as compared to other groups. If they did, then injustice would result. This attitude was expressed in the Jacksonian motto borrowed from the Populists in the United States and adopted by the Guide - "Equal Rights to All, and Special Privileges to None". It was also later expressed in the demands for direct democracy when established political parties proved unwilling or unable to respond to the needs of "the people".

Unfortunately for the farmers, Laurier's partial return to continentalism in economic policy was too severe a strain for a party which had become committed as deeply as its rival to the National Policy. The "Eighteen Liberals" of Toronto, among them Sir Clifford Sifton, broke with the Party, and it went down to defeat under a Nationalist Imperialist, and a National Policy cross-fire.<sup>71</sup> The Conservatives, having obtained a working majority of forty-five seats in the House, took over under the leadership of Robert Borden. It was apparent from the outcome of the election that Canadian farmers, despite their numerical strength, were as yet unable to influence governmental policy when their measures did not coincide with the interests of eastern capital, although successes had been achieved in the economic sphere through farmer cooperatives. To the farmers' advantage, however, the offer of reciprocity remained on the statute books of the United States for another decade, with the result that year after year the grain growers in convention demanded that the offer be accepted. As a measure to offset the disadvantages of the protective tariff, the agitation for lower freight rates also received additional support. But there remained a conviction among agrarians that the "sinister influence" of capital, the predatory power of established privilege, the menacing influence of manufacturing monopolies, and the danger of the people from moneyed classes, were all conspiring to undermine the agrarian body politic.

It was with a suspicious eye, then, that the farmers of the West awaited the settlement of the terminal elevator question, for

the incoming Conservative administration had never shown a great willingness to respond to agrarian desires before or during the 1911 election. Borden had reluctantly inherited this issue but realized that the passage of this revision of the 1900 Manitoba Grain Act could satisfy the prairie farmers without unduly jeopardizing his support from the industrial sector. As a result, the Canada Grain Act was legislated into being on April 1, 1912 but not without considerable antagonism over the introduction of a subsection of the bill while it was still in committee. Under this provision, the government-appointed Board of Grain Commissioners could use their own discretion in regulating the distribution of railroad cars whenever it was considered necessary and advisable to relieve congestion and facilitate the dispatch of grain. Grain growers generally had come to regard the car distribution clauses as essential to the freedom of their industry, and when this amendment was made known, there was considerable opposition generated on the prairies.<sup>72</sup> Although this section was subsequently deleted, and farmers generally benefitted from the intense government regulation of the grain trade, Conservative hedging in this matter left behind it a residue of suspicion of the intent and purposes of federal politicians. As a result, agitation for the establishment of an independent Grain Commission entirely free from all political influences was embarked upon, indicating a strong desire among agrarians for "self-government" in agricultural affairs.<sup>73</sup>

Hence, it was at this time that the issues of free trade and the efficacy of cooperative marketing practices were joined by another

concern which reflected disappointment or outright hostility to existing political practices. Earlier reprints of American publications dealing with direct legislation in the Guide played an important role in promoting the idea that the rule of the ordinary citizen must be restored. Through the procedures of direct legislation, i.e., the initiative (the authority for the people to originate bills), the referendum (submissions for public decision on any measure on demand of a certain percentage of the electors), and the recall (the right to recall any official who does not follow the wishes of the people), it was hoped that democracy by the people could be realized. In fact, such measures were described as the most important popular expressions of the will of the people since the rebellion of 1837.<sup>74</sup> In addition, as Morton has suggested, in expressing a populist concern for the political representation of the common man, Canadian agrarian reformers shared with their American counterparts the Jeffersonian faith in the virtue of the people and in the perfectability of human institutions.<sup>75</sup>

Until the defeat of the Liberals in 1911, however, there appeared to be no pressing need to establish direct legislation as an alternative to the existing system of party government. But after reciprocity with the United States was abandoned with the succession of the Conservatives to power, many reform-minded agrarians came to the conclusion that if each elector had been able to vote on a separate ballot for the reciprocity agreement, detached from the fate of the Liberals, the trade pact would have been ratified. Its defeat was thus interpreted as a forcible illustration of the wisdom of

submitting important matters of national policy to a popular vote.<sup>76</sup> By reforming the political structure in this manner, its supporters claimed that it would prevent governments from defying public opinion, enable the people to have laws passed with rapidity, meet the democratic instincts of the day, prevent alienation of the public domain and the organization of public monopolies, check corruption and promote public morality, and eliminate partisanship and personal influence.<sup>77</sup> Yet the detractors of this system pointed out its fundamental incompatibility with the British principle of responsible government and argued that the fact that political corruption at its base came from the people in the first place and would be increased rather than diminished, it would inevitably result in crude, non-representative, hasty, impractical, and unconstitutional legislation.<sup>78</sup> In essence, this argument centred on the fear that experts in government would be replaced by the man on the street.<sup>79</sup>

Despite these objections, by the spring of 1912, the demands for direct legislation had gathered considerable momentum in the prairie provinces, amid talk of secession in order to escape from the domination of eastern Canadian financial interests.<sup>80</sup> Fundamentally, the objectives of the grain growers' fight for democracy were to strengthen capitalism by saving small enterprise from destruction, to wrest control of the government from the plutocracy, and use it for democratic ends. Accordingly, the grain growers' associations and the U.F.A. were among the first to endorse this reform measure, but were soon to be followed by both political parties in Alberta and

Saskatchewan and the Liberal Opposition in Manitoba. That the provincial parties should respond in this manner is not surprising, for politicians in the West, many of whom were actively involved in the farmers' movement, invariably made a practice of giving sympathetic and careful consideration to the requests of organized agrarians. The adoption and endorsement of direct legislation was one means of ensuring this continuous support. It can be readily appreciated as well that this reform measure offered an alternative to farmers who had become completely disenchanted with the existing political structure as a whole and who were inclined to engage in independent politics. As a result, attempts at independent politics before the First World War were generally unsuccessful.<sup>81</sup>

Prairie farmers were thus faced with three alternatives of political expression. Two of these alternatives, direct legislation and independent politics, were joined by the possibility of forming a farmer-labour alliance to provide a more effective voice in the struggle against "the plutocracy". However, cooperation between labour and the grain growers in support of such issues as direct legislation, the single tax, a graduated income tax, and other reforms could not reverse the basically incompatible attitudes both groups held on the basis of their relative positions in the social order. The labour perspective inevitably reflected a specifically urban point of view which contrasted sharply with the rural ideology of prairie farmers. There were those among the agrarians, such as E. A. Partridge, who were typical of the view that a unity of interest and

purpose existed between these two sectors, but generally a common front rarely met with complete success.<sup>82</sup>

Generally speaking, then, by the outbreak of World War I the organized farmers of Western Canada had exerted their presence in the political life of the nation. To the disappointment of many farmers, however, direct legislation was defeated in a referendum, and experience with independent candidatures had been uniformly discouraging. In addition, despite the existence of farmers in important positions in the provincial governments, the prospect of capturing one or both of the major parties' organizations had become by 1914 an unlikely prospect. Nonetheless, the farmers had taken an important step in establishing their claim for recognition which would change the political structure of the prairie provinces for years to come. Their commercial success in cooperative marketing had initially indicated that organized agrarians could successfully combat a powerful industrial lobby and force governments to enact favourable legislation. But in the political field, farmer control of the mechanisms of government could effectively guarantee, not only the survival of rural values, but also the survival of small-scale enterprises. This is an important point, for it had become increasingly obvious to farmers' organizations that values emphasizing greed and corruption would inevitably lead the country into moral chaos. Moreover, activists within the agrarian movement pointed to the outbreak of the War in 1914 as proving conclusively that the uncontrolled power of "nationalist-minded monopoly capitalists" must be checked.



It is not surprising, therefore, that farmers would emphasize the need for basic democratic reforms, the most important being the recognition of the common citizen as the very root and foundation of society. Such reform aspirations were consistent with the populist heritage of the agrarian perspective - the pragmatic dimension of this perspective ensured that these measures could eventually be implemented if farmers would organize and disseminate their views. Agrarian involvement in the prohibition issue and the enfranchisement of women gave a further indication that the need for moral and social reform occupied a central position in the farmers' overall programme of action.

As mentioned above, indirect attempts to introduce democratic reforms into the political system had largely met with failure and frustration. One alternative which remained, however, was the formation of a third party which could offer the agrarian community an exclusive forum within which to express their grievances.<sup>83</sup> Although the desire to establish third parties was generally accompanied by an equally strong desire to circumvent and eventually disrupt the old established parties, the methods and results of allowing the organized farmers to enter politics were by no means identical from province to province. They were, in short, conditioned by the different political histories of the three prairie provinces. In particular, Manitoba had been governed in the image of Upper Canadian politics by the Conservatives under Premier R. P. Roblin for a period of 16 years until their defeat in 1915. The incoming Liberal administration

under T. C. Morris was prepared to erase the unfavourable atmosphere which its opponents had created by offering a progressive and reformist programme aimed specifically at the Manitoba grain growers, but generally including all those dissatisfied with the status quo. But by this time many farmers were convinced that the old parties in the province were entirely controlled by their federal counterparts, reinforcing a conviction that a third party was needed to guarantee the voice of the grain growers in provincial politics. The leadership of the M.G.G.A., however, was not as anxious as the rank-and-file to commit the organization to such a course of action, for the danger existed that the farmers could lose their credibility as agents of democratic reform by appearing either too radical or too politically naive in the eyes of Manitoba voters as a whole. In other words, the farmers would have to face the difficult task of attracting the votes of other sectors of the population if a third party were to be successful. The leadership was not convinced that this could be achieved. By way of compromise, the new United Farmers of Manitoba (U.F.M.) in 1920 endorsed a procedure by which the organization would avoid entering provincial politics, but in the constituencies the locals could hold conventions, nominate candidates, and organize. Furthermore, the executive of the U.F.M. were willing to draft a platform if a majority of constituencies should prove to be in favour of political action. As a result, local action was initiated and nine farmer representatives were elected to the Manitoba legislature in 1920. Bolstered by this success, the U.F.M. placed the resources

of the organization behind farmer candidatures and in 1922, the agrarians won a plurality of seats.<sup>84</sup>

In Saskatchewan, the Liberals were the party of the grain growers in body and spirit from the birth of the province in 1905, with many prominent farmers occupying important positions in the government. Consequently, when the demand for provincial political action arose, Premier William Martin met it in 1920 by dissociating the provincial from the federal party. With the weight of the executive of the S.G.G.A. behind such a move, political action was referred to the locals, but unlike the situation in Manitoba, third party proponents could not generate sufficient enthusiasm to make the movement a success. Martin's tactical move of calling a snap election in 1921 proved decisive, for only 13 independent Progressive candidates were elected to the legislature. In this case, the Liberal Party had survived the most serious challenge to its power and managed to keep the farmers in the fold for another 23 years. (The only exception was a depression period government led by the Conservatives from 1929-34.)

By contrast, in Alberta, the leadership of the U.F.A. never maintained a close association with the Liberal movement. Consequently, the drive for a third, independent farmers' party achieved greater momentum in this province than elsewhere, despite the presence of Henry Wise Wood, perhaps the most outspoken and articulate of all agrarian leaders, who was in principle against the farmers entering politics. Nonetheless, in Alberta the Conservative opposition was

completely ineffectual and an American third party, the Non-Partisan League, had achieved some modest success in the province. Wood and the U.F.A. executive thus were forced to seek a compromise solution - a solution which was discovered in Wood's concept of group government. Unlike the Non-Partisan League, Wood advocated the admission of only farmers to the ranks of the U.F.A. and its representation in the legislature would constitute a separate group, cooperating with other groups but not combining with any to constitute a political party.<sup>85</sup> Guided by this concept, the U.F.A. in 1919 entered politics, both federally and provincially. In two years, it had won a majority of seats in the provincial legislature.

What these diverse political histories show is that farmers were by no means agreed as to the best strategies to be adopted in achieving political recognition. This was a function as much of the structure of the existing political system as the differential social and cultural backgrounds of the provinces themselves. Farmers generally could appreciate the need for reform in Western Canada as a whole, but their perception of their role and the role of their organizations in this process can be accounted for by exploring the differences in the farmers' relative experiences in each of the provinces. If they could achieve their objectives without entering the political arena as an independent farmers' government, then support for an established party could be expected. But to the extent that the old party system could do little to accommodate their demands, then third party agitation remained as the only alternative. It is clear that disagreements

over tactics were tempered by the common sentiment shared by the agrarian middle-class that opportunities for economic, cultural and social advancement were inhibited by a closed market situation created by an eastern elite insensitive to its needs.

As a result of this situation, the rhetoric of protest became expressed in populist and liberal-democratic terms - in terms which accentuated the "moral and just" character of the farmers' cause itself, especially in comparison to the "evil" forces emanating from the urban metropolis.<sup>86</sup> To this extent, the Canadian farmers' movement showed a remarkable similarity to comparable movements in the United States. The resemblance ends, however, in the latter's difficulty in developing a consistency between theory and practice or in other terms, between the rhetoric of the movement and a programme calling for practical reform measures. For example, Richard Hofstadter has noted that American populists knew little about marketing devices, strategies of combination, or skills of self-defense and self-advancement through pressure politics,<sup>87</sup> although there were indications by 1915 that the Non-Partisan League had achieved some important political inroads in North Dakota. By comparison, the cooperative movement in Canada had grown to significance in response to the need for pragmatic solutions to marketing problems. This dual character of the middle-class agrarian provides a framework for understanding and analysing farmer protest in Canada.

In the next chapter, the events and circumstances which culminated in the rise and decline of farmer governments and agrarian

political strategies will be examined. It was during this period (1915-1935) that the national policy of development came to a close, and the federal government became even more indifferent to the demands of the agrarian community as interests were turned elsewhere. It is a period when the long-run economic trends were becoming more evident, and were emphasized by cyclical factors in two depressions. In this period the farmers formed their first indigenous political party, the Progressives, and in the western provinces, the farmers played an active role in regional politics. As in the organizational and commercial phase of the movement, the strains and agitations on the part of farmers over disproportionate concentrations of financial and political power crystallized into demands for normative changes, but in an avenue of expression which was not considered to be accessible. Precipitating factors played a role as well: they functioned to focus beliefs on particular events and situations, and created a sense of urgency and need for mobilizing for action.

# FOOTNOTES

1. Anderson, F. W. "Some Political Aspects of the Grain Growers' Movement, (1915-1935) With Particular Reference to Saskatchewan". Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon), 1949, 9.
2. Smith W. L. "When the Patrons Swept Ontario". Grain Growers' Guide, December 1, 1926, 6.
3. Sharp, Paul F. The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada. New York: Octagon Books, 1971, 58-59.
4. See J. B. Brebner. The Mingling of Canadian & American Peoples. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940, 218-43. H. M. Troper indicates that between the middle 1890's and World War I nearly 1 million American farmers found their way into the Canadian West. Harold M. Troper. Only Farmers Need Apply. Toronto: Griffen House, 1972.
5. Rolph, William K. Henry Wise Wood of Alberta. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950, 30-31.
6. C.A.R.. 1919, 373; and Louis Aubrey Wood. A History of Farmers Movements in Canada. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1924, 13-105.
7. Wood. op. cit., 13.
8. Michell, H. "The Grange in Canada", (1914), Pamphlet No. 4131. Public Archives of Canada. Manuscript Division, Ottawa, Ontario.
9. Wood. op. cit., 114-115.
10. Shortt, S. E. D. "Social Change & Political Crisis in Rural Ontario: The Patrons of Industry, 1889-1896", in Oliver Mowat's Ontario. Donald Swainson (ed.). Toronto: Macmillan, 1972, 211. See also Russell Hann. "Some Historical Perspectives on Canadian Agrarian Political Movements: The Ontario Origins of Agrarian Criticism of Canadian Industrial Society", (n.d.), Pamphlet No. 1717. McMaster University Archives.
11. Ibid., 212. On the surface, it appears as though Ontario farmers and urban labour had laid a lasting foundation for political cooperation for many years to come. Both groups recognized the need for abolishing the Senate, female suffrage, an end to assisted immigration, the establishment of technical and agricultural schools, restrictions on usury, and the prohibition of government aid to railways. It is this kind of co-operation which has undoubtedly led a number of analysts to view the farmers' movement as an appendage to a large working class political movement. However, as Shortt recognizes,

such a view is misleading, for labour and farmers held basically incompatible attitudes toward society. The Patrons expressed an almost classical liberal economic doctrine, which revealed their own small-property interests. Reflecting entrepreneurial ambitions, the farmers diagnosed the economic plight of Canada as one of corrupt public intervention rather than one of lethargic government. The farmers opposed, as a result, subsidies to farm products, legislation awarding accident compensation to farm labour, and the use of the strike or boycott in labour disputes. Only the passage of anti-trust legislation was favoured, for it would advance the liberal end of free competition. To the extent, then, that labour pressed for the recognition of the existence of a permanent working class with interests entirely to itself, farmers could find very little basis for united action. See Shortt, 229ff.

12. It was evident that as early as 1893 the potential voting power of Ontario farmers had captured the attention of office-seeking politicians. For example, Oliver Mowat and his Reform Party opted for the advancement of reciprocity between Canada and the United States and of a reduction of customs duties to the basis of a revenue tariff. See The "Patrons of Industry": From a Speech of Oliver Mowat, November 23, 1893. Ontario Election Pamphlets, 1894, No. 484. McMaster University Archives. The ability of political parties to capture the farm vote remained as an extremely important index of success for many decades. This is nowhere more evident than in Saskatchewan, where the provincial Liberal party held power almost continually up to 1944 by responding to the demands of farmers.
13. Shortt. op. cit., 212.
14. Sharp. op. cit., 58.
15. See "Documents of Western History: The Agrarian Movement in the 1890's: A Report of an Address by J. M. Douglas at Saltcoats in 'The Patrons' Advocate', February 13, 1895". Saskatchewan History. Vol. VII(2), 1954, 51-55.
16. Wood. op. cit., 123ff.
17. McCutcheon, Brian R. "The Patrons of Industry in Manitoba, 1890-1898", Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, Series III(22), 1965-66, 8-9.
18. See "Grain Growers of the 90's", Grain Growers' Guide, March 1, 1916, 21.



19. Lipset, S. M. Agrarian Socialism. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1968, 59.
20. Speech quoted by M. Lambert, "How the Grain Growers Grew", Grain Growers' Guide, June 26, 1918, 5.
21. Wood. op. cit., 166-8; Allan R. Turner. "W. R. Motherwell: The Emergence of a Farm Leader", Saskatchewan History. Vol. XI(3) (Autumn 1958), 94-103.
22. Wood. op. cit., 171.
23. Turner. op. cit., 99-100. In addition, the railways were required to supply loading platforms within a reasonable time after demand and to grant the right to load cars from vehicles whether there was a platform or not.
24. C.A.R., 1919, 356.
25. Dockage may be described as foreign matter and cracked grain that must be removed in order to bring the grain up to standard. Dockage is usually determined by a set of sieves and a small scale. See D. A. MacGibbon. The Canadian Grain Trade. Toronto: Macmillan, 1932, 95-101.
26. Sharp. op. cit., 26ff.
27. Grain Growers' Guide, December 6, 1911, 5.
28. Grindley, T. W. "Wheat in the Canadian West", Queen's Quarterly. Vol. XXXVII (Spring 1930, 370-385.
29. Wood. op. cit., 199.
30. C.A.R., 1919, 347.
31. Wood. op. cit., 185, and Hopkins Moorhouse, Deep Furrows. Toronto; McLeod, 1918, 89.
32. Letter of the Grain Growers' Grain Company to R. P. Roblin, December 20, 1906, quoted in W. A. Mackintosh, Agricultural Cooperation in Western Canada. Toronto: Ryerson, 1924, 22-3.
33. Ibid., 23-4.
34. With the establishment of a permanent organization by 1907, E. A. Partridge resigned as president of the G.G.G.Co. in order to concentrate his efforts on coalescing agrarian opinion in other areas. He was succeeded by T. A. Crerar, the first parliamentary

leader of the Progressive Party.

35. Lipset. op. cit., 68.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 68-69.
38. Mackintosh. op. cit., 73.
39. The objectives of the Council as set forth in its constitution were as follows: (1) To form a bond of Union and to assist in harmonizing the views of the several Provincial Associations on matters relating to the common weal of agricultur-  
alists; (2) To deal with and promote legislation that is interprovincial in its scope and character; (3) To exercise its influence to secure to any of its members legislation that affects any one of its members directly or locally; (4) To deal with any matter that may be referred to it by any one of the Provincial Association. (Report of the Council Meeting, in the Grain Growers' Guide, March 1909, 38.)
40. Wood. op. cit., 202.
41. Grain Growers' Guide, June, 1908, 6; April, 1909, 23.
42. Spafford, D. S. "The Elevator Issue, the Organized Farmers and the Government", Saskatchewan History. Vol. XV(3) (1962), 82; and Wood, op. cit., 208.
43. Wood. op. cit., 212.
44. Ibid.
45. Spafford. op. cit., 83.
46. The Morning Leader, Regina, December 15, 1909, 3.
47. Mackintosh. op. cit., 51. Mackintosh suggests further that the results of farmers' elevators showed the necessity of the operation of a line of elevators rather than of individual units, both because of competitive strength and because of the danger of local management. (52)
48. Ibid., 52.
49. Wood. op. cit., 220.
50. Ibid., 221.

51. Mackintosh. op. cit., 53.
52. Ibid., footnote 42.
53. Grindley. op. cit., 374.
54. Ibid.
55. Spafford. op. cit., 92.
56. Mackintosh. op. cit., 34.
57. Spafford. op. cit., 81.
58. Lipset. op. cit., 69.
59. Patton, Harald S. Grain Growers' Cooperation in Western Canada. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928, 409. There were, in fact, three principal forms of cooperation: cooperation in the actual production of crops; cooperation in the marketing of the products; and cooperation in the buying of commodities needed for farming, i.e., a matter of farmer-owned factories and distribution networks. Cooperation of production involves the pooling of the product and the agreement to accept uniform prices based on the grades of quality of the products. Marketing cooperation emerges when there is reliance upon one or a very few crops that have a history of price fluctuation. In this situation farmers often trade their individual search for profits for the security of a guaranteed uniform price. In commodity cooperation, there is no risk at all to the institutions of private property or profit. See John W. Bennett; Northern Plainsmen: Adaptive Strategy and Agrarian Life. Chicago: Aldine, 1969, 278-9.
60. See John W. Bennett and Cynthia Krueger, "Agrarian Pragmatism and Radical Politics", in Lipset, op. cit., 352. It is interesting to note that in Saskatchewan in the 1930's the socialist C.C.F., having attracted the attention of farmers by calling for measures to relieve the economic fiasco brought on by the Depression, began accommodating its programme almost immediately to suit the specific requirements of the agrarian community. These requirements included the security of land tenure, stability of individual enterprise and income, and in general, the support of private property.
61. Wood, op. cit., 226.
62. Morton, W. L. "The Western Progressive Movement, 1919-1921", The Canadian Historical Association, Annual Report (1946), 42.

63. Wood. op. cit., 251-56.
64. See Joseph C. Mills, "A Study of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, 1910-1930", Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1949.
65. It is evident that despite important differences between eastern and western farmers, the common threat posed by the C.M.A. and its member organizations more than compensated for diverse viewpoints and perspectives. Agrarians from both East and West saw the C.M.A. as the chief enemy of democracy and political righteousness in Canada. The "battle of the people versus privilege" was chiefly fought against this citidel of "reaction and corruption". Grain Growers' Guide, February 7, 1912, 3-5. S. D. Clark adds that the feud between the Guide, and Industrial Canada (the official organ of the C.M.A.) was marked by the bitterness which so often characterized the resentment felt, particularly in Western Canada, towards the industrialists as a pressure group. S. D. Clark, "The Canadian Manufacturers Association", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. 4 (November, 1938), 505-23.
66. Wood. op. cit., 264-5.
67. Sharp. op. cit., 44.
68. Chipman, George F. "The Farmers' Platform", in The Siege of Ottawa, (Ottawa, 1910), 4.
69. Mills. op. cit., 55.
70. Toronto Globe. December 17, 1910, 6.
71. Morton. op. cit., 43.
72. Wood. op. cit., 218.
73. Resolution passed at the ninth annual meeting of the M.G.G.A., Brandon, January 24, 1912, C.A.R., 1912, 626.
74. Stevenson, J. A. "The Battle for Democracy in Canada", Grain Growers' Guide (November 2, 1910), 5.
75. Morton, W. L. "Direct Legislation and the Origins of the Progressive Movement", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XXV(3) (September 1944), 279-88.
76. Chambers, Elizabeth. "The Referendum and the Plebiscite", in Politics in Saskatchewan, Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (eds.).

Don Mills: Longmans, 1968, 63.

77. C.A.R., 1913, 610-1; Grain Growers' Guide, February 1, 1911.
78. Ibid. As D. S. Spafford has pointed out, direct legislation was not without critics among the farmers, the most notable being F. W. Green, the secretary-treasurer of the S.G.G.A. His political position was that of a respectable farmer who thought that his profession was being denied proper recognition. He believed in the primacy of agriculture in the economy and the superiority of rural life; his dream was the building of a "well-rounded, well-balanced Canadian yeomanry" which could take its rightful place in the national economy. The place of agriculture he saw threatened by the growing urban population: that much of this population was not Anglo-Saxon added to his concern. Direct legislation, he feared, would permit political power to slip further into the hands of the cities. See D. S. Spafford, "'Independent' Politics in Saskatchewan Before the Nonpartisan League", Saskatchewan History. Vol. XVIII(1), (1965) 3-4. See also Grain Growers' Guide, February 28, 1912, 10.
79. It is interesting to note that this kind of debate bears striking resemblance to the arguments found in the democratic and aristocratic criticisms of mass society. The latter centres in the intellectual defense of elite values against the rise of mass participation; the former in the defense of democratic values against the rise of elites bent on total domination. See William Kornhauser, The Politics of Mass Society. New York: Free Press, 1959, esp. 21-38. See also F. A. Shils, "The Theory of Mass Society", Diogenes, No. 39 (Fall 1962); and Philip Selznick, "Institutional Vulnerability in Mass Society", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LVI (1951), 320-31.
80. Chambers. op. cit., 64; Sharp. op. cit., 67.
81. Spafford. "'Independent' Politics in Saskatchewan Before the Nonpartisan League", op. cit., 1-9. The S.G.G.A., for example, declared itself against a third party because legislation could be controlled by the initiative and the referendum. C.A.R., 1913, 609.
82. See, for example, Lionel Orlikow. "The Reform Movement in Manitoba", Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, series III, no. 16 (1961), 54-55.
83. In fact, the available evidence suggests historically that the rural farm voter is much more likely to support a third party

than the urbanite because of the former's tendency to conceptualize issues on a district or local level. The fact that the party is weak nationally or even provincially appears to be of minimal importance to the rural voter. See Lipset, op. cit., chapters 6 and 8; John A. Irving, The Social Credit Movement in Alberta. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959; V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics. New York: Vintage Books, 1949, 117, 177.

84. Morton, "The Western Progressive Movement 1919-1921", op. cit., 50.
85. Ibid., 51-2.
86. As emphasized earlier, it was this factor among others which prevented the farmers from forming a close alliance with urban labour.
87. Hofstadter, Richard. The Age of Reform. New York: Vintage Books, 1955, 59.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE POLITICAL PHASE OF AGRARIAN REVOLT

In considering the impact of economic strains upon the ideology and outlook of prairie farmers, it has been argued thus far that by the outbreak of World War I there were two different methods of action competing for the support of the farmer. On the one hand, there were those actively involved in the elevator and grain marketing companies who generally believed in economic cooperation as the best solution to agrarian problems; on the other hand, elements within the grain growers associations considered political remedies to be the most efficacious means of dealing with farmer grievances. Regional differences complicate this pattern somewhat, however, for as arbitrary as the provincial boundaries might seem, conditions were sufficiently different in each province to give rise to a mild particularism which was, as we have seen, as much a product of the differential political histories of the regions as the variation in immigration patterns. It will become clear that inter-provincial action could only be sustained in the economic aspects of the grain growers' movement in the pooling of wheat for sale, despite the efforts of the Canadian Council of Agriculture (C.C.A.) to develop some consistency in the objectives and tactics of farmers throughout Canada. Such consistency had not been maintained in the earliest cooperative endeavours, nor were they to be sustained in the political efforts of the 1920's. As a dominant characteristic of norm-oriented movements, the absence of consensus is to be explained by the availability of a wide variety of channels for agitation as well as a variety of strategies and tactics for each channel.<sup>1</sup> Because of this

large number of alternative paths of action, several related organizations may arise simultaneously and split the movement.

Be that as it may, in this chapter it will be argued that one of the necessary conditions for the political mobilization of western farmers was the existence of frequent fluctuations in income and profit precipitated by the complex and unpredictable nature of the world market situation. It was also apparent that the combination of long-term grievances with short-term improvements in fact increased rather than decreased the tendency to protest. Pinard has offered one possible explanation for this phenomenon by pointing out that when one has long-term grievances, a short-term improvement only makes more salient long-term expectations.<sup>2</sup> Prairie farmers had generally shown an increase in output in terms of bushels of grain produced, with a corresponding increase in the rate of return through the cooperative efforts of the farmer-owned grain companies. But such an increase was accompanied by anxiety and uncertainty over the prospects of maintaining a suitable profit margin, for the defeat of reciprocity in 1911 effectively implied that the costs of the farmer could rise sharply in relation to the prices charged by protected Canadian industries. The inevitable result of this state of affairs was a widening gap between the farmers' expectations and the economic realities of the prairie economy.

What this indicates, therefore, is that agrarian protest must be viewed as an outcome of both relative deprivation emphasizing the discontinuity between expectations and actual conditions and



specific deprivations emphasizing a disparity between a group's objectives and the means of their procurement. As many studies of political movements have shown, actual deprivation is not a sufficient condition for protest action.<sup>3</sup> The combination of these two factors, however, may produce a situation conducive to the rise of third party movements. In the case of prairie grain growers, the beginning of the world military confrontation in 1914 did much to accentuate long-term grievances.<sup>4</sup> In that year, the immigration boom came to an abrupt halt and farmers found themselves squeezed between rising costs of production and high interest and debt charges. An increase in wheat prices did not keep pace with the rapid rise in expenses and by 1917, farmers were generally less well off than in 1914. Furthermore, the action of the government in raising the tariff and controlling agricultural prices while leaving war profits largely untaxed convinced thousands of western farmers that the federal political parties were run for the privileged few.<sup>5</sup> Of great concern to the farmers as well was the suspension of the Crow's Nest Pass Agreement, framed originally in 1897. Under the terms of this agreement, the C.P.R. had bound itself to accept a maximum schedule of rates on certain products originating in the West and on certain manufactured commodities shipped from the East in return for subsidies and concessions granted by the federal government. Other railways, as constructed, had taken the same schedule as their norm.<sup>6</sup> The agreement in effect became the bulwark protecting farmers against exorbitant rates and by imposing a temporary suspension of these rates during the War, the issue became an important

factor in the rise of political insurgency on the prairies.

Such a description of farmer grievances must, nonetheless, be balanced by the fact that during the War (1914 to 1919), farm areas in crop increased 60% and the value of field crops grew from 638 to 1,455 million dollars or 127%.<sup>7</sup> On the prairies specifically, wheat acreage nearly doubled from 1911 to 1921.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the total value of property per farm had increased significantly to an average of \$12,735 by 1921, an increase of \$8,558 from a comparable average twenty years earlier.<sup>9</sup> Combined with this relative increase in the farmer's land and crop values was a steady improvement in his operating facilities with varied forms of new and better, although expensive, farm machinery. Such improvements were augmented by the introduction of the telephone and automobile, by the establishment and development of rural mail service, and by better roads, which all contributed to an expansion of the farmers' awareness of pertinent issues and an increased opportunity to exchange political views.

Of particular importance during this period, nevertheless, was the growth in the size of farms which accompanied the expansion of farm services and the increase in productive capacity which improved conditions facilitated. Available census statistics reveal that by 1921, farms were no longer confined to 300 acres or less, as they had been in 1901 and 1911, but included farms ranging in size from 300 to 640 acres or 56% of the total.<sup>10</sup> It is significant that even though farms occupying 300 acres or less comprised a corresponding 44% of the total, these farms represented only 20% of the total

acreage in the region, suggesting that medium-sized farms were now becoming the most prominent. In fact by 1931, 43% of the farms that were under 300 acres in size occupied a mere 18% of the total acreage; 41% of the farms were between 300 and 640 acres in size occupying 42% of the total, while even larger farms, comprising 40% of the total, were making their appearance.<sup>11</sup>

What this suggests is that medium-sized farmers could not be expected, in every instance, to face a similar range of economic and non-economic problems, for differences in income are likely to produce differential outlooks and expectations relating to a divergent access to opportunities for purchasing consumer goods, for capital investment, etc. It seems logical to assume that as conditions continued to improve, middle-income farmers shared the expectation that their purchasing power and opportunities would increase proportionally. However, the cyclical fluctuations in income inherent in a wheat economy largely eroded those plans, producing a level of resentment which largely explains the intensity with which grain growers attacked industrialists, politicians, and government policies which appeared to run contrary to the interests of agrarians as a whole. In effect, there existed on a number of occasions important discrepancies between the expectations of middle-class farmers and actual conditions.

Given this situation, it is possible to locate the source of antagonism to urban labour which farmers frequently displayed throughout this period and afterward. As outlined earlier, the source of antagonism between grain producers and workers was significantly

different. As J. N. McCrorie has shown, the historical solution for labour was to gain bargaining power over wages and working conditions within an industry; conversely, the solution for farmers was to gain control over other industries. The worker eventually acquired bargaining rights within an industry; the farmer eventually took over some of the industries within which he was in conflict, integrating them into his farm operation.<sup>12</sup> To many farmers, therefore, the suggestion by a few agrarian and labour leaders that the two groups shared a common perspective arising from a similar condition of exploitation was pure speculation, for it failed not only to take into consideration the fact that urban and rural life conditions were basically incompatible, but it also neglected to consider the aspirations of middle-income farmers to achieve a level of economic independence qualitatively different from the urban workers' preoccupation with shorter hours and higher wages. It is indeed recognized that under certain circumstances, the agrarian community could be persuaded to join labour in the mutual struggle against the "protected interests". But the history of such cooperative efforts shows clearly that there was very little which could sustain it beyond immediate and specific concerns.

One major qualification of this observation would appear to be centred in the case of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.) which became a major political force in Saskatchewan during the 1930's and beyond. Ostensibly, the party represented a coalition of urban labour and the farming sector of the province in the interest

of securing socialist reform measures in the face of monopoly capitalist exploitation. Middle-class farmers did indeed support the party, but it is questionable whether socialism as an ideology ever captured the imagination of even a small minority of farmers. As argued elsewhere, the farmers' solutions to problems were above all pragmatic to their intent, and it seems reasonable to suggest that the C.C.F.'s policy of controlling and/or nationalizing major industrial and business concerns in the province appeared as a welcome antidote to rising costs of production and low grain prices. Taking into consideration that the C.C.F., in response to agrarian pressure, dropped two controversial clauses in its manifesto dealing with the nationalization of land and the complete eradication of capitalism, there is little reason to assume that farmers supported the party either as a result of some prior disposition toward socialism or as an indication of some commitment to the principle of sustained cooperation between themselves and the working class in urban Saskatchewan.

The essential point to be made is that farmers were motivated for the most part by practical self-interest, a factor which guided the thinking of agrarians in both the economic and political spheres. The Wheat Pool, for example, was one proposed venture within which farmers sought to centralize commodity marketing in such a way that maximum returns on their product could be realized. Practicality became the primary consideration, for the Wheat Pool promised to solve complex marketing problems in a large urban industrial society on agrarian terms. In the political sphere, direct action was eventually

advanced as the most efficacious means of quickly securing favourable legislation and at no time did farmers indicate a distinct commitment to a particular line. In essence, ideological boundaries between right and left appeared to be unimportant, for third parties in the West advancing agrarian causes covered a broad spectrum of the political map. In this case it was clear that any party could attract agrarian support if it would align itself against the "interests" and provide some security to farmers as a whole. It was a lesson in political strategy that the C.C.F. and Social Credit learned well, for many of their more important proposals matched those outlined much earlier in the Farmers' Platform of 1916. In short, if these parties could offer enduring solutions to the problems relating to the economic vulnerability of the farmers' income, then support from the agrarian sector could be expected.

Viewed in this manner, farmer protest cannot be conceived as an attempt to radically transform the country's social, economic, and political structure - it was simply an effort to achieve some measure of recognition from an urban industrial society whose priorities were shifting from agricultural to manufacturing concerns. The activities of agrarians in both the economic and political fields reflected this most basic of farmer grievances and provides a background for understanding the nature and intent of agrarian demands throughout the period 1914-1935.

### The Farmers' Platform and the Agitation for Political Action:

It has been repeatedly stressed throughout this analysis that the farmers' organizations remained the key to success if their members had any hope of attaining important reform measures and were instrumental, along with the Grain Growers' Guide, in publicizing this fact throughout the prairie provinces. As agrarians became more experienced in cooperating through their educational and economic associations, they became increasingly resolved to employ their voting power in acquiring legislative support. This disposition toward political independence was greatly stimulated by World War I and the consequent increase in governmental regulation of Canadian life. Questions of taxation, prices, the marketing of agricultural and industrial products, and transportation, all came under the surveillance and supervision of federal authorities. It was a state of affairs which became a powerful inducement toward the establishment of an independent attitude among farmers, for there developed a widespread suspicion that in administering these powers, the government was becoming unduly influenced by the inclinations and desires of "big business".

It was, moreover, a fact of economic life that the farming community should be greatly concerned with federal legislative matters. The continental economy of Canada created domestic economic problems which required governmental intervention, for the construction of the necessary wheat marketing and transportation facilities demanded a large amount of capital which was often unavailable to encourage

competitive building by private contractors. As a result, the government was forced to intervene and either operate the necessary services itself or to regulate private business in the interest of protecting the public against exploitation by monopoly practices. In this instance, state control became a matter of economic necessity rather than political theory.

As far as western farmers were concerned, the need for federal assistance became much more insistent with the end of the land boom in 1913, and the collapse of wheat prices which fell to the lowest point in a decade. Because of the heavy burden of fixed charges for land, farm implements, and provincial debts, they were unable to reduce their costs to equalize their drop in income. They naturally turned to the government for aid and pressed for federal legislation which would enable the farmers to establish cooperative land banks to loan money at low interest rates.<sup>13</sup> This arrangement could be implemented, the grain growers' associations argued, by holding the farmers' crops as security, which in turn would allow the farmer to hold his wheat until the spring rather than have to sell it when the market was glutted and prices depressed in the fall.<sup>14</sup>

Federal legislation on such matters, however, was a painstaking process, for politicians in Ottawa, under pressure to devote their attention almost completely to war-time issues, could do little but refer many domestic matters to the provinces.<sup>15</sup> Such a move was bound to be interpreted as an indication of federal indifference; as a consequence regional political boundaries, particularly in the West,



were becoming firmly established. The move toward western political independence was further augmented by the widespread dissatisfaction with the Borden government's handling of the War and by a split in Liberal party ranks between Quebec and western members over the issues of language rights and conscription. Wilfrid Laurier, fearing the loss of Quebec to Henri Bourassa's nationalist supporters, chose to align himself against conscription, a decision which has been interpreted as erasing party unity and costing the Liberals an almost certain electoral victory.

This probable . . . victory, to be based on anti-conscription sentiment in Quebec and low tariff sentiment in the West, was averted by the formation of the Union Government. The issue in that political transformation was whether the three western Liberal governments could be detached from the federal party. But the attempt made at the Winnipeg convention in August, 1917, to prepare the way for this change was defeated by the official Liberals. The insurgents refused to accept the verdict of the convention; and by negotiations, the course of which is by no means clear, the support of the three western administrations and of the farmers' organizations was won for Union Government. Thus the leadership of the West was captured . . . 16

For the time being, then, the political insurgency on the prairies was absorbed by the Union government. However, when the Liberal and Conservative coalition began conscripting farmers' sons in early 1918, and failed either to conscript wealth or to make any significant tariff changes, the farmers' alienation from the old parties reached a critical stage. The third party alternative thus became ever more urgent and compelling.

Another important factor which contributed to the general

agrarian disaffection with established political tradition was the stance taken by the Canadian Council of Agriculture in its promotion of farmer unity through the issuance, in 1916 and 1918, of well-constructed platforms on matters of national concern. Up until 1916, the C.C.A. had not been able to coalesce farmer opinion to the point where serious issues could be confronted, for its charter strictly forbade membership of the farmers' cooperative companies. Membership was comprised solely of non-commercial organizations. But in 1916 an enlargement of the Council took place through the admission to it of representatives from each of the western Grain Growers' Companies, the Grain Growers' Guide and the United Farmers' Cooperative Company of Ontario.<sup>17</sup> With a more stable and more adequate source of funds now that its finances were placed on an entirely different basis by the provision that the commercial organizations would be assessed a fixed charge per shareholder for its upkeep, the Council began to assume a more active role as an educational and lobbying body. As a result, farmers began to press for more favourable legislation from the federal government.

With the support of the farmers' associations behind it, the C.C.A. embarked upon a programme which sought to promulgate the farmers' cause throughout the entire nation. The rationale for such a programme was to codify the numerous resolutions and recommendations accepted over a period of many years at the annual meetings of the farmers' organizations.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, it was hoped that by circulating farmer demands over an extensive area, politicians in Ottawa would be forced

to accept the urgency of agrarian requests for action on specific matters. As Roderick McKenzie, the secretary of the Council noted, it was becoming more apparent each year that parliament invariably responded more quickly and more favourably to industrial, financial, and transportation interests to the detriment of "the rural population and the common people".<sup>19</sup> Hence, in response to this apparent absence of legislative support for the agrarian community, the Farmers' Platform was drafted and completed in tentative form by early December, 1916. With very few changes it was endorsed by the M.G.G.A. on January 11, 1917, by the U.F.A. on January 25, the S.G.G.A. on February 13, and by the United Farmers of Ontario (U.F.O.) on March 1st.

The major portion of the platform was devoted to a statement of the need for reform in the tariff laws of Canada, but it is striking that a number of propositions were aimed specifically in the direction of democratic reform. Specifically, it was proposed that in order to reduce the high cost of living, tariff laws should be amended as follows: by reducing the customs duty on goods imported from Great Britain to one-half the rates charged under the general tariff and that further gradual, uniform reductions be made in the remaining tariff on British imports that will ensure complete free trade between Great Britain and Canada; that the Reciprocity Agreement of 1911, still remaining on the American statute books, be accepted by the parliament of Canada; that all foodstuffs not included in the Reciprocity Agreement be placed on the free list including agricultural implements, farm machinery, vehicles, fertilizer, coal, lumber,

cement, illuminating fuel and lubricating oils; that the customs tariff on all the necessities of life be materially reduced; and that all tariff concessions granted to other countries be immediately extended to Britain. As these changes were expected to reduce the government's revenue, it was urged that additional funds should be acquired by a direct tax on unimproved land values, including all natural resources; by a sharply graduated personal income tax; by a heavy graduated inheritance tax on large estates; and by a graduated income tax on the profits of corporations. The Farmers' Platform also favoured the nationalization of all railway, telegraph, and express companies; short-term leasing of natural resources of public auction rather than their alienation from the Crown in order to safeguard the interests of the public; direct legislation including the initiative, referendum, and the right of recall; public disclosure of political campaign fund contributions and expenditures both before and after elections; the abolition of the patronage system; full provincial autonomy in liquor legislation, including manufacture, export and import; and the federal enfranchisement of women already accorded the franchise in any province.<sup>20</sup>

During the next two years the Farmers' Platform was revised, not only because several planks in the original document such as female suffrage, prohibition, measures of direct taxation on incomes and business profits, and legislation directed against political patronage had been carried into effect, but also because the termination of the War brought problems of reconstruction upon which the C.C.A. deemed

it imperative that the organized farmers should state their views.<sup>21</sup> This revision was dignified by the title of the New National Policy in contradistinction to the National Policy of protection promulgated by a former generation. It contained tariff demands which were made even more explicit and clauses were added dealing with the need for stronger inter-Empire relations and the establishment of a league of nations as an international organization for the maintenance of peace. It also advocated public disclosure of corporate earnings, especially those protected by the tariff, and particular sections were devoted to recommendations concerning the demobilization and repatriation of returned soldiers. It was urged that measures be taken to relieve unemployment in the urban centres, and clauses dealing with Senate reform, proportional representation, the removal of press censorship and a restoration of the rights of free speech formed the nucleus of certain political and constitutional recommendations.<sup>22</sup>

Officially it was claimed by the C.C.A. that this revised version of the Farmers' Platform would place the country on an economic, political, and social basis that would be of interest not only to farmers, but to the citizens of Canada generally. It was argued in this regard that wage-earners, artisans, professional men and trades-people, along with the agricultural community, were all affected more or less equally by the fiscal system prevailing in Canada. It was further pointed out that all Canadian citizens were just as much involved as the farmer in economic and social reform and that despite the fact that the organized farmers had initiated and promoted

a federal programme of reform, it did not prove a desire to create class conflict or gain selfish ends.<sup>23</sup> Despite these assurances, however, labour was not convinced that the ordinary workman would acquire similar benefits from the programme as the farmers. For example, James Somerville of the Saskatchewan Labour Party, attending a S.G.G.A. convention in Regina on February 18, 1919, declared that the Farmers' Platform did not go far enough to receive the support of labour. He illustrated his objections by pointing out that the people of the "Old Country" under a low tariff were no better off than the people in Canada under conditions of high protection. Furthermore, he argued that while labour desired the nationalization of natural resources, the farmers were only willing to pursue such a policy on a limited basis.<sup>24</sup> In effect, for the farmers the nationalization of certain resources was a matter to be dictated by practical considerations and not, as in the case of labour, to be determined by doctrine or philosophy. The basic disunity between these two sectors in terms of motivation and outlook was once again illustrated.

For this reason and others, apart from the fact that the programme originated from discussions and resolutions of the grain growers' associations, it is difficult to view the Farmers' Platform as encompassing the interests of the Canadian populace as a whole. In this fundamental respect, the document represented the collective expression of agrarian ideology through its reinforcement of rural values and its condemnation of the evils and abuses of urban industrial

society. There is no mistaking the intent of the New National Policy directives - the agricultural sector in Canada must be given the opportunity to exercise more control over economic and political affairs for the sake of protecting the citizenship rights of farmers everywhere. As the Guide argued, such a course of action was absolutely necessary, for the well-being of the nation rested on the development of its richest resource, its agricultural areas.<sup>25</sup> This conviction, as expected, was particularly widespread in the prairie region.

It was thus through a well-constructed platform that the farmers hoped to gain sympathy for these views among members of parliament and the public generally. It is readily apparent that charges of parochialism could not be avoided unless the document's intention was to cover a broad spectrum of issues, issues which could be interpreted as encompassing the concerns of a cross-section of Canadians. In addition, it was important that the organized farmers protect themselves from allegations of political subversion, for it could be argued in some circles that such a programme was aimed at radically transforming the nation's values and system of government. Change was an expressed aim of the Farmers' Platform to be sure, but there is little indication that agrarians intended to introduce fundamental innovations in the Canadian system by engaging in direct and independent political action. As we shall see presently, there was a radical element, but the majority of farmers simply envisioned the programme as an important step towards a more equitable and more democratic society. Independent action became an alternative when,

and only when, all other avenues of agrarian self-expression had been exhausted.

Support for this contention can be found in the fact that the constitutions of the provincial associations as well as that of the Canadian Council of Agriculture explicitly discouraged direct participation in political activities. In an editorial outlining the purpose of the Farmers' Platform, the Guide commented that organized farmers, especially in the West, proposed to encourage farmers everywhere to give their support only to such candidates pledging themselves to support of the platform when elected to parliament. It continued by pointing out that the farmers in each constituency could take any political action they chose to secure the selection and election of such candidates, but that it was distinctly understood that neither the Council nor any of the provincial associations would engineer any political platform.<sup>26</sup> The Farmers' Platform, then, was political in nature only to this limited extent.

This predisposition was further strengthened and articulated by Henry Wise Wood of Alberta whose reputation as a leading agrarian exponent was widely established throughout the prairies. Wood's experience in Missouri during the hey-day of the American Populist movement had left him highly skeptical of the efficacy of independent politics, for many agrarian parties in opting for a self-reliant political stance had shown themselves to be patently incapable of securing intelligent political leadership. As a result, such exercises had often resulted in dismal failures. Wood was thus convinced that



the only way to solve agrarian problems was to develop an organization which would enable the farmers to understand economic conditions and make them less subject to political prejudice.<sup>27</sup> Hence, during the 1917 federal election campaign, he preferred to follow the advice of the C.C.A. and have the farmers seek to capture control of the old party organizations rather than pursue a course of independent political action. In an open letter to the farmers of Alberta during the campaign, he asserted that if the agrarian community would gain mastery of the party machinery there would be no need to form a third party.<sup>28</sup>

Given this attitude and its wide dispersion among leading agrarian spokesmen, the eventual choice made on behalf of the organized farmers to engage in independent politics seems highly inconsistent with the stated policies of the major farm organizations. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, however, the Farmers' Platform by its very nature contributed to a weakening of old party tradition by insisting upon a more direct and active concern for the plight of the farmer. Even though many agrarians had come to believe that both parties were practically synonymous and that neither would give justice to the farmer<sup>29</sup>, it is doubtful whether they believed that any practical political alternative was possible. The programme formulated by the C.C.A. changed this outlook, for it inspired farmers to take seriously suggestions offered repeatedly in the Guide and elsewhere that western political representatives sever their ties with the "privilege-ridden, party-blind, office-hunting Grit and Tory parties that make their headquarters at Ottawa".<sup>30</sup> From then on it was not much of a

step from the Farmers' Platform to direct political action. As farmers grew increasingly impatient with the actions of the federal government, it was almost inevitable for them to resort to independent political activities.

It has also been pointed out earlier that the formation of the Unionist government had helped to weaken the political organizations of both old parties, which in turn contributed to the creation of a spirit of independence among the grain growers. Unionist candidates received support from the powerful and influential farm journals, including the Guide, the Farmer's Sun, and the Alberta Non-Partisan, and even the Manitoba Free Press had given its non-partisan support and no longer exhorted farmers to vote Liberal. Perhaps the most encouraging development inspiring Canadian agrarian advocates of political action, however, were the successes experienced by the Non-Partisan League in American politics. The League was organized in the wheat state of North Dakota in 1915 by A. C. Townley and a small group of socialist farmers. They attacked existing political parties as "useless for the farmers' purpose" and called for a farmers' alliance "to grapple with organized 'big business' greed".<sup>31</sup> As a political movement, the League advanced beyond an expression of protest against high transportation costs, low farm prices, and unfavourable market conditions. It was a protest against underlying economic developments which a few radically-inspired farmers believed were evils inherent in a maturing capitalist system.<sup>32</sup> The anti-monopolistic demands for the nationalization of public utilities, of

banking and credit systems, of all industries "in which competition has virtually ceased to exist", and the extension of the public domain to include all coal mines, water power, and forests, reflected the socialist background of the League in North Dakota.<sup>33</sup>

In terms of strategy, the League's approach to the problem of establishing legitimacy in the political sphere was to attempt to capture the North Dakota Republican Party by entering a league slate in the primaries rather than by starting a new party. In 1916, the first election contested by the League, it elected the governor and all the other state officials. After succeeding in capturing control of both houses of the legislature in 1918, it enacted a large part of its programme into law: a state bank; a Home Building Association for the purpose of enabling citizens of the state to build and own their own homes by lending money at low rates of interest; a graduated state income tax distinguishing between earned and unearned income; a state hail-insurance fund; a workmen's compensation act that assessed employers for its support; an eight-hour day for working women; and regulation of working conditions in the mines.<sup>34</sup> Its measure of success was indicated by its ability to attract 200,000 members in 1917 in not only North Dakota but also in neighbouring states.<sup>35</sup>

With the impetus of important achievements in the wheat-producing areas of the American mid-west, it was inevitable that Canadian grain growers could be attracted to a movement offering solutions to their economic woes. The League's influence in Canada lay precisely in its theory of non-partisanship, which deprived the

Conservatives of their principal election plank, and its practical successes in North Dakota, which challenged the accomplishments of the Liberal party. Furthermore, it offered the debtor West an opportunity to obtain cheap money through the nationalization of the banking and credit systems, and promised to support a programme calling for the removal of the protective tariff which could solve the farmers' remaining economic problems. The elimination of the middleman and the land speculator would be necessary, according to League philosophy, to satisfy the principle that "what the producer produces shall go to the consumer direct through government channels and the manipulator of prices - the easy money guy - be thus eliminated".<sup>36</sup> Such proposals, along with specific reform measures dealing with the necessity for equal rights for women, the introduction of direct legislation, the abolition of liquor traffic and the substitution of popular sovereignty for cabinet and senate domination in Canadian life<sup>37</sup>, were consistent with earlier resolutions contained in the Farmers' Platform and thus could be easily reconciled to the general mood and inclination of prairie reformers.<sup>38</sup> The League consequently entered Canada confident that considerable progress could be attained in changing the basic context of prairie politics.

Despite the optimism of League supporters, its organizers were not totally prepared for the difficulties to be encountered in dealing with the parliamentary system of government. This system was not only foreign to the non-partisan concept, it was also structured in such a way that made it impossible for the League to capture

the older party organizations as they had in North Dakota, for there were no direct primary elections. The absence of the direct primary meant in effect that it had to enter Canadian politics as a third party. Under the single-member-district, simple-plurality-vote electoral system, this procedure would probably be unsuccessful unless the new party could attract a wide following among the organized farmers. Consequently, its attempt to enter Independent League candidates in the provincial elections of 1917 in Alberta and Saskatchewan met with very limited success - it elected only two members to the Legislature in Alberta and one in Saskatchewan, the latter of whom was elected by acclamation, being the candidate also of the Liberals and Conservatives.<sup>39</sup>

Despite this rather modest impact on the Canadian political scene, the League did contribute to the strengthening of the agrarian movement in a number of ways: a) it reinforced a group awareness among many farmers and persuaded them that group action could be effective in promoting legislative changes in the economic and social field;<sup>40</sup> b) to those who participated in the campaigns, the experience gave invaluable first-hand information in the operation of political institutions. The League provided the training school for a relatively small but vocal group of agrarian leaders in Alberta who were later to exercise political authority in the U.F.A.; and c) in the tradition of political reform movements in Canada, it offered further encouragement, particularly in Alberta, for the development of political action and group solidarity among farmers. Yet the process of convincing thousands of farmers as to the efficacy of direct action was not easily

accomplished, for it had been publicly stated on many occasions by the grain growers associations and the U.F.A. that the political alternative could do little to improve agrarian conditions because of the inherent danger of splitting the movement into opposing factions. In fact up to 1919 these organizations absolutely refused, officially at least, to consider this alternative or to join the Non-Partisan League in joint action.

Early in 1919, however, the situation had changed sufficiently to warrant re-consideration of this strategy. Economic intervention into grain handling and marketing procedures had been effective but not up to the point of significantly reducing the discrepancies which continued to exist between costs of production and the prices paid for the farmers' product. As the War drew to a close, the serious railway problem remained unsolved as the anticipated flood of immigrants failed to materialize and the over-expanded systems were forced to rely upon the thinly scattered prairie population for revenue. Furthermore, the economy of the prairie provinces staggered under the burden of depressed prices, high costs, and heavy fixed-debt charges. Clearly, the growing discontinuity between actual conditions and the expectations among farmers for a more equitable and just share of the nation's wealth had reached an intolerable level, for farmers were generally less prosperous in 1919 than they had been in 1914 despite the growth in the size of farms and an increase in output. To the middle-class farmer caught up in this economic squeeze, the insensitivities of the major political parties appeared particularly cogent after years

of unfulfilled election promises and commitments. Hence, the sense of urgency which accompanied the demands for direct action by several agrarian spokesmen were readily received by many disenchanted farmers.

In sensing this high level of disaffection, the Non-Partisan League was anxious to forge alliances with the farmers' organizations in the hope of securing a common political front. In Alberta, the League threw its organization behind the U.F.A. with the result that the latter body became convinced of the need for united political action. At a joint meeting of U.F.A. and League representatives it was declared that "the chief aim of this movement shall be to change our form of government from the party system to a business administration, based on the fundamental principles of democracy, by which, ultimately, all schools of political thought will have due representation in the conduct of the Government of the country".<sup>41</sup>

Very little time had elapsed, however, before the League realized that the representation of "all schools of political thought" essentially included only those consistent with agrarian thinking. This was clearly indicated by Wood and his organization's refusal to include League members who were not farmers in the movement. In effect, the farmers had denied the League the opportunity to form an alliance with the urban working-class, as it had done in North Dakota, and preserved the movement's essentially agrarian character. In terms of strategy, Wood's theory of group action prevailed at the expense of the League's united front philosophy and illustrated the farmers' unwillingness to concern themselves with urban problems. Consequently,

by July of 1919, the League had practically suspended its Alberta activities and its political action was made to harmonize with that of the United Farmers. In Saskatchewan, the Grain Growers and the Non-Partisans failed completely to reach agreement and in September of 1919, J. B. Musselman, Secretary of the S.G.G.A., issued a letter repudiating the League's policy.<sup>42</sup> In Manitoba, meanwhile, the League's influence was virtually non-existent.

Perhaps the most crucial contribution of the Non-Partisan League in the Canadian West was its influence in precipitating the collapse of the old party system, particularly in Saskatchewan and Alberta. It in effect offered farmers and voters generally an alternative to Liberal government and all but eradicated the efforts of the Conservatives to provide effective opposition. The third party alternative had been introduced into the region and despite the League's rather limited achievements, had succeeded in promoting an active interest in political affairs. In addition, its appearance, having coincided in 1917 with the national Liberal party split between Laurier and Unionist Liberals over the question of forming a coalition government with the Conservatives, had also augmented the issuance of the Farmers' Platform in encouraging a new awareness of the possibilities of united action. The establishment of an independent farmers' movement in both federal and provincial politics was only but a step away.



### The Grain Growers Enter Politics:

It has been suggested that the single most important event to stimulate the movement towards independent political action was the revocation in 1918 of the order-in-council exempting farmers' sons from military service which Borden had promised during the election campaign of 1917.<sup>43</sup> The result was a bitter denunciation of the Union Government and its policies and a reaffirmation of the antagonism which had been generated toward federal parties before the formation of the war-time coalition government. Once again agrarians stressed the essential collusion between the national parties and the commercial, financial, and industrial interests of metropolitan Canada in implementing the National Policy of tariff protection and railway construction by dividing the vote of the electorate on "political" issues and by the compromises and majority decisions of the legislative caucus.<sup>44</sup> The event was significant in another respect as well: the group of westerners attached to the grain growers' movements who had been returned to parliament as supporters of the Union Government were now squarely faced with the decision of either repudiating their parliamentary commitments and responsibilities or responding to the desires of their prairie constituents. In isolation the conscription issue could be rationalized as a question of national survival or as a temporary measure to guarantee a prompt conclusion to the War, but according to the majority of agrarians, it represented yet another example of a continuous sacrifice of prairie interests in favour of a seemingly

unilateral decision made on behalf of the eastern manufacturing lobby. It was a situation which only hardened the resolve of prairie farmers and convinced them of the need for immediate legislative changes.

Upon the conclusion of the War and the signing of the armistice, it became clear that the organized farmers had intensified rather than modified their views with the publication of the New National Policy. Again, the western farmers' group at Ottawa, under the unofficial leadership of T. A. Crerar who had been appointed to the post of Minister of Agriculture in the Borden Cabinet, discovered itself in an awkward situation. As members of parliament their responsibility was to assist the government in its work of reconstruction and yet they could ill afford to ignore the growing dissatisfaction of their constituents who, as the drought-afflicted season's crop brought in its defective yield, began to voice their strong objections to the practices of the profiteer, the reckless extravagance of the federal government, and the burdens laid upon them by the highest tariff in force since Confederation.<sup>45</sup> In the Lethbridge area of southern Alberta, for example, the average yield of wheat between 1908 and 1921 ranged from 63 bushels to the acre in 1915 to two in 1918, and eight in 1921.<sup>46</sup> Although this situation was particularly extreme, the entire western prairie in varying degrees suffered a similar fluctuation in yield. It was a circumstance which precipitated an intense upheaval of expectations, particularly among middle-income farmers, and can be represented as one of the more important preconditions for protest activity which culminated in the Progressive electoral sweep of the West.

Added to these strains accompanying the hazards of nature were those associated with the hazards of the market. In 1917 the government had fixed the price of wheat to keep it from going higher, and had established a Wheat Board to market the crops of the war years. The question which confronted the government in its reconstruction phase was whether to discontinue this ostensibly interim measure and revert back to the open market concept or to fix the price of grain and continue to market the crops through the Wheat Board. Under pressure from government M.P.s from the West and the organized farmers' associations, Borden and his associates considered it appropriate to extend the life of the Wheat Board for the crop yield of 1919, but its liquidation in 1920 again convinced farmers of the government's insincerity and its failure to respond to the needs of agrarians everywhere.<sup>47</sup>

Meanwhile, the question of tariff revision became the focal point around which the government's intentions could be evaluated. Pressure from the West for a major reduction in the tariff was mounting and becoming intense and it was fully expected that Borden's first post-war budget would contain enough tariff concessions to hold its western following intact. Accordingly, Sir Thomas White, Minister of Finance, announced that the surtax on the British preferential rates would be entirely abrogated and that on other schedules removed in part.<sup>48</sup> Reductions amounting to two and one-half per cent were made in the duties on certain agricultural implements and of five per cent in the case of others, but generally very little was done to meet agrarian demands with respect to the tariff as set forth in the New

National Policy. A most significant point of contention was the fact that eastern manufacturers were able to compete in the open market while gaining the advantages of protection for the same commodity items at home. The budget had not addressed itself to this problem, nor was it likely to do so in the foreseeable future. As a result, L. A. Creer resigned his post as Minister of Agriculture and along with nine other western Unionists, crossed the floor of the House of Commons to sit in opposition to the government's policies.<sup>49</sup> The event triggered the renewal of third party agitation and foreshadowed the arrival of the Progressive Party on the political scene.<sup>50</sup>

Another event of considerable significance was the entrance into provincial politics of the United Farmers of Ontario (U.F.O.), which, in October 1919, carried forty-five seats in a Legislature of 111, and formed an administration.<sup>51</sup> For many agrarians who were skeptical of the chances a farmers' party would have in an open election, the success which was illustrated by the results in Ontario infused many with a new sense of optimism. The U.F.O. had formed a platform on the basis of many of the issues which confronted the organized farmers of the West - the drain of rural manpower initiated in 1910 by the cancellation of military exemptions, the protective tariff, and the corruption of the major political parties and their domination by urban interests. In Ontario, as in the West, urban domination represented, in the minds of many farmers, a moral crisis because agriculture was not only the economic strength of the nation but also the purest and best way of life. Furthermore, rural society

was considered to be the bulwark of democracy because of its alleged moral purity and basic stability. Thus as farmers across the country began to realize that urban centres were becoming dominant economically, politically, and socially - those areas which they regarded as unproductive, parasitical, and corrupt - their indignation was intensified. As rural values faced the onslaught of corrupting ideologies from the city, considerable strength was added to the argument of the C.C.A. and the proponents of the Progressive idea in politics for a unified Canadian farmers' movement.

Yet despite the similar objectives of the U.F.O. and the western associations, it should not be inferred that the achievement of a consensus of opinion and outlook was probable or even possible with respect to the overall priorities and strategies which would be employed in combating the "protected interests". Important differences continued to exist and may be illustrated by referring to the pre-occupation among Ontario farmers with rural depopulation and the consequent drain of manpower which undermined the economic stability of rural society throughout the entire province.<sup>52</sup> This was less of a problem in the West where urban centres were relatively few in number and the attractions of the city less prominent. Conversely, the "boom and bust" cycle of wheat production fashioned an outlook among western grain growers that could not be matched in the mixed farming areas of the East. The key difference was the diversified nature of crop and livestock production which enabled the Ontario farmer to avoid complete financial ruin in the event of some unforeseen collapse of the market

or a natural disaster. The protective tariff, a fundamental source of grievance among prairie farmers, was interpreted in the light of its effect on the stability of farm prices, while in Ontario, protection was construed on the basis of its effect on the profitability of farming and the resultant drift of the population from rural to urban areas. These differences of opinion, while seemingly minor in terms of crisis, nevertheless were to prove decisive in the efforts of the Progressive party to achieve agrarian unity on a national level. The consequent reinforcement of regional parochialisms further complicated Progressive endeavours to obtain a consensus.

Temporarily however, social and economic conditions in the immediate post-war period had reached such crisis proportions that it was not difficult for farmers across Canada to minimize their differences. In the process of converting farms and industry to peacetime production and accommodating the flood of returning soldiers from Europe, the Canadian economy was becoming taxed to the point where inflation was out of control and capital investment had seriously declined. As social unrest intensified, there existed, as Donald Creighton noted, "a bewildered sense of social injustice"<sup>53</sup> which was at least partially due to the enormous profits which some had made from the War while others were dying in the trenches. All of this was no doubt stimulated and aggravated by the recent example of the Russian Revolution, whereby it was reasoned that workers and farmers had installed a truly democratic government. Accordingly, a new wave of optimism gripped those in the farmer and labour movements who had

visions of combining their energies in cooperative ventures aimed at eradicating capitalist exploitation. In theory, such plans had considerable substance, for a combined bloc of determined voters could do much to install a new government more responsive to the needs of the people. But in practice, the realities of conflicting life-styles and long-term objectives drastically qualified such visions.

The problem of labour-agrarian incompatibility was amply illustrated during the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 when workers for the first time in the history of the Canadian labour movement were attempting to establish a basis for the control and ownership of industry.<sup>54</sup> Western farmers could sympathize with the efforts of workers to achieve recognition and wage equalization among various labour groups, but the threat of violence during the strike and the workers' ostensible dedication to the principle of militant trade unionism convinced many agrarians of the need for caution and discretion when seeking social and economic reforms. As a petit capitalist entrepreneur himself he was well aware of the fact that militancy could only undermine his potential for power in the marketplace and, ultimately, jeopardize the crusade for reform.<sup>55</sup> In fact, the leaders of the Winnipeg strike were condemned by the Grain Growers' Guide for preaching openly "the doctrines of Bolshevism, confiscation, and rule by force", for the danger now existed that every liberal sentiment could be branded with the Bolshevik stigma.<sup>56</sup> Thereafter cooperation with labour was limited in nature, and usually raised severe opposition among less tolerant farmers who looked upon the labourer's wages as a primary cause for the high cost

of living. T. A. Crerar, leader of the unofficial Progressive caucus, frequently repudiated the idea that the farmers were a class organization in the sense that labour was, and often advanced the proposal that an agrarian party was in an excellent position to hold the balance "between capital on the one side and labour on the other because the farmers were both capitalists and labourers".<sup>57</sup>

Yet despite indications to the contrary, in 1920 labour leaders persisted in suggesting a farmer-labour alliance to the point of forming a national political party. Crerar reacted strongly against the idea, as reflected in a letter to J. J. Morrison:

"The Manitoba Branch of the Dominion Labour party here have as the first plank in their platform the socialization of all property through the elimination of capitalism . . . no good can come from any endeavour to co-operate with the Labour people as long as they have this as the main tenet of their political belief".<sup>58</sup>

Morrison replied:

"The Labour party in Ontario is quite as socialistic as in Manitoba, and I am quite sure that their views are just as objectionable to the farmers here as to the farmers in the West. It is quite impossible . . . [for] any stable union taking place between the labour and farmer movement . . . because we believe in lessening the cost of production. . . . Labour men generally believe in increasing the cost of production by increased wages and shorter hours".<sup>59</sup>

It is important to clearly distinguish the respective interests of farmers and urban labour as a prelude to understanding the intricacies and complexities of the organized farmers' rise to political power. On both the federal and provincial scenes agrarians were attempting to qualify the growth of industrialism by ensuring that the political



process be held accountable for the welfare of Canada's rural inhabitants. This could be achieved only if agrarian problems were solved in an increasingly expanding urban industrial society on agrarian terms. How this could be translated into a programme of pragmatic reform posed a difficult task for agrarian leaders, for not all farmer spokesmen were convinced that their constituents were prepared to commit themselves, financially, and organizationally, to a bone fide political party. T. A. Crerar expressed misgivings on more than one occasion as to the level of political awareness and education exhibited by local leaders and grass-roots followers alike.<sup>60</sup> He preferred the farmers to direct their energies towards improving their social and economic situation through their associations and companies and developing the national scope of the Canadian Council of Agriculture.

Although Crerar's hostility towards the farmers' independent political movement had tempered somewhat with the phenomenal increase in membership and organizational capability of the prairie grain growers' associations and the expansion of the movement into other provinces,<sup>61</sup> the agrarian revolt against "partyism" prevented the adoption of many political practices which experience had shown to be essential. The emphasis upon local organizations as the source of policy and power kept the organization close to the people, but it also prevented decisive or uniform action. When farmer delegates gathered in Winnipeg early in 1920 to discuss the possibility of creating a federal farmers' party, it became immediately evident that the reconciliation of sectional divergencies of opinion would be an extremely difficult

undertaking, for in some provinces (particularly Manitoba and Saskatchewan), the question of independent political action had been deferred where the governments had been reformist and responsive to agrarian demands. In other provinces, most notably Alberta and Ontario, the independent attitude pervaded the political thinking of many agrarian leaders who had made it quite clear that the idea of constituency autonomy would be jealously guarded.

This posed a perplexing problem for Thomas Crerar and others who had hoped to force the federal Liberals to introduce needed reforms through pressure tactics. The implication underlying this position was that an effective Progressive lobby would be required as a matter of course to broaden its base of support to include urban as well as rural elements, a position which proved repugnant to the economic group theorists who proposed that a Progressive party represent farmers only.

This group, represented most prominently by Henry Wise Wood of Alberta, based its philosophy on the premise that organized strength was needed to protect the interests of agriculture. Wood was firmly convinced that competition was a "false social law" and that no social system based on that principle could ever reach perfection. Cooperation represented a viable substitute, but according to Wood could only be secured through the organization of efficient class groups which, when fully structured, placed competition on the highest possible level where it was merged in cooperation. In this regard, the heart of his doctrine became centred in the proposition that "power treats power

on equal terms in the hope of an equitable adjustment".<sup>62</sup> Taking his beliefs a step further, he emphasized that the only basis for an efficient group organization in modern society was economic, for any other motivation lacked the stability and strength provided by a community of economic interest.<sup>63</sup> Rather than becoming an exponent of the Marxist dialectic, however, which he believed could never be applied to an agrarian movement, he translated his theory into essentially populist terms: the farmers' struggle, being essentially ethical in nature, was one which sought to combat the privileged position of the forces of evil through the growing democratic power of the common people.<sup>64</sup> Ultimately, however, the farmers, representing a distinct economic unit, could develop and encourage inter-class concord and mutual respect by complementing the organized strength of other economic units of society.<sup>65</sup> Organization based on economic interest again was the key in reaching an equilibrium of interests, for he often emphasized that if the farmers were to widen their base to include other groups (such as urban labour), they would weaken the movement's democratic character.<sup>66</sup>

In translating his doctrine of democratic group organization to conform with the political and economic realities of prairie society, it became readily apparent that one of the primary targets of reform was the existing system of government. He proposed that proportional representation be introduced and that every individual citizen member of a group exercise that vital but neglected responsibility of nominating candidates and of sharing the cost and work of elections. The

group candidate when elected would become a delegate rather than a representative.<sup>67</sup> It becomes immediately apparent that this philosophy of group government struck at the very substance of the bi-partisan party system of North America, with its heterogeneous membership of either of the traditional parties. In Alberta in particular, adherence to Wood's ideas meant that in taking political action, the U.F.A. should not assist at the birth of a third party but should itself go into politics as an organization. To many of Wood's followers in the agrarian movement in Alberta, therefore, the U.F.A. would not become a new independent party - it would not become a political party at all.<sup>68</sup> Had the farmers of this province strictly adhered to Wood's advice, it could have occasioned a startling political transformation unparalleled in Canadian history. But even though the movement failed to accomplish complete political reorganization, it did effectively set a precedent for one-party government for many years to come and all but destroyed the effectiveness of the traditional two-party system in the province.

Because of the highly innovative and critical nature of Wood's propositions, he was condemned by the Conservative and Liberal press alike for espousing doctrines ostensibly alien to British tradition and in direct conflict with the principle of responsible government.<sup>69</sup> The controversy spread into the ranks of the farmers themselves, for Thomas Crerar and his associates were convinced of the expediency of channeling agrarian unrest into a genuine liberal party, appealing to all reform elements in Canada. The inherent danger of advocating a class movement, Crerar argued, was that it would have the effect of

alienating a considerable number of urban voters who had broken with the old political parties and wished to become identified with the Progressive cause.<sup>70</sup> As opposed to Wood's idea of delegate democracy, Crerar also contended that a political party representative should not become parochial and restrictive in confining his attention to his constituents alone, but should effectively represent his party in the interests of all Canadians for the sake of expediting the functions of government. Furthermore, Crerar emphasized the need for centralization, particularly with regard to the allocation of funds needed to inform public opinion of Progressive views in all parts of Canada.

This rather sharp variance of opinion should not be interpreted to mean that there existed two completely irreconcilable strains in the agrarian movement. An analysis of the statements of these two men reveals that the point at issue between them was not so much a matter of the end desires as a matter of the means to that end. It was largely, if not entirely, a question as to how the new Progressive coalition was to be organized. By the end of 1920, after Crerar had been confirmed as the official leader of the National Progressive Party by the C.C.A. executive and the provincial farmers' associations,<sup>71</sup> both men essentially agreed to follow a course of action which would prove to be of ultimate benefit to agriculturalists across Canada. As a matter of policy, the proposals contained in the Farmers' Platform of 1918 would be endorsed in their entirety, with special emphasis placed on the need for an improved marketing system, the re-institution of the Crow's Nest Pass agreement, reciprocity with the United States

and increased markets for agricultural products, easier credit for farmers, and the return of the control of natural resources to the provinces. Insofar as farmers could concentrate their collective attention on such issues, there was little need, for the time being at least, to attach special significance to regional or provincial particularisms.

In the wake of post-war recession and low prices for agricultural products, all was propitious for the entry of the Progressives into federal politics. Having been bolstered by by-election successes, Crerar and his associates launched repeated attacks on government fiscal policies - as criticism increased in intensity, the Liberal-Conservative government sought to re-affirm its mandate from the people of Canada.<sup>72</sup> Meighen accordingly called an election for December 6, 1921 and immediately initiated a counter-attack of his own. He accused the Progressives repeatedly of promoting class politics and defended the National Policy of protection as the only means of guaranteeing the long-run economic stability of the nation. Election pamphlets emphasized the severity of foreign competition in promoting an increased trade deficit and assured the farmers that without protection, the Canadian dollar would be devalued and a corresponding escalation in the prices of nearly all commodities would ensue.<sup>73</sup> In fact, one pamphlet went so far as to suggest that many farmers were favourably disposed towards protectionism and that the free trade philosophy was merely a misrepresentation by the Progressives of the true desires of the Canadian electorate.<sup>74</sup> Meanwhile, the federal

Liberals, led by Mackenzie King, attempted a middle-of-the-road approach by declaring their opposition to the class character of Progressivism, while at the same time pointing out the essential unity of interests between themselves and the farmers of Canada.<sup>75</sup> Crerar, for his part, denied the class nature of the movement, but he could not completely dispel the suspicion that his party represented only the narrow interests of farmers.

One incident during the election campaign which undermined the strength of the Liberal-Conservatives was its aborted attempt to discredit Crerar in his role as president of the United Grain Growers Ltd. (U.G.G.). A Royal Commission enquiry was launched shortly before the election with the purpose of investigating the grain trade and proving the U.G.G. guilty of corrupt practices.<sup>76</sup> The government had hoped to elicit the support of the C.P.R. in this matter, but the latter's refusal to do so enabled Crerar and Progressive candidates to inform the public that the Commission had been selected for purely political reasons in order to ostensibly expose the self-interest motivation of the grain growers' movements. It was a costly political blunder, for rather than proving the free trade sentiment to be simply a manifestation of already corrupt grain procedures, it added to the resolve of Crerar to assail existing tariff barriers.<sup>77</sup> Attacks on the Meighen administration were consequently increased and the government itself was shown to engage in practices which were contrary to the public interest: favouritism was shown toward manufacturers, the Cabinet was dominated by corporate lawyers with a vested interest in maintaining

the status quo, and agriculture was not receiving the kind of encouragement it needed in promoting a healthy Canadian economy.<sup>78</sup>

In the upshot of these charges and counter-charges, the election itself marked the government's utter downfall, as only 50 of its candidates were successful. The Liberals, who had made a clean sweep of Quebec and Nova Scotia, obtained 118 seats and were able to assume office. Progressive achievements in the election, meanwhile, were in fact impressive. In their first attempt they had won 65 seats - 37 of 43 seats in the prairies, 24 in Ontario, and representation in all provinces except Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Quebec.<sup>79</sup>

Crerar, who privately recognized that a post-electoral alliance of some sort would occur, was prepared to discuss the situation with the victorious Liberals,<sup>80</sup> but it was rejected only at the last minute when he could not obtain from Mackenzie King those pledges which would have ensured the identity of the farmer group and the curbing of the protectionist elements in the Liberal Cabinet. In seeking a coalition with the Liberals, Crerar had renewed his interest in working within Liberal ranks to force progressive legislation, but the Alberta and Ontario wings of the movement were not prepared to compromise their position as a distinct third-party entity. They preferred an independent course of action and made it quite clear to Crerar that they would not follow a leader and decisions made in caucus, for they resembled old-line party practices. These developments in fact marked the beginning of the disintegration of the movement, for the Progressives as a whole neither imposed their policies on the Liberals nor



definitely became a parliamentary party seeking office. With that fatal tendency of third parties to avoid responsibility, they declined even to become the official opposition.<sup>81</sup> Although the Progressives did manage to secure a few legislative changes, the loose organization of the party with its emphasis on provincial control eventually split the movement into opposing factions.

It was suggested in an article which appeared in the Guide in 1924 that perhaps the single greatest weakness in the Progressive movement was the difference of opinion as to whether the farmers' party should have become involved directly in politics or whether they should have confined their activities to the representation of a single class or economic group.<sup>82</sup> The problem lay in faulty organization, a point which Wood repeatedly stressed. In attempting to enter the federal field, many Progressives, particularly those of the Crerar persuasion, assumed that regional parochialisms could be minimized in the quest for national representation of reform interests. That motive was genuine enough, but they had failed to realize two distinct difficulties with such an approach. In the first place, the entrance into federal politics could not be kept separate from a demand that political action be taken in the provinces. Any federal movement is required to attempt the capture of provincial governments in order to acquire the patronage whereby to build an effective political organization. Crerar, however, hoped to avoid this eventuality by simply persuading the existing Liberal governments in the West to accept Progressive initiatives in the reform field. He was confident that this could be

achieved while at the same time re-capturing the federal Liberal party from the control of the conservative and protectionist Liberals in the East. The federal Liberals simply granted a few concessions to the Progressives as a matter of compromise and expediency; the provinces, meanwhile, sought to apply the reform principle in such a manner as to conform to specific regional priorities. The outcome was an absence of consistency in the movement and the resultant magnification of strains and schisms.

Secondly, in underestimating the nature and effect of provincial and regional particularisms, the Progressives not only ignored the respective political histories of these areas, but also failed to recognize the underlying variables which contributed to the wide variance of opinion which existed across the prairies. In Manitoba, for example, the desire for reform among farmers, particularly between 1905 and 1922, was much more superficial than in Saskatchewan and Alberta. This occurred predominantly as a result of the fact that the province was as much an extension of conservative Ontario as a part of the western frontier society. Even with the wave of central European immigrants after 1900, settlers from Ontario still retained control in Manitoba. The great bulk of American immigrants, many of whom were radical in politics, went to Saskatchewan and Alberta - 20% of the population in these provinces had come from the United States by 1911, while the corresponding figure for Manitoba was less than 5%.<sup>83</sup> This preponderance of Ontario influence gave a conservative cast to the province, especially to rural Manitoba. In the provincial election

of 1922, in which the Progressives won 28 of 49 seats and formed the government, it was apparent that the previous Liberal administration of T. C. Norris was in fact too reformist and progressive for the farmers of the province. Even though there was little the grain growers could ask of the Norris government that it was not prepared to grant, the farmers represented a right-wing conservatism that was more in keeping with the traditions of Manitoba than were the radicalism of the trade unions or the reform policies of the Liberal government.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, along with the breakup of party ties in the West following the formation of the Union government in Ottawa in 1917, rural distrust of labour and urban groups, and the wave of anti-party sentiment that swept the prairies, agrarian conservatism can be identified as one of the more important underlying causes for the Norris government's defeat. Crerar himself was a product of this conservatism, but he too underestimated the resolve among the farmers of Manitoba to oppose his "broadening out" policy of including all reform-minded sympathizers. This was not a major point of schism as far as Manitoba was concerned, but it did indicate the effect regional parochialisms could have in limiting the viability of a national farmers' movement.

In Saskatchewan, the ethnic variability in this predominantly rural province and the attendant absence of traditional predispositions and political biases promoted an unwillingness on the part of the population to favour new political systems. What this meant in effect was that in the absence of a traditional frame of reference within which to judge and evaluate the Canadian political experience, it became

difficult to assess the viability of a new expression lying on the periphery of the conventional political wisdom. As a result it was considered more appropriate, as far as the farmers were concerned, to include the existing system to work more directly to their advantage. Their conservatism, moreover, was conditioned by a desire to achieve practical results from the parties in power and at no time did there appear to be any more than passing attention paid to doctrinaire proposals or principles.<sup>85</sup> The Liberal party quickly became the political manifestation of this pragmatic inclination and became in effect the government of the farmers. The slightest desire of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association in fact became law with as much dispatch as the conventions of government allow.<sup>86</sup> With the demand for provincial political action becoming increasingly more apparent in the post-war period, Premier William Martin lost little time in attempting to satisfy farmer demands. His first act of compromise was to dissociate the provincial from the federal party, which was soon followed by the appointment of J. A. Maharg, president of the S.G.G.A., to the post of Minister of Agriculture.<sup>87</sup> In the 1921 provincial election Martin and his supporters were thus able to circumvent the possibility of independent political action being taken on the farmers' behalf by strengthening farmer-government ties. When C. A. Dunning became Premier in 1922 his former prominent association with farmers' organizations served him beneficially, and with a decline in the intensity of farmer feeling he was able to lead the way to a restoration of the former relationships between provincial and federal

parties.<sup>88</sup> Progressivism at the provincial level did survive until 1930, but it was evident that its failure to make any significant achievements, both provincially and federally, lay in its inability to gauge correctly the political inclinations of the Saskatchewan electorate. Throughout the history of the province the farmers maintained their basic demands consistently and judged older parties and new ones alike by the degree to which their policies met agrarian demands. Twenty years later the election of a C.C.F. government in Saskatchewan was effected only after a substantial modification of its programme was made and its policies made more consistent with agrarian desires.

In Alberta the original party system succumbed to the pressure of farmers' demands for direct action in politics. The Liberals here were unable to accommodate the farm revolt because the U.F.A. and its leaders, in accepting the distinctive theory of group government expounded by Henry Wise Wood, opposed the type of farmer-government co-operation found in Saskatchewan.<sup>89</sup> And unlike the state of affairs existing in its neighbouring provinces, the large proportion of American immigrants who entered Alberta, brought with them an experience in politics and in the business of farming which gave the provincial farm movement a specificity and uniqueness all its own.<sup>90</sup> Like Wood, many were former Populists, and their involvement in, or awareness of, agrarian third party movements in the United States left them highly sensitive to such issues as female suffrage, honesty in government, direct democracy, social reform, and attacks on the moneyed "interests".<sup>91</sup> At the

same time the failures of agrarian parties in the American West had persuaded Wood that caution was required in implementing a programme of agrarian reform, given the realities of Canadian political life. He was therefore convinced that his concept of group government was the only means of ensuring the success of a new movement. Correlatively, he believed Crerar's idea that a farmers' reform party could operate within the framework of traditional parliamentary practice and procedure was doomed from the beginning, for once conditions improved sufficiently for the farmer, there would be nothing left to sustain the movement beyond a rather amorphous commitment to the idea of reform. As such, reformism could be easily usurped by the major parties unless a farmers' political organization was prepared to change the very structure and means by which political power could be acquired and maintained. The U.F.A., in entering the election of 1921, accepted this challenge, and the organization's success in winning 37 of 61 seats in the Alberta Legislature seemed to confirm the fact that group government had indeed met this challenge successfully.<sup>92</sup> The U.F.A. was to maintain majority control for another 14 years until the Depression and the promise of social credit obliterated its credibility among the voters of the province.<sup>93</sup>

In assessing Wood's impact on the farmers' rise to prominence in Alberta politics, it becomes readily apparent that only he had been successful in estimating to a reasonable degree of accuracy, the mood and disposition of the prairie wheat farmer. In his theories he stressed the importance of agricultural cooperation, which was essentially a

form of intensified group competition aimed at realizing a more even balance of economic power for farmers in relation to other occupational groups. By so doing, Wood's doctrines in fact complemented the grain growers' efforts in developing co-ordinated marketing practices premised on the idea of cooperation. A theory which could capture the new business-like entrepreneurial ethos of the grain growing sector as embodied in its commercial enterprises while at the same time evincing notions which emphasized the vulnerability of the common people to the forces of exploitation and dominance and the immutability of rural existence, could expect a sympathetic audience among many western farmers. In politics Wood's populism expressed itself in the belief that the two traditional parties were the agencies by which the organized financial and commercial interests consummated their control of the economic life of modern society. Organized group government was considered by Wood to be a suitable panacea for autocratic control, for in organizing people around some permanently operating principle of action, i.e., economic interest, true democracy could be realized through inter-group cooperation.<sup>94</sup> Wood was cautious, however, to stress the need for the preservation of the identity of the economic group organizations. If the economic groups were dissolved or confused, the result might be a farmer-labour party, but that would be a return to the old party system and not group government.<sup>95</sup> On this important point Wood achieved another notable advantage over other farm leaders - his recognition of the basic incompatibility between urban labour and farmers enabled him to reinforce agrarian suspicions

of the city and its inhabitants. As opposed to Crerar and his followers who envisioned the possibility of an all-encompassing social reform movement, Wood was convinced that as industrialization and urbanization inexorably progressed towards occupational expansion and specialization, the farmers would inevitably lose any competitive advantage they might have enjoyed in a largely rural prairie society.

Although somewhat suspicious himself of urban labour, Crerar could never commit himself to a policy of excluding or alienating potential allies in the towns and cities, particularly in view of the fact that he hoped to construct a liberal and reformist movement on a national scale. Endemic to such an approach was the problem of reconciling differences of opinion on how party discipline and coordination could be achieved, given the realities of the parliamentary system of government and the question of whether the control of the legislator should be placed in the hands of his constituents or left to the discretion of the party caucus. This was clearly demonstrated as early as November 1922, when the Progressives assembled in Winnipeg to plan their national programme. A resolution summoning the formation of a federal coordinating agency inaugurated the clash of rival philosophies. The U.F.A. delegation forced a compromise resolution which provided that the provincial organizations could hold conferences and then present their decisions before the constituencies.<sup>96</sup> This dissension continued to grow until eventually it ruptured the party and reduced the Progressive movement to a purely sectional protest.

Crerar's hope to create a reforming, liberalizing movement



that would purify society, equalize opportunity, and ameliorate regional antagonism was thus shattered by his failure to grasp the significance of rank-and-file opposition to the old parties and their practices. Moreover, C.C.A. disenchantment with Crerar's leadership and his opposition to the re-establishment of the Wheat Board on the grounds that it would interfere with free competition and lead inevitably to the socialization of industry,<sup>97</sup> diminished his popularity considerably. At loggerheads over organization, Crerar resigned as leader of the National Progressive Party in November 1922. Ostensibly he relinquished his position because of the need to devote his full attention to the affairs of the U.G.G.Ltd., of which he was president, but it was widely rumoured in the western press that the real reason was the divergence of opinion over party policy.<sup>98</sup> His successor, Robert Forke, made it clear from the outset that the "broadening out" principle was the only one the Party could afford to follow and thus indicated that he proposed to follow the lines laid down by his predecessor.<sup>99</sup>

On the question of control of the party machinery, Forke unwillingly acceded to the pressures of the U.F.A. members to leave the governing of the Party in the hands of the provincial associations.<sup>100</sup> This was a fundamental demand, for the impulse underlying the desire for political action necessitated the creation of farmers' governments on the provincial level. Many solutions to marketing and credit problems were within provincial jurisdiction, and many farmers believed that only through their own governments could adequate legislation be

secured. Moral indignation, political realities, and economic necessity were the forces which drove the agrarian revolt into provincial politics, but it created a further source of disharmony, division, and embarrassment for the National Progressive Party and for Robert Forke as its leader with the drift continuing towards conventional party politics.

With this underlying current of dissatisfaction threatening to dissolve the movement, Forke tried repeatedly to close the ranks of the provincial blocs by appealing to the free trade sentiments of farmers across the prairies. While the Party did achieve modest success in securing a few concessions from the federal Liberals, the Progressive split continued to widen, particularly with regard to such questions as banking and currency reform, rural credit, the responsibility of a member to his constituents, and the need for restricting the dominant influence of the Cabinet over the House of Commons. Accordingly, six dissident western M.P.s split from the Party and, having been joined later by four others, collectively came to be known as the "Ginger Group".<sup>101</sup> These radical U.F.A. members and their followers declared themselves willing to cooperate with other farmer representatives on matters pertaining to the welfare of their constituents, but unwilling to sacrifice their loyalty to their local supporters to the discipline of the party caucus.<sup>102</sup> In short, the growing conviction that the Progressive movement was no longer a worthy exponent for the cause of reform was a fundamental reason for the deep dissatisfaction of this dissident group.

During 1924 and 1925, then, the opinion of most political observers was that the political unity of agrarian revolt had ended. It had become simply a collection of sectional and provincial movements which had neither organization nor leadership outside of Alberta. There was little doubt in the minds of many that in a general election campaign the Liberals and Progressives would be unable to reconcile their differences and that in the resultant three-cornered contests, many farmers' candidates would be defeated. These predictions proved reasonably accurate in the general election of 1925, particularly in the West. Although the Party was not obliterated (24 Progressives were returned to Parliament, compared to 65 in 1921<sup>103</sup>), there were indications that the Party was slowly dissolving. The election had come at a time when the wheat industry was quickly recovering its lost prosperity. Consequently, the farmers' energies were now turned to the development of wheat pools, and there was little enthusiasm left for the political crusade.

In the following year, when the Conservative minority government sought to re-affirm its mandate with the Canadian electorate, the Progressive caucus, perhaps recognizing the existence of farmer apathy, decided to support the Liberals. This policy of joint candidates was one of the influential factors in bringing about the almost complete Liberal and Liberal-Progressive sweep in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, but it did little for the recognition of Progressivism as a distinct and separate political force. No Conservative candidate was elected in either of these provinces, although a small group of independent

Progressives succeeded in being returned (4 in Manitoba, 3 in Saskatchewan, and 2 in Ontario<sup>104</sup>). Forke sought to justify his party's collusion with the Liberals by pointing out that certain legislation on which they were mutually agreed could more easily be put through.<sup>105</sup> However, one of the most significant results of the election was the division of the Progressive movement into three distinct groups - the Liberal-Progressives, the Independents, and the U.F.A. The latter, having in fact increased its presence in the House from 9 to 11 members, had voted against any amalgamation with the Liberals and entered the campaign as a separate parliamentary group.<sup>106</sup> The identity of the U.F.A. was thus secured. Conversely, the Progressive Party's tenuous existence dissolved with the resignation of Forke as leader and his appointment to the post of Minister of Immigration and Colonization in the King Cabinet.<sup>107</sup> A significant chapter in Canadian political history had come to an end.

#### The Rise and Fall of the Farmers in Federal Politics: A Summary

The failure of the Progressive movement to achieve its stated goals cannot exclusively be attributed either to the failure in organization or simply to rural ignorance or rural isolation. Its rise can be attributed to the commercialization of agriculture and the attendant concern among prairie farmers with money, credits, and unstable markets which demanded political representation and solutions to these problems. Regional parochialisms, as we have seen, complicated the development of

a consistent programme of action on a national level, but the prairie provinces did construct regional mechanisms to handle pressing issues which were more in line with their diverse political histories. Denis Smith has suggested that within the national parties, the prairie units of both the Liberals and Conservatives were relatively progressive in proposing reform that would benefit the rural prairie economy. The basic measures of crop insurance and credit reform desired by prairie farmers were adopted by Liberal governments in all three provinces before 1921. To make their appeal in the West, Liberals and Conservatives frequently played down their relationship with their more conservative eastern branches. Even in the apparently homogeneous political region within the prairies, Smith notes, separate provincial traditions, tactical needs, and provincial jealousies made cooperation between the three prairie units of the old parties difficult.<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, the Liberal Party's anti-protection policy and its conciliatory stance towards the United States managed to attract many western sympathizers. Conversely, the Conservative Party's anti-American tradition was inimical to generating much enthusiasm among western voters, many of whom were American immigrants.<sup>109</sup>

This weakness of the Conservatives and the dominance of the Liberals has been considered to be an important conducive factor for the success of the Progressive Party in the 1921 election.<sup>110</sup> The wartime coalition and the split of the Liberal Party into the Laurier and Unionist factions led to the fragmentation of the old parties which helped to destroy traditional lines of party thinking and which

precipitated the almost total collapse of the Conservatives as a federal party.<sup>111</sup> Arguing from a position of economic determinism, C. B. Macpherson in his Democracy in Alberta interprets the new emerging party system in Alberta and the other two prairie provinces as what he terms a "quasi-party system" which deviated significantly from the traditional two-party system of democratic theory and which failed to qualify as a strictly one-party system.<sup>112</sup> In characterizing the West in general and Alberta in particular as a class homogeneous area, he argues that because of the absence of any serious opposition of classes within the region, alternate parties were not needed either to express or to moderate a perennial conflict of interest.<sup>113</sup> The system in effect mitigates a class conflict that is not an internal one in the area, but one between the region and outside centres of capital. Furthermore, the apparent petit bourgeois illusions held by prairie farmers, who believe themselves to have more independence than they actually have,<sup>114</sup> inevitably results, Macpherson contends, in their discontent with the external forces that control their economic security. Their illusions of independence invariably lead to conservatism, for they discover that they cannot fundamentally alter their insecurity without destroying the economic system.<sup>115</sup>

Support for Macpherson's contentions could presumably be found in the fact that by 1922, the membership in agrarian organizations and interest in politics generally had shown signs of declining with the gradual return to prosperity which was in evidence in the wheat-producing areas of the western provinces.<sup>116</sup> This could be interpreted to

mean that the farmers' "illusions" as independent commodity producers had been strengthened by improving conditions, but it is not an altogether convincing argument. In the first place, their "conservatism" was not necessarily borne from the realization of their insecurity but from the recognition that political action and the existing economic organizations were doing little to alleviate a condition of instability in the prairie economy, a condition which was the fundamental cornerstone of the wheat farmers' grievances since the settlement of the West. Rather than being mystified or resigned to accept current conditions, the farmers sought to develop strategies and seek practical solutions to their economic difficulties. Prosperity, it would seem, could only strengthen the farmers' resolve to discover permanent remedies to their problems.

In the second place, Macpherson has underestimated the nature and substance of agrarian ideology by failing to differentiate between various income levels of the farming community. It has been argued previously that middle-income farmers are most likely to be affected by unstable prices which a fluctuating market precipitate and as such develop a perspective and outlook substantially different from either high or low income farmers. The drive for profit predicated their position as capitalist entrepreneurs and their approach to wheat production and marketing conditions was based on practical self-interest. It was however, a self-interest regulated by cooperative practices, for it made more economic sense, from a practical point of view, to approach the problem of distribution and sale collectively rather than

individually.

In terms of classifying western farmers as petit bourgeois producers, Macpherson also tends to underestimate the extent to which regional parochialisms played a significant role in differentiating agrarian political practices and outlooks within prairie society as a whole and even within the provinces themselves. Class homogeneity was easily disrupted in the province of Alberta by the influence of geography, which differentiated the territory into agricultural heartland, the mountains, the cities, and the north.<sup>117</sup> With the exception of the farming areas, the U.F.A. made few political inroads. The homogeneity pattern could also be disrupted by the presence of minority ethnic groups such as French-Canadians and Ukrainians, by massive urbanization, or by the concentration of industrial and extractive workers.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, the implication from Macpherson's position is that the prairies have developed a fundamentally non-partisan tradition and have been consistently opposed to the old party system. However, Denis Smith argues that the Liberal Party in Saskatchewan, ruling almost without interruption from 1905 to 1944, was for most of the time in open, even defiant, union with the federal Liberal Party; the Progressives in Manitoba allied themselves with the Liberals after 1928 and from 1931 on, described themselves as a Liberal-Progressive coalition.<sup>119</sup> Conversely, there have been groups explicitly rejecting the party system even outside the western provinces, as in Ontario.<sup>120</sup>

On this general theme, Macpherson has also contended that single-party dominance in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba has



primarily been the result of the behaviour of a petit bourgeois community in revolt against the "quasi-colonial" status of these provinces. Reaction against Eastern Canada has been a recurrent theme in prairie politics, but not an exclusive one.<sup>121</sup> The charismatic power and political intuition of a few men has been important, particularly Henry Wise Wood in Alberta. It has been contended that the political experience and lack of appeal of the leadership is precisely one of the more important reasons for the failure of the farmers' party in Ontario.<sup>122</sup> In addition, the absence of political opposition in the prairie region during this period does not imply that an absence of opposition voters existed.<sup>123</sup> From 1917, no prairie party has received more than 58% of the popular vote in a provincial election - the corresponding figure for a federal election is 57%.<sup>124</sup> To represent the rise of farmers' parties as simply a reaction of an "exploited" rural hinterland against the dominance of metropolitan centres of industry and commerce is to overstate the case, for other factors played a role in producing a political configuration specific to the prairie region during this period.

To illustrate this point, comparisons can be made to attempts to organize farmers politically in other parts of Canada which produced variant results. In British Columbia, for example, the great diversity among so-called "petit bourgeois" agriculturalists has been cited as one of the reasons for the failure to organize a third-party movement in the province.<sup>125</sup> In addition, the separation of geographical areas within the province, the emergence of the farmers' movement from the

Conservative Party rather than, as on the prairies, the Liberal Party, the fact that direction was sought outside the province, and the fact that the incidence of the recession of the early twenties was not the same in all parts of the region contributed to the development of a specific political pattern, despite the presence of resentment and suspicion of the metropolitan East.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, this abortive attempt at organization cannot be explained as the failure of the farmers of British Columbia to grasp the significance of their relationship to eastern centres of power or as a manifestation of their illusions of independence. A much more plausible explanation is that regional, geographical, political and occupational differences created differential outlooks and perspectives within the agricultural community to a much greater extent than in the wheat producing areas of the prairies.

Viewed within this context, the failure of the Progressive Party to substantially alter the political fortunes of western farmers can be partially explained by its inability to overcome or neutralize the many variant forces which split the movement into rival factions.<sup>127</sup> Within specific regions, however, it was possible for a farmers' party to interpret events and situations within the framework of a specific milieu and present its programmes to a reasonably homogeneous population, provided that population could not find its political salvation within the two major parties. The Progressives found it impossible to legitimize a national platform or even to provide a strategy which could strengthen their appeal. These difficulties continued to confront

the agrarian movement following the collapse of the Progressives in both the political and economic spheres. However, the emergence of the Wheat Pools on the western plains did much to alleviate the problem of reconciling differences and brought the farmers closer to solving their marketing problems. These points are the subject for discussion in the following chapter.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Smelser, Neil. Theory of Collective Behaviour. Glencoe: Free Press, 1963, 96ff.
2. Pinard, Maurice. The Rise of a Third Party. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971, 116.
3. See Maurice Pinard. "Poverty and Political Movements", Social Problems, Vol. 15(2) (Fall 1967), 358-373; Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian, Collective Behaviour, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1957, 432; W. B. Cameron, Modern Social Movements, New York: Randon House, 1966, 39-40; W. G. Runciman, Relative Deprivation and Social Justice, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966, 25-6.
4. As early as 1912, the threat of war was interpreted by the Guide as a fabrication of the "vested interests", especially the munitions manufacturers. Grain Growers' Guide, September 4, 1912, 12.
5. An example of the antagonism generated towards the manufacturers of war materiel may be found in the initial resolution of the annual convention of the M.G.G.A. held at Brandon, January 10-12, 1917. "... (This Convention) desires to urge in the strongest possible terms an abhorrence of private profiteering on the part of those engaged in the manufacture or furnishing of war supplies of any kind and also urges that a census of the wealth of Canada should be immediately taken with the view to imposing upon it the full share of the burden it should bear in this time of national sacrifice". C.A.R., 1917, 739.
6. Wood, L. A. A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1924, 361.
7. C.A.R., 1920, 92.
8. Wheat acreage was 19,389,000 in 1921 as compared to 9,990,000 in 1911. This figure was a mere 2,495,000 acres in 1901, although most of the increase was centred in the province of Saskatchewan. See Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Catalogue No. 21-507.
9. Murchie, R. W. Agricultural Progress on the Prairie Frontier. Toronto: Macmillan, 1936, 67-70.
10. Census of Canada: 1921, Vol. V, Agriculture, Table 2; Census of Canada: 1961, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Nos. 96-537, 96-538, 96-539.
11. Ibid.

12. McCrorie, J. N. "Change and Paradox in Agrarian Social Movements: The Case of Saskatchewan", in R. J. Ossenberrg (ed.), Canadian Society: Pluralism, Change, and Conflict. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1971, 41.
13. C.A.R., 1913, 30-2; 61.
14. Grain Growers' Guide, July 29, 1914, 5-6; September 16, 1914, 3.
15. In Manitoba, the M.G.G.A. went on record as approving the establishment of an agricultural credit bank under the wing of the government. The Manitoba government, by an act assented to on March 9, 1917, created a Farm Loans Association which was empowered to lend money on first mortgages to an amount equal to 50% of the valuation on farm property. In the same year as well, farm loan measures were also passed by the legislatures of Saskatchewan and Alberta. See Wood, op. cit., 288-90.
16. Morton, W. L. "The Western Progressive Movement, 1919-1921", The Canadian Historical Association Report, 1946, 44-5.
17. Wood. op. cit., 345-6.
18. Ibid. During the War the C.C.A. held an important position in dealing with such questions as the fixing of wheat prices and the disposition of flour and grain supplies for the Allies. Its influence in such adjustments was considerable and its views or statements concerning railway rates and problems carried weight with the Railway War Board.
19. The Canadian Council of Agriculture, "The Farmers' Platform", Winnipeg, 1917, Public Archives of Canada, Manuscript Division, No. 4625, Ottawa, 1. As the Guide pointed out, "... the business interests seem to be represented invariably by experienced lawyers. The time possibly is not far distant when the farmers will be equally well represented at the capital". Grain Growers' Guide, May 30, 1916, 30.
20. "The Farmers' Platform", op. cit., passim.
21. Two of the greatest concerns of the organized farmers at this time were expressed by the Guide in editorials stressing the need for educational work and for cooperation in the fight of the "common people against the 'Big Interests'". Grain Growers' Guide, January 17, 1917, 5; January 31, 1917, 22-3.
22. "Platform of the Farmers' Party". Resolution passed by the Canadian Council of Agriculture at a Meeting held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, November 29, 1918, Public Archives of Canada, Manuscript

Division, Ottawa.

23. Ibid., 1-2.
24. C.A.R., 1919, 391.)
25. Grain Growers' Guide, September 15, 1920, 7.
26. Ibid., March 21, 1917, 6.
27. Ibid., September 19, 1917, 10.
28. Ibid., June 20, 1917, 12-3.
29. The following editorial in the Guide is fairly representative of this feeling which existed for many years: "The only hope of the farmers of Canada is to realize that they have no more to expect from one political party than another". Grain Growers' Guide, August 10, 1910, 6.
30. Ibid., August 30, 1916, 5.
31. Gaston, Herbert G. The Non-Partisan League. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1920, 54.
32. Saloutos, Theodore. "The Rise of the Nonpartisan League in North Dakota, 1915-1917", Agricultural History, Vol. 20(43) (January 1946).
33. "The Non-Partisan League", Grain Growers' Guide, September 5, 1917, 8.
34. Gaston. op. cit., 285-87.
35. Ibid., 237-38.
36. Alberta Non-Partisan, November 23, 1917, 9 and "The Non-Partisan League", Grain Growers' Guide, September 5, 1917, 24.
37. Alberta Non-Partisan, January 4, 1918, 7.
38. Frequent articles in League publications in Canada from C. W. McDonnell, a member of the North Dakota legislature, kept Canadians informed of the progress of the state's accomplishments. For examples of these reports, see the Alberta Non-Partisan, January 2, 1919, 3 and March 24, 1918, 10. This publicity not only created interest in the League, but was an important factor in arousing Canadian farmers to the potential power of group action in politics.

39. Smith, David E. "A Comparison of Prairie Political Developments in Saskatchewan and Alberta", Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 4(1) (February 1969) 17-26. The two elected members were James Weir and Mrs. L. McKinney, noted for her work in the W.C.T.U.
40. Sharp, Paul F. The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada. New York: Octagon Books, 1971, 103.
41. C.A.R., 1919, 379.
42. Ibid., 380.
43. Rolph, W. K. Henry Wise Wood of Alberta. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950, 69.
44. Morton, W. L. The Progressive Party in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950, 288. Farmers were particularly resentful of the drain on their manpower at this time because they were trying to take advantage of the greatly increased demand which the War precipitated and the resultant higher price.
45. Wood. op. cit., 349.
46. Report of the Survey Board for Southern Alberta, January 1922.
47. Following the termination of its control on August 31, 1920, a vigorous campaign was inaugurated in the West for the revival of the Wheat Board: in Alberta, the U.F.A. instructed its locals to study the Government sale of grain and the general question of national marketing as a direct step toward the complete state control and handling of all commodities and business. It was stated that under this system of national marketing, the farmer was assured of obtaining the average price that his wheat would bring on the world's markets throughout the twelve months during which it was marketed; this was a real advantage and so was the stabilization of prices. The great difficulty was the risk of waiting for a long period for payments if world prices should be so uncertain and irregular that the National Board could only pay a small amount in advance. Conversely, the other view, which eventually prevailed, was expressed by the Toronto Globe on September 22, 1920:

The conditions which made Government price-fixing . . . advisable no longer exist. The market should be left to find its natural level. To raise the price of wheat artificially in these days of dear food would be class legislation and bad economics. It would be equally deplorable if wheat growers

combined to restrict selling until they were paid what they demand. One hears of dairy farmers reducing their herds so as to create a scarcity of milk with the object of raising prices to levels which yield excessive profits. Limitation of output is as indefensible on the farm as in the factory. (pp. 4 and 7).

48. Wood. op. cit.
49. The Government's protectionist fiscal policy was, Crerar maintained, "economically unsound and morally wrong". Canada, House of Commons Debates, 1920, Vol. III, 2908-9; 1921, 8-9. He informed the House that protection was unnecessary because it benefited the "interests", the large eastern corporations such as Dominion Textiles, Monarch Knitting, Canada Cement, and British Empire Steel and Coal. They made astounding profits, he maintained, by mergers based on water stocks and yet received protection for their products. Unequal tax distribution bred discontent and revolutionary activity, according to Crerar, but which could be rectified by fiscal reform based on graduated taxes on personal income, inheritance and corporation profits and on unimproved land values including natural resources. Debates, 1919, Vol. IV, 3336-7.
50. Not all western Unionists chose this course of action. A case in point was R. C. Henders who, as president of the M.G.G.A., was an outspoken and ardent agrarian. In 1917 he had accepted nomination as Unionist candidate and was elected, but in voting with Borden on the budget as a matter of party loyalty, had by 1920 sacrificed his credibility with the organized farmers of Manitoba and disappeared into obscurity following the Progressive victory. See C.A.R., 1920, 741. It was clear that western agrarians could not, and would not, be compromised on the question of tariff revision.
51. After the subsidence of the Grange as an influential factor and the disappearance of the Patrons, the farmers of Ontario drifted back to their old political moorings. Discontent was channeled into the editorial pages of the Farmer's Sun, which was originally published by Goldwin Smith in 1891 as an expression of his views on Canadian relations with the United States and Britain. Gradually, however, the idea of a powerful organization was working in the minds of men such as E. C. Drury, W. C. Good and others whose experience dated back to Grange and Patron days; they had learned much from such mistakes as those organizations had made and from the successes of the western bodies. Following the failure of the Grange to implement its alliance of 1909 with other organizations, a number



of its members at their annual meeting on December 17, 1913, considered the question of consolidating existing societies in Ontario. By 1914, the United Farmers of Ontario had become a viable organization and the point of expression for agrarian grievances. See C.A.R., 1919, 380.

52. According to the 1921 census, Ontario's rural population had declined by nearly 100,000 between 1891 and 1911, while the urban population had risen by more than 500,000. In other words, the percentage of Ontario's population classified as rural had declined from 61.3% in 1891 to 47.4% in 1911. R. W. Trowbridge, "War Time Rural Discontent and the Rise of the United Farmers of Ontario, 1914-1919", unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Waterloo, 1966, 34. Farmers blamed this population shift on the protective tariff, by which industry was made more prosperous and therefore paid higher wages than agriculture.
53. Creighton, D. G. Dominion of the North. Toronto: Macmillan, 1957, 456.
54. For a history and analysis of the Winnipeg General Strike, see D. C. Masters, The Winnipeg General Strike, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950; D. J. Bercuson, "Western Labour Radicalism and The One Big Union: Myths and Realities", in Politics in Saskatchewan, Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (eds.), Don Mills: Longmans, 1968, 32-49; D. J. Bercuson, "The Winnipeg General Strike, Collective Bargaining, and The One Big Union Issue", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LI(2) (June 1970), 164-76; Fred Tipping, "The Social Gospel and Early Labour Movements in Western Canada", Paper presented at the Conference on the Social Gospel, Regina, March 1973.
55. It must be emphasized once again that the farmers' relationship with labour was far more complex than a superficial review of their occasional common struggle and endeavours would suggest. The farmer was not a special category of the industrial labour force. He was and remains a petit capitalist entrepreneur who found himself in conflict with industries producing different but related goods and services. If the object of conflict gave him occasional common cause with labour, the source of antagonism was not identical nor synonymous with the roots of worker dissatisfaction. The root of agrarian antagonism can be found in the conflict which arises between industries in a capitalist society and in the historical relationship of prairie agriculture to Canadian industrial development. See McCrorie, op. cit., 41.

56. Grain Growers' Guide, May 21, 1919, 5-6.
57. Manitoba Free Press, November 18, 1920, 3. The farmers in convention continually reiterated the need for the effective development of rural life and the establishment of "balanced" relationships between rural and urban communities, the latter of which included labour elements. See, for example, the Minutes of the Annual Convention of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association held at Brandon on January 9-11, 1918.
58. Crerar Papers, Crerar to J. J. Morrison, September 7, 1920.
59. Ibid., Morrison to Crerar, September 20, 1920. The relevance of these remarks cannot be underestimated, particularly in the context of the C.C.F.'s rise to prominence in the 1930's and 40's.
60. Crerar Papers, Crerar to Chipman, April 11, 1919, and Crerar to J. J. Morrison, September 3, 1919.
61. By 1920, the paid membership in the prairie organizations totalled nearly 85,000. That same year the United Farmers of New Brunswick and the United Farmers of Nova Scotia joined the C.C.A. and the following year Les Fermiers-Unis de Quebec affiliated. This growth may be attributed partly to the optimism aroused by political victories in Ontario and in five federal by-elections, partly to the general desire of farmers to preserve, through political action, the highly profitable conditions enjoyed during World War I, and partly to western free trade tendencies arising out of proximity to, and assimilation with, the American market. See C.A.R., 1920, 109-10.
62. Wood, H. W. "The Efficient Citizenship Group", Grain Growers' Guide, March 22, 1922, 14-8; H. W. Wood, "Organization for Democracy", December 4, December 11, 1918, 21ff. and 39-40; Grain Growers' Guide, January 29, 1919, 28.
63. Wood, H. W. "The Significance of Democratic Group Organization", U.F.A., April 15, 1922, 5; Grain Growers' Guide, October 5, 1921, 27.
64. Wood, H. W. "In Defense of Group Politics", The Canadian Forum, Vol. 3(27) (December 1922), 72-4.
65. Wood, L. A. op. cit., 338.
66. Rolph. op. cit., 80.
67. Morton, W. L. "The Social Philosophy of Henry Wise Wood", Agricultural History, Vol. 22(2) (April 1948).

68. Again in politics Wood warned that if the identity of economic groups were dissolved or confused, the result might be a farmer-labour party which would represent a return to the old party system and not group government. See Grain Growers' Guide, July 30, 1919, 4. In defense of Wood's doctrines, William Irvine published The Farmers in Politics, in which he insisted that the U.F.A. had developed as a result of fixed economic and social laws. The farmers had been forced into class organizations, he contended, by the "social law" of self-preservation, but only they "of all the economic groups of Canada have discovered the higher law of cooperation . . . between competing groups". (p. 147).
69. See, for example, the Calgary Herald, October 22, 1919, 2; Manitoba Free Press, November 5, 1919, 5.
70. Manitoba Free Press, February 4, 1920. What is implied in this statement is that urban elements should be free to support the farmers' platform as enunciated by the New National Policy. It does not mean necessarily that agrarians should focus their attention upon urban issues.
71. "Resolved", ran the motion, "that the C.C.A. recognizes the third parliamentary exponents of the New National Policy, and gives its full endorsement to their action in choosing as their leader the Hon. T. A. Crerar, and commends him as national leader to all provincial organizations". Grain Growers' Guide, December 15, 1920, 3.
72. On July 10, 1920, Arthur Meighen replaced Borden as Premier and the term "National Liberal and Conservative Party" was now applied to the Government's House supporters.
73. The National Liberal and Conservative Party Publicity Committee Publications: 1921 Election, Pamphlet No. 5080, Public Archives of Canada, Issue 22 ("Why Protection is Necessary"); Issue 23 ("The Crerar-Wood Tariff"); Issue 65 ("What the Farmer Pays").
74. Ibid., Issue 4 ("Many Farmers are Protectionists").
75. National Liberal Committee, Publication No. 10, "Liberals and Farmers", October 1921, Pamphlet No. 5081, Public Archives of Canada.
76. Wood, L. A. op. cit., 354-5.
77. As the Toronto Globe reported, the Progressive aim was not the abolition of the tariff as such, but the gradual elimination of the protective element in it. (October 18, 1921), 1.

78. Crerar was driven to declare during the campaign that while the tariff was a leading issue, it was not the only issue. "The supreme issue today", he pointed out, "is whether the government is to be free or fettered, and whether legislation in the future shall be for the few or for the many". Grain Growers' Guide, October 19, 1921, 7 and 19.
79. C.A.R., 1921, 855.
80. Crerar Papers, Crerar to A. K. Cameron, September 20, 1921.
81. A decade earlier George Langley had urged that the legitimate objective of a separate farmers' party would be to "influence the government even if it did not become strong enough to take itself on the actual work of governing". Grain Growers' Guide, September 21, 1910, 13-14.
82. Darby, A. E. "Progressive Prospects", Grain Growers' Guide, October 29, 1924, 8 and 17.
83. Donnelly, M. S. The Government of Manitoba. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963, 58.
84. Ibid., 57.
85. Eager, Evelyn. "The Conservatism of the Saskatchewan Electorate", in Politics in Saskatchewan, op. cit., 1ff.
86. C.A.R., 1919, 391. From the beginning an interlocking of personnel between the leadership of the S.G.G.A. and the provincial Liberal administration ensured continuous and sympathetic consideration of agrarian demands. W. R. Motherwell, Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture from 1905 to 1918, had been one of the founders of the Grain Growers' Association and was its first president. George Langley, who was taken into the Cabinet in 1912, and C. A. Dunning, who followed in 1916 and became Premier in 1922, were both active and influential in the agricultural association.
87. C.A.R., 1921, 781.
88. Brennan, J. W. "C. A. Dunning and the Challenge of the Progressives, 1922-25", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XXII(1) (1969), 1-12.
89. See W. Calderwood. "The Decline of the Progressive Party in Saskatchewan, 1925-1930", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XXI(3) (1968), 81-99.

90. Thomas, L. G. The Liberal Party in Alberta. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959, esp. 189-205.
91. Although no accurate immigration statistics are available, it was estimated that by 1920 the total number of American immigrants probably was well over a million and a quarter, many of whom settled in Alberta. See C.A.R., 1920, 241. See also R. H. Coates and H. C. MacLean, The American-Born in Canada: A Statistical Interpretation. Toronto: Macmillan, 1943.
92. This influence was reflected in the resolutions passed by the U.F.A.: the favouring of the election of senators, the fixing of a set election date for both federal and provincial elections, the use of the referendum and recall, the introduction of proportional representation and the transferable vote, and the recommendation that provincial members be allowed to adopt an independent attitude on public bills. U.F.A. Annual Report, 1921, 53-62.
93. C.A.R., 1921, 855.
94. Grain Growers' Guide, October 5, 1921, 27.
95. Morton. "The Social Philosophy of Henry Wise Wood", op. cit., 122.
96. Grain Growers' Guide, November 15, 1922, 5.
97. House of Commons Debates, 1920, Vol. V, 4120.
98. Manitoba Free Press, November 17, 1922, 1.
99. Like Crerar, Forke generally advocated public ownership of railways, the encouragement of agriculture, reduced freight rates, the elimination of tariffs under which combines flourished, a restrictive immigration policy, the revision of the Bank Act from the "common people's standpoint" rather than from that of the banker, an immediate increase in British trade preference to 50% of the general tariff, and reciprocity with the United States. See C.A.R., 1923, 167-8.
100. Calgary Herald, November 14, 1922.
101. Grain Growers' Guide, "The Progressive Division", July 9, 1924, 5.
102. U.F.A., July 2, 1924, 12; July 15, 1924, 4; C.A.R., 1924-25, 205-6.
103. Scarrow, H. A. Canada Votes: A Handbook of Federal and Provincial Election Data. New Orleans: Hauser Press, 1962.

104. Ibid.
105. Manitoba Free Press, July 28, 1926, 3.
106. Calgary Daily Herald, July 24, 1926, 1 and 3.
107. C.A.R., 1926-27, 42. The Progressives did manage to elect 12 candidates in the 1930 election, but party unity had all but disappeared.
108. Smith, Denis. "Prairie Revolt, Federalism and the Party System", in Party Politics in Canada, 3rd ed., H. G. Thorburn (ed.). Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1972, 205.
109. Ibid., 206ff.
110. Pinard. "The Rise of a Third Party", op. cit., 59-60. For a discussion of Pinard's model of one-party dominance, see Graham White, "One-Party Dominance and Third Parties: The Pinard Theory Reconsidered"; Andre Blais, "Third Parties in Canadian Provincial Politics"; Maurice Pinard, "Third Parties in Canada Revisited: A Rejoinder and Elaboration of the Theory of One-Party Dominance", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. VI(3) (September 1973), 399-421; 422-38; 439-60.
111. Morton. "The Progressive Party in Canada", op. cit., 60.
112. Macpherson, C. B. Democracy in Alberta. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953, 215ff.
113. Ibid., 21.
114. For a discussion of this notion, see chapter 3.
115. Macpherson. op. cit., 225.
116. C.A.R., 1922, 226-7; Grain Growers' Guide, January 17, 1923, 13.
117. Macpherson has depicted the entire province as being dependent on grain growing or at least farming and ranching, and cities are regarded merely as market centres for the agricultural countryside.
118. Flanagan, Thomas. "Political Geography and the United Farmers of Alberta", in The Twenties in Western Canada, S. M. Trofimenkoff (ed.). Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1972, 159.
119. Smith, Denis. op. cit., 213.

120. Morton. "The Progressive Party in Canada", op. cit., 75.
121. Smith, Denis. op. cit., 213-4.
122. Harrington, J. L. "The Drury Debacle: An Inquiry into the Causes of the Farmers' Defeat of '23", The Canadian Forum, Vol. XXVIII(333) (October 1948), 153-5.
123. Lipset, S. M. "Democracy in Alberta", The Canadian Forum, Vol. XXXIV(406) (November 1954), 175-7; Vol. XXXIV(407) (December 1954), 196-8.
124. Scarrow. op. cit.
125. Ormsby, M. A. "The United Farmers of British Columbia: An Abortive Third-Party Movement", The British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. XVII (1953), 53-73.
126. Ibid., 73. By contrast, in Quebec nationalism has been considered as the dominant axis of protest among French-Canadians, outweighing in importance even economic disaffection. See Marcel Rioux, "Conscience ethnique et conscience du classe au Quebec", Researches Sociographiques, Vol. VI (1965), 23-32; Fernand Ouellet, "Le nationalisme canadien-francais: de ses origines a l'insurrection de 1837", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XLV (1964), 277-92.
127. Added to the Progressive movement's organizational shortcomings was its inherently conservative bias - a bias which tended to alienate moderates and radicals alike. See L. O. Courville, "The Saskatchewan Progressives", unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus, 1971.

## CHAPTER 6 .

### THE RISE OF THE WHEAT POOLS AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF BELIEF AND ORGANIZATION

Throughout the preceding pages, two strains of thought and action have been identified as running through movements of agrarian reform. On the one hand, the prairie wheat grower has been characterized by a pattern of values and a basic ideology which emphasized that agriculture is, par excellence, the fundamental industry and that farmers are of basic importance to society.<sup>1</sup> This is expressed in a reverence for and attachment to the land (which is seen as the ultimate value), respect for the stability arising from property ownership, high valuation on work, the view that the farmer makes the best citizen in a democracy, individualism, and a consciousness that in all of these areas the farmer is set apart from (and above) the urban inhabitant. These convictions were, furthermore, reinforced in periods of financial hardship and when marketing difficulties were accentuated, giving rise to the notions that government must restrain the selfish tendencies of those who profited from the farmers' labour and that the people, not the plutocrats, must control their own political fortunes. On the other hand, the commercialization of agriculture precipitated the development of farming as a business enterprise and an increasing emphasis on mechanization and on the production of a cash crop for foreign and domestic markets. The farmers' commercial position pointed to the usual strategies of the business world: combination, cooperation, lobbying, and pressure politics. Accordingly, a new set of values stressing efficiency, maximum output, and production for profit accompanied this change in the traditional concept of agriculture and led to a concomitant alteration in the expectations which middle-income,



and aspiring middle-income, agrarians held towards farming.

It has been suggested in this study, furthermore, that the combination of these values produced a unique configuration of attitudes among farmers in the prairie region and generated the emergence of economic and political strategies to deal with particular problems. These problems were complicated through the appreciation of debts through deflation, the high cost of credit, inequitable tax burdens, discriminatory railroad rates, government policies protecting manufacturers, and unreasonable elevator and storage charges. As a result, efforts were made through agrarian organizations to restore profits in the face of exploitation by eastern Canadian industrialists and under unfavourable and highly unpredictable market and price conditions. One such effort was centred in the principle of cooperation with its emphasis on removing the middleman as a means of eliminating exploitation and obtaining higher crop prices. Such a system was considered to be ideal, for it could play a useful role in curbing private and public economic power without replacing other forms of enterprise, since farmers' movements have usually been against the abuses of capitalism and not against the system itself. In addition, there is no argument against rural individualism: cooperatives are valuable precisely because they are the products of the farmers' individualism, the result of taking matters into their own hands.<sup>2</sup> Various types of cooperatives emerged on the prairies in the 1920's, but despite the substantial progress that was made in achieving benefits for their subscribers, gains did not come easily as prairie cooperators were deeply divided

in a fiercely "competitive cooperative" movement.<sup>3</sup> Once again, the underlying strains of regionalism split the movement.

It was, however, not impossible for farmers in all three prairie provinces to develop a mechanism to minimize regional differences. As a subject for discussion in this chapter, the pooling of wheat for sale achieved notable results in not only bringing a significant measure of security to the wheat producer but also in underscoring the need for inter-regional coordination. The pools became, in effect, highly important social as well as economic institutions for western farmers, leading many spokesmen to acclaim their virtues as the embodiment of Christian values. Henry Wise Wood for one extolled the essential morality of the cooperative principle underlying the pool concept with its emphasis on service to others, unselfishness, and the brotherhood of man, and even declared that the wheat pool was "just as much a religious institution as the Church".<sup>4</sup> Statements such as these were common in this era of heightened morality and sense of economic justice, but just how important and what part religious precepts played in shaping the agrarian movement will be discussed later in the chapter. Reference to the role of strictly non-economic factors will also be considered in relation to the upheavals which radically altered the nature of provincial prairie politics in the late twenties and early thirties.

### Grain Marketing and the Rise of the Wheat Pools:

The concept of pool marketing, while it emerged on the prairies as a new and untried experiment, was in fact but a further step towards the goal of cooperation. "The Grain Growers' organizations of Western Canada have steadily pursued this object . . . although both the point of attack and the attack formation have been shifted from time to time".<sup>5</sup> At first the farmer had sought government intervention to relieve the prevailing injustices of the system of marketing controlled by private enterprise. Agrarians often had only one buyer for their grain, and were suspicious that the whole group of line companies either held down the price to farmers, or at least took too large a share of the Winnipeg grain price as payment for their marketing and storing services. When requests for government interference failed, however, a farmers' company, the Grain Growers' Grain Company, was established to operate through the recognized channels but without the excessive profits made by the elevator companies and the Grain Exchange firms. A further advance was made in the successful demand for government owned or supported elevator systems. But the Saskatchewan Cooperative Elevator Company and the United Grain Growers Ltd., the more lasting results of these actions, failed to fully satisfy the ideal of cooperation. Neither distributed profits on the patronage dividend basis. Profits were returned to shareholders or used for the general advancement of the farmers' movement.

The pool idea, by contrast, was designed to implement the

principle of cooperation in the marketing of wheat. Members received an initial payment on delivery and interim payments with final distribution being made at the end of the crop year on the basis of extent of participation. The selling agency disposed of the wheat through direct selling to millers and importers, thus eliminating the speculative element. The Grain Exchange would be by-passed in favour of orderly marketing and stabilized prices. Under the pool system, the farmer was receiving in effect the competitive world price, less the actual cost of handling, transportation, and selling. The advantage of producers lay not only in the direct return of that portion of marketing margins which constituted the middleman's profits, but also in a further reduction of marketing costs through the potential economies of large-scale, centralized selling.<sup>6</sup>

That this new form of marketing procedure should prove successful at this time is not surprising, given the realities of post-war devaluation and recession.<sup>7</sup> Farmers had invested heavily in land and equipment during the war in response to buoyant prices and a government campaign to expand food production. When the world price of wheat declined sharply in 1920, many farmers were unable to meet debt charges. The failure of both Conservative and Liberal governments to do anything about government marketing of wheat led many farmers to turn to the support of a proposal for a 'farmers' Wheat Pool which would market grain cooperatively on the world market in a manner similar to the work of the government board. In a disagreement over tactics, the S.G.G.A. was the first farmers' organization to split over the question of what

13

direction the agrarian movement would take in marketing grain.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, in 1921 a small group of dissidents formed the Farmers' Union of Canada "with the object in view of supporting and affiliating with farmers' organizations in all the large producing countries to obtain control of all main farm produce, to regulate and obtain reasonable prices above cost of production, and also to protect the farmers' interests by the support and strength of their own organization".<sup>9</sup> The new, more radical organization began a vigorous drive for a wheat pool.

The campaign of the Farmers' Union over the next two years succeeded and the S.G.G.A. finally accepted the challenge to cooperate with the Union to build the pool.<sup>10</sup> Both organizations campaigned throughout the province, urging farmers to sign contracts agreeing to turn all their wheat over to the wheat pool for five years and thus completely eliminate the influence of middlemen. The campaign was highly successful and generated great enthusiasm among wheat growers, but it must be pointed out that the pooling idea cannot be viewed as a conscious plan of radical leaders. As Lipset points out:

. . . the overwhelming majority of farmers were never oriented to any long-term goal of major social change . . . In attempting to gain economic security, in fighting for concrete objectives as solutions to particular problems, the farmers gradually came to believe that they were fighting a total system, that the railroads, the Grain Exchange, the newspapers, all were pitted against them. . . . The almost evangelical appeal for farmers finally to destroy the middlemen in the grain trade and control their own economic destiny activated more farmers than ever before . . .

In Manitoba and Alberta as well cooperative wheat pools were endorsed

wholeheartedly by wheat growers and their representatives and proposals were issued at the annual conventions of the farmers' organizations to create a central selling agency for all three provincial pools. Co-operation on an inter-regional level was indeed closer to becoming a reality and farmer spokesmen were eagerly predicting the emergence of a unified farm bloc in eradicating the economic problems which had plagued the agrarian movement since the turn of the century.

The difficulties inherent in developing a coordinated approach were not entirely eliminated, however, nor were the wheat pools to achieve totally the kinds of advantages which were predicted by their supporters. In the first place, a conflict of personalities and ideals, reflecting disparate regional priorities and objectives, continued to exist among farm leaders. For example, elements within the newly formed United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) openly criticized the leadership of the Canadian Council of Agriculture and older, more established farmers' associations for their alleged failure to respond quickly and decisively to the many issues affecting prairie wheat growers. The great forte of the C.C.A. had always been its ability to secure general agreement among farmers' organizations, but such agreement seemed no longer possible. The Grain Growers' Guide, long a staunch supporter of the Council, did its best to close the widening gap in the ranks of the organized farmers through such editorials as that written in 1926: "We hope the time is near at hand when the leaders of the important farm organizations . . . can get together like sensible people and put the Council in a position where it is adequately staffed

and financed to speak for and represent agriculture".<sup>12</sup> Yet despite these efforts, dissension over political activity and marketing methods grew, with the result that the C.C.A. became impotent and farmers tended to break up into separate and parochial units.<sup>13</sup>

Disagreements over marketing methods were clearly illustrated on a number of occasions. The United Grain Growers Ltd. and its president Thomas Crerar never accepted the doctrine that by means of a 100% pool membership Canadian grain growers could exact a higher price from foreign consumers of Canadian wheat than competitive conditions would warrant. Its essential view was that since the wheat growers of Western Canada were primarily engaged in the production of wheat for export, the future prospects of this industry were bound up with greater freedom in international trade and a reversal of the trend toward rigid controls. In the view of the U.G.G.Ltd., however, the solution to the problem of western grain production was not to be found in the machinery of marketing but in efficiency in production and in enlarged markets. The grain growers did adopt a system of compulsory, non-profit pooling with a centralized selling agency for marketing their grain, but not before Crerar and his associates had campaigned vigorously but unsuccessfully for a voluntary cooperative wheat pool utilizing the facilities of the U.G.G.Ltd. and the Saskatchewan Cooperative Elevator Company (which was later absorbed into the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool). Another point of contention between Crerar and the grain growers developed over direct terminal shipping. The Pools wanted to amend the Grain Act to permit the farmer to ship his grain through the

country elevator to the elevator of his choice. Crerar, who had assisted the Pools financially and with administrative personnel, opposed this major change; it would result in a loss of revenue to non-pool elevator operators. For his stand, Crerar encountered the hostility of his constituents; he and the U.G.G.Ltd. were lumped with the Grain Exchange as "interests" vigorously opposing any changes in the Act.

The identification of the Grain Exchange with the U.G.G.Ltd. was a severe shock to Crerar and his associates, for on the prairies there had always been a natural tendency among farmers to view the day-to-day fluctuations on the Exchange as the results of mismanagement and the abject disregard for the welfare of the farming community. It was this sort of abuse which Crerar himself had campaigned against, but now farmers were suggesting that the farmer-controlled grain companies themselves had not done enough to combat the power of the "interests". In an effort to counter-balance the control of the Exchange and to better protect farmers against disastrous declines in prices, the pools offered their membership a convenient rallying cry with which to maintain morale by assailing the abuses of the open market system and the institutional framework within which these abuses took place.<sup>14</sup> The organization of the pools was further strengthened by the hardships the grain producers experienced from the drop in wheat prices which followed the high levels prevailing during World War I. After the failure to re-establish a government board in 1922-23, the movement obtained its impetus from the conviction that if farmers had control over the disposal of a large portion of the Canadian export surplus,



they could not only eliminate the price hazards involved in the daily fluctuations of the open market, but also exact higher prices for Canadian wheat from consumers in the markets of the world. The conjunction of good harvests and higher prices during the boom years between 1924 and 1929 led them to believe that by organizing the Pools they had succeeded.<sup>15</sup> However, the economic disaster which precipitated the Great Depression summarily proved that cooperative enterprise alone could not guarantee success in the marketplace. The farmers eventually came to realize that the vicissitudes of the market were such that government intervention was needed to control and regulate those forces which were beyond the immediate grasp of wheat producers and their representative organizations.

This problem can be illustrated with reference to the difficulties experienced by the wheat pools following the collapse of the market in 1929 and beyond. As we have seen, at first, under the general heading of the principles of cooperation, prairie farmers aspired to only two goals: to organize one central selling agency that would balance the bargaining power between buyers and sellers; and to create a system of mass storage, the costs of which would be shared, to hold much of the crop off the market in bumper-crop, low-price years, and to sell this "carry-over" in leaner, high-price years. But this could be accomplished only if certain economic conditions were in their favour. They had to be able to identify an unusually large crop year and an unusually low price, and further, to predict the crop and price of the following year. If they did not, they would carry over the crop into

another low-price year, incur storage costs for no purpose, get no income from the unsold stored wheat, and either have to dump the carried-over wheat onto a market where it would push down the world price further, or carry over an even larger amount to the next year. This situation actually arose in 1929.<sup>16</sup> The Pools decided to carry over into 1930 an amount which was actually over 50% of the crop.<sup>17</sup> But the next year there was an even lower grain price.

Complicating this pattern even further was an apparent trend toward over-production. This trend owed its origin chiefly to nationalistic government policies, particularly in Europe. It was a reaction in part, but only in part, to the attempts of producer organizations in the exporting countries to get together with a view to obtaining greater returns for their members, which meant higher prices for the European consumer. This aspect of the situation was given wide publicity, but for military as well as political reasons the governments of European countries were predisposed on their own part to give increased protection to their domestic producers even though the effect was to encourage increased uneconomic production.<sup>18</sup> Another important factor was the prevalence of high tariffs on manufactured goods in the wheat-exporting countries. High protective duties made it increasingly difficult for European manufacturers to secure access to markets abroad, and thereby, in the balance of international trading, to provide their countries with the exchange necessary for a large import of food grains.<sup>19</sup> The explanation for continued over-production thus runs in terms of national policies which were destroying the equilibrating functions of

free markets. By 1929 the situation in wheat had become one of serious disequilibrium between world supply and demand.

The Wheat Pools were clearly facing a difficult situation. One alternative to the carry-over problem was to sell all the crop for the best price it could earn that particular year. But even here there were difficulties of management. The Pools offered their members an "initial" payment of approximately two-thirds the expected selling price, at the time the members delivered their grain to the country elevators. Being a democratic organization and having the best interests of their members perhaps too close at their heart, in 1929 they commenced to pay initial sums that were almost equal to the final selling price for that crop.<sup>20</sup> When the "final" payment was made to each member, they had overpaid and the prairie governments had to step in to protect the banks who had loaned much of the initial payment.<sup>21</sup> The same situation occurred the next year, when the total price to the farmer, which had been between 75¢ and \$1.00 for the preceding 5 years (depending partly on the quality of the crop), fell to less than 50¢.<sup>22</sup> Faced with such a crisis, the federal government was forced to intervene and take over the Pool's central selling agency, with the Pools reverting to merely running their cooperative elevators.

Representations were made in Ottawa by the three provincial premiers on behalf of western grain producers in an effort to persuade the federal government to assist them in "pegging" prices.<sup>23</sup> In effect, they were asking Ottawa to assume a financial obligation should the price of wheat fall any further. However, Prime Minister Bennett was

not inclined to run the risk of losing significant amounts from the federal treasury in the interest of simply attempting to stabilize wheat prices. Under the terms of the British North America Act, Bennett argued, the matter was clearly under provincial jurisdiction.<sup>24</sup> Federal assistance would be provided, but the bulk of the problem remained with the provincial governments and the wheat pools. Because farmers could exact few guarantees from federal authorities for economic assistance, attacks on the "interests" and the open market system increased substantially as conditions worsened. The Pools, which had suffered so severely from their failure to estimate accurately the trend of world wheat values in 1929, exploited this discontent as part of their general assault on the principles of free marketing while campaigning in favour of a permanent central marketing grain board. It was evident, however, that the wheat pools were powerless unless changes in the current world conditions of supply and demand could somehow be effected.

The impact on middle-income farmers was perhaps the most devastating, although the effects of the depression were felt by every group in the rural population. Accompanying the prosperity of the latter half of the 1920's was the expectation that conditions would continue to improve and that through the organization of the wheat pools, some measure of economic protection could be afforded to guard against disastrous declines in prices. When such protection failed to materialize, the farmer, particularly the middle-income farmer, was faced with the prospects of regressing towards a subsistence existence, which quickly accentuated existing discrepancies between long-term expectations and

actual conditions. Between 1929 and 1933 the world index number for agricultural prices registered a reduction of 56%<sup>25</sup> which compounded an already extraordinary insecurity of income characteristic of one-crop farming. As the value of farm land dropped and debt charges multiplied, wheat producers focused their attention on the overwhelming need to control wheat prices, on crop insurance, and on the politicians who were believed to have the necessary power to modify the effects of an economic catastrophe.

As the depression wore on, the demand for reform became irresistible, and brought about a climate of opinion in which the leadership of business, and particularly of "big" business, was profoundly distrusted and bitterly resented. Populist rhetoric emphasizing the virtues of agrarian existence became almost synonymous with the efforts of farmers to seek alternatives to the political and economic status quo. In the political sphere, the apparent inability of prairie governments to exact suitable legislation to regulate and maintain the grain market produced a suitable atmosphere for the rise of third parties; in the economic sphere, the pools and other farmers' organizations lobbied for the establishment of a permanent wheat board.<sup>26</sup> By 1935 the lobby had proved successful, for a Canadian Wheat Board was instituted to buy grain at "emergency" prices, although somewhat below the price that it thought would be ruling when the crop came in. Eight years later the organization of the Wheat Board as the sole marketing agency for most western cereal grains not only guaranteed a system of orderly marketing compatible with agrarian needs and interests; it

dealt, in addition, a powerful blow to the grain trade in general and the Winnipeg Grain Exchange in particular. Beyond these important economic measures, the discontent which flourished during the 1930's also produced striking political changes: the emergence of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.) in Saskatchewan and the victory in 1935 of the Social Credit Party in Alberta.

#### The C.C.F. and Social Credit in Western Canada:

As agrarian unrest heightened with the drastic reduction in wheat prices, a group of Saskatchewan farmers met to discuss the position of the grain producer vis-a-vis the economic crisis. Out of this meeting, held on December 16, 1930, emerged what was known as the "Charter of Liberty" movement.<sup>27</sup> Resolutions were later passed which complained of the many economic injustices meted out to farmers and threatened that unless the federal government complied with their demands, they would organize "for the political conquest of this Province along with such other provinces as will join us for the purposes of forming a co-operative commonwealth within the British Empire, trading directly with Great Britain on a free trade and barter basis".<sup>28</sup> Although the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) and its president A. J. Macauley would not endorse this threat of secession, the resolutions embodied in the new economic policy of the U.F.C.(S.S.) included every other article of the agrarian Chartist movement. Drafted at its annual convention on February 24-28, 1931, this new policy took the form of

insisting, among other items, on revised freight and express rates without affecting the existing scale of wages, the nationalization of currency, credit, natural resources, and utilities, a fairer distribution of wealth, and the institution of a cooperative commonwealth based on non-profit production.<sup>29</sup> But having achieved no satisfactory changes, the following year the U.F.C.(S.S.) continued its denunciation of the existing economic system as combining "dictatorship of the highest degree, compulsion, confiscation, the destruction of personal initiative and the refusal of personal liberties" and urged farmers and other citizens "to bear their share in the process of bringing about a new social economic system of co-operative production for use".<sup>30</sup> In such a system, the working class would be welcome, for the combined strength of labour and agrarian organizations was needed to not only modify the existing structure of capitalism, but also to bring pressure to bear on the federal government. The times were opportune for the emergence of a new movement on the political scene.

Accordingly, the C.C.F. was brought into existence in Calgary on August 1, 1932, when representatives of farm and labour organizations in the four western provinces and Ontario discussed plans for the formation of a dominion-wide socialist movement. The new C.C.F. was to remain essentially a federation of provincial units, each of which had its own approach to socialism and politics and did not interfere with the activities of other provincial sections. As one observer has noted, the early radical promotion group, many of whom had socialist ideas as a result of earlier experiences in other socialist movements or because

of intellectual contact with socialist ideas, was only a small segment of the new party. These socialists, however, gained an influence that was out of proportion to their numerical strength in the new Farmer-Labour Group (as it was known in Saskatchewan initially) because of the obvious failure of other attempted solutions to the farmers' economic problems, especially the efforts at economic cooperation and political pressure on old party governments.<sup>31</sup> Among the platforms of the new party was the socialization of all private industries in Canada. This applied to land as well, since the U.F.C., under the impact of the depression, advocated a form of land nationalization in which the state would hold title to the land and the farmers would be given a use-lease title.<sup>32</sup> This appealed to many wheat producers as a means of preventing foreclosures by banks and mortgage companies, and it satisfied the socialists' desire for state ownership.<sup>33</sup>

It should not be inferred from the foregoing that farmers were unanimous in their support for an agrarian-labour alliance which in the past had ended in failure on ideological and organizational grounds. Agrarian interest in such an alliance was based primarily on the conditions of agriculture and the platform of social and economic change which the C.C.F. was in the process of proposing. The bitterness and resentment which had accompanied the farmers' rapid loss of status from producer-capitalist to wage-earner or worse had left many agrarians predisposed towards new ideas and new solutions to problems to which the old political system had failed to respond. The C.C.F. offered such solutions, but the extent to which the movement adopted urban and



essentially "alien" socialist concepts left more than a majority of farmers suspicious of the intentions of the new organizations. The new brand of "Canadian socialism" outlined in a 13 point manifesto and called for by J. S. Woodsworth at the Regina C.C.F. Convention in July of 1933 was in large part worked out by the "eastern intellectuals" of the League for Social Reconstruction.<sup>34</sup> The doctrines the L.S.R. developed were Canadian in the sense of being British (North) American and socialist in the senses of being advanced liberal and Fabian, radical Christian, and empirical - all of which goes a long way in explaining the difficulties farmers experienced in generating overwhelming enthusiasm for the movement.

The western wing of the C.C.F. indeed recognized this problem, but as one of the editors of the Winnipeg Free Press noted:

Socialism in our day - at least as defined by the C.C.F. in convention at Regina last week - means Socialism with a great big hole in it. The hole was left intentionally in order to allow the farmers to march into the Socialist fold. But they did not stay there long . . .<sup>35</sup>


This, he observed, did not mean the farmers' organizations had left the C.C.F. They were still there at the end of the Convention, but it remained to be seen whether they would stay within the ranks of the new movement. The U.F.O. and U.F.A. delegates were particularly alarmed by the idea of nationalizing agriculture and insisted that they be left alone to manage their own affairs.<sup>36</sup> Part of the problem again stemmed from the influence of the L.S.R., whose original manifesto dealt sparingly with agriculture, and then only under the heading of cooperative institutions.<sup>37</sup> Such a near oversight had to be quickly rectified if

support from the western sector was to be achieved. In Ontario, by contrast, the C.C.F. was patently an urban-oriented party; its socialist philosophy was essentially alien to the rural experience and temper.<sup>38</sup> By 1934 the U.F.O. had completely dissociated itself from the C.C.F. for being too close to communist doctrine.<sup>39</sup>

It was the latent rural fear of the collectivization of the land which C.C.F. leaders, particularly in the West, were forced to realize would prevent real identification of the agrarian community with C.C.F. philosophy. Farmers would support the C.C.F., not because of its socialist ideology, but because they could identify with the reformist ideals that the movement supported. It was imperative, therefore, that close attention be paid to agrarian demands. Accordingly, Article 4 of the Regina Manifesto included specific items of special interest to farmers: security of tenure for the agriculturalist on conditions to be laid down by individual provinces; insurance against unavoidable crop failure; removal of the tariff burden from the operations of agriculture; encouragement of producers' and consumers' co-operatives; the restoration and maintenance of an equitable relationship between prices of agricultural products and those of other commodities and services; and improvement of the efficiency of export trade in farm products.<sup>40</sup> Although the C.C.F. platform contained provisions for the social ownership of most of the means of production and distribution, including the machinery of banking and investment, public utilities, most natural resources and all industries approaching a condition of monopoly, agriculture and small business enterprises

were to remain in the private sector where they would be subject to government regulation.

But despite these reformist measures, farmers were still cautious of the C.C.F.'s approach to social and economic change. The final clause of the Regina Manifesto, for instance, outlining its intention to "eradicate capitalism" and "put into operation the full programme of socialized planning",<sup>41</sup> could attract little sympathy among grain producers who had always maintained that it was the abuses of capitalism and not capitalism itself which had been the basis of their disaffection with the on-going system. It was apparent, then, that if the C.C.F. were to gain the confidence of the agrarian community, further changes in its socialist doctrine were needed. This point is no better illustrated than in respect to its land policy. The initial socialist land programme called for farming to be carried on under a "use-lease" arrangement, which would permit the individual farmer to operate as before, except that he would lease the land from the state. The plan was devised to ensure security of tenure by inhibiting evictions caused by defaulting on mortgage payments. As early as 1932, however, opposition to land nationalization produced a change in wording. The policy became known as "use-hold" to emphasize the security of tenure aspect rather than state ownership. In July of 1933, a motion was tabled by the political directive board that the land policy should be amended "so that occupants be granted the privilege of exchanging their 'use-lease' for clear title any time after their indebtedness had been paid in full".<sup>42</sup> By 1934 the official



manifesto continued to advocate security of tenure, but gave no details of the land policy. Two years later at the provincial convention in Saskatchewan, a reform platform was adopted which made no reference to socialism and the policy of land nationalization was officially dropped.<sup>43</sup> The farmers had made their point.

It has been suggested that by the late 1920's socialist doctrine had spread widely among farmers, many of whom accepted the socialist expression of explanation of the Depression.<sup>44</sup> However, the left wing constituted only a small but vocal portion of the agrarian movement and the C.C.F. in Saskatchewan was constantly under pressure to compromise and modify its blatantly socialist programme. In addition, the alliance with labour revealed little more than a "marriage of convenience", for farmers had shown themselves to be primarily interested in agricultural reform only and not in a plan of action calling for sweeping social changes and a working-class state. In keeping with the traditions of agrarian revolt in Saskatchewan, the C.C.F. itself had become a party of pragmatic reform, shifting its policy when necessary to accommodate rural demands.<sup>45</sup> While the party continued to emphasize social planning and social security, the social ownership of financial institutions, some resources and public utilities, it did not radically conflict with the policies and programmes earlier discussed and implemented in the West. In 1941 the C.C.F. supported the farmers in their demands for higher wheat prices, and by so doing, had its membership more than double during 1941-42.<sup>46</sup> In a pre-election pamphlet dated in 1944, it was pointed out that the "C.C.F. believes in the family farm as the

basis of rural life" and that it would protect the family farm by increasing farm income through guaranteed minimum prices, encourage the development of cooperatives, institute crop insurance, and press for the abolition of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange.<sup>47</sup> By emphasizing this agricultural policy and social welfare measures, the C.C.F. took 53% of the popular vote in 1944 and all but 5 seats in the legislature.<sup>48</sup>

The question may be raised at this point of why Alberta and Manitoba, which had a reasonably similar history and social and economic structure, did not develop the same response as Saskatchewan to the depressed conditions of the 1930's. A partial explanation for this apparent anomaly can be found in the fact that in Manitoba, for instance, there appeared to be general satisfaction in maintaining a progressive-agrarian-liberal alliance at the level of provincial politics - anti-party feeling led to a proclivity towards coalition which eventually culminated in a non-partisan administration which was formed in 1940 and lasted nearly a decade.<sup>49</sup> Under the regime of John Bracken, which managed to carry four different labels in less than twenty years (United Farmers of Manitoba, Progressive, Liberal-Progressive, and Coalition), there emerged a system in which the established Liberal social and economic elite of Winnipeg continued to exercise political power by dominating the farmer-elected government. The desire of both these groups for "business government" gave credence to the rhetoric of non-partisanship.<sup>50</sup> Added to this situation was the condition of Manitoba's agricultural economy, which was less exposed to the vagaries of the weather and price fluctuations than the rest of the prairie

region. Rural residents of the province were less dependent on one-crop farming, for the practice of mixed farming and the proximity to the markets in Winnipeg reduced both the hazards of relying on a single crop and the economic need for a large cooperative movement. Since the important community and provincial institutions were concentrated in one city and accessible to most farmers, the need for duplicating the community services that existed in urban areas was not as great in rural Manitoba as elsewhere on the prairies and, consequently, local activity was weak.<sup>51</sup> In the absence of community participation and organizational membership and involvement (interest in the U.F.M. and Wheat Pool was comparatively low), the tendency toward apathy and a high variability in political behaviour is, in the opinion of the authors of the American Voter, likely to occur.<sup>52</sup> Such a pattern appeared to be characteristic of the oldest and most conservative of the three prairie provinces.

In Alberta, by contrast, the option of developing a third-party organization to cope with the problems created by the depressed state of agriculture in the 1930's appeared much more viable in Manitoba. The farmers' experience in widespread community participation through local governments and cooperatives compared favourably to Saskatchewan and created similar responses to very similar conditions.<sup>53</sup> In 1935 the U.F.A. government, which had been in power since 1921 and proved incapable of coping with the depression, was replaced by the monetary reform government of the Social Credit Party. To the legislature of 63 members, 56 Social Credit candidates, 5 Liberals, and 2 Conservatives

were elected.<sup>54</sup> Not a single U.F.A. candidate was returned. This remarkable victory was achieved at a time when the principal government problem in the province was that pertaining to the burden of private and public debt. While the financial obligations of the provinces and their municipalities were heavily increased by the cost of unemployment and agricultural relief, their revenues were depressed by the low income conditions prevailing among the people. Conditions in Alberta had reached the point where debt-carrying charges were absorbing approximately half of the provincial revenue.<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile, the U.F.A. government was suffering from a loss of public confidence. They were avoiding as far as possible an increase in taxation and were adhering to policies calculated to preserve the public credit of the province. But they had been in office for 14 years and their age was telling against them.<sup>56</sup> They lost prestige through the resignation in 1934 of the Premier, J. E. Brownlee, following his involvement in a seduction case and through the divorce litigation involving the Minister of Public Works, O. L. McPherson, who had not been re-appointed to the Cabinet when the Hon. R. G. Reid became Premier of the province.<sup>57</sup> In addition, Henry Wise Wood had retired from the U.F.A. in 1931<sup>58</sup>, which to a large extent left the farmers' party without a clear sense of direction and purpose. With the leading U.F.A. theorist retired, many Locals actively included social credit books and pamphlets on their list of suggested reading material and utilized the theory as an additional explanatory device for economic instability and the lack of purchasing power.<sup>59</sup> Social credit had the advantage of including a

socialist critique of society in its theory without embracing socialist conclusions. In 1935 many of these Locals switched allegiance en masse to the Social Credit Party.

While the U.F.A. was considering the possibilities of debt conversion and of pressuring the federal government to assume the responsibility of relief legislation and action or grant the province a larger share of taxation revenues, the spokesmen for the Social Credit were assuring the people that their public and private financial troubles were unnecessary and could be permanently removed by the adoption of credit principles and the use of credit in the province. Proponents represented the new movement as embodying the means of abolishing poverty through the use and distribution of the credit power of the state to bring about the equation of consumption to production and thus ensure the people the full benefit of the increment arising from their association. It was, furthermore, proposed to distribute purchasing power by means of a basic dividend to be paid monthly to adult residents of the province. The sum of \$25 per month was frequently associated with the proposal.<sup>60</sup> Beyond monetary reform measures, however, the Social Credit Party offered an understandable critique of the system; it met the desire to find meaning, presenting both an explanation of the depression and a programme to escape from its consequences; and it promised to satisfy basic needs, not only physical, but also psychological.<sup>61</sup>

As far as the farmers were concerned, the Social Credit platform fitted neatly into the rural conception of how the system could



be changed and improved: while attacking the Grain Exchange and eastern financiers, Social Credit did not propose a fundamental transformation in the on-going capitalist structure. It hoped to make capitalism work by nationalizing the banks and pumping new currency into circulation whenever prices fell. This gross oversimplification of the functioning of the system enabled everyone to think they understood it, regardless of whether or not they could actually assess the content of the interpretation. Yet despite these obviously simplified solutions to the difficulties of the times, it tended to underscore the tremendous appeal that William Aberhart, leader of the movement, was able to generate. He was said to have been able to combine "the functions of the prophet" (which he developed from his religious radio programme instituted in Calgary in 1924) "with the executive capacities of the great planner and organizer. As a prophetic leader, Aberhart may be interpreted in terms of his unification of Christianity and the philosophy of social credit, his ability to resolve his followers' problems of ego involvement, and his charismatic appeal".<sup>62</sup> But while the critics of Aberhart and his social credit doctrine tended to emphasize its messianic character and its essentially right-wing populist and escapist tendencies<sup>63</sup>, Social Credit's evolution from a loosely-organized movement to a well-established party emphasizing sound administration rather than apocalyptic visions and its record of remaining in power for over thirty-five years in the province of Alberta tend to qualify this argument.<sup>64</sup> This process of compromise and tactical adjustment finds a close parallel with the C.C.F. in its bid for power in Saskatchewan.

It has been suggested that many farmers did not see vital differences in the programme and tactics of the C.C.F. and Social Credit. In Saskatchewan, for example, farmers inside and outside the C.C.F. sought, on a number of occasions, to force the party to unite with Social Credit.<sup>65</sup> This pressure for cooperation at the local level brings out the point that many people were prepared to join with Social Credit because they desired immediate action and tangible results. In effect, they saw little reason for conflict among organizations which premised their policies on reformist and pragmatic goals. Each movement, according to Lipset, provided a functional definition of the situation within the cultural framework of the wheat belt. Each interpreted the Depression as being caused by eastern "capitalism", "vested interests", or "financiers". Within that framework, one could apparently build either a leftist or a rightist ideology.<sup>66</sup> What this means within the framework of this discussion, is that a new movement does not necessarily entail much congruence between the ideology of the movement as articulated by its leadership, and the belief system of its followers, but simply requires the development of a generalized belief which identifies the sources of strains within the system and envisages an overall cure.<sup>67</sup>

This suggests that as one moves from elite sources to belief systems downward on a political information scale, the understanding of "standard" political knowledge declines very rapidly. Furthermore, in moving from top to bottom of this information dimension, the character of the objects that are central in a belief system undergoes systematic change. Converse has succinctly outlined this process:

These objects shift from the remote, generic, and abstract to the increasingly simple, concrete, or "close to home". Where potential political objects are concerned, this progression tends to be from abstract, "ideological" principles to the more obviously recognizable social groupings or charismatic leaders and finally to such objects of immediate experience as family, job, and immediate associates.<sup>68</sup>

As a means of understanding the bulk of mass political behaviour, the shift from right to left or conservative to liberal, becomes less perplexing, for the level of political sophistication among the vast majority of the population at any given time is extremely low.<sup>69</sup> Thus it is possible to differentiate the ability of the leadership of the C.C.F. and Social Credit to organize specific attitudes into wide-ranging belief systems, from the incapacity of the mass of the electorate to conceptualize political philosophy and ideology in anything but simple, "grass-roots" terms. This does not mean that the platforms and policies of these western third parties were totally misunderstood or appreciated; indeed, the interpretation provided by party spokesmen of events and circumstances at the time tended to reinforce existing conceptions of the political and economic evils which were widely diffused within the prairie populace. A realistic picture of political belief systems among an electorate, then, is not one that omits issues and policy demands completely nor one that presumes widespread ideological coherence; it is rather one that captures with some degree of accuracy the fragmentation, narrowness, and diversity of these demands.<sup>70</sup> As far as prairie grain growers were concerned, therefore, it is possible to assume that they would support either Social Credit or the C.C.F. only to the extent to which party policies were congruent with demands and

notions forming the basis of the agrarian experience. As we have seen, party ideologues were successful in accommodating these demands into the framework of their party strategies. To the extent, however, that the appeal of the C.C.F. or Social Credit was consistent with the social history and political experience of Saskatchewan and Alberta respectively, a pattern of interchangeability between the support of one movement over another could not be expected.

One point that should be raised here is that in the search for one or more variables possessing explanatory power to solve the mysteries of political behaviour, there has been a tendency to choose and isolate the most notable, persistent, and "reliable" pattern which appears to rise about the multitude of factors influencing mass action. The literature on agrarian political movements is a case in point, for often it is assumed that social class qualifies as the most visible pattern influencing the farm vote. However, in the first place, as noted in chapter 2, the term is too ambiguous in explaining rural politics, for often its proponents ignore or minimize the fact that important differences may exist among farmers themselves and that urban and rural stratification systems may operate independently in producing dissimilar behavioural configurations. Secondly, although an individual may ostensibly satisfy all the necessary conditions for placing him in a given class pattern, he may respond differently according to a whole range of values which override his "natural" economic response. For example, the natural choice of a grain-belt farmer in Saskatchewan of French national background may have been the C.C.F. but he voted Liberal

in the 1934 election; similarly, the Liberals may be considered to be a natural expression of the political partisanship of a farmer in Ontario of Anglo-Saxon heritage who voted for the Conservatives. It may be argued that the French and Anglo-Saxon farmers misconceived their natural economic interests, but an argument of equal force may be presented which notes that the French wheat farmer may be responding from religious misgivings about the C.C.F., while the Ontario farmer could be responding in terms of an apprehension surrounding the apparent ethnic control of the Liberal Party.

Milnor has argued that the "misconception" of economic interest may be the result of placing higher evaluation on non-economic factors such as religion or national background<sup>71</sup>, but it can also be stated that political choice may be a function, not of an individual's inability to perceive his "real" interests, but of his own definition of what is real and true relative to the context in which a conception of reality is developed. These contexts, however, do change, with the result that some factors appear to take precedence over others, but it has been argued throughout this study that middle-income grain farmers responded consistently to unstable price and market conditions in a manner which shaped their outlooks and perceptions into a characteristic pattern. This response should not be considered as necessarily false or illusory, but as one conditioned by regional particularisms, by differential political experiences, by the strengths and weaknesses of economic and commercial organizations, and by divergent immigration patterns which gave certain farmers an experience and background qualitatively different

from other one-crop grain producers, other farmers, and wage-earners in the cities and towns. It has been noted that religion also contributed in producing differential alignments and strategies among farmers in particular areas - it remains to be explained the role and importance religious precepts had in influencing the agrarian perspective.

### Religion and Agrarian Ideology:

It has been suggested that throughout the period of intensified agrarian protest against high tariff barriers, poor grain handling procedures and low grain prices, farmers had shown a proclivity to perceive and interpret their grievances in terms both explicitly and implicitly religious.<sup>72</sup> As Richard Allen explains:

Patterns of behaviour, individually and collectively emerge which sometimes owe more to religious concerns of alienation and reconciliation, of guilt, justification, redemption, and ultimate hope than to the cold rationalities of economic interest. The two impulses meet in a framework of ideas, or an ideology, combining self-interest and ultimate aspirations by which a group, class, section or nation, explains to itself and to the world, what its problems are, how it is approaching them, where it is going and why. To a remarkable degree, the social gospel and the ideology of the agrarian revolt coincided.<sup>73</sup>

This "social gospel" has been defined as "a call for men to find the meaning of their lives in seeking to realize the Kingdom of God in the very fabric of society".<sup>74</sup> It rested on the premise that Christianity was essentially a social religion concerned with the quality of human relations upset by the encroachments of industrialism and urbanism, although its rise was also partially attributable to the emergence of

intellectual currents in the latter years of the nineteenth century which encouraged a social concept of man and underlined the social dimensions of the Gospel.<sup>75</sup> In emphasizing social reform, various wings called for complete social reconstruction based on cooperation, and through the writings of J. S. Woodsworth, Salem Bland and others in the Grain Growers' Guide<sup>76</sup>, sought to instill a sense of direction and purpose into the farmers' quest for economic and political change. This apparent affinity between the ideology of agrarian revolt and the social gospel can be traced partially to the influence of Henry Wise Wood, who sought to put Christian values and principles into practice. He looked upon agrarian cooperation not only as an instrument of political and economic reform, but as a method of bringing about social regeneration, and in his speeches and writings are found many references to the need for religious inspiration in affecting a better and less competitive social order.<sup>77</sup> In her study of an eastern Alberta community, Jean Burnet suggests that the U.F.A. replaced or at least competed with existing religious organizations.<sup>78</sup> Meetings were often held on Sundays, were begun with prayer, and included a full slate of issues which included moral problems requiring remedies and a collective attack.<sup>79</sup> William Irvine, an active reformer in Alberta politics, interpreted this religious spirit as a call for the sacralization of the world. "The new . . . spirit is the very soul of the world movement for justice. It is the champion of the weak against the strong; it elevates the human values to a height of paramount importance. . . . This kind of religion cannot be kept out of politics. Being inseparable from life it

permeates its every department, and extends the domain of the sacred to what have been called material things. The line between the sacred and the secular is being rubbed out. This does not mean that everything is becoming secular; on the contrary, everything is becoming sacred".<sup>80</sup>

These statements by Irvine accurately reflect social gospel philosophy, for the "Kingdom of God on Earth" may be interpreted as a spiritual endeavour to reunite the celestial and mundane spheres into a meaningful whole. It also reflected an effort toward an essential unity of purpose and action among all reform-minded sectors of society and Irvine, as a leading exponent of cooperation between the grain growers' movement and trade unionism, sought to develop a religious framework to permanently bond urban and rural forms of protest against the evils of industrialization. Such a task was difficult, for although farmers and urban labour had found a community of interest in the struggle against the plutocracy, the essential contradiction between urban and rural life styles, beliefs, and attitudes represented a formidable barrier against sustained cooperation. Moreover, the extreme violence and radicalism of the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919 and the violent response of the police had shocked many farmers into opposition to labour's cause and made common efforts even more difficult in the future. The social gospel, deriving its basis of thought from an urban context, faced a similar and ever-increasing problem of convincing farmers that urban-based ideas and concepts could be relevant in a rural setting.

For this reason, although there is considerable justification for assuming that social gospel precepts played an important role in



reinforcing the basic tenets of agrarian ideology, it is less convincing to argue that the two bodies of thought in fact coincided. One observer, although writing in an American context, has even asserted that a relationship between the social gospel and the farmers' movement simply did not exist, for as proponents of the social gospel invaded city slums and industrial communities, older, more "individualistic" doctrines met rural needs.<sup>81</sup>

That rural society, moreover, was still committed to the social creed of laissez-faire, while the farmers found satisfaction in the other-worldly consolations of religion long after these had been spurned by the city workers. The social gospel which was developed in part as a means of reclaiming the proletariat was not evoked by a similar need on the prairies.<sup>82</sup>

Furthermore, this author contends, the prairies already boasted their own social gospel of individualism, of "practical theology" rather than "systematic theology", with prohibition the agrarian equivalent of the urban social message. "The social gospel thus became one more item of difference between urban and rural Christianity, between Liberal-Modernist-Humanist and 'Fundamentalist'".<sup>83</sup>

While conceding the role of the social gospel in labour politics in Canada as opposed to the American experience - and the separation of one branch of the Canadian movement into a bond with the "true Christianity" of some labour spokesmen, such remarks do reinforce the fact that urban and rural perceptions of religion and "life" in general were significantly diverse to warrant separate examination. And yet, on another plane, the "fundamentalism" of the Aberhart-inspired movement of reform in Alberta, by invoking Biblical legitimations and

claiming that social credit doctrine was practical Christianity, has been considered as a form of social gospel.<sup>84</sup> Hiller has argued that it is perhaps not too much of a generalization to suggest that whenever a Christian body champions social concerns, regardless of its ideological bent, it is forced to minimize personal salvation and other-worldly themes because it seeks Biblical analogues to the present situations to reinforce its claim for commitment, and to justify worldly activity that has no direct religious significance. He adds that even though Aberhart personally held his other-worldly concerns and his this-worldly interests in a tight balance, many of his followers joined the crusade primarily because the social gospel this-worldly motif was most prominent and acceptable.<sup>85</sup>

This argument holds merit to the extent that agrarians in the province of Alberta who supported Aberhart had largely abandoned a purely "individualistic" ethic in favour of the principles of cooperation and association. But the degree to which farmers actually subscribed to these principles as ends in themselves rather than as means to an end (higher prices for their product, for example) is a matter for historical speculation. The leadership did accept the theory of cooperation apparently without hesitation, but there is some question whether the ordinary farmer fully grasped the philosophical premises underlying the cooperativism vs. individualism argument. On this basis it may be equally applicable to inquire into the suitability of viewing the social gospel as the religion of agrarian revolt, for it continues to be argued that the tendency of rural society to believe

in "interests" conspiring against them predicates a continuing crusade toward social and moral conformity and theological conservatism. This expressed itself, as one commentator has argued, in the support of the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan in the late 1920's as a reaction in rural areas to the apparent invasion of liberal theology and the social gospel. It was noted that the Klan's appearance led to the development of a religiously-inspired organization, violently anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant in sentiment and strongly fundamentalist in nature.<sup>86</sup> This emotionally-charged atmosphere pervaded the provincial election of 1929 and to a considerable extent, determined its outcome.<sup>87</sup>

It must be noted that although the arrival of the Ku Klux Klan gives considerable credence to the argument that a rural agrarian society experiencing economic difficulties is often prone to "conspiratorial" and often "reactionary" explanations for its plight<sup>88</sup>, the sudden disappearance of the Klan suggests that this was neither an enduring pattern nor a dominant characteristic of the prairie grain producer. The wheat farmer did, however, experience wide-spread deprivation relative to other sectors of the population in direct relation to the problems of surviving on an insecure income. As a result, agrarian ideology contained as one of its premises the populist notion that deprivation is directly related to the inordinate power of a group or organization located outside of the local society, i.e., the eastern-controlled corporations and monopoly capitalists. Secondly, the populism of agrarian revolt emphasized the need for social reform in an effort to eliminate the abuses of the capitalist system. Finally, the worth of

the common people is extolled as the highest virtue and forms the core element in populist rhetoric. To the extent that the social gospel reinforced and provided a sense of moral justification and sense of immutability to these notions, it is possible to identify a relationship with agrarian ideology which supercedes arguments stressing the essentially simplistic, xenophobic, and irrational qualities of agrarian protest. "The social gospel", in the words of T. C. Douglas, "is a people's movement, a movement of men and women who had dedicated their lives to making the brotherhood of man a living reality".<sup>89</sup> To the farmer fighting unstable market conditions, high transportation costs, and low prices, statements such as this could at least lessen the sense of helplessness of the situation. Nevertheless, practical self-interest and commercial enterprise remained as the key sustaining forces if the farmers' survival were to be guaranteed. Pragmatism, not ideology, would be the test of this achievement.

#### Summary:

In this chapter it has been noted that during the period from the rise of the wheat pools to the emergence of the C.C.F. and Social Credit Party, farmers continued to be differentiated according to regional parochialisms, the degree of prosperity of individual farmers, the type of agriculture, ethnic origin, and religion. Yet the agrarian movement up to this point could generally be identified as a reasonably consistent effort on the part of grain producers to achieve certain

goals, even if the means were at times highly diverse. By 1935, however, the goals themselves had undergone change. With the defeat of the U.F.A. in that year went the last remnants of a bone fide farmers' government and the apparent desire to develop distinct agrarian political units in search of power. The C.C.F. and Social Credit were broadly-based reform movements appealing to all segments of the population desirous of change, although farmers still insisted on agrarian reform as a condition of their support. Rural suspicions of urban intentions still remained, but the possibility of compromise and accommodation now existed.

In the economic sphere, the continued commercialization of agriculture was to a greater extent accompanied by the rapid mechanization of wheat farming, mechanization that made bonanza farms possible. Like modern businesses, bonanza farms put huge tracts of land under cultivation with central management, using the most advanced equipment possible and specialized labour. New problems arose, but the specific grievances which had been the distinguishing features of the medium-sized grain producer were now changing. Moreover, the retirement of Henry Wise Wood in 1931 had left the farmers' movement of this period without perhaps its greatest and most articulate spokesman, and with his departure went the hope of establishing economic group organizations premised on the principle of cooperation. Finally, the re-establishment of the Canadian Wheat Board in 1935 had closed an era in Canadian agricultural history - a period when the dominant theme had been the struggle for control of wheat marketing between the organized

farmers and the organized grain trade.

~

—

## FOOTNOTES

1. Davis, Joseph S. "Agricultural Fundamentalism", On Agricultural Policy, 1926-1838. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1939, 24-43.
2. This does not imply that rural individualism may be unequivocally equated with unbridled economic individualism applied in the context of a free market economy. Significant practical modifications in the pattern of prairie agriculture to this latter image include the careful control of the market through administered prices and the influence of government agencies, such as the Canadian Wheat Board. In addition, underlying an individualized, competitive entrepreneurial system at the local level are found various types of informal, well-organized district and inter-farm exchange systems intended to lower the cost of labour and machinery rentals. Cooperative measures did not undermine rural individualism; on the contrary, they arose out of the need to reduce the risks inherent in small-scale capitalistic agriculture operating with marginal resources. See John W. Bennett, Northern Plainsmen: Adaptive Strategy and Agrarian Life. Chicago: Aldine, 1969, 280-1.
3. Macpherson, Ian. "The Co-operative Union of Canada and the Prairies 1919-1920", in The Twenties in Western Canada, S. M. Trofimenkoff (ed.), Ottawa: National Museum of Man 1972; T. Ainslie Kerr, "Canada's Co-ops", (1955) Pamphlet No. 1628, McMaster University Archives.
4. Morton, W. L. "The Social Philosophy of Henry Wise Wood", Agricultural History, Vol. 22(2) (April 1948) 116.
5. Patton, H. S. Grain Growers' Cooperation in Western Canada. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929, 351.
6. Ibid., 399ff.
7. See W. A. Mackintosh, Economic Problems of the Prairie Provinces. Toronto: Macmillan, 1935, 8ff.
8. It would not be accurate to say, however, that the Farmers' Union owed its existence to a shift of allegiance wholly or even in large part. The Farmers' Union not only began in an area of the province where the S.G.G.A. was organized only spottily, but also found success primarily in areas where farmers of Ukrainian origin predominated. The S.G.G.A., by contrast, had almost no representation in areas settled by Central Europeans. Ethnicity can thus be identified as another source of schism in the farmers' movement. See D. S. Spafford, "The Origin of the Farmers' Union of Canada", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XVIII(3) (Autumn 1965), 89-98.

9. Yates, S. W. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool: Its Origins, Organization and Progress, 1924-1935, United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section), (Saskatoon, 1947), 32-6.
10. In 1926 the Farmers' Union amalgamated with the S.G.G.A. and was known as the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section). See C.A.R., 1925-26, 490.
11. Lipset, S. M. Agrarian Socialism, Garden City: Anchor Books, 1968, 86.
12. Grain Growers' Guide, December 1, 1926, 7.
13. Mills, Joseph C. "A Study of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, 1910-1930", Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1949, 198.
14. Mackintosh, W. A. "The Canadian Wheat Pools", (1925), Pamphlet No. 5274, Public Archives of Canada.
15. See C.A.R., 1924-25, 398-9, 418; 1925-26, 249, 400; 1927-28, 513, 538-9; 1928-29, 464ff.
16. Britnell, G. E. The Wheat Economy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1939, 64ff.
17. Brett, Paul F. Submission on Behalf of the Pool Organization of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba to Royal Grain Inquiry Commission, 1937, 27.
18. MacGibbon, D. A. The Canadian Grain Trade 1931-1951. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1952, 204.
19. Ibid., 206; Montreal Star, June 2, 1930, 1.
20. Britnell, op. cit., 54.
21. Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph, February 8, 1930, 1.
22. Montreal Gazette, February 14, 1930, 1; Ottawa Morning Citizen, November 1, 1930, 5.
23. The Toronto Globe, November 18, 1930, 4.
24. Ibid., November 19, 1930, 1.
25. MacGibbon, op. cit., 3.
26. C.A.R., 1935-36, 215.



27. Ibid., 1930-31, 259.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., 258.
30. Minutes of the Annual Convention of the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section), Saskatoon, February 23-27, 1932 in C.A.R., 1932, 273-4.
31. Lipset, S. M. op. cit., 134-5.
32. Ibid., 135-6.
33. Ibid., 136.
34. Horn, Michiel. "The League for Social Reconstruction and the Development of a Canadian Socialism", Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 7(4) (November 1972), 3-17; Michiel Horn, "Frank Underhill's Early Drafts of the Regina Manifesto 1933", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LIV(4) (December 1973), 393-418; J. King Gordon, "A Christian Socialist in the 1930's", Paper presented at the Conference on the Social Gospel, Regina, 1973.
35. Winnipeg Free Press, July 24, 1933, 1 and 4.
36. Ibid., July 27, 1933, 1.
37. Horn. "The League for Social Reconstruction . . .", op. cit., 6.
38. Caplan, Gerald F. "The Failure of Canadian Socialism: The Ontario Experience, 1932-1945", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XLIV(2) (June 1963), 93-121.
39. Toronto Mail and Empire, March 12, 1934, 1.
40. Regina Manifesto (Programme of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, adopted at the First National Convention held at Regina, Saskatchewan, July, 1933), Pamphlet No. 1557, McMaster University Archives.
41. Ibid.
42. C.C.F. Papers, Minutes, Political Directive Board, July 8, 1933, McMaster University Archives.
43. C.C.F. Papers, First Annual Convention, 1936, McMaster University Archives.

44. Silverstein, Sanford. "The Rise, Ascendancy and Decline of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation Party in Saskatchewan, Canada, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Washington University, 1968, 55ff.
45. See Peter R. Sinclair. "The Saskatchewan C.C.F. and the Communist Party in the 1930's", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XXVI(1) (Winter 1973), 1-10; Peter R. Sinclair, "Populism in Alberta and Saskatchewan", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1972.
46. Lipset. op. cit., 149.
47. C.C.F. Pamphlets, "The Farmers and the C.C.F.", 1944, McMaster University Archives.
48. Stevenson, J. A. "The Saskatchewan Election", Dalhousie Review, Vol. XXIV(2) (July 1944), 219-44.
49. Donnelly, M. S. The Government of Manitoba. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963, 63ff.
50. Wiseman, Nelson. "The C.C.F. and the Manitoba 'Non-Partisan' Government of 1940", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LIV(2) (June 1973), 175-93.
51. Lipset. op. cit., 263.
52. Campbell, Angus et al. "Agrarian Political Behaviour", The American Voter: An Abridgement. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964, 210-30.
53. See A. K. Davis. "The Saskatchewan C.C.F.", Our Generation, Vol. 6(4) (June 1969), 50-1.
54. Irving, John A. The Social Credit Movement in Alberta. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969, 331.
55. Irving, John A. "The Appeal of Social Credit", Queen's Quarterly, Vol. LX(2) (Summer 1953), 146-60.
56. The tendency of mass parties over a period of time to assume a less democratic and more oligarchical internal structure may be offered as one possible explanation for the inability of the U.F.A. to hold and maintain public confidence. See Robert Michels, Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy. Glencoe: Free Press, 1949.

57. Anderson, Owon. "The Alberta Social Credit Party: An Empirical Analysis of Membership, Characteristics, Participation and Opinions", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1972, 81.
58. Ottawa Morning Journal, January 23, 1931, 4.
59. Anderson. op. cit.
60. Irving. "The Social Credit Movement in Alberta", op. cit., 250-1.
61. Irving. "The Appeal of Social Credit", op. cit., 155.
62. Irving. "The Social Credit Movement in Alberta", op. cit., 337.  
 See also Harry H. Hiller, "A Critical Analysis of the Role of Religion in a Canadian Populist Movement: The Emergence and Dominance of the Social Credit Party in Alberta", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, McMaster University, 1972; Harold J. Schultz, "Aberhart: The Organization Man", Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 7(2) (Spring 1959), 19-26; H. J. Schultz, "A Second Term: 1940", Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 10(1) (Winter 1962), 17-26; H. J. Schultz, "Portrait of a Premier: William Aberhart", in Politics of Discontent, Ramsay Cook et al. (eds.), Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1-27; Peter R. Sinclair, "William Aberhart and Social Credit: The Charismatic Legitimation of a Hero", Unpublished Manuscript, n.d.
63. Smiley, Donald V. "Canada's Poujadists: A New Look at Social Credit", Canadian Forum, Vol. XLII(600) (September 1962), 121-3.
64. Mallory, J. R. "Social Credit: Party or Movement?", Canadian Forum, Vol. XXXV (June 1955), 52-5.
65. Lipset. op. cit., 155.
66. Ibid., 156.
67. See Neil Smelser, Theory of Collective Behaviour, Glencoe: Free Press, 1963, Chapter 5 and pp.292ff. The fact that Social Credit and the C.C.F. did arise in Alberta and Saskatchewan respectively may be explained to a considerable degree in terms of their divergent political traditions and experiences, rather than as a result of economic or social differences. Smith has noted that the absence of an alternate party in Alberta after 1921 did more to create an environment conducive to accepting Social Credit than any other influence in that society, for it remained consistent with third-party precon-

ceptions established in 1921 by the U.F.A. Obversely, the presence of the Liberal alternative to the Conservatives in Saskatchewan in 1934 forced the C.C.F., with the total defeat of the Conservatives (who had come to power in 1929), into the role of opposition and helped perpetuate Saskatchewan's two-party system. D. E. Smith, "A Comparison of Prairie Political Developments in Saskatchewan and Alberta", Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 4(1) (February 1969), 17-26.

68. Converse, Philip E. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Politics", in Ideology and Discontent, D. E. Apter (ed.). New York: Free Press, 1964, 213.
69. Ibid., 212.
70. Ibid., 247.
71. Milnor, Andrew. "The New Politics and Ethnic Revolt: 1929-1938", in Politics in Saskatchewan, Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (eds.). Don Mills: Longmans, 1968, 151-77.
72. Allen, Richard. "The Social Gospel as the Religion of Agrarian Revolt", in Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook (eds.), The West and the Nation: Essays in Honour of W. L. Morton. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976, 174-86.
73. Ibid.
74. Allen, Richard. "The Social Gospel and the Reform Tradition in Canada, 1890-1928", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XLIX(4) (December 1968), 382; Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971, 4ff.
75. Allen. op. cit., and Richard Allen, "The Background of the Social Gospel in Canada", Paper presented at the Conference on the Social Gospel, Regina, 1973; Roger Hutchinson, "The Canadian Social Gospel in the Context of Christian Social Ethics", Paper presented at the Conference on the Social Gospel, Regina, 1973.
76. For example, see Grain Growers' Guide, March 31, 1915, 15ff.
77. Morton. op. cit., 116ff.
78. Burnet, Joan. Next-Year Country: A Study of Rural Social Organization in Alberta. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981, 128.

79. Ibid., 176; J. P. Bate, "Prohibition and the U.F.A.", Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 18(4) (Autumn 1970), 1-6.
80. Irvine, William. Farmers in Politics. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1920, 53.
81. Latta, Maurice C. "The Background for the Social Gospel in American Protestantism", Church History, Vol. V (1963), 256-70.
82. Ibid., 268.
83. Ibid., 269.
84. Miller. op. cit., 309.
85. Ibid.
86. Calderwood, W. "Religious Reactions to the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XXVI (1973), 103-14. As a counter to this position, it has been argued that farmers could resist the Klan precisely because agrarian organizations placed cooperation at the centre of their philosophy, i.e., cooperation between all classes of the community. See Anon, "The Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan", Queen's Quarterly, Vol. 35 (August 1928), 592-602.
87. Kyba, Patrick. "Ballots and Burning Crosses - The Election of 1929", in Politics in Saskatchewan, op. cit., 105-23. It has been pointed out that after the failure of the Progressive convention at Regina in July of 1927, the life of the movement was extended by Premier Gardiner's hostility which blocked any move towards the Liberals, by the advent of the Ku Klux Klan which acted as a catalyst drawing the Progressives and Conservatives together, and by the resultant Progressive-Conservative alliance which survived, in the provincial legislature, for four years after the demise, in 1930, of the Progressive Party in Saskatchewan. W. Calderwood, "The Decline of the Progressive Party in Saskatchewan, 1925-1930", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XXI(3) (1968), 81.
88. This is essentially the argument put forward by Hofstadter with regard to the "irrational" tendencies of the Populist movement in the United States. Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, New York: Vintage Books, 1965.
89. Excerpts from a speech delivered at the Conference on the Social Gospel, March 24, 1973, Regina, Saskatchewan.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

One of the more significant conclusions which can be reached from the foregoing analysis is that by concentrating on the long-term structural situation of the prairie grain producer, it is possible to avoid such assumptions that agrarian unrest represented either a defensive reaction of a rural petty bourgeoisie in search of economic independence or a manifestation of interest group politics in search of radical alternatives to the status quo. The process of industrialization and urbanization did supply the basis of concern and disaffection for many farmers, but it was a reaction specifically articulated in agrarian and rural, not industrial and urban, terms. This important qualification serves to dispel any notion that farmers were simply an appendage to a large working-class movement seeking to modify significantly or even overthrow existing capitalist institutions. Although the explanation for the rise of the socialist C.C.F. in Saskatchewan, for example, appears to become more plausible through reference to the farmers' ostensible receptivity to the idea of labour-agrarian collusion in the struggle to end exploitation by an eastern metropolis, it is inconsistent with the tendencies and dispositions which were revealed through the development of producer organizations. Those tendencies were, for the most part, inherently practical in their implications and revolved around the assumption that the goal of all political and economic activity would be to protect the viability of agriculture as the fundamental industry. As such, proposed changes in the normative patterns of prairie life were conceptualized within a specific agrarian context.

As a norm-oriented movement itself, i.e., one which focuses its energy on modifying and/or protecting existing normative patterns, agrarian reformism centred on alleviating strains and precipitating the development of new models of organization and association. As noted, it should not be inferred that farmers proposed to reconstitute the social order completely - indeed, it was precisely because political authorities, as agents of social control, tolerated and encouraged farmers' activities (without necessarily approving specific proposals) that the movement was consolidated.<sup>1</sup> For example, agrarian demands for tariff reform were fortified when politicians, particularly Progressive and certain Liberal politicians, included reductions in the preferential trade schedule in a broader policy of alleviating the inequities of protectionism. In this manner, as Smelser notes, agencies of social control encourage a norm-oriented movement to retain its norm-oriented character by (a) permitting expressions of grievance but insisting that this expression remain within the confines of legitimacy, and (b) giving a hearing - as defined by institutionalized standards of "fairness"<sup>1</sup> - to the complaints at hand.<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that authorities must accede to the demands of the movement; rather they must leave open the possibility that these demands, along with others, will be heard, and that some responsible decision will be taken with regard to them.<sup>3</sup>

In considering Smelser's scheme from the point of view of its explanatory potential, it must be recognized that his categories for classifying collective behaviour remain on a rather abstract level.

His set of determinants - conduciveness, strain, generalized belief, precipitating events, mobilization for action, and social control - are devised at such a high level of abstraction that they do not generate substantive predictions easily, except of a very general character. Nonetheless, the scheme is useful in bringing together into a meaningful whole seemingly disparate and contradictory evidence. Rather than concentrating on the description of an episode of collective behaviour and the study of its transformation through time, Smelser's approach leads us to concentrate on the factors underlying the emergence of social movements. In this way it is possible to identify the reasons and conditions under which social movements occur, as well as the rationale and conditions under which people join them. Hence pure description is avoided by an emphasis on such factors as the readiness among participants for some alternative pattern of action, the courses of action that are structurally possible, and the beliefs which function to identify the sources of strain and to specify certain responses as possible or appropriate.

As one of the more salient independent variables in the study of agrarian discontent, strains represent the focal point upon which the agrarian movement was mobilized. It has been shown how economic deprivations became a significant factor behind the support for a variety of producer organizations and political associations as wheat growers fought to control the effects of declining and unstable incomes, lack of credit facilities and inadequate representation. By the late 1920's and the entire decade of the 1930's, both drought and



depression further reduced living standards and created a situation conducive to a demand for change. It was suggested, however, that although changes for the worse in one's economic status, in the short run as in the relatively longer run, coupled with fluctuations in income, can act as an incentive for participation in social movements, steady deprivations such as poverty are unable to provide a basis of identification with a new organization. Thus it was generally among middle-income farmers, whose expectations and experiences of relative deprivation were most acute, that the impetus behind the farmers' movement was focused. Even though isolation and loneliness had initially restrained many farmers from participating in earlier organizations, the increase of informal and formal communications networks and access to information accompanying the commercialization of agriculture significantly reduced such constraints to organizational involvement.

Many conducive elements were also involved in the rise of the farmers' movement, but one of the most important was the conduciveness of the party system to accommodate producer grievances. The traditional weakness of the provincial Conservatives in the West, combined with apparent periodic insensitivities of the federal parties, lent themselves to the establishment of direct action and third party options. The rise of the Progressive Party and farmer-controlled or dominated provincial governments gives support to the view that grain producers were in the forefront in initiating substantive changes in the economic and political destinies of the prairie provinces. Yet again, rather than indicating a predisposition toward theories encompassing

a radical transformation of prairie society, farmers approached the issues of the day from an essentially pragmatic viewpoint. As a whole agriculturalists dismissed conceptions of an agrarian economy in which all land would be owned by the state, or all products produced and marketed under government regulations. As devotees of private property and supporters of the freedom of the individual to produce, wheat farmers could tolerate government regulations and invasions of a property sphere only if these were in direct benefit to their enterprise.<sup>4</sup> To this end, regulation and interference could be accepted if unstable prices and income, high and increasing cost of credit, and uncertainty of wheat export sales were controlled. Thus it is possible to identify a significant practical modification of the "free market economy" existing with regard to the Canadian grain marketing system. With the permanent establishment of the Canadian Wheat Board, prairie farmers are able to sell their grain to a farmer-owned Wheat Pool, which in turn sells it to the Board for export abroad. Grain producers are therefore to a large extent guaranteed prices - or at least their fluctuation under a free market system is leveled off.<sup>5</sup>

A further practical limitation to the operation of a purely individualized competitive entrepreneurial system is the existence of various types of cooperative arrangements designed to reduce the amount of risk capital needed to operate a farm enterprise and to assist in protecting the farmer from market imperfections. While cooperatives have been successful generally in lessening individual vulnerability and generating a spirit of mutual help in response to need, they have

been basically unable to bargain with agribusiness firms (such as those operating in the machinery and power, chemical, petrochemical, finance, and transportation industries) for all producers or to control the supply of commodities reaching the market. Consequently, producer-controlled marketing boards have been established provincially and are involved in the sales of farm produce on a fairly wide scale. What this indicates is that despite an apparent contradiction between co-operative strategies employed on the farm and in the marketplace and an individualistic and competitive emphasis based on the institutions of property ownership, prairie grain producers continue to demonstrate the possibility of reconciling the two approaches in the name of practicality.

It should not be inferred from the foregoing that pragmatism is a quality exclusively reserved for describing the essential character of the prairie grain farmer. In most cases it evolved as a basic exigency predicated on the very survival of a farm enterprise exposed to the vagaries of nature and to a highly unstable market structure. The wheat producing areas of prairie Canada furnish a classic example of boom-and-bust economics. Saskatchewan, for instance, in the 1930's had the lowest per capita income in Canada; in 1965 it had the second highest (caused by a bumper crop in a wet year and large sales of grain abroad). Fluctuation has therefore been the norm: wheat sold for \$0.75 a bushel in 1921; was depressed to \$0.25 in the 1930's, and advanced to \$0.53 in 1941 and \$1.60 in 1962.<sup>6</sup> Given this situation, many farmers have diversified into livestock production because of its

stabilizing effects and because, as a matter of practical self-interest, it could sustain the family farm during a poor yield season.

Although research is needed to trace the changes in attitude and circumstance from the 1930's to the present, one change which has dominated the agricultural production scene has been the growth of large-scale farming units. Accompanying this growth has been a concern among grain growers' organizations and prairie governments alike over a tendency toward few family farms and rural depopulation. While conceding that larger farming units are more economical because it is possible to minimize operating costs relative to fixed costs, the outcome is often a decrease in the overall volume of production coming from the land. Beyond a certain farm size, yield per acre falls off because the land is not cultivated as intensively; consequently, the Saskatchewan government is now encouraging farm operators to expand by "intensification rather than extensification".<sup>7</sup> This means that grain growers would try to boost the productivity of their farm operation by diversification into other forms of agricultural activity, rather than increasing their acreage beyond a certain size. In this case, dependence on a single crop would no longer be as devastating in hard times and would help ease labour shortages by providing year-round employment.

Complicating this development has been a recurrent theme in agrarian discontent since the turn of the century: discriminatory federal policies in favour of eastern interests. For example, the government's eastern-oriented food-grains policy and Otto Lang's (the

Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board) ostensible intention to abandon the Crow's Nest Pass Agreement which provided preferential freight rates to producers for shipping grain and flour to Vancouver and Thunder Bay, have caused renewed ferment on the prairies. The Wheat Pools and the National Farmers Union (successor to the United Farmers of Canada) have banded together to demand the retention of the preferential tariffs, for it is argued that the railways would, in the absence of the Crow's Nest Pass Agreement, be able to vary rates among different sized delivery points. In effect such power would enable them to dictate that farmers deliver to a few central locations, where in-land terminals with capacity to handle as much as five million bushels of grain would be built.<sup>8</sup>

Although Lang has deferred a decision to scrap the tariffs, the issue has accentuated a long-standing problem which has afflicted grain growers' organizations since their inception - disagreement over the means to achieve their goals.<sup>9</sup> The Palliser Wheat Growers Association, for example, which includes a mere 3,000 farmers out of 100,000 wheat producers in the three prairie provinces, has joined Lang in calling for a market strategy emphasizing the "natural flow" of a system of supply and demand by dealing with private grain merchants rather than being restricted by the quota system currently employed by the Canadian Wheat Board. Despite limited achievements, the free traders have managed to convince Ottawa to allow private grain companies to purchase food grains directly from the farmer and sell to the domestic market throughout Canada. Under the old system - a system

which formed the basis of grain grower demands in the 1920's and 30's - the Wheat Board was the exclusive buyer and seller of feed grains for export and of western grain intended for sale in Eastern Canada. Under this revised system, many prairie farmers feel their bargaining position has been destroyed and that they are more vulnerable to the vicissitudes of market prices, particularly when labour strife has blocked grain shipments and has lowered both domestic and foreign prices. The grain handlers strike in 1974, for example, caused at least \$10 million in demurrage charges that the Wheat Board had to pay shipping firms for defaulting on delivery of western grain. This cost in turn was subtracted from the price the Board paid to farmers.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, demands for guaranteed and stabilized prices have intensified, involving both the prices of grain for export and for domestic use.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the N.F.U. and the Wheat Pools have insisted that the Wheat Board become the exclusive agent for marketing grain, thereby eliminating price fluctuations caused by trading on the Winnipeg and Chicago commodity exchanges.<sup>12</sup>

These grievances, forming the basis of grain grower unrest, continue to centre upon the issue that farmers' income remains highly unstable relative to the rest of the population. Efforts to force governments to index costs, i.e., take into consideration rising costs of production, illustrate the point. Tendencies on the part of government to stabilize its balance of payments, particularly in times of recession, by fixing prices for extended periods of time have been met by vehement agrarian opposition and have renewed charges of discrimination

and indifference to the plight of the prairie wheat producer. Once again western discontent has been concentrated on the alleged insensitivity of eastern centres of political and financial dominance and on the need for the western provinces to exert their independence,<sup>13</sup> although the practical limitations of such a stance are indeed recognized by a discerning public. Nonetheless, such expressions have their roots deep in the political and economic history of Canadian society, and in the movements of protest which centred in the wheat-producing areas of the western plains.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Smelser, Neil. Theory of Collective Behaviour. Glencoe: Free Press, 1963, 306.
2. Ibid., 307.
3. Ibid.
4. Bennett, John W. Northern Plainsmen: Adaptive Strategy and Agrarian Life. Chicago: Aldine, 1969, 280.
5. Ibid. From the viewpoint of government policy-makers, the problem in the agricultural sector traditionally has revolved around low incomes for farmers. In an attempt to alleviate this problem, programmes involving price supports and subsidies for agricultural products were introduced. These programmes exert pressures on government finances and are today unpopular, given the relatively high cost of food for the consumer. Thus politicians are placed in the difficult position of opposing high and rising food prices to combat inflation and at the same time supporting the principle of, and programmes for, higher farm incomes.
6. Ibid., 99.
7. "Grain Farmers are Determined to be Masters of their Freight", The Financial Post, June 28, 1975, 28.
8. Ibid.
9. It has been suggested that since there are large numbers of farmers' organizations at the present time, it can probably be concluded that there are far too many of them. The vastness of the numbers precludes a united stance by the organizations in their relationships with government and other sectors of the industry. If farmers were able to form one body instead of the present type of structure, a more efficient and effective form of organization would result. W. J. Craddock and E. T. Lewis, "Agriculture in the Canadian Economy", in Issues in Canadian Economics, L. H. Officer and L. B. Smith (eds.), Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1974, 155. This suggestion, however, tends to ignore the lessons of history, for there continues to be a tendency of basing expectations and judgments in the context of regional particularisms - a formidable barrier to establishing national goals and objectives.
10. Time Canada, October 21, 1974, 10-11.
11. House of Commons Debates, Vol. 119, May 1, 1975, 5401-3; May 7, 1975, 5561-74; June 18, 1975, 6885-91.



12. Ibid., July 22, 1975, 7805.
13. See, for example, John J. Barr and Owen Anderson (eds.), The Unfinished Revolt: Some Views on Western Independence. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### BOOKS:

1. Alford, Robert R. Party and Society. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963.
2. Allen, Richard. The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971.
3. Apter, David E. (ed.). Ideology and Discontent. New York: Free Press, 1964.
4. Barr, John J. and Owen Anderson (eds.). The Unfinished Revolt: Some Views on Western Independence. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971.
5. Bell, Daniel (ed.). The Radical Right. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1964.
6. Bennett, John W. Northern Plainsmen: Adaptive Strategy and Agrarian Life. Chicago: Aldine, 1969.
7. Berger, Carl and Ramsay Cook (eds.). The West and the Nation: Essays in Honour of W. L. Morton. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976.
8. Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann. The Social Construction of Reality. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1967.
9. Borhek, James T. and Richard F. Curtis. A Sociology of Belief. New York: Wiley, 1975.
10. Boyd, Hugh. New Breaking: An Outline of Cooperation Among the Farmers of Western Canada. Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1938.
11. Brebner, J. B. The Hingling of Canadian & American Peoples. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940.
12. Britnell, G. E. The Wheat Economy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1939.
13. Buck, Solon. The Agrarian Crusade. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920.
14. Burnet, Jean. Next-Year Country: A Study of Rural Social Organization in Alberta. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951.

15. Butterfield, Herbert. History and Human Relations. London: Collins, 1951.
16. Cahnman, Werner J. and Alvin Bockoff (eds.). Sociology and History. New York: Free Press, 1964.
17. Cameron, W. B. Modern Social Movements. New York: Random House, 1966.
18. Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. The American Voter: An Abridgement. New York: Wiley, 1964.
19. Card, B. Y. The Canadian Prairie Provinces from 1870-1950: A Sociological Introduction. Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1960.
20. Chipman, George F. The Siege of Ottawa. Ottawa, 1910.
21. Clark, S. D. The Developing Canadian Community. 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968.
22. Coates, R. H. and H. C. MacLean. The American-Born in Canada: A Statistical Interpretation. Toronto: Macmillan, 1943.
23. Cook, Ramsay et al. (eds.). Approaches to Canadian History. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967.
24. \_\_\_\_\_. Politics of Discontent. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969.
25. Creighton, D. G. Dominion of the North. Toronto: Macmillan, 1957.
26. Davis, Joseph S. On Agricultural Policy 1926-1938. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1939.
27. Dawson, C. and E. Younge. Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces. Toronto: Macmillan, 1940.
28. Donnelly, M. S. The Government of Manitoba. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963.
29. Durden, Robert. The Climax of Populism. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965.
30. Englemann, F. C. and M. A. Schwartz. Political Parties and the Canadian Social Structure. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1967.

31. Fowke, V. C. The National Policy and the Wheat Economy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957.
32. Gaston, Herbert G. The Non-Partisan League. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1920.
33. Harris, Nigel. Beliefs in Society: The Problem of Ideology. London: C. A. Watts, 1968.
34. Hartz, Louis. The Liberal Tradition in America. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1955.
35. Hartz, Louis et al. The Founding of New Societies in the History of the United States, Latin America, South Africa, Canada and Australia. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964.
36. Heberle, Rudolph. Social Movements. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1951.
37. Hicks, John D. The Populist Revolt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931.
38. Hofstadter, Richard. The Age of Reform. New York: Vintage, 1955.
39. Hook, Sidney. The Hero in History. New York: John Day Co., 1943.
40. Horowitz, Irving Louis. Philosophy, Science and the Sociology of Knowledge. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1961.
41. Innis, H. A. The History of the C.P.R. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1923.
42. Ionescu, G. and E. Gellner (eds.). Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969.
43. Irvine, William. Farmers in Politics. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1920.
44. Irving, John A. The Social Credit Movement in Alberta. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959.
45. Key, V. O. Jr. Southern Politics. New York: Vintage Books, 1949.
46. ———. Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1958.

47. Kornhauser, William. The Politics of Mass Society. New York: Free Press, 1959.
48. Lane, Robert E. Political Man. New York: Free Press, 1972.
49. Laqueur, Walter Z. Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement. New York: Basic Books, 1962.
50. Lipset, S. M. Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1968.
51. Lower, A. R. M. Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada. Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, IX, part I, Toronto: Macmillan, 1936.
52. \_\_\_\_\_. Colony to Nation. Toronto: Longmans, 1964.
53. MacGibbon, D. A. The Canadian Grain Trade. Toronto: Macmillan, 1932.
54. Mackintosh, W. A. Agricultural Cooperation in Western Canada. Toronto: Ryerson, 1924.
55. \_\_\_\_\_. Economic Problems of the Prairie Provinces. Toronto: Macmillan, 1935.
56. Macpherson, C. B. Democracy in Alberta: Social Credit in Alberta. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962.
57. Mannheim, Karl. Ideology and Utopia. New York: Harvest Books, 1936.
58. Marshall, T. H. Class, Citizenship and Social Development. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1965.
59. Marx, Karl. The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonapart. New York: International Publishers, 1969.
60. Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. The German Ideology. R. Pascal (ed.). New York: International Publishers, 1969.
61. Masters, D. C. The Winnipeg General Strike. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950.
62. Michels, Robert. Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy. Glencoe: Free Press, 1949.

63. Moore, Barrington, Jr. Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966.
64. Moorhouse, Hopkins. Deep Furrows. Toronto: McLeod, 1918.
65. Morton, A. S. History of Prairie Settlement. Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, VII, part 1. Toronto: Macmillan, 1938.
66. Morton, W. L. The Progressive Party in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950.
67. Murchie, R. W. Agricultural Progress on the Prairie Frontier. Toronto: Macmillan, 1936.
68. Nugent, Walter. The Tolerant Populists. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.
69. Officer, L. H. and L. B. Smith (eds.). Issues in Canadian Economics. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1974.
70. Ossenberg, R. J. (ed.). Canadian Society: Pluralism, Change, and Conflict. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1971.
71. Parsons, Talcott. Essays in Sociological Theory. New York: Free Press, 1954.
72. Patton, Harold S. Grain Growers' Cooperation in Western Canada. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928.
73. Pinard, M. The Rise of a Third Party: A Study in Crisis Politics. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971.
74. Pollack, Norman. The Populist Response to Industrial America: Midwestern Populist Thought. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962.
75. Rolph, William K. Henry Wise Wood of Alberta. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950.
76. Runciman, W. G. Relative Deprivation and Social Justice. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.
77. Scarrow, H. A. Canada Votes: A Handbook of Federal and Provincial Election Data. New Orleans: Hauser Press, 1962.

78. Schutz, Alfred. Collected Papers, Vol. I. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1962.
79. Schwartz, C. The Search for Stability. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1959.
80. Schwartz, Mildred A. Public Opinion and Canadian Identity. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.
81. Smelser, Neil. Theory of Collective Behaviour. Glencoe: Free Press, 1963.
82. Smith, T. L. and P. E. Zopf, Jr. Principles of Inductive Rural Sociology. Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Co., 1970.
83. Stead, Robert J. C. Grain. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969.
84. Swainson, Donald (ed.). Oliver Mowat's Ontario. Toronto: Macmillan, 1972.
85. Taylor, Carl C. Rural Sociology. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1933.
86. ———. The Farmers' Movement, 1620-1920. New York: American Book Company, 1953.
87. Thomas, L. G. The Liberal Party in Alberta. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959.
88. Thorburn, H. G. (ed.). Party Politics in Canada. 3rd ed. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1972.
89. Toennies, Ferdinand. Community and Society. Charles Loomis, trans. and ed. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963.
90. Trofimenkoff, S. M. (ed.). The Twenties in Western Canada. Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1972.
91. Troper, H. M. Only Farmers Need Apply. Toronto: Griffen House, 1972.
92. Turner, F. J. The Frontier in American History. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920.
93. Turner, Ralph H. and Lewis M. Killian. Collective Behaviour. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1957.

94. Tyre, Robert. Douglas in Saskatchewan: The Story of a Socialist Experiment. Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1962.
95. Ward, Norman and Duff Spafford (eds.). Politics in Saskatchewan. Don Mills: Longmans, 1968.
96. Weber, Max. The Methodology of the Social Sciences. Trans. by E. A. Shils and H. A. Finch. New York: Free Press, 1949.
97. \_\_\_\_\_. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Trans. by Talcott Parsons. New York: Scribner, 1958.
98. Wood, Louis Aubrey. A History of Farmers Movements in Canada. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1924.
99. Woodward, C. Vann. Origins of the New South, 1877-1913. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951.
100. Yates, S. W. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool: Its Origin, Organization and Progress, 1924-1935. United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section), (Saskatoon 1947).

#### PAMPHLETS AND REPORTS:

1. Ager, Clarus. "The Farmer and the Interests: A Study in Economic Parasitism", (1916), Pamphlet No. 4410. Public Archives of Canada.
2. Armstrong, R. W. "The Salt of the Earth: A Study in Rural Life and Social Progress", (1930), Pamphlet No. 1658. McMaster University Archives.
3. Bredt, Paul F. Submission on Behalf of the Pool Organization of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba to Royal Grain Inquiry Commission, 1937.
4. C.C.F. Papers, First Annual Convention, 1936. McMaster-University Archives.
5. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census Reports, 1921, Vol. V, Agriculture, Table 2; 1951; 1961, Nos. 96-537, 96-538, 96-539.
6. Crerar Papers, Crerar to J. J. Morrison, September 7, 1920; Morrison to Crerar, September 20, 1920; Crerar to Chipman, April 11, 1919; Crerar to Morrison, September 3, 1919; Crerar to A. K. Cameron, September 20, 1921.



7. Good, W. C. "Is Democracy Doomed?", (1933), Pamphlet No. 1609, McMaster University Archives.
8. Hann, Russell. "Some Historical Perspectives on Canadian Agrarian Political Movements: The Ontario Origins of Agrarian Criticism of Canadian Industrial Society", (n.d.), Pamphlet No. 1717, McMaster University Archives.
9. House of Commons Debates, Vol. 3, 1920; Vol. 119, May 1, 1975, May 7, 1975, June 18, 1975.
10. Kerr, T. Ainslie. "Canada's Co-ops", (1955), Pamphlet No. 1628, McMaster University Archives.
11. Mackintosh, W. A. "The Canadian Wheat Pools", (1925), Pamphlet No. 5274, Public Archives of Canada.
12. Michell, H. "The Grange in Canada", (1914), Pamphlet No. 1431, Public Archives of Canada.
13. ———. "The Problem of Agricultural Credit in Canada", (1914), Pamphlet No. 4128, Public Archives of Canada.
14. National Liberal Committee, "Liberals and Farmers", (October 1921), Pamphlet No. 5081, Public Archives of Canada.
15. National Liberal and Conservative Party, "Many Farmers are Protectionists", (1921), Pamphlet No. 5082, Public Archives of Canada.
16. Ontario C.C.F. Provincial Council, Farm Committee Report, (October 4-5, 1952), McMaster University Archives.
17. Ontario Election Pamphlets, "The 'Patrons of Industry' From a Speech of Oliver Mowat", (November 23, 1893), Pamphlet No. 484, McMaster University Archives.
18. "Platform of the Farmers' Party", Resolution passed by the Canadian Council of Agriculture at a Meeting held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, November 29, 1918, Public Archives of Canada.
19. Regina Manifesto (Programme of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, adopted at the First National Convention held at Regina, Saskatchewan, July, 1933), Pamphlet No. 1557, McMaster University Archives.
20. Report of the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations. Ottawa: King's Printer, (1940), Book I.

21. Report of the Survey Board for Southern Alberta, (January, 1922).
22. Take It from Uncle George: Co-operation in Saskatchewan: An Idea in Action, published by the Co-operative Union of Canada (Saskatchewan Section), (1943), Pamphlet No. 1516, McMaster University Archives.
23. The Minutes of the Annual Convention of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association held at Brandon on January 9-11, 1918.
24. The National Liberal and Conservative Party Publicity Committee Publications 1921 Election, "Why Protection is Necessary", No. 22; "The Cramer-Wood Tariff", No. 23; "What the Farmer Pays", No. 65, Pamphlet No. 5080, Public Archives of Canada.

#### ARTICLES:

1. Allcock, J. B. "'Populism': A Brief Biography", Sociology, Vol. 5(3) (September 1971), 371-387.
2. Allen, Richard. "The Social Gospel and the Reform Tradition in Canada, 1890-1928", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XLIX(4) (December 1968).
3. \_\_\_\_\_. "The Social Gospel as the Religion of Agrarian Revolt", in Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook (eds.), The West and the Nation: Essays in Honour of W. L. Morton. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart (1976), 174-86.
4. Anon. "The Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan", Queen's Quarterly, Vol. 35 (Autumn 1928), 592-602.
5. Bate, J. P. "Prohibition and the U.F.A.", Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 18(4) (Autumn 1970), 1-6.
6. Bennett, J. W. and C. Krueger. "Agrarian Pragmatism and Radical Politics", in S. M. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1968.
7. Bercuson, D. J. "Western Labour Radicalism and The One Big Union: Myths and Realities", in Politics in Saskatchewan, Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (eds.). Don Mills, Longmans, 1968, 32-49.

8. ———. "The Winnipeg General Strike, Collective Bargaining, and The One Big Union Issue", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LI(2) (June 1970), 164-76.
9. Blais, Andre. "Third Parties in Canadian Provincial Politics", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. VI(3) (September 1973), 422-38.
10. Brennan, J. W. "C. A. Dunning and the Challenge of the Progressives, 1922-25", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XXII(1) (1969), 1-12.
11. Brown, Lorne. "The Progressive Tradition in Saskatchewan", Our Generation, Vol. 6(4) (June 1969), 21-46.
12. Calderwood, William. "The Decline of the Progressive Party in Saskatchewan, 1925-1930", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XXI(3) (1968), 81-99.
13. ———. "Religious Peactions to the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XXVI (1973), 103-14.
14. Caplan, Gerald F. "The Failure of Canadian Socialism: The Ontario Experience, 1932-1945", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XLIV(2) (June 1963), 93-121.
15. Careless, J. M. S. "Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History", in Approaches to Canadian History, Ramsay Cook et al. (eds.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967.
16. ———. "'Limited Identities' in Canada", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. L(1) (March 1969), 1-10.
17. Chambers, Elizabeth. "The Referendum and the Plebiscite", in Ward and Spafford (eds.), op. cit.
18. Clark, S. D. "The Canadian Manufacturers Association", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. 4 (November 1938), 505-23.
19. ———. "The Religious Sect in Canadian Politics", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 51(3) (November 1945).
20. Converse, Philip E. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics", in Ideology and Discontent, D. E. Apter (ed.). New York: Free Press, 1964.
21. Craddock, W. J. and E. T. Lewis. "Agriculture in the Canadian Economy", in Issues in Canadian Economics, L. H. Officer and L. B. Smith (eds.). Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1974.

22. Davis, A. K. "The Saskatchewan CCF", Our Generation, Vol. 6(4) (June 1969).
23. \_\_\_\_\_. "Canadian Society and History as Hinterland Versus Metropolis", in Canadian Society: Pluralism, Change, and Conflict, R. J. Ossenberg (ed.). Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1971, 6-32.
24. Davis, Joseph S. "Agricultural Fundamentalism", On Agricultural Policy 1926-1938. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1939, 24-43.
25. Documents of Western History: The Agrarian Movement in the 1890's: A Report of an Address by J. M. Douglas at Saltcoats in 'The Patrons' Advocate', February 13, 1895", Saskatchewan History, Vol. VII(2) (1954), 51-55.
26. Eager, Evelyn. "The Conservatism of the Saskatchewan Electorate", in Ward and Spafford (eds.), op. cit.
27. Embree, D. G. "Rise of the United Farmers of Alberta", Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 5(4) (Autumn 1957), 1-5.
28. Flanagan, Thomas. "Political Geography and the United Farmers of Alberta", in The Twenties in Western Canada, S. M. Trofimenkoff (ed.). Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1972.
29. Fowke, V. C. "Royal Commissions and Canadian Agricultural Policy", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. XIV(2) (May 1948), 163-75.
30. \_\_\_\_\_. "The National Policy - Old and New", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. XVIII(3) (August 1952), 271-86.
31. Geertz, Clifford. "Ideology as a Cultural System", in Apter (ed.), op. cit.
32. Gerth, Hans. "The Nazi Party: Its Leadership and Composition", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 45 (1940), 517-41.
33. Gonick, C. W. "Metropolis/Hinterland: Themes", Canadian Dimension, Vol. 8 (March-April 1972), 24-8.
34. Grindley, T. W. "Wheat in the Canadian West", Queen's Quarterly, Vol. XXXVII (Spring 1930), 370-385.
35. Harbron, John D. "Social Credit in B.C.", Canadian Forum, Vol. 32, (August 1952), 102-3.

36. Harrington, J. L. "The Drury Debacle: An Inquiry into the Causes of the Farmers' Defeat of '23", The Canadian Forum, Vol. XXVIII (333) (October 1948), 153-5.
37. Horn, Michiel. "The League for Social Reconstruction and the Development of a Canadian Socialism", Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 7(4) (November 1972), 3-17.
38. ———. "Frank Underhill's Early Drafts of the Regina Manifesto 1933", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LIV(4) (December 1973), 393-418.
39. Horowitz, Gad. "Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism in Canada: An Interpretation", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. XXXII(2) (May 1966).
40. Innis, H. A. "Significant Factors in Canadian Economic Development", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XVIII(4) (1937).
41. Irving, John A. "Henry Wise Wood", The Canadian Forum, Vol. XXXI (366) (July 1951), 86-7.
42. ———. "The Appeal of Social Credit", Queen's Quarterly, Vol. LX(2) (Summer 1953), 146-60.
43. Kyba, Patrick. "Ballots and Burning Crosses - The Election of 1929", in Ward and Spafford (eds.), op. cit., 105-23.
44. Latta, Maurice C. "The Background for the Social Gospel in American Protestantism", Church History, Vol. V (1963), 256-70.
45. Lipset, S. M. "The Rural Community and Political Leadership in Saskatchewan", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. XIII (August 1947), 410-28.
46. ———. "Political Participation and the Organization of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. XIV(2) (May 1948), 191-208.
47. ———. "Democracy in Alberta", Part I, Canadian Forum, Vol. 34(406) (November 1954), 175-177; Part II (407) (December 1954), 196-198.
48. Lower, A. R. M. "The Origins of Democracy in Canada", Canadian Historical Association, Annual Report (1930), 65-70.
49. Macpherson, C. B. "Democracy in Alberta: A Reply", Canadian Forum, Vol. 34(408) (January 1955), 223-5.

50. Macpherson, Ian. "The Co-operative Union of Canada and the Prairies in 1919-1929", in Trofimenkoff (ed.), op. cit.
51. MacRae, Donald. "Populism as an Ideology", in Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics, G. Ionescu and E. Gellner (eds.). London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1960, 166-179.
52. Mallory, J. R. "Social Credit: Party or Movement?", Canadian Forum, Vol. XXXV (June 1955), 52-5.
53. McCrorie, J. N. "Change and Paradox in Agrarian Social Movements: The Case of Saskatchewan", in Ossenberg, op. cit.
54. McCutcheon, Brian R. "The Patrons of Industry in Manitoba, 1890-1898", Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, Series III(22) (1965-66), 8-9.
55. Mealing, S. R. "The Concept of Social Class and the Interpretation of Canadian History", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XLVI(3) (September 1965), 212.
56. Milnor, Andrew. "The New Politics and Ethnic Revolt: 1929-1938", in Ward and Spafford (eds.), op. cit., 151-77.
57. Minogue, Kenneth. "Populism as a Political Movement", in Ionescu and Gellner, op. cit., 197-211.
58. Morrison, D. E. and Allan D. Steeves. "Deprivation, Discontent, and Social Movement Participation: Evidence on a Contemporary Farmers' Movement, the N.F.O.", Rural Sociology, Vol. 32 (1967), 414-34.
59. Morton, W. L. "Direct Legislation and the Origins of the Progressive Movement", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XXV(3) (September 1944), 279-88.
60. \_\_\_\_\_. "The Western Progressive Movement, 1919-1921", The Canadian Historical Association, Annual Report (1946).
61. \_\_\_\_\_. "The Western Progressive Movement and Cabinet Domination", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. XII(2) (May 1946), 136-47.
62. \_\_\_\_\_. "The Social Philosophy of Henry Wise Wood", Agricultural History, Vol. 22(2) (April 1948).
63. \_\_\_\_\_. "The Bias of Prairie Politics", Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Vol. XLIX, Series III, Section Two (June 1955).

64. Drlikow, Lionel. "The Reform Movement in Manitoba", Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, Series III, no. 16 (1961), 54-55.
65. Ormsby, M. A. "The United Farmers of British Columbia: An Abortive Third-Party Movement", The British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. XVII (1953), 53-73.
66. Ouellet, Fernand. "Le nationalisme canadien-français: de ses origines à l'insurrection de 1837", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XLV (1964), 277-92.
67. Parsons, Talcott. "Social Classes and Class Conflict in the Light of Recent Sociological Theory", in Essays in Sociological Theory. New York: Free Press, 1954.
68. Pinard, Maurice. "Poverty and Political Movements", Social Problems, Vol. 15(2) (Fall 1967), 358-373.
69. ———. "Third Parties in Canada Revisited: A Rejoinder and Elaboration of the Theory of One-Party Dominance", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. VI(3) (September 1973), 439-60.
70. Rioux, Marcel. "Conscience ethnique et conscience du classe au Québec", Researches Sociographiques, Vol. VI (1965), 23-32.
71. Robin, Martin. "The Social Basis of Party Politics in British Columbia", Queen's Quarterly, Vol. LXXII(4) (Winter 1966), 675-90.
72. Russell, P. A. "The Co-operative Government's Response to the Depression, 1930-1934", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XXIV(3) (1971), 81-100.
73. Saloutos, Theodore. "The Rise of the Nonpartisan League in North Dakota, 1915-1917", Agricultural History, Vol. 20(43) (January 1946).
74. Schultz, Harold J. "Aberhart: The Organization Man", Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 7(2) (Spring 1959), 19-26.
75. ———. "Portrait of a Premier: William Aberhart", in Politics of Discontent, Ramsay Cook et al (eds.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962, 1-27.
76. ———. "A Second Term: 1940", Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 10(1) (Winter 1962), 17-26.

77. Selznick, Philip. "Institutional Vulnerability in Mass Society", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LVI (1951), 320-31.
78. Serfaty, Meir. "The Unity Movement in Alberta", Alberta Historical Review, Vol. 21(2) (Spring 1973), 1-9.
79. Shils, Edward. "The Intellectuals in the Political Development of the New States", World Politics, Vol. XII(3) (April 1960), 329-368.
80. ———. "The Theory of Mass Society", Diogenes, No. 39 (Fall 1962).
81. Shortt, S. E. D. "Social Change & Political Crisis in Rural Ontario: The Patrons of Industry, 1889-1896", in Oliver Mowat's Ontario, Donald Swainson (ed.). Toronto: Macmillan, 1972.
82. Silverstein, Sanford. "Occupational Class and Voting Behaviour: Electoral Support of a Left-Wing Protest Movement in a Period of Prosperity", in Lipset, op. cit., 451-60.
83. Sinclair, Peter R. "The Saskatchewan C.C.F. and the Communist Party in the 1930's", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XXVI(1) (Winter 1973), 1-10.
84. Smiley, Donald V. "Canada's Poujadists: A New Look at Social Credit", Canadian Forum, Vol. XLII(500) (September 1962), 121-3.
85. Smith, David E. "A Comparison of Prairie Political Developments in Saskatchewan and Alberta", Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 4(1) (February 1969), 17-26.
86. Smith, Denis. "Rhetorical Radical", Canadian Forum, Vol. XLIII (515) (December 1963), 203-5.
87. ———. "Prairie Revolt, Federalism and the Party System", in Party Politics in Canada. 3rd ed., H. G. Thorburn (ed.). Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1972.
88. Spafford, D. S. "'Independent' Politics in Saskatchewan Before the Nonpartisan League", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XVIII(1) (1965).
89. ———. "The Elevator Issue, The Organized Farmers and the Government", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XV(3) (1962).



90. Stanley, G. F. G. "Western Canada and the Frontier Thesis", Canadian Historical Association, Annual Report (1940), 105-14.
91. ———. "Regionalism in Canadian History", Ontario History, Vol. LI(3) (Summer 1959), 163-71.
92. Stevenson, J. A. "The Saskatchewan Election", Dalhousie Review, Vol. XXIV(2) (July 1944), 219-24.
93. Stewart, Angus. "The Social Roots", in Ionescu and Gellner (eds.), op. cit., 180-196.
94. Stinchcombe, Arthur L. "Agricultural Enterprise and Rural Class Relations", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 67 (1961-62), 165-176.
95. Thompson, J. S. "The Social Credit Experiment under W. Aberhart Discussed", Dalhousie Review, Vol. XV (October 1935), 373-6.
96. Turner, Allan R. "W. R. Motherwell: The Emergence of a Farm Leader", Saskatchewan History, Vol. XI(3) (Autumn 1958), 94-103.
97. Turner, F. J. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", in The Frontier in American History. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920, 1-38.
98. Underhill, F. H. "The Development of National Political Parties in Canada", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XVI(4) (December 1935), 367-87.
99. Walter, Murray. "Continental Europeans in Western Canada", Queen's Quarterly, Vol. 38 (1938), 68-79.
100. Watt, James T. "Anti-Catholic Nativism in Canada: The Protestant Protective Association", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XLVIII (1) (March 1967), 45-58.
101. White, Graham. "One-Party Dominance and Third Parties: The Pinard Theory Reconsidered", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. VI(3) (September 1973), 399-421.
102. Wiles, Peter. "A Syndrome, Not a Doctrine: Some Elementary Theses on Populism", Ionescu and Gellner (eds.), op. cit., 166-179.
103. Wiseman, Nelson. "The C.C.F. and the Manitoba 'Non-Partisan' Government of 1940", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LIV(2) (June 1973), 175-93.
104. Wood, H. W. "In Defense of Group Politics", The Canadian Forum, Vol. 3(27) (December 1922), 72-4.

105. Worsley, Peter. "The Concept of Populism", in Ionescu and Gellner, op. cit., 215-250.
106. Zakuta, Leo. "The C.C.F.-N.D.P. Membership in a Becalmed Protest Movement", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. XXIV (1958), 96-108.

UNPUBLISHED WORKS:

1. Allen, Richard. "The Background of the Social Gospel in Canada", Paper presented at the Conference on the Social Gospel, Regina, 1973.
2. Anderson, F. W. "Some Political Aspects of the Grain Growers' Movement, (1915-1935) With Particular Reference to Saskatchewan", Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon), 1949.
3. Anderson, Owen. "The Alberta Social Credit Party: An Empirical Analysis of Membership, Characteristics, Participation and Opinions", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1972.
4. Courville, L. O. "The Saskatchewan Progressives", Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan (Regina Campus), 1971.
5. Gordon, J. King. "A Christian Socialist in the 1930's", Paper presented at the Conference on the Social Gospel, Regina, 1973.
6. Hiller, Harry H. "A Critical Analysis of the Role of Religion in a Canadian Populist Movement: The Emergence and Dominance of the Social Credit Party in Alberta", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, McMaster University, 1972.
7. Hutchinson, Roger. "The Canadian Social Gospel in the Context of Christian Social Ethics", Paper presented at the Conference on the Social Gospel, Regina, 1973.
8. Lengel, Leland Levi. "The Righteous Cause: Some Religious Aspects of Kansas Populism", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oregon, 1968.
9. McCrorie, J. N. "The Saskatchewan Farmers' Movement", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1967.

10. Mills, Joseph C. "A Study of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, 1910-1930", Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1949.
11. Milnor, A. J. "Agrarian Protest in Saskatchewan, 1929-1948: A Study in Ethnic Politics", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1962.
12. Silverstein, Sanford. "The Rise, Ascendancy and Decline of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation Party in Saskatchewan, Canada", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Washington University, 1968.
13. Sinclair, Peter R. "Populism in Alberta and Saskatchewan", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1972.
14. \_\_\_\_\_. "William Aberhart and Social Credit: The Charismatic Legitimation of a Hero", Unpublished Manuscript, n.d.
15. Tipping, Fred. "The Social Gospel and Early Labour Movements in Western Canada", Paper presented at the Conference on the Social Gospel, Regina, March, 1973.
16. Trowbridge, R. W. "War Time Rural Discontent and the Rise of the United Farmers of Ontario, 1914-1919", Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Waterloo, 1966.

#### NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS:

1. Alberta Non-Partisan, 1917-1919.
2. Calgary Herald, 1922-1926.
3. Canada Year Book, 1905-1935.
4. Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1912-1936.
5. Darby, A. E. "Progressive Prospects", Grain Growers' Guide, October 29, 1924.
6. Drury, E. C. "The Canadian Farmer: What He Wants", Maclean's, Vol. XLI(12), June 15, 1928.
7. "Grain Farmers are Determined to be Masters of their Freight", The Financial Post, June 28, 1975.

8. Grain Growers' Guide, 1908-1926.
9. "Grain Growers of the '90's", Grain Growers' Guide, March 1, 1916.
10. Lambert, N. "How the Grain Growers Grew", Grain Growers' Guide, June 26, 1918.
11. Manitoba Free Press, 1920-1926.
12. Montreal Gazette, 1930.
13. Montreal Star, 1930.
14. Ottawa Morning Citizen, 1930.
15. Ottawa Morning Journal, 1931.
16. Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph, 1930.
17. Smith, W. L. "When the Patrons Swept Ontario", Grain Growers' Guide, December 1, 1926.
18. Stevenson, J. A. "The Battle for Democracy in Canada", Grain Growers' Guide, November 2, 1910.
19. The Morning Leader, Regina, December 15, 1909.
20. "The Non-Partisan League", Grain Growers' Guide, September 5, 1917.
21. "The Progressive Division", Grain Growers' Guide, July 9, 1924.
22. Time Canada, October 21, 1974.
23. Toronto Globe, 1910-1930.
24. Toronto Mail and Empire, 1934.
25. U.F.A., 1922-1924.
26. Winnipeg Free Press, 1933.
27. Wood, H. W. "Organization for Democracy", Grain Growers' Guide, December 4, December 11, 1918.
28. \_\_\_\_\_. "The Efficient Citizenship Group", Grain Growers' Guide, March 22, 1922.
29. \_\_\_\_\_. "The Significance of Democratic Group Organization", U.F.A., April 15, 1922.