FARMERS OUTSTANDING IN THEIR FIELD:
The Ginger Group in Politics, 1921 to 1935

by

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Abstract

The Ginger Group, the ten M.P.s who split from the caucus of the National Progressive Party in June and July, 1924, marked a rare organized attempt in the Canadian Parliament to achieve democracy, or more precisely what Aristotle called polity. The Ginger Group members represented the more radical section of the Progressive movement, the section most distinct from traditional Canadian politics. They influenced fundamentally the inter-war reform movements: without the Ginger Group, the Progressive movement, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Social Credit League would have happened differently.

In the early Progressive party, the Gingerites stood most strongly for constituents' rights, preventing the Progressive party from forming a coalition with the Liberals. For the next two years, they fought increasing central control in the Progressive party. By mid 1924, they believed that the principles of the movement they represented were irreconcilable with the Progressive party and so they broke away from its caucus. Between their secession and the onset of the Depression, a number of the Ginger Group members, most notably the five Alberta members plus Agnes Macphail of Ontario and M.N. Campbell of Saskatchewan, were eloquent and influential Parliamentarians who worked in close co-operation with Labour M.P.'s such as J.S. Woodsworth and Labour/Farmer M.P. William Irvine.

The renewal of political protest in the Depression gave the Gingerites a new opportunity to expand their reform movement beyond the remnants of the Progressives. The Gingerites and their Labour M.P. allies were the parliamentary nucleus from which grew the CCF. More indirectly, the Alberta Gingerites contributed to Social Credit: although they came to be strong

opponents of Aberhart's Social Credit League, their outspoken advocacy of unorthodox financial reforms such as Douglas Social Credit prepared the way for Aberhart's crusade.

Despite their contributions to the populist revolt of the 1930's, the Ginger Group's ideology was quintessentially part of the earlier Progressive movement. Their views of political organization, the good society and citizenship were part of the reform movement which grew up towards the end of the First World War and burned brightly for a brief time afterwards. The Gingerites were out of place in the new reform movements; most of their erstwhile supporters moved over to the Social Credit in 1935, and the Gingerites themselves drifted away from the CCF. Nevertheless, the Ginger Group has been interpreted primarily in terms of the later movements, of which they were on the fringes, rather than of the Progressive movement, of which they were the hard core. Furthermore, the Ginger Group has been presented primarily as a phenomenon of Alberta's political culture, even though its ideology reflected that of many Progressive supporters throughout the Prairies and Ontario. These traditional historical views of the Ginger Group have obscured the depth of the earlier reform movement and its lessons about our political evolution.

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Preface

I do not, of course, know anything first hand about the Prairies before 1968. The great political, economic and social reform movements lived and died years before I played in the sand with my cousin and his dog on the "farm". The farm, as my whole extended family calls it, is a property on the Alberta parkland, a few acres large, which had once been a rural school and teacherage. In the 1970's it was the home and office for my aunt and uncle's oil field maintenance business. The only domestic animals were a dog, which was eventually killed and eaten by a pack of coyotes, and innumerable cats.

My early impressions of farmers came from holidays at my cousin's home. These glimpses gave me a view of the people in the area far different from fifty years beforehand. The farmers I knew seemed to be well off. The first satellite dish I ever saw was on these farms. The first plane ride I ever took was in a two-seat Cessna which my grandfather flew from the neighbours' ploughed field, the same field over which we snowmobiled in the winter.

This picture I know of Alberta farmers is an anomaly with the early farmers in the area. Henry Spencer, UFA M.P. and member of the Ginger Group, grew up in England. After a short stint working at a bank in England and a year working as a printer in Paris, France, he homesteaded very near my cousin's farm. The question applicable to Henry Spencer, 'how do you keep them in Paris when their sights are on the farm,' was unique to the homesteaders. It stands in stark contrast to a recent visit my cousin and I made to the local town; we were the only people I saw that day over eighteen and under thirty.

It is tempting, nevertheless, for me to think of the 'farm' as a connection to the

past. I have stood on the edge of the fields and, like young Brian O'Connor in W.O Mitchell's Who Has Seen the Wind, felt part of something much older than myself. Indeed, the ephemeral spirit of the farmer reform movement may have been connected to the eternal spirit of the prairies, but now that the farmer-reform movement is gone, it makes little sense to try and find it there. The strange juxtaposition of old advertisements pondering the dangers to youth of Jazz music, the importance of a good laxative and the merits of chocolate as a food for growing children are more decipherable contexts for the prairie historian than the spirit which life on the Prairies may or may not engender. The connection between the prairie and a certain kind of politics cannot be magical and at the same time tangible. Or, to put it another way, although living on the Prairie may lead one to ponder the wind, that wind cannot be considered the medium of a political movement. Politics come from our environment, but not the environment that we wipe off of our shoes when we come into the house.

Many people have contributed time, advice and general support for my preparation of this thesis. I would like to thank the J.S. Ewart Fund and the senate of University of Manitoba who administer it, as well as the University of Victoria History Department for their financial assistance. I would also like to thank the helpful staff at the Glenbow Archives in Calgary and the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa.

I am grateful to Dr. James Gray of Calgary, Mr. and Mrs. W. Selby of Calgary, and especially Theresa Steele of Victoria. I would also like to thank my parents and Grandparents, who have always taken the time to tell me about their experiences in small town and rural Alberta. If they had not planted such seeds, this thesis would never have

come about. The errors and omissions in this work, however, I claim as entirely my own.

Chapter One
The Ginger Group and Perceptions of Prairie Populism

> As one thinks of the outlook on the post war period as expressed in 1921 in this country, one finds many points in common with the present, but also in so far as public interest is concerned, a much more definitely organized point of view then than now.
>
> N. P. Lambert, 1943[1]

By the time the first histories of the Farmer-Reform movement in Canada were being written in the late 1940's and the 1950's, the people who had provided the movement with thought and drive were either no longer farmers, no longer reformers, or no longer with us. The early histories, removed from the spirit of the farmer-reformers, tried to explain the Progressive movement in terms of the politics the farmer-reformers left behind. The most apparent examples were the still active Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Social Credit League. Thus, the focus of the study of Prairie populist movements shifted to the successors of the Progressive movement, the apparent culmination of the reform movement. In short, the early histories of the farmer reform movement presented the 1920's in terms of what the movements of the 1930's looked like in the 1950's.

The Progressive movement, however, cannot be understood as a prelude to other protests because, as a whole, it represented a unique departure from traditional Canadian politics. The Progressive movement was more optimistic and, at its height, had much wider popular support than either of its successors, although it had a much shorter life. Its ideology grew from a combination of the ideals of the farmers' movements and post

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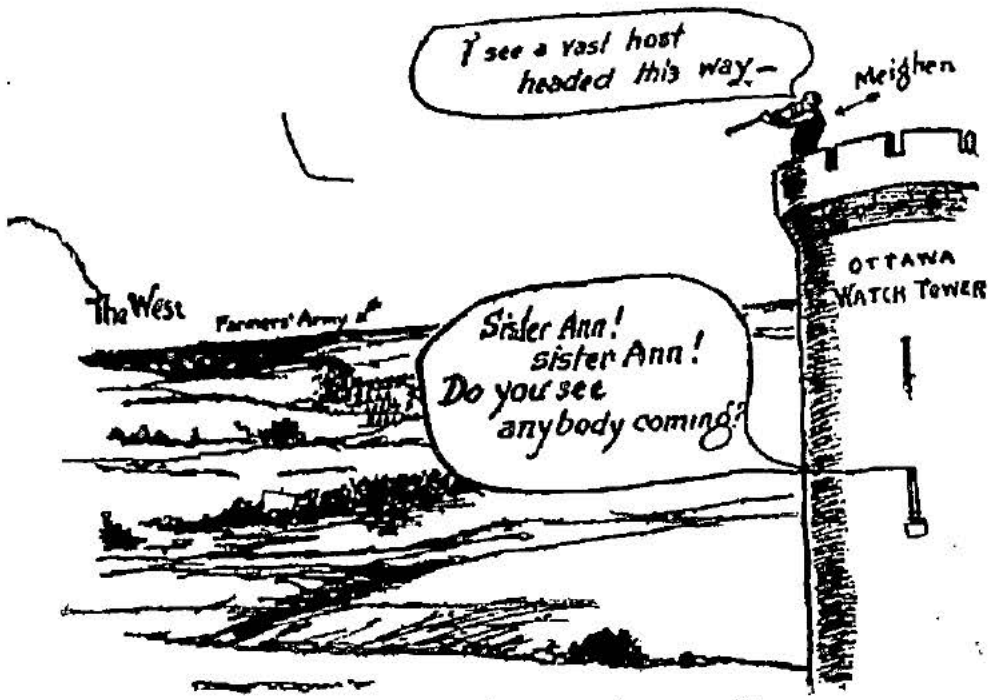
[1] N.P. Lambert to A.B. Hudson, 27 May, 1943. A.B. Hudson Papers, volume 2. National Archives of Canada. (N.A.C)



The Calgary Eye Opener notes the farmers' mood, 20 August, 1921

World War One reforming zeal but it lacked a single, clear articulation. The movement was strongest on the Prairies, where it represented a political culture that was, for a time, more fluid than elsewhere. The movement's nature was such that once its force dissipated, its purpose was no longer apparent.

The central problem in histories of the Canadian Progressive movement comes from this ephemeral nature. Scholars who examined the Progressives to explain the evolution of contemporary politics fitted them into more modern political conceptions. Viewing the Progressives through such modern eyes is a disservice that culminates in misunderstanding. As Lawrence Goodwyn observed in 1976 about American studies of their late nineteenth century populist movement, "our culture loyalty to our own world, together with the personal resignation that is a central component of that loyalty, is the

underlying cause of our inability to understand the nineteenth century reformers."[2]

In Canada, the misjudgment of the post World War One reform movement has been complicated by the divisions within the Progressive movement, the most obvious of which separated the moderate and radical Progressive M.P.'s. The political conceptions of the more moderate M.P.'s were more compatible with the traditional Canadian politics to which the political conceptions of the radicals were particularly anomalous. Thus, although the radicals were more representative of important aspects of the reform movement than the moderates, their role has been underemphasized or misunderstood. Again, Lawrence Goodwyn's words apply to the Canadian populist movement.

> So overpowering have been the cultural limitations of our own vision that when we have looked back to the early 1890's we have been able to see only those people who most nearly resemble modern participants in the Progressive society. 'Liberalism' being the outer limit of our understanding of reform in modern American culture, historians of the reform movement have unconsciously seen the Populists as 'liberals'[3]

Unwittingly, Goodwyn described one of the central problems of W.L. Morton's The Progressive Party in Canada (1950), a seminal work on the Progressive party. Morton portrayed the radical Progressive M.P.'s as naive ideologues who ultimately hampered the majority's reforms. By overlooking the significance of the radical M.P.'s relative freedom from partisan politics and their consistent support of the movement's principles, Morton ignored a major part of the movement's spirit.

The most obvious manifestation of the more radical M.P.'s was the Ginger Group,

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[2] Lawrence Goodwyn, Democratic Promise: The Populist Movement in America. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. xiv.

[3] Ibid, p. xiv.

the ten M.P.'s who broke away from the National Progressive party in June and July, 1924. Five members, George Coote, Robert Gardiner, E.J. Garland, Donald Kennedy and Henry Spencer were Alberta M.P.'s; three, Preston Elliot, W.C. Good and Agnes Macphail were from Ontario. Milton Campbell was from Saskatchewan and W.J. Ward, from Manitoba.[4]

Because the Ginger Group is most often studied as a peripheral aspect of the Progressives or for its contribution to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and the Social Credit League, it has either been overlooked or portrayed as a consequence of Alberta's political culture. Indeed, the basic definition of the Ginger Group has become unclear. For example, Walter Young, in his study of the CCF, defined the Ginger Group as including all the UFA Parliamentarians.[5] Similarly, although Morton correctly designated the Ginger Group as the ten seceding M.P.'s, he presented them as uncompromising adherents "to the basic doctrines of Alberta Progressivism which constituted the fundamental cleavage between them and the Manitoba Progressives."[6] Thus, he made Elliot, Good, Macphail, Ward and Campbell either closet-Albertans or bad Ontarians, Saskatchewanians and especially Manitobans and he ignored the five Alberta M.P.'s outside of the Ginger Group.

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[4] Letter from Preston Elliot, M.N. Campbell, Robert Gardiner, E.J. Garland, D.M. Kennedy, Agnes Macphail, H.E. Spencer to Robert Forke, June 14, 1924, H.E. Spencer papers, Glenbow Archives. Letter from W.C. Good, G.G. Coote, P. Elliot, W.J. Ward to Robert Forke, July 3, 1924, W.C. Good Papers, volume 7. N.A.C.

[5] Walter Young, Anatomy of a Party, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 29, note 49.

[6] W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 199.

Purportedly, Morton's designation of Manitoba and Alberta Progressives was for convenience.[7] Unfortunately Morton forgot his own qualification. His designation of convenience became an overgeneralization which was particularly evident in his description of the 1926 constitutional crisis where he again used the term, 'Albertan' to designate a solid block. Had Morton looked at the votes in the House of Commons in 1926, he might have noted that the UFA M.P.'s voted in three distinct ways, the Gingerite five being one part, two other groups of two Members each forming the other two.[8]

One reason for Morton's strict provincial divisions was his failure to distinguish sufficiently between the Progressive party and Progressives at large. Although Morton's focus was the party, he often applied his conclusions about the party to the movement without sufficient grounds. R. Douglas Francis noted that Morton failed to explore the ideology of the agrarian reform movement behind the Progressive party, of which Morton's opposing Alberta and Manitoba wings were only one part.[9] As this thesis will show, provincial divisions within the federal Progressive caucus were weaker than has been generally portrayed, but such provincial differences were even less clear among Progressives at large.

Another problem, aside from provincial generalization, in defining the membership

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[7] Ibid, pp. 106.

[8] Ibid, pp. 256-258. Morton referred to the Alberta Group in the 1926 Parliament monolithically then noted that two Alberta UFA M.P.'s voted differently from the others, apparently unaware of his inconsistency. He simply ignored the other two UFA M.P.'s. (The UFA federal caucus after the 1925 election had nine members) For a breakdown of the divisions in the votes of the UFA caucus in 1926, see chapter two below.

[9] Douglas R. Francis, "In Search of a Prairie Myth: The Intellectual and Cultural Historiography of Prairie Canada," Journal of Canadian Studies. vol. 24, no. 3 p. 48.

of the Ginger Group arose from the Ginger Group's parliamentary alliance with other radicals, especially Labour M.P.'s J.S. Woodsworth and William Irvine and Joseph Shaw, an independent M.P. from Calgary elected in 1921 with the support of the UFA. Although these three M.P.'s shared many ideas and beliefs with the Ginger Group, they were never part of the Progressive caucus and therefore not directly involved in the breakup of the Progressive party. Nevertheless, because of the Gingerites' close co-operation with the Irvine and Woodsworth, especially in the creation of the CCF, the earliest analyses of the Ginger Group presented them in terms of their relationship with the Labour M.P.'s.

Most of these early histories came from attempts by CCFers to understand their roots and promote their party, in particular to avoid the disintegration of the Progressives. Some of these analysts presented the Gingerites as merely Woodsworth's followers. For example, Olive Ziegler, writing about Woodsworth in 1934, ignored entirely the role of the farmer-reform movement in Parliament:

> From the beginning, Mr. Woodsworth had sought to show that the coming of Labour into the House meant more than the emergence of a third political party. It represented a new set of ideas and ideal in Canadian life, which for the first time were finding an expression in Parliament, the legislative centre of the country.[10]

Frank Underhill was more generous than Ziegler in acknowledging the role of the Gingerites in pre-CCF reform politics, however, his conception of the membership of the Ginger Group and the reasons for its existence were still imprecise. For example,

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[10] Olive Ziegler, Woodsworth, Social Pioneer. (Toronto: Ontario Publishing co. Limited, 1934) pp. 153-154.

Underhill said that the Ginger Group was comprised of the few Progressives,

> determined to remain independent and not to succumb to the embraces of the parties run from St. James St or King St[sic].... Most of them were UFA members from Alberta who insisted on their function as spokesmen of a distinct occupational group, the farmers, and who, like the labour members, were denounced by right-thinking people for introducing class distinctions into politics. Mr. Woodsworth worked with them, as did Agnes Macphail from Ontario. They were the nucleus from which sprang the CCF in 1932.[11]

Underhill's comment is representative of typical errors about the Ginger Group. He did not distinguish between the Ginger Group and the UFA. He called Alberta Gingerites the majority when only half of the Ginger Group in 1924 was from Alberta. Underhill also suggested that Agnes Macphail, like Woodsworth, was outside of the group. However, Underhill's most significant alteration of the Ginger Group was his contention that the group opposed political parties from St. James and King streets not political parties in general. Thus, the Ginger Group appears more compatible to the CCF in 1944 than it actually was.

Nevertheless, Underhill at least acknowledged that the Gingerites had played a unique role in the CCF, something most of the early CCFers ignored. The prominence of Labour M.P.'s at the expense of the Farmers was particularly evident in accounts of the 1926 parliamentary session, the zenith of the reformers' influence in Parliament in the 1920's. Ziegler wrote, "during the session of 1926, the Liberal party held office only by a slight majority so that the Labour group, though few in number, could swing the vote

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[11] Frank H. Underhill, "James Shaver Woodsworth: Untypical Canadian. An Address at the dinner to Inaugurate the Ontario Woodsworth Memorial Foundation, October 7 1944.," (Toronto: Ontario
Woodsworth Memorial Foundation, November, 1944), p. 22.

one way or the other."[12] Similarly, a CCF twenty-fifth Anniversary Program mentioned only the two labour members of Parliament, J.S. Woodsworth and A.A. Heaps: "the two labour M.P.'s, who held the balance of power threw their support behind Mr, King. The result was old age pensions, the first federal social security legislation."[13] At best, Ziegler and the CCF were exaggerating. The two Labourites did not hold the balance of power since the Conservatives had sixteen seats more than the Liberal government. Without the support of at least the Ginger Group and a few other Progressives, the Labour M.P.'s had little influence on government policy.[14]

While early analyses of the farmers' role within the CCF were part of the new movement's building process, more recent CCF/NDP analyses tend to blame farmers for the CCF/NDP's political fortunes. For example, Garth Stevenson, political science professor and former Alberta provincial NDP candidate, believed that Alberta farmers had held the CCF back. Stevenson's central argument in a 1986 article was, "that the Alberta

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[12] Ibid, p. 165.

[13] "An Historic Letter", CCF 25th Anniversary Souvenir, p. 73.

[14] See Chapter two, below. Another example of the tendency of CCF histories to present the CCF as the beginning of many reforms is evident in Thomas Socknat's article on the peace movement in the CCF. According to Socknat, "it was not until the social and economic upheaval of the Depression years that even pacifists themselves fully articulated the inter-relationships between peace and social change." Thomas A. Socknat, "The Pacifist Background of the Early CCF," J. William Brennan, ed. Building the Co-operative Commonwealth: Essays on the Democratic Socialist Tradition in Canada. (Regina, University of Regina Plains Research Centre, 1985)p. 58. Socknat appears to overlook the pre-1930 thought of Agnes Macphail and W. C. Good, as well as the first clause of the Farmer's Platform which proposed a League of Nations to safeguard World Peace.

NDP should view itself primarily as the party of the working class."[15] He believed that farmers and labour had little in common more specific than, "clean air, safe drinking water and a reduction in the death toll from traffic accidents."[16] He was particularly critical of populism, which he believed came from the idea, "that the land is the source of all wealth and farmers the source of all virtue," and added that the negative stereotype of populists Ezra Pound, John Blackmore and James Keegstra, "should be included in any honest appraisal of the populist political tradition in North America."[17]

The tendency of forgetting the radical farmers was not limited to CCF boosters or apologists; most studies of the Social Credit similarly obfuscate the role of radical farmers in the 1920's. As in the case of work on the CCF, these authors perceived Social Credit as the culmination of populist politics in Alberta for which the UFA was merely a prelude. For example, John Irving in his 1959 study of the Social Credit movement in Alberta said of the 1935 Social Credit campaign, "never before in Alberta, not even in 1921, had a political campaign aroused so much support, and all of it on a voluntary basis."[18] Certainly, Irving showed the intensity and divisiveness in many communities of the 1935 Social Credit campaign,[19] however, the intensity of Social Credit support in 1935

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[15] Garth Stevenson, "Class and Class Politics in Alberta," Larry Pratt, ed. Essays in Honour of Grant Notley: Socialism and Democracy in Alberta. (Edmonton: NeWest Publishers Ltd., 1986.), p. 216.

[16] Ibid, p. 212.

[17] Ibid, p. 210.

[18] John A. Irving, The Social Credit Movement in Alberta. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959) p. 306.

[19] See, for example, Ibid, pp. 285-288.

does not mean that their numbers were unprecedented. In fact, logically, Social Credit only divided a community if significant parts of that community supported another group.[20]

Moreover, Irvine's only electoral evidence of Social Credit's supposedly unprecedented support was that it won 56 of 63 seats in the 1935 provincial election.[21] Further electoral analysis of provincial results does suggest that the Social Credit, with 54.2% of the popular vote in 1935, was stronger than the UFA, which won 28.8% in 1921.[22] Federally, however, the UFA in 1921 was much stronger than the Social Credit ever was. The UFA won 60.3% of the total popular vote in 1921; Social Credit won 45.5% of the total popular vote in 1935.[23] Social Credit only won over sixty percent of the popular vote in one federal riding, Camrose, with 65.5%. In 1921, four UFA candidates had over 70 percent of the vote. William Lucas won 80.9% of the popular vote in his riding (approximately the same riding as Camrose in 1935), followed closely by Spencer with 79.7%, Garland with 74.5% and Gardiner with 72.9%. Two other

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[20] Jean Burnet noted that the intense division between those remaining loyal to the UFA and those who supported the Social Credit was strong enough to weaken rural community organizations. Jean Burnet, Next-Year Country: A Study of Rural Social Organization in Alberta. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951) pp. 147-148.

[21] Irving, p. 331.

[22] One should note that the UFA only ran candidates in 45 of the 58 ridings in 1921. Howard A. Scarrow, Canada Votes: A Handbook of Federal and Provincial Election Data. (New Orleans: Hauser Printing Co., 1962) p. 221.

[23] The Social Credit won 36.4% of the Urban vote and 48.3% of the rural vote Canadian General Election Report 1935: Report of the Chief Electoral Officer. (Ottawa: J.O. Patenaude. 1935) pp. 586-636.

UFAers also won more than 60% of the popular vote in their ridings.[24]

C.B. Macpherson's 1953 study, Democracy in Alberta, provides another analysis of Alberta politics through the Social Credit window. Macpherson based his search for Alberta's political culture on its homogenous class composition, mostly petit-bourgeois farmer, and its quasi-colonial status. While these criteria may have been useful to distinguish Alberta from Central Canada, they were a strange choice to distinguish it from the other Prairie provinces.[25] All three Prairie provinces were predominantly rural in 1921, but if any Prairie province should manifest petit bourgeois politics particularly strongly, it would be Saskatchewan, which was only 28.9% urban compared to Alberta, at 37.88% urban.[26] Furthermore, Alberta's economy was slightly more diversified than Saskatchewan, particularly with the collieries around Drumheller and in the Crow's Nest Pass.

Nevertheless, Macpherson's argument persisted. Gurston Dacks, in an essay published in 1986, also explained Alberta politics as a result of its class composition and quasi-colonial status. In Dacks' words, the "twin pillars" of Alberta political culture in the twentieth century were, alienation "towards national political institutions," which

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[24] Canadian General Election Report 1921: Report of the Chief Electoral Officer. (Ottawa: F.A. Ackland, 1922) pp. 467-510. Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1921, Annual Review Publishing co. Ltd. p. 517. All six of these UFAers were in three cornered contests.

[25] Macpherson himself used these two characteristics, class composition and quasi-colonial economy, both as common among all three Prairie provinces and unique to Alberta. For example, see C.B. Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta: Social Credit and the Party System. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953) pp. 21, 6.

[26] Census of Canada, 1921, p. 346. Manitoba's population was 42.88% urban.

Albertans saw "as the means by which central Canada has affected its domination over the West", and, "the inclination of Albertans to relate to provincial politics in terms of the interest they have believed they share in a single dominant commodity rather than in terms of social class or some other form of consciousness."[27] Moreover, by extending the "twin pillars" of Alberta's political culture back to the turn of the century, Dacks ignored historical differences between 1900 and 1920. Thus he lost Macpherson's insight of Alberta's early political history which had explained some particularities of Alberta politics, such as the general mistrust of the Liberal party after the 1910 Alberta and Great Waterways railway scandal.[28]

One of Macpherson's problems, that of indiscriminately shifting focus between the Prairies as a whole and a particular province, was not unique to class analyses. Walter Young presented a similar mistake when he agreed with S.M. Lipset that, whereas CCF leaders in many parts of Canada were non-conformists, in Saskatchewan they were "normal community leaders."

> In this respect, Saskatchewan was atypical because no where else was there the same degree of social and economic homogeneity, with the possible exception of some urban class areas in British Columbia. Outside the Prairie bastion of the CCF, the party leaders and activists tended more to correspond to the 'deviants' described by [S.D.] Clark[29]

In the first sentence, Young suggested that Saskatchewan was unique among provinces.

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[27] Gurston Dacks, "From Consensus to Competition," Larry Pratt, ed. Essays in Honour of Grant Notley: Socialism and Democracy in Alberta. (Edmonton: NeWest Publishers Ltd., 1986.) p. 187.

[28] Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta, p. 25.

[29] Walter Young, Anatomy of a Party, p. 184.

With his shift of focus to the Prairies in the second sentence, Young suggested that the Prairies were unique among regions. He thus obscured whether his argument was based on the provincial or regional delineation, as if they were one and the same.

Misunderstandings of the political events and ideas of the Progressive movement are partly the result of the chronological and regional differences between the reformers of the 1920's and the historians who study them. Some of these biases, such as Stevenson's examination of farmer populists in Alberta in terms of left and right wing distinctions, are relatively easy to spot. However, any view of the farmer-reformers is also complicated by more invisible perceptions, things to which, as Goodwyn noted, analysts do not recognize their own loyalties. One of the most important of these invisible biases for Canadian researchers has been acceptance of the very party system which the radicals wanted to replace. This could be called a party bias, not towards a specific political party, but towards political party organization.

Canadian researchers tend to believe that political parties maintain national unity by facilitating coalitions between different regions and between different interests within one party. C.B. Macpherson particularly believed in the unifying features of brokerage parties, noting that one of the two main functions of the party system is, "to sift and bring together into two or a few combinations the multitude of divergent group demands and equate them to the available supply of political goods, giving due weight to each without destroying any." Macpherson believed, "There is little question that these functions are performed more or less adequately by the party system wherever it exists, and that they

must by performed if democracy is to by maintained in such societies."[30]

The implications of the party system bias in histories of the Progressive movement are extremely important because a major division between the moderates and the radicals arose from their different views of party organization. Many Progressive M.P.'s believed the party structure would allow organized farmers sufficient influence on policy. Conversely, the radical Gingerites rejected party organization because they believed it allowed the most organized and wealthiest to dominate other groups within the party. Whether the radicals or moderates were more realistic depends on one's view of the party system in post-First World War Canada.

Morton presented an example of a party bias when he noted the concern that the radicals' theory of political organization caused the moderates:

> Nor was the alarm caused by the doctrine of "group government," as it was promptly dubbed, altogether unjustified. [UFA president] Wood's theory of occupational representation was revolutionary in concept, if not in method. It accepted the fact of economic conflict and proposed to institutionalize it. It would have altered in its political application the working of representative and responsible government. It surely would have abolished as unnecessary the traditional party system.[31]

Obviously, Morton recognized the implications of the radicals' political theory. Morton's bias showed in his apparent belief that the errors of these implications were self-evident. In this case, the radicals appear doctrinaire and even potentially destructive of moderate reforms. As Morton said,

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[30] The second function Macpherson noted, "is, to act as a safeguard against a permanent irresponsible oligarchy and as a check to abuse of power" Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta, p. 242.

[31] Morton, Progressive Party in Canada, pp. 94-95.

> By attacking the party system and refusing to recognize any distinction between federal and provincial politics, the advocates of 'group government' threatened to upset the political designs of such agrarian leaders and sympathizers as Drury, Crerar, Dafoe and Lambert.[32]

Morton forgot that members of the Ginger Group were often the strongest proponents of moderate farm legislation while Crerar, and his sympathizers often voted against such legislation to support the Liberals.

The party bias in general terms, assumes that a party organization is an effective democratic mechanism. This assumption is by no means certain. For example, C.B. Macpherson noted V. C. Fowke's study which showed that farmers had little influence on government policy even at the height of their political movement, because after 1920 the government believed farmers' demands were incompatible with the needs of the central Canadian economy.[33] Farmers in the 1920s are not the only example of influence more apparent than real. Alvin Finkel argued a welfare state, which "placed a floor on the standard of living of working people," was created after the Second World War because the ruling classes wanted, "to preserve the power of the ruling class but saw that power threatened by working-class militancy." He claimed that in no way did it reduce the business leaders' power.[34] The Marxist interpretations of the class nature of the state by Macpherson and Finkel are not entirely compatible with the Ginger Group's understanding of class. However, like the Ginger Group, the above passages posit that

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[32] Ibid, p. 94.

[33] Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta, p. 9.

[34] Alvin Finkel, "Origins of the welfare sate in Canada", Leo Panitch, ed, The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977) p. 345.

a certain group controlled the government, and that farmers or workers could not significantly influence government policy under the contemporary political system.

Surprisingly, Macpherson ultimately accepted the party system in spite of recognizing the insufficient political influence of organized farmers. He accepted the contradiction because he judged the alternative to the party system on the basis of how well it performed the job of a traditional party system.

> All that is relevant to our problem here is that a class-divided society, to be a democracy, does require a party system, or a substitute which can perform the same functions, namely the moderation and containment of class opposition, and the provision of some safeguard against arbitrary government.

Macpherson added, in respect to the peculiar system he believed had evolved in Alberta,

> We now have grounds for concluding that, in these specific conditions (a quasi-colonial and largely petit-bourgeois society), it can perform the same functions as the regular party system, though in reduced degree, and that it is the only system that can do so.[35]

In addition to assessing how well a party system facilitates democracy, Canadian researchers have been particularly interested in how the party system addressed regional differences. For example, although Morton recognized that the failure of the Progressives represented the obsolescence of an alternative to party and cabinet government, he still believed that the party system had promoted the healing of regional divisions:

> The independence of the legislatures of an earlier day was no longer possible; the parliament had become the critic, not the master of cabinets. The popular control of nomination and provision of campaign expenses depended moreover upon a zeal for public affairs the electorate failed to display for any length of time. The Progressives put a challenge to

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[35] Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta, p. 246. his italics, his brackets

democracy only the U.F.A. met successfully.[36]

While Morton acknowledged the failure of the more democratic alternative, he concluded that the Progressive party advanced "[t]he work of reconciliation, a work of time, of patience, of manoeuvre," by "proving that the West, too much tried, would and could resort to independent political action." Morton even speculated that only the onset of the depression prevented the Progressive movement from completing the reconciliation of Western Canada.[37]

However, not all studies of Prairie populism were so fundamentally at odds with the ideology of the radical Progressives. For example, Walter Young, pointed out the importance of the idea of co-operation for many farmer-reformers, an idea which did not fit neatly into traditional Canadian politics then or since:

> The CCF began in the west because it was there that the roots of protest had grown strong in the soil of discontent, that the isolation of nature and eastern business were most keenly felt, driving people to build their own organic society expressing values foreign to industrial capitalism. Chief among these values were co-operation and fellowship.[38]

In 1969, Alan Cairns underlined the effect of assumptions about political parties on Canadian political history. He proposed that the party system was not the great healer of cleavages that it had been made out to be. He pointed out that general acceptance of the unifying role of parties distorted understanding of Canadian politics because, "the

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[36] Morton, Progressive Party in Canada, pp. 291-292.

[37] Morton, pp. 294-295. Morton contended that regionalism was not the problem in 1950 that it had been in 1920, largely because the Progressives had shown that the west could not be ignored. The tenacity of Western Canadian regionalism suggests that Morton either did not recognize its existence in 1950 or wrote when such a feeling was at an ebb.

[38] Young, Anatomy of a Party, p. 287.

party system, importantly conditioned by the electoral system, exacerbates the very cleavages it is credited with healing."[39] Specifically, Cairns noted that party organization in a single-member constituency system made relatively small provincial differences in a party's share of popular vote appear much larger. As Cairns critically stated, "The analysis of Canadian politics has been shamefully affected by a kind of mental shorthand which manifests itself in the acceptance of the political map of the country which identifies provinces or sections in terms of the end results of the political process, partisan representation."[40]

Cairns' means of avoiding the assumptions which account for the "shameful mental shorthand" was closer analysis of electoral results. While such a method was not entirely new to studies of Prairie populists, it was used primarily by those who challenged accepted conclusions. For example, in 1954, in reviewing Macpherson, S.M. Lipset observed that in provincial elections in Alberta since 1921,

> the winning party has rarely received more than 55 percent of the popular vote. The large legislative majorities are a result of two factors: The opposition vote has been divided among a number of parties and, in a fairly homogenous geographical unit such as Alberta, the lines of opinion are more or less the same in each constituency. Thus even with a small

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[39] Cairns, "The Electoral System and the Party System", p. 64.

[40] Ibid, p. 74. Cairns noted that political parties must adapt to the distortions: "A political party does well enough when it does not use its political resources in an area whose seats go to another party." Ibid, p. 67. Larry Glassford showed precisely this effect in the Conservative's 1930 federal election plans: "[General A.D.] Mcrae had a simple plan: to concentrate funds and effort where there existed a chance to win seats. Consequently he did not even establish a party headquarters in Alberta where the United Farmers continued to dominate federal as well as provincial elections." Larry A. Glassford, "Winning the West: R.B. Bennett and the Conservative Breakthrough on the Prairies, 1927-1930," Prairie Forum, vol 13, no. 1 (Spring, 1988), p. 71.

lead, the dominant party can sweep almost all the seats.[41]

In 1980, Peter McCormick applied Cairns' principles to an analysis of the results of Alberta elections since 1935 and found the same pattern Lipset observed in 1954. Like Lipset, McCormick's approach disputed the conception that Albertans reacted to their circumstances with a particular shared ideology:

> What makes Alberta different is not the share of the vote that Albertans give to their preferred party, but the way that the electoral system translates those votes into seats.... Since 1935, this [the total opposition share of the vote] has averaged a quite respectable 47.58 per cent. What makes Alberta different from other provinces is not the size of this vote, but its fragmentation[42]

In a 1972 example of closer electoral analysis, Thomas Flanagan noted significant political cleavages within Alberta prior to and throughout the UFA period, thus suggesting that the Alberta electorate has been less politically uniform than generally assumed. Although some of his findings were compatible with Macpherson's notion that Alberta politics were the result of a homogenous community reacting in concord, Flanagan made important modifications by noting that Alberta was not ethnically homogenous, and that many people from minority ethnic groups still supported the UFA.

Flanagan showed that overwhelming support for the UFA, the kind of support

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[41] S.M. Lipset, Review of Democracy in Alberta, Canadian Forum, (November, 1954), p. 176.

[42] Peter McCormick, "Voting Behaviour in Alberta: The Quasi-Party System Revisited," Journal of Canadian Studies vol. 15, no. 3 (Fall 1980), p. 90. Flanagan noted the same fragmentation of opposition vote even at the height of UFA support, "Typically the Farmers received between 60% and 70% of the vote [in the southern agrarian heartland], while the opposition's support, puny as it was, was often divided by more than one party." Flanagan, p. 152.

Macpherson believed was endemic to Alberta, only applied in rural central and southern Alberta. He called this area the heartland, one of four politically distinct areas evident in the prohibition plebiscite of 1915 and which, "carried over into the U.F.A. period, modified and combined in such a way as to make the farmers unshakeable in elections." Although it was only one of four areas, "the heartland was so large that victory there was enough to rule the province."[43]

However, although the UFA dominated on the scale which Macpherson described only in the heartland, a plurality of people outside of the dominant ethnic community also supported the UFA.

> From the very beginning, the farmers were able to attract to their banner ethnic candidates who were victorious more often than not. Indeed, one may argue that the U.F.A. were surprisingly successful among the minorities, given the Protestant, Anglo-Saxon cast of the populist movement with its mores of social reform, popular democracy, and moral rectitude.[44]

Further electoral analysis illustrates more weaknesses in traditional assumptions about Alberta politics. For example, an analysis of the popular vote for the Progressive party shows that Alberta was less distinct from either Saskatchewan or Manitoba than the number of candidates elected suggests. Rather than the Alberta farmer M.P.'s' share of the popular vote being extraordinary, it was almost identical to Saskatchewan in 1921 and 1925 and it followed the same pattern as in Manitoba of a strong start, decline in 1925,

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[43] The other areas were the cities, mountain, and the north. Thomas Flanagan, "Political Geography and the United Farmers of Alberta," in S. M. Trofemenkoff, ed., The Twenties in Western Canada (Papers of the Western Canadian Studies Conference March 1972) (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1972), p. 152.

[44] Ibid, p. 156.

resurgence in 1926 and decline again in 1930. The Progressives in Alberta received 60.3% of the popular vote in 1921, very slightly less than the 60.7% in Saskatchewan and more than the 48.2% in Manitoba. In 1925, Alberta Progressives won 31.5% of the popular vote, still less than the 31.7% in Saskatchewan and only slightly more than the 28.4% in Manitoba. In 1926 the Alberta Farmers won 38.7% of the popular vote, for the first time more than Saskatchewan at 22.1% and still more than the 30.7% in Manitoba. In 1930, the Alberta farmers won 30.1% of the vote compared to 6% in Saskatchewan and 25.3% in Manitoba.[45]

The anomaly in Alberta was in seats held by farmer M.P.'s rather than in share of the popular vote: In Manitoba, the farmers' share of the popular vote in 1930 was 52.5% of its share in 1921. In Alberta, the farmers' share of popular vote in 1930 was 49.9% of the 1921 share. However, in 1930 Manitoba farmers' groups had only 25% of the share of seats they had in 1921 while the UFA had 67.5% of the share of seats as in 1921.[46]

Even in the face of electoral analysis, old conceptions about the Alberta Farmer-reformers are surprisingly tenacious. For example, Canada Votes, 1935-1988, a collection of detailed federal and provincial election data, begins its summary of the Alberta federal results with,

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[45] See Appendix A for electoral results. The graph in Appendix A shows the similarities in popular support for Farmer Candidates in the Prairie Provinces.

[46] In 1921, the UFA won ten of twelve federal seats. It supported Irvine and Shaw, the winners of the two other seats. Nevertheless Irvine and Shaw were neither UFA nor Progressives in 1921.

> This 50 year history of Alberta elections can be summarized in a single sentence. Initially it was the home of the right-wing Social Credit party, briefly flirted with the Liberals and is now utterly dominated in both federal as well as provincial elections by the Progressive Conservatives. Macpherson has described the situation as a 'quasi-party system,' a point of view for which there is some disagreement.[47]

Despite this description which suggests Alberta politics was uniquely simple, the data on twelve consecutive pages of this book shows that only once in federal elections did the Social Credit receive a larger share of the Alberta vote than the Liberals did nationally.

It would appear that the problems inherent in the histories of the Farmer-reform movement call for a new studies with less reliance on old assumptions. David Laycock's 1989 study of Prairie populism between 1910 and 1944 is encouraging. Like Macpherson, Laycock studied populism on the Prairies as a manifestation of farmers' concerns but Laycock went beyond analyzing the ideologies as simple manifestations of a petit bourgeois ideology. As he argued,

> Class attachments do not necessarily produce all embracing class logics. The similarity of many prairie populist proposals to those of contemporary American and European labour organizations suggests that the class basis of an organization should not be granted inordinate explanatory power.[48]

Laycock divided Prairie populism into four groups, the Crypto-Liberals, the Radical Democratic populists, the Social Democratic Populists and the Plebiscitarian populists. Still, these divisions were still somewhat artificial and not entirely removed from provincial overgeneralizations. For example, Laycock noted, "Manitoba Progressives

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[47] The disagreement noted is Lipset's 1954 review of Macpherson. Canada Votes, 1935-1988, p. 281.

[48] David Laycock, Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies, 1910 to 1945. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) p. 267.

viewed the party system as a machine that, disassembled and relieved of its offensive components, could be put back on the road to deliver good policy with no morally offensive exhaust."[49] Of course, the idea Laycock described was neither unique to nor universal among Manitoba Progressives.

Laycock still had the problem of precisely where to draw the lines in his divisions. Such questions as, 'is a Manitoba farmer automatically a crypto-Liberal' and 'when does a crypto-Liberal become a radical democrat' remain. For example, Laycock called faith in the free market a basic part of Crypto-Liberal belief.[50] However, the Ginger Group's consistent stand in Parliament against protection, even protection which favoured the farmers, contrasted with Crypto-Liberals T.A. Crerar and Robert Forke. Furthermore, the Gingerites pose a special problem to Laycock's divisions because they were not quite the same as Radical Democratic Populists like Wise Wood of the UFA nor the Social Democratic Populists in the CCF leadership. Gardiner and Garland thus became radical democratic hybrids, as did Irvine and E.A. Partridge.[51]

Furthermore, Laycock's chronological divisions between crypto-Liberal and other populists are not always suitable. For example, Laycock suggested that the 1921 federal election success was a Crypto-Liberal victory, taken over in the following years by Social and Radical democratic populists.[52] In fact, Radical Democratic Populism began between

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[49] Ibid, p. 44.

[50] Ibid, p. 289.

[51] Ibid, p. 274.

[52] Ibid, p. 273.

1911 and 1916, and became an influential part of the farmer reform movement well before 1921.

Nevertheless, in making his divisions more fluid than either Morton or Macpherson, Laycock recognized more clearly the interconnections between radicals and moderates within the Progressive movement. For example, Laycock used the UFA as the best example of radical democratic populism, but also included the United farmers of Ontario (UFO) and the United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section (UFC[SS]).[53] Furthermore, Laycock's designations of Social Democratic Populism, best represented by the CCF, and plebiscitarian populism, represented by the Social Credit League, avoid neat provincial containers - although the Social Credit was primarily an Alberta movement, Laycock never had to assume that all Albertans were Social Crediters.

More historical study is required to further explore manifestations of reform on the Prairies less in terms of modern politics and stereotypes. This study will attempt to examine the Ginger Group, in terms of their ideology rather than in terms of how well they worked within the party system. It will examine their 'radical' approach to Canada's political and economic problems, radical because they sought fundamental systemic changes to the organization of political parties, to social policy and to financial policy.

This study concentrates on the Alberta members of the Ginger Group to illustrate the relation of the radical Progressive ideology to Alberta's political culture. At the same time, since the Ginger Group was only half of the Alberta Progressive caucus, a study of the Ginger Group allows us to get beyond simplistic conceptions of a monolithic Alberta

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[53] Ibid, p. 70.

political culture. Furthermore, this study examines the Alberta members in the context of the entire Ginger Group in order to show that the radical Progressive ideology was not simply a manifestation of things unique to Alberta. The political longevity of the Ginger Group adds another dimension to the study. Members of the Ginger Group were still in Parliament during the renewed protest movement of the Depression; indeed, the Gingerites were active in them. The differences between the ideology of the Ginger Group and the CCF and Social Credit League illustrate the connections and the distinctions between the post-war reform movement and the Depression reform movements.

This study is offered as a step towards what Laycock believed still needed to be done: the preparation of an "integrated detailed popular intellectual history with agrarian organizational histories to help account for internal variations within prairie populist democratic thought."[54] Through understanding these radical farmer-reform M.P.'s, we will be better able to comprehend the nature and the purpose of the Progressive movement and their very different conception of politics. By understanding the road not taken, perhaps we can understand better where we are.

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[54] Ibid, p. 296.

Chapter Two
The Ginger Group and the Progressive Party

> It is rather a curious thing that farmers will agree pretty well on principles, and then quarrel over details and put infinitely more attention to some insignificant thing than they would a larger matter
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> T.A. Crerar, 1920[1]

This chapter examines the emergence of the Ginger Group from the Progressive party in order to understand what brought the Ginger Group together and what distinguished it from other farmer M.P.'s, both nationally and within Alberta. To do so it is necessary to study the Alberta Gingerites' biographies and their political environment and the issues which isolated the Ginger Group within the Progressive party, specifically the differences between the leadership of the UFA and the leadership of the Progressives, the debate over fusion with the Liberals, and Parliamentary issues. The chapter also considers the Ginger Group's relationship with the rest of the UFA, which became particularly important after the 1924 split from the Progressive caucus. In conclusion, the chapter will illustrate the continued importance of the Gingerites in Parliament even as the Progressive party disintegrated.

The biographies of the five eventual Alberta Gingerites, Robert Gardiner, Henry Spencer, Edward Garland, George Coote and Donald Kennedy, show us some of the characteristics that they brought to Alberta's very young political culture. The early history of the farmer-reform movement in Alberta illustrates aspects of its political culture which affected the Gingerites. Together, the biographies and the early farmer-reform

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[1] T.A. Crerar to H.W. Wood, 13 February, 1920. Crerar papers, box 153.

movement indicate the beginnings of the differences between the Gingerites and the more moderate farmer-reform M.P.'s. Robert Gardiner became the first Progressive from Alberta elected to the House of Commons when he won the Medicine Hat by-election on June 27, 1921. He eventually became chairman of the UFA group in Parliament and succeeded Henry Wise Wood as President of the UFA. Gardiner was the oldest of the five Alberta Ginger Group M.P.'s and the only bachelor. He was a Presbyterian, born in Scotland in 1874, where he obtained an elementary school education. He immigrated to Canada in 1902 and began farming outside of Excel, Alberta.[2] Gardiner was one of two of the Alberta Gingerites to hold political office before running for the UFA: he had served as councillor and reeve of the municipal district of Golden Centre, Alberta, from 1914 to 1921. Gardiner worked against political patronage in municipal business and supported the independent political movement in Alberta as early as 1916.[3]

Henry Elvins Spencer was an Anglican, born in England in 1882, and educated at an English collegiate school. He worked as a bank teller in England and then as a printer in Paris, France, before coming to Canada in 1908 to homestead near Edmonton. As a new farmer who believed that Prairie agriculture was not working as well as it could, he joined the early farmers' organizations. He attended the convention at which the Alberta Farmer's Association and the Society of Equity united as the UFA and subsequently helped form the McAfferty UFA local.[4] Spencer was first elected a director

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[2] Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1922, p. 222.

[3] Independent Political Movement petition, 1916, letter from Gardiner to Lorne Proudfoot, 27 February, 1917. Lorne Proudfoot papers, Glenbow Archives.

[4] Spencer interview with Una Maclean, Glenbow Archives.

of the UFA in his federal constituency in absentia (he and his wife took turns attending the conventions and staying home with the baby). He was first nominated as the UFA candidate in 1919 and elected in the 1921 general election. Spencer eventually became secretary of the Ginger Group and then secretary of the UFA federal caucus and of the Co-operating Groups in Parliament.[5]

Edward Garland was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1885 and was the only Roman Catholic of the five. He attended university in Dublin before immigrating to Canada in 1909.[6] On coming to Alberta in 1911, he worked first as a day labourer in Calgary and then as a farmer in Rowley. He was secretary-treasurer of the Bow River UFA constituency association in 1920 and 1921 and worked on the hustings in the 1921 Medicine Hat by-election.[7] Garland recalled later that during his first year or so in the UFA, farmers had to be convinced to join the UFA through explicit material advantages such as cheaper fencing at the UFA Co-op. By 1921, however, farmers were more enthusiastic: "I never saw so many businessmen and other people join the UFA in my life before. People used to join the UFA in those days whose grandfather had had some relationship with farming."[8]

George Coote, born to Irish parents in Oakville, Ontario, in 1880, was the only

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[5] Spencer recollected in 1961, "The curious thing was that I didn't have the slightest temptation to go into public life, or of taking secretarial work." Ibid

[6] J.K. Johnson, ed, Canadian Directory of Parliament 1867-1967, (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1968), p. 222.

[7] Parliamentary Guide, 1922, p. 143., Garland Interview With Una Maclean, 27 July, 1961. Glenbow Archives.

[8] Ibid

Canadian among the Alberta members of the Ginger Group.[9] He had a high school education and worked in Ontario as a bank teller until he was transferred to Kamloops, British Columbia, and then, in 1906 to Nanton, Alberta.[10] After leaving the bank, he worked for short period for an insurance company in Nanton before homesteading outside of town because of his health.[11] Coote joined the UFA in 1913 and eventually became vice president of the Macleod UFA federal association.[12] He was elected to the House of Commons in the 1921 general election.

Donald Macbeth Kennedy, like Robert Gardiner, was from Scotland. He was born in 1884 and came to Canada in 1903. Kennedy was a Baptist, educated in Perth, Scotland, and at Brandon College in Manitoba before coming to Alberta to farm. Like Gardiner, Kennedy had local political experience, first as a municipal councillor in Fairview, Alberta, in 1917 and then as municipal secretary treasurer 1918-1919.[13] Kennedy won a seat for the UFA in the provincial election of 1921, however, he resigned that seat in November in order to run for the UFA federally.[14]

A comparison of the above biographies to those of the other five UFA M.P.'s elected in 1921 shows no absolute characteristics which distinguish the Gingerites. For

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[9] Parliamentary Guide, 1922, p. 132.

[10] Johnson, p. 134.

[11] Printed summary, Coote papers, Glenbow Archives.

[12] Johnson, p. 134.

[13] Ibid, p. 301.

[14] Edmonton Journal, 4 November, 1921, p. 1

example, the nationalities within each of the two groups was mixed; four of the five Alberta Gingerites were born in Great Britain, while among the other five, Donald Kellner and William Lucas were from Ontario, Lincoln Jelliff and Daniel Webster Warner were from the United States and Alfred Speakman was born in Scotland. Since Speakman never became a member of the Ginger Group, the Ginger Group cannot be considered a phenomenon of being British. Nor, since Coote was born in Ontario, can being of British stock be considered fundamental to Ginger Group membership. Similarly, although the American origin might explain something about the political views of two of the UFA M.P.'s outside of the Ginger Group, it cannot explain the other three non-Gingerites. Other characteristics also fail to distinguish all of the Alberta Gingerites. Four of the five were Protestant, but Garland was Catholic. Four represented southern Alberta ridings, but Kennedy's Edmonton East reached to Alberta's northern border. All five were farmers, but so were most of the UFA. All of the Gingerites were born between 1874 and 1885, but so were Kellner, Lucas and Speakman.[15]

Nevertheless, the Gingerites' biographies give some insight into the Group's politics. All five Gingerites were born outside of the prairies and came to Alberta as young adults to homestead between 1902 and 1911. As such, they stand out from Speakman, Warner and Jelliff, and the successive leaders of the Progressive party, Thomas Crerar and Robert Forke, all of whom were in the Prairies earlier.[16] Because the

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[15] Johnson, pp. 291, 299, 344, 543, 592.

[16] Speakman came to Alberta in 1891. Forke was born in Scotland in 1860 and immigrated to Canada in 1882. Crerar was born in Manitoba. Ibid, p. 210, 142. Although Lucas came to Alberta in the same period as the Ginger Group, he came from

Gingerites were relatively late arrivals, they became politically involved with the farmers' movement after the creation of the early farmer organizations such as the Territorial Grain Growers Association. While the earlier farmers cut their political teeth in the old parties, the later ones used farmer organizations as a vehicle for their concerns and protests outside of the old political parties. Therefore, part of the distinction between the future Ginger Group and more moderate farmer-reformers was a result of their becoming politically active as farmers at a time and in a place where party politics were being rejected.

The biographical pattern of the Ginger Group is most useful when connected to external influences. One of the most important of these was Henry Wise Wood, president of the UFA from 1916 to 1931. Wood's economic and political beliefs had a powerful impact on the ideology of the UFA. Indeed the political success of the UFA had much to do with Wood's popularity within Alberta.[17]

Wood believed that one's economic group most influenced one's politics. Therefore, farmers could only maintain united political strength if they organized strictly as an economic group. His definition of economic groups, which he often called class, was a mix of agrarian syndicalism and populist thought. Farmers were a distinct class, as were labourers and industrialists. Other classes were defined more vaguely by

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a partisan Conservative family. William Lucas, Interview with Una Maclean, 29 October, 1961, Glenbow Archives. Clipping from Peterborough Examiner, 22 March, 1961.

[17] Garland recalled, "I don't think anything could have defeated the old man as long as he retained the full measure of his faculties and his strength." Garland Interview with Una Maclean, Glenbow Archives.

profession, for example, doctors were a distinct class. The effectiveness of each class and their ability to represent the political will of their members depended on organization. Industrialists could exploit other classes because they were well organized while farmers and labour were not.

Wood conceived a solution to this exploitation in a theory known as Group Government. He proposed that each class should organize itself politically so that all classes would have representation, and therefore appropriate influence, in Parliament and in Cabinet. Wood also believed that strong organization alone would not solve farmers' long term political problems; if Group Government was to work, each group must be internally democratic. In his address to the 1919 UFA central convention, Wood said, "[farmer's political] action must be purely democratic, it must be instituted, developed and carried on by the people themselves. If they had no interest to carry on in this way, it was useless to attempt to inaugurate action."[18]

If Wood was correct in proposing that one's economic group determined one's political ideas, it followed that most people in a farmer organization would agree on most issues. And, when most people agree, democracy is relatively easy to achieve. Superficially, the idea that farmers thought alike could explain why the UFA was relatively democratic and still unified, however, it fails to account for the many divisions within national farmer organizations. A better explanation of the UFA's cohesion was that Wood's theory of Group Government gave Alberta farmers a theoretical depth that farmers in other prairie provinces lacked. This depth also ensured that, within the UFA,

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[18] Calgary Albertan, 25 January, 1919, p. 19.

reaction against political parties was more directed against the party system than the two old parties in particular.[19]

In contrast, farmers nationally lacked a widely-accepted, comprehensive articulation of their desire for reform. The national farmers' organization, the Canadian Council of Agriculture (CCA), was a loose organization which drafted the farmers' platform and declared the National Progressive party as its political representative. The political reforms of the farmers' platform, however, were vague enough to appeal to those who sought simple as well as fundamental reform. As such, it was insufficient to provide the farmer-reform movement with an ideology. Furthermore, the CCA, primarily a political pressure group, was not structured to lead Canadian farmers to a particular interpretation of the Farmer's Platform. The lack of a strong national farmers' organization and the consequent lack of ideological direction distinguished many Progressive from the members of the eventual Ginger Group.

The Gingerites were also distinguished as being the Progressive Parliamentarians least affected by Thomas A. Crerar, former Union Cabinet Minister, president of the Grain Growers' Grain Company and leader of the Progressive caucus from its inception in 1920 to November 1922. Crerar dominated the new party because he had more Parliamentary experience than most Progressives and because most of them lacked ties

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[19] As Garland said in 1960: "Nothing could have shaken us, boy, in those days we were really solid for group representation, for loyalty to our constituency. That was the one thing that stuck in our minds perhaps more than anything else and for that I think Mr. Wood deserved a tremendous amount of credit. He had really got it right in our minds that we had to represent the farmers. Not the farmers of all of Canada but our farmer, our own farmer right there in the riding that we represented." Garland interview with Una Maclean

with any other central organization or with each other. On the other hand, the freedom of the new Progressive M.P.'s from political machinery left Crerar with the difficult job of being national leader of party which represented a movement that was, in varying degrees, against centralized political organization. As Crerar noted in April of 1922, "Someone said to me the other day that my task was rather difficult since I was the leader of sixty-five independents".[20]

Crerar's situation was more difficult because he did not understand the farmers' rejection of political parties and attributed the anti-party feeling to simple mistrust of reactionaries in the old parties. He dismissed as "seeking to obtain power for the sake of power," and, ironically, "narrow partisanship," the concern of a Manitoba farmer who feared that a fusion of the Progressives with the Liberals, "will be the end of the Progressive movement as this fight has been to kill the two old parties."[21]

Rather than rejecting the old party system, Crerar thought the party system was a necessary and good influence particularly in limiting cleavages. He illustrated his surprisingly traditional view in 1923 when he wrote, "I have always felt that our parliamentary institutions, the source of governing and law making power, are the greatest institutions we have, and Anglo-Saxons on the whole appear to have attained as great a degree of perfection in popular government as is to be found anywhere in the world."[22]

Wood's group government alternative to the party system seemed like unnecessary

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[20] Crerar to Milliken, 17 April, 1922. Crerar papers, box 132.

[21] Crerar to W.J. Miller, 19 January, 1922. Miller to Crerar, 26 December, 1921. Crerar papers, box 121.

[22] Crerar to McConica, 6 March, 1923. Crerar papers, box 132.

class selfishness to Crerar. Democracy for him meant a system in which all people felt united rather than a system which was influenced from the bottom up. Thus, direct democracy was too narrow in scope. For example, Crerar castigated Saskatchewan Progressive M.P. C.W. Stewart for following the wishes of his constituents: "It is impossible for people in any locality or any constituency to correctly visualize all that is involved in government in this country." Crerar added,

> A member's duty, therefore, as I see it, is not alone to find out whether his constituents want him to do any particular matter, but it is in a higher sense to advise and particularly inform them on the considerations that surround these grave questions of public moment.[23]

Crerar's view of politics and his acceptance of party organization were antithetical to the Alberta Gingerites' dislike of partisan politics and their support of Group Government. These differences with Crerar began to distinguish the eventual Ginger Group members once they were in Parliament as part of the Progressive caucus.

For the first few months in Parliament, the eventual Gingerites stood out only as a few individuals. Despite the strength and direction of Henry Wise Wood's beliefs, none of the UFAers had yet formed close personal ties to other M.P.'s with similar ideologies. Furthermore, although the UFA had contributed money and organization for each constituency, the constituency picked its own candidate, who was theoretically independent of everything except the wishes of his constituents. The UFA directed its M.P.'s only as far as they understood and accepted its political theory.

The Gingerites' lack of organization gave Crerar strong influence over the

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[23] Crerar to C.S. Stewart, 7 September, 1922, Crerar papers, box 121.

Progressive caucus late in 1921 when it decided its role in the new Parliament. Crerar, a free-trade Liberal at heart, sought to fuse the Progressive and Liberal parties to form a national, low-tariff party. A few individual future Gingerites (and many Progressive supporters) stood against any kind of a coalition with the Liberal party. For example, Agnes Macphail asserted fusion would destroy the Progressives. She said, "Even if Mr Crerar goes over to the Liberals, I will not, even if I should be the only independent left in the House."[24] Gardiner and Campbell also opposed any coalition. T.H. McConica, a Saskatchewan Progressive M.P., told Crerar in a letter on 22 December that at a Saskatoon meeting with several Alberta M.P.'s, "We talked freely and I feel very sure that all of them are entirely dependable excepting Mr. Gardiner. Mr. Garland had left and I can say nothing as to him. [M.N.] Campbell was the most outspoken in opposition and talked of the cross benches."[25]

In a reply already showing the beginning of tension between Crerar and the future Gingerites, Crerar agreed with McConica, saying he was, "not very hopeful of him[Gardiner]." Crerar was particularly unhappy because Gardiner publicly divulged the events of the Saskatoon meeting: "This I consider dishonourable and I think the matter will have to be dealt with when we meet at Ottawa. Ignoring his own advice that resentment in politics is neither pleasant nor profitable, Crerar added, "Campbell is weak,

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[24] Edmonton Journal, 19 December 1921.

[25] T.H. McConica to Crerar, 22 December, 1922. Crerar papers, box 132. Interestingly, McConica, like the most Crypto-Liberal UFA M.P.'s, was American-born and older than the Gingerites. He had been president of the Senate of Ohio between 1892 and 1895. Morton, p. 149.

opinionated, somewhat conceited and ignorant. I have very little hope for him either."[26]

Besides Gardiner and perhaps Garland, the other Alberta members did not stand out at this early stage, partly, because of their lack of experience in Ottawa.[27] However, UFA M.P.'s soon coalesced. By April, 1922, enough UFAers acted together with sufficient frequency that one Ontario M.P. wrote to Crerar, "I do not like the position taken by the Alberta crew, it will get them nowhere."[28] By late July, 1922, when the idea of a Liberal-Progressive coalition resurfaced in the Progressive caucus,[29] UFA ideology became more important for the individual Alberta M.P.'s. Albert Speakman, for example, supported Crerar's second coalition attempt until he returned to Alberta:

> I have thought this over very carefully since and have discussed it with a few of my personal friends who are amongst the leaders in the movement here and have come to the conclusion that a fusion, as suggested, is impossible for the Alberta members at the present time. The feeling here is very strong, and in that feeling, as you know, I sympathize to some

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[26] Crerar to McConica, 19, January, 1922. Crerar papers, box 132. Crerar seems to have taken an intense dislike to Campbell, one of the original members of the Ginger Group. In September of 1926, he wrote to Mackenzie King, "I am afraid Campbell is elected in Mackenzie. There were few in the whole contest I would rather see beaten than him." Crerar to W.L. Mackenzie King, 15 September, 1926. Crerar papers.

[27] Henry Spencer, for example, hypothesized that no one opposed Crerar's decision not to form the official opposition, a decision which made the absorption of the Progressive by the Liberals much easier, "because it was taken at a very early stage before we really found each other.... I think it was because we were all perfectly green." Spencer interview with Una
Maclean.

[28] Wm. Elliot to Crerar, 7 April, 1922. Crerar papers, box 132.

[29] Copy of letter from Crerar to The Winnipeg Tribune, referring to an interprovincial conference of Progressive M.P.'s in Regina, "August 6th last" (1922) ca. 1923. (precise date chewed away by mice) Crerar papers, box 132.

extent at least.[30]

The majority of Alberta M.P.'s, with the probable exceptions of Warner and Jelliff, opposed fusion more adamantly than Speakman.[31]

The Albertans were not the only Progressives to object to fusion with the Liberals; several Saskatchewan M.P.'s reported their constituents also opposed it. McConica, who favoured fusion, told Crerar that after meeting with his supporters, he realized, "the idea of an alliance with the Liberals does not appeal to them nearly as strongly as it did in February. It will take a strong effort to line them up. And the result in Manitoba [a farmers' victory in the 1922 provincial election] has strengthened the feeling."[32] John Millar, Progressive M.P. for Qu'appelle, said he would favour fusion if his constituents agreed but a small number were decidedly against it and the great majority were mildly opposed.[33] C.W. Stewart could, "readily see [the] material advantage" of an alliance or coalition with the Liberals, but deemed it his "first duty to express the opinion of my constituents, and I am convinced that they are overwhelmingly opposed to such a move at this time."[34]

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[30] Speakman to Crerar, 18 August, 1922. Crerar papers, box 136.

[31] A.B. Hudson, who had been involved in the December 1921 attempt at fusion said that he discussed the political situation with (ex-Alberta Premier?) Stewart. "His view as to Alberta agrees with your own. He thinks that Warner, Jelliff and probably Speakman would come in, but none of the others, for the present at least." Hudson to Alex (?), 24 August, 1922. Crerar papers, box 121.

[32] McConica to Crerar, 23 July 1922. Crerar papers, box 132.

[33] John Millar to Crerar, 4 August, 1922. Crerar papers, box 121.

[34] C.W. Stewart to Crerar, 30 August, 1922. Crerar papers, box 121.

In spite of these reservations by Saskatchewan Progressives, most Saskatchewan M.P.'s either favoured a coalition or would have been considered it.[35] The Saskatchewan representatives, therefore, were either not representative of most Saskatchewan Progressives or they changed their views once in caucus. To a degree at least, the opinions of the Saskatchewan M.P.'s had gone through a process described by Crerar in a letter to C.W. Stewart:

> your outlook and your judgement on the problems of government in Canada have been altered by your experience of one Session in Ottawa, because you have come in closer contact with them than it is possible, or ever will be possible, for the vast majority of your electors.[36]

Speakman's change of mind, as well as Millar, McConica and Stewart's wariness after returning home from Ottawa shows a struggle between what seemed important inside the caucus and what seemed important inside the constituency. Strong constituent demands and the development of ties with other farmer-reform M.P.'s could explain why support for coalition or co-operation with the Liberals weakened after the Progressives first session in Parliament. However, over time, the lack of co-ordination among constituents made Parliamentary politics more important for many Progressive M.P.'s and the Progressives became more like a party. By the end of the Progressives' first year in Parliament, the importance of the principles of the farmers' movement were declining, although the process was gradual and far from universal.

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[35] McConica told Crerar in September 1922 that, in respect to fusion: "I am very sure you can depend upon twelve of the Saskatchewan Members." McConica to Crerar, 11 September, 1922. Crerar papers, box 121. Of course, McConica had said the same of the Alberta M.P.'s the previous 22 December.

[36] Crerar to C.W. Stewart, 7 September, 1922.

The most notable exceptions to the conservative influence of Parliament in the Progressive caucus were the future Ginger Group M.P.'s, the M.P.'s who had most strongly resisted fusion with the Liberals. An examination of the votes in the House of Commons shows how the divisions deepened and the eventual Ginger Group slowly agglomerated to become the most cohesive part of the caucus. They voted most often with each other and with the two Labourites J.S. Woodsworth and William Irvine. The voting pattern of many other Progressives was more fluid. On any given vote, various M.P.'s voted according to their view of the issue discussed. The majority, albeit a shifting group, tended to follow the Crypto-Liberal leadership. The divisions between radical Gingerites and moderate majority emerged in the House in 1922. The 1922 budget debate was a good example. The Progressives were relatively united in their disappointment with the lack of significant tariff reduction in the Liberal's 1922 Budget; the radicals voted with the majority against it.[37] However, the caucus was more divided on the Conservative amendment which criticized the Liberals for failing to follow the lower tariff policy of the 1919 Liberal convention.[38] The moderates were afraid to vote for this amendment even though they supported it in principle, because by voting with the Conservatives they could bring down the Liberal government. Although only four

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[37] House of Commons, Debates, 1922, pp. 2213-2214. Ten Progressives voted with the Liberals. Strangely, Preston Elliot was one of them, as were two Ontario Progressives who would soon join the Liberals and the Protectionist B.C. Progressives.

[38] Ibid, p. 2179. The Conservative criticism of the Liberals was obviously a partisan tactic because the Conservatives were adamantly protectionist. Nevertheless, it was an effective way to catch the Progressives in a dilemma between principle and partisanship, since the Crypto-Liberal Progressives, who claimed to be above partisan politics, did not want to oppose the government.

Progressives, Gardiner, Garland, Macphail and N.H. McTaggart (Maple Creek, Saskatchewan), voted for the Conservative amendment, the five future Alberta Ginger Group M.P.'s, along with Shaw, Irvine, Woodsworth and McTaggart of Saskatchewan, tried to avoid voting, even though they were in the House. When forced to vote, Shaw, Kennedy and Spencer voted against the Conservative amendment. Coote also did, but added, "Mr. Speaker, under compulsion I vote against the amendment."[39]

Nevertheless, in most divisions in 1922, the future Gingerites and the other Progressives voted together, sometimes in support of relatively radical reform.[40] For example, in April 1922, J.S. Woodsworth, who was attacking the role of the R.C.M.P. as a government tool to end labour disputes, especially the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, resolved to limit the R.C.M.P. to the Northwest Territories. Although all of the future Ginger Group voted for the Woodsworth resolution, so too did thirty-two other Progressives, including Crerar and Forke.[41]

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[39] Ibid, p. 2912-2913. Coote did not say from where the compulsion came. Spencer's vote may be a typographical error, since he quoted on p. 2913 as voting against the amendment, but is listed on p. 2912 as voting for it.

[40] A short debate which showed the moderate and radical Progressive in agreement in 1922 came from W.C. Good's motion for proportional representation. (Proportional representation would allow smaller groups to elect representatives, and was therefore necessary for Group Government.) Crerar also supported Proportional representation because it was a further step in,
"getting as exact a representation of the people's will in the matter of government as it is possible to do." Ibid, p. 1653. Mackenzie King also declared his support for Good's motion, which was
nevertheless talked out. Ibid, p. 1655.

[41] Crerar said he did not necessarily agree with all of Woodsworth's assessments of the R.C.M.P. during the strike, but supported the measure because he felt that the R.C.M.P. was too expensive. Ibid, p. 835. Sixteen Progressives voted against the amendment, including Jelliff of Alberta. Ibid, pp. 843-844. Two UFA M.P's, Kennedy

A year later, however, the radical-moderate division within the Progressive party had become clearer. In March 1923, the majority of Progressive M.P.'s did not support Woodsworth's similar resolution.[42] This time, twenty-six Progressives voted against the motion, which was defeated 156 to 23, while only fourteen supported it.[43] The future Ginger group made up the largest section of the more radical Progressives who voted with Woodsworth: only two future Gingerites, W. C. Good and Preston Elliot, voted with the majority against the resolution.

Debates on oleomargarine in 1922 and 1923 showed the same trend in the Progressive party. The production and importation of oleomargarine had been illegal in Canada until 1914 when it was allowed to help alleviate a wartime butter shortage. Dairy farmers objected to the continued sale of the competing product. In May, 1922, A.W. Neill of B.C. moved that the manufacture and importation of oleomargarine be discontinued as of September first.[44] Several Progressives, including W.C. Good, Crerar and Alfred Speakman, believed that Neill's resolution amounted to protection and refused to vote for it.[45] In the end, only three British Columbia, three Alberta and two Ontario

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and D.W. Warner did not vote.

[42] Again, Woodsworth moved to provide a federal force to protect federal property and a distinct N.W.M.P for the territories. House of Commons, Debates, 1923, p. 1139.

[43] Ibid, 1923. pp. 1152-1153. Garland, Spencer and Kennedy voted for the amendment and four other UFA M.P's voted against it. Gardiner and Coote were not present for the vote.

[44] House of Commons, Debates, 1922, p. 1777.

[45] Ibid, pp. 1836, 1832. D.W. Warner of Alberta said that he would support the prohibition of oleomargarine even if others (see Crerar to Stewart, note 23, above) thought him small minded for doing what his constituents asked. In terms of constituency

Progressives supported the resolution, which was defeated 57-83.[46] All the future Ginger Group M.P.'s voted against the resolution, but, as with the 1922 R.C.M.P. debate, they were not distinguished from the majority of Progressives nor were their views universal among the UFA M.P.'s.

The oleomargarine question came up again in June, 1923, when the Liberals called for the return of the 1914 suspension of prohibition on oleomargarine.[47] However, whereas in 1922, most Progressives supported the free trade argument, in 1923 most did not.[48] R. Macgregor Dawson, the biographer of Mackenzie King, criticized the selfishness of the majority of Progressive M.P.'s in voting for protection when it favoured farmers: "The Progressives might continue to be sensitive and faithful representatives of agrarian and sectional interests, they could no longer assert that they were the uncompromising foes of privilege of all kind."[49] Dawson's assessment, however, needs some clarification. Fourteen Progressives, including the Alberta five plus Good and Macphail, voted against

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responsibility, Warner's choice of issue was as consistent as Gardiner's or Macphail's on coalition with the Liberals. However, Warner's stand was not also compatible with the rest of the farmer's platform whereas Gardiner's and Macphail's issue was.

[46] Ibid, p. 1840. None of the future Ginger Group were among the supporters.

[47] House of Commons, Debates, 1923, p. 3520.

[48] Progressives did not necessarily give up their free-trade rhetoric. T. McConica, before voting for prohibition of oleomargarine in 1923 claimed, "I am not a protectionist, and I hope the time may come soon when nations will conclude that protection is a mistake." Ibid, p. 3533.

[49] R. MacGregor Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958), p. 449.

the government measure and thus did not compromise their principles.[50] Indeed, Good clearly articulated the logical and political problems of farmer support for the prohibition of oleomargarine when he criticized an editorial in The Farmer's Advocate which supported the prohibition of oleo:

> Now, granted that protective tariffs have not been, and cannot be of much assistance to Canadian farmers generally, is it wise for us as farmers to seek every possible benefit which protection may confer, hoping thus to get at least a share of the good things going, or should we rather aim at doing away with special privilege of all kinds? I have always favoured the latter policy.[51]

The oleomargarine and R.C.M.P debates illustrated that by 1923 the future Ginger Group M.P.'s tended to vote together, often contrary to the majority of Progressives. However, there was not yet a firm division between the Ginger Group and other Progressives. First, the Gingerites were not the only Progressives to vote against the majority; they were just the most consistent. Second, the Progressives represented mostly farmers and thus still had more in common with each other in most debates than with the old parties.

Two issues in parliament, one important for the radicals and the other for the moderates, show the Progressives working together in 1923. The radicals' key issue was the structure of non-confidence votes. On February 12, 1923 Irvine moved that, "a defeat of a government measure should not be considered as a sufficient reason for the

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[50] House of Commons, Debates, 1923, p. 3580.

[51] W.C. Good to W.H. Porter, Editor, Farmer's Advocate, 14 April, 1924. W. C. Good papers, volume 7.

resignation of the government."[52] The purpose of the motion was to free individual M.P.'s from having to vote with their party on every issue, since the fate of the government would only be in question on specific confidence motions. According to Shaw, Irvine's resolution would, "allow members to escape that embarrassing situation" of voting against their convictions and their constituents.[53] The defeat of the resolution by the old parties, in effect, hamstrung non-partisan Parliamentary reform, since party discipline would not be relaxed. Nevertheless, almost all Progressives supported the resolution.[54]

The moderates' key issue was the tariff. The radicals supported the Progressive majority on two 1923 amendments to lower it even though they did not think the tariff was the fundamental economic problem for farmers. The first amendment came in the debate on the 1923 Address to the Throne when R.A. Hoey moved for a substantial reduction in customs duties in order to lower the cost of agricultural production.[55] All the Progressives except the three from British Columbia voted for the amendment, which was defeated 54-140.[56] And in the May, 1923 debate on the budget, all the Progressives supported Forke's amendment proposing an immediate and substantial reduction of the tariff. In the main motion, the Conservatives and Progressives both voted against the

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[52] House of Commons, Debates, 1923. p. 242.

[53] Ibid, p. 216.

[54] Ibid, pp. 243-244.

[55] Ibid, p. 65.

[56] Ibid. pp. 178-179. Labour M.P.s Woodsworth and Irvine and Liberal Andrew McMaster were the only non-Progressives to support the amendment.

Liberal budget, although for opposite reasons.[57]

Credit and banking, however, was much more contentious for the Progressives. Although farmers across Canada were very concerned about banking and currency, there was no consensus on either the precise problems or their solutions. The more radical approach of the Gingerites and a few other individual Progressive M.P.'s towards Banking and Credit increased division within the Progressive caucus during the 1923 decennial Bank Act revision.

The Progressives voted almost entirely in concord on a series of relatively moderate amendments to the Bank Act.[58] However, the debate itself illustrated growing tension between two factions. Most Progressives emphasized certain issues, particularly the failure of the Merchant's Bank and the need for rural credits.[59] Although the future Ginger Group and the two Labour M.P.'s were also concerned about these issues, they were more interested in the Banks' monopoly on the money supply and sought more fundamental reform of the Canadian financial system.[60]

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[57] Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada, pp. 183-185.

[58] House of Commons, Debates, 1923, pp. 4147-4149, 4161. Good moved an amendment that the Bank Act be renewed for one year rather than ten. Shaw moved an amendment to limit interest to 7% a year; Coote, to limit interest to 8% a year, T.W. Bird to examine the collapse of the Merchant Bank and Woodsworth, to allow bank staff the right of association. All amendments were supported by the overwhelming majority of Progressives. Only McBride and Neill of B.C. voted against Good's and Shaw's motions. Every Progressive was for Coote's, McBride was the only Progressive against Bird's and all supported Woodsworth's. Every amendment was defeated by the majority of Conservatives and Liberals, although a varying few from each old party supported the different amendments.

[59] See for example, Wm. Black, Ibid, p. 4034, Hoey, p. 4039, Lucas, p. 4043.

[60] See Chapter Four, Below

Robert Forke's gentlemanly condemnation of the future Ginger Group's approach to the Bank Act illustrated the moderates' dismissal of the more radical proposals:

> I think hon. members may rest assured that nothing very radical or serious is likely to happen in this parliament as regards the Bank act....
>
> Perhaps the people who are anxious to go too far have played into the hands of those who do not want to go at all.... They have made people afraid and those who might have been willing to go a little further have been afraid to move just for fear some of the ideas that have been propounded should be put into practice.[61]

Proponents of more radical reform, on the other hand, believed the majority's moderate approach was destructive to the reforms. As a result, the old parties easily limited debate even on reforms such as a proposal to pass the Bank Act for only one year instead of ten. W.C. Good displayed the radical disgust, describing the action of the moderate Progressives as, "entirely unworthy of those concerned."[62]

Despite increasingly obvious differences between the future Ginger Group and most other Progressive M.P.'s, the Ginger Group did not form until after the 1924 budget debate. In this debate, which took place in April and May, the radicals believed the majority's unwillingness to vote against the Liberal party compromised the non-partisan principles of the farmer-reform movement. Most Progressive Members liked the 1924 budget, which was closer to the Farmers' platform than any they had seen in the House.[63]

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[61] House of Commons, Debates, 1923, p. 4045.

[62] Ibid, p. 4142.

[63] Crerar for example, dismissed criticisms made in the debate about the Liberals' failure to live up to the principles of their 1919 platform: "whether the government that was elected in 1921 and which my right hon. friend now leads, has up to the present lived up to that platform or not, I think they may justly claim that in the present tariff proposals which they have brought
down they have at any rate made a step in the right direction." House of Commons,

However, Woodsworth, seconded by Shaw, moved an amendment similar to Hoey's amendment in the 1923 address and Forke's in the 1923 budget. Woodsworth criticized the Liberals for failing to alleviate the problems of natural resource industries (such as farming) and proposed "an immediate and substantial reduction of the tariff on the necessities of life, including foodstuffs clothing and building materials."[64]

The Progressive majority was in a dilemma. Ostensibly, they feared bringing down the government if they voted for Woodsworth's amendment. On the other hand, they clearly supported it in principle and therefore could not speak against it without appearing hypocritical. In contrast to the majority, all ten of the Ginger Group, including Ward and Elliot (who had previously voted only sporadically with the group) supported the Woodsworth amendment, as did Irvine, Woodsworth himself, Shaw, A.J. Lewis and O.R. Gould from Saskatchewan and L.P. Bancroft from Manitoba.[65] The support of the three non-Gingerite Progressives shows that the issues in the amendment were not, in themselves, the reason for the split. Nevertheless, all ten of the soon to be Ginger Group voted together: the Group had coalesced by the end of this debate.

The increasingly consistent division between the more radical minority and more moderate majority within the Progressive party culminated in the Ginger Group secession in June and July of 1924. The first seven Ginger Group members, Gardiner, Garland, Kennedy, Spencer, Campbell, Elliot and Macphail, left the Progressive caucus on June

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Debates, 1924, p. 2151.

[64] Ibid. p. 1460. The resolution also included income tax, land tax and inheritance tax reform.

[65] Ibid. 2221-2222.

14. They believed that the Progressive party no longer represented the principles of the farmer-reform movement. As M.N. Campbell explained after the split,

> the refusal of the 'Ginger Group', as they are being dubbed in the press, to attend the Progressive Caucus must not be interpreted as a break with the organizations in the country. The basic idea behind it is to preserve the movement in its pure form, and to enable those members to represent their constituents more directly.[66]

In their letter of resignation to Progressive leader Robert Forke, the Gingerites described the farmer-reform movement as a twofold protest, "against the economic burdens that have been piled upon the agricultural industry as a result of forty years of Class government," and, "against a party system organized and dominated by the top, and by means of which the financial and commercial interests have retained power for so long." On an even broader scope, the Gingerites believed that the farmer-reform movement, "represented a noble effort to give effect in the political field to that co-operative philosophy which has not only constituted an outstanding characteristic of the Farmers' movement, but which is the World's best hope of saving civilization."[67]

The Ginger Group believed that events since the beginning of the Parliament, such as the early attempt at coalition with the Liberals, the 1923 Bank Act debate and the 1924 Budget debate, showed that the Progressives were increasingly like the old parties. They told Forke:

> Bearing in mind the fact that each constituency represented by us is autonomous in the nomination, election, financing and control of its member, it should be evident that it is impossible to secure our support for

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[66] M.N. Campbell, Article, ca. 1924., p. 1. Spencer Papers. N.A.C.

[67] Letter from the Seven to Robert Forke, 14 June, 1924. Coote Papers.

> the formation of a political party organization on the old lines involving majority rule in caucus, whip domination, responsibility for leaders' statements and action, and so forth.[68]

The three other Ginger Group members, Good, Coote and Ward (curiously, Preston Elliot signed both documents) sent a letter to Forke on July 3, 1924, after the press associated them with the other seven. In their concise letter, they noted, "we are in large measure in agreement with the statement of principles and viewpoint issued by the seceding Members" and second, "as far as the work of Parliament, we have been for a long time in active and regular collaboration with most of the seceders, and believe it our duty to continue that collaboration."[69]

Forke and Crerar separately responded to the Ginger Group on June 2, 1924. Forke did not believe that the organization of the Progressive caucus in Parliament affected constituency autonomy or general organization of the movement. He believed that the Group's concerns about the principles of the Progressive movement were really concerns about procedure:

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[68] The group noted that the decision of the majority of the Progressive caucus to support sending a Parliamentary delegation to the British Empire Exhibition at public expense, taken just prior to the first Ginger Group split, was the culmination of their disagreement with the majority. Ibid., p. 3.

Also, personal differences, though less important to an understanding of the Gingerites' fundamental political beliefs, contributed to the split. Spencer noted in an interview in 1961 the role of Progressive Whip J.F. Johnston, who had promised but failed to keep the Budget debate going for a week. Campbell, writing soon after the split, suggested that there were few hard feelings towards Forke, but also said that if Crerar had still been leader the split would have happened a year earlier. W.C. Good was less certain of the split, and wrote in 1958, "The secession, I think, would not have taken place if J. Fred Johnston had not been whip of the Progressive group. The appraisal some of us made of Johnston was pretty well borne out by his subsequent political career."

[69] Good et al. to Forke, 3 July, 1924. Good papers, volume 7.

> The differences between us would appear to arise in connection with our Parliamentary organization. Three years ago the Progressive members adopted the usual form of Parliament organization with leader, whip and caucus, but they by no means became servile to it. The meetings of the caucus have been held in exactly the same spirit and manner as the meetings of our local organization and conventions at home. They have possessed the same strength and the same weakness, neither more nor less.[70]

In one sense, Forke was quite right. Progressive M.P.'s could still vote more freely than their Liberal and Conservative counterparts. However, the Ginger Group members believed that trying to impose a party view, even without strict party discipline, was antithetical to democracy because it took the direction of the movement away from the constituents. According to Campbell, although majority rule was never imposed in caucus, when the minority

> voted against the majority in the House, they were made to feel that they were a source of major embarrassment to the main group, and it was to relieve the majority from this disadvantage, as well as to secure more freedom to represent their constituents, that they eventually refused further to attend the caucus.[71]

Crerar seems to have understood more clearly than Forke that the split resulted from the Gingerites' concerns about the organization of the movement. Nevertheless, as he had with Wood in 1920, Crerar judged their reasons trivial. He told the seceders,

> You place your withdrawal from us upon wholly different grounds [than that the platform has been departed from]. I [changed by hand to 'we'] think it is not too much to say, upon the relatively unimportant grounds of the form of organization the Progressives have among themselves for

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[70] Forke to Macphail, Gardiner, Garland, Kennedy, Spencer and Campbell, 20 June, 1924, p. 1. Crerar papers, box 132.

[71] M.N. Campbell, Article, ca. 1924., p. 1.

carrying out their work in Parliament.[72]

After leaving the Progressive caucus, the Gingerites no longer had to worry about disappearing inside a party. The most important political question for the Alberta five was no longer their relationship with the National Progressive Party but rather their relationship with the UFA organization and the other UFA M.P.'s. The Ginger Group five were only half of the UFA federal group, albeit they had the general support of Joseph Shaw and William Irvine, the two other Alberta M.P.'s. The other five UFAers often voted with the crypto-Liberals; their interpretation of the farmer-reform movement and the UFA differed significantly from that of the more radical five.

These differences within the UFA federal caucus did not cause great concern among UFA members at large. Indeed, UFA locals, not being directly involved in the problems of the Progressive caucus in Ottawa, were more interested in the capacity of their M.P.'s as local representatives than in their relationships with the Progressive party. Leona Barritt, President of the Red Deer UFA constituency association, illustrated this attitude in a letter to The Calgary Albertan. Replying to a November 14, 1924, article,

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[72] Crerar to seven original seceders, 20 June, 1924. Crerar papers, box 132. pp. 1-2. The rest of Crerar's letter is a rhetorical question as to what good a party can do without an organization, a valid question the Ginger Group would not have to answer until 1933 when their scope went beyond the UFA organization.

The rhetoric of the dissenters and Crerar appears to have been their greatest similarity; they used similar language to defend entirely different conceptions of the farmers' movement. For example, in their resignation letter, the group noted the difference between the Political party, which aspires to power in a competitive spirit and the "democratically organized group which aims to co-operate with other groups to secure justice rather than power." Crerar, on the other hand, wrote that those opposed to broadening out the Progressive party into a brokerage party, "are more concerned with the triumph of the party for party's sake than I am." Crerar to R.H. Milliken, 29, November, 1922. Crerar papers, box 132.

"Federal Ginger Group Attacked by Red Deer UFA", she wrote,

> We do not know where the Albertan got its information, but it is inconceivable that any but an imbecile could have gotten such an impression from the discussions of that gathering. The convention was composed of far too intelligent men and women to attack such outstanding people as compose the Ginger Group.

Barritt explained, "the vote of confidence in our member [Albert Speakman] was personal only and implied no connection with the differences which have risen, nor censure of those who differed with him." Regarding the Ginger Group split, the Red Deer UFA decided that it, "did not possess the real and inside information," and thus was unable, "to give definite instructions to Mr. Speakman on these matters."[73] Barritt also explained that the Red Deer UFA expected the UFA M.P.'s to work out their differences among themselves. It passed a resolution asking for a conference composed of two elected representatives from each federal constituency and the federal M.P.'s to work out internal divisions.

At precisely such a conference the UFA M.P.'s drafted a resolution suggesting that the 1925 convention affirm first, "that the elected U.F.A. representatives, having in mind the guiding principles of the organization, shall maintain their solidarity as a group," and second, "they shall at all times be seized with the important duty which devolves on them of co-operating in finding practical methods whereby they can further the aims and objects of the Organization."[74] While these recommendations spoke of working together,

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[73] Leona Barritt to Calgary Albertan, November 1924, clipping in Coote papers, f163. Glenbow Archives.

[74] Paper signed by all of the UFA M.P.'s, except Kennedy to the Chairman, UFA convention, January, 1925. UFA papers, f19. Glenbow Archives.

the key clause was the one referring to the organization's guiding principles. The task for the 1925 UFA convention, therefore, was defining these guiding principles in terms of the UFA federal representatives.

The convention followed the federal caucus's suggestions with a series of resolutions which articulated the relationship of the UFA M.P.'s with each other, the UFA Convention and Locals, and other reform Parliamentarians. The first resolution, in laying out the extra parliamentary relationships of the UFA M.P.'s, stated that each UFA M.P., "shall be known only as a U.F.A. representative, and shall be expected to attach himself to no other legislative group or party". Furthermore, it declared M.P.'s to be responsible directly to their particular UFA constituency organization which was, "responsible to the U.F.A. organization as a whole."[75] A major implication of the first resolution was that the UFA M.P.'s would not be Progressives.[76] It also would prevent them from disappearing into a Progressive-Liberal coalition.

The second resolution, which addressed the parliamentary relationships of the UFA M.P., limited the individual representative's independence from the UFA. It stated that each M.P. was, "expected to co-operate as an individual with all other U.F.A. members, thereby forming and organizing a parliamentary group unit". The convention still expected this group to co-operate with, "other parliamentary parties, groups, or individual members," but only ,"when practicable to do so" and, "in the interests of desirable

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[75] Minutes of UFA central Convention, 1925, p. 180.

[76] According to Garland's recollection, the UFA M.P.'s in 1921 had tended to think of themselves as UFA representatives rather than Progressives anyway. Garland interview with Maclean

legislation.[77]

Some observers have interpreted the 1925 UFA Convention resolutions as the end of the Ginger Group. For example, reporter Grant Dexter said in 1925,

> [the Ginger Group] was purely a parliamentary movement. When the Gingerites returned to their constituencies during the 1924 recess, they found that their breakaway had not increased their popularity. While the West was in enthusiastic accord with many of the reforms the Gingerites advocated, the instincts of the electors warned them against divisions in the party. The Alberta farmers at their 1925 convention strongly urged the Gingerites to co-operate with the main group.[78]

More recently, Peter Smith, noting that both the Calgary Albertan and the Winnipeg Free Press called the convention the end of the Ginger Group, said that the UFA Gingerites gave way to some extent on their principles of constituency autonomy.[79]

However, rather than correcting the Gingerites' views, the resolutions recognized their independence from the Progressive caucus. By making the constituency association responsible to the convention, the first resolution not only reduced constituency autonomy in the UFA, it also made the UFA distinct from the Progressives. Therefore, the UFA was following the Ginger Group rather than forcing it back into line.[80]

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[77] Minutes of UFA Central Convention, 1925, p. 180.

[78] Grant Dexter, "Will the Prairies Go Solid Again?", Maclean's October 15, 1925, p. 75. Dexter's understanding of politics within the UFA seems questionable. For example, in this same article, he called Speakman practically independent.

[79] Peter Douglas Smith, "The United Farmers of Alberta and the Ginger Group: Independent Political Action 1919-1939." University of Alberta, M.A. Thesis, 1973. p. 48.

[80] The fourth resolution, "that nothing in the above resolution shall be so construed as to prevent the U.F.A. parliamentary group from acting with, and inviting into their group councils, individual parliamentary members, especially those elected by other farmers' organizations similar to the U.F.A.", also seems to recognize the split in the

There is significant additional evidence that the UFA convention accepted the Ginger Group's approach. For example, in advising Henry Wise Wood on how to settle the differences among the UFA M.P.'s, "without humiliating the Speakman bunch", William Irvine said:

> Boiling the question down it is merely one of whether the Alberta members shall co-operate with the Progressives as individuals or as a U.F.A. group unit. You could tell them that it is important for them to cooperate but that you insist upon that being done as a U.F.A. group unit and that the extent to which Alberta will co-operate must by decided on by the Alberta Unit.[81]

The similarity of Irvine's solution in support of the Ginger Group to the Convention's second resolution, even in the use of the phrase "group unit", suggests that the convention also supported the Gingerites.

Furthermore, contrary to what the Albertan and the Free Press argued, considerable other evidence suggests that the Ginger Group survived after the 1925 UFA convention. For example, in March, 1925, Coote, Garland, Spencer, Gardiner and Gardiner, along with Elliot, Good, Shaw, Irvine, Campbell, Ward, Woodsworth and Macphail appointed W.C. Good, "to act on our behalf in securing adequate representation for us on any committees which are to be formed during the remainder of the present session."[82] Rather than having disappeared, the Ginger Group was alive and working with formal recognition in

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sense that the resolution encouraged co-operation with other farmer M.P's to come into the UFA's group councils as individuals rather than the UFA taking part in someone else's (eg. the Progressive) caucus. 1925 UFA Convention minutes, p. 180.

[81] Irvine sent W.N. Smith the draft of a letter he sent to Wood. Irvine to Smith, 15 December, 1924. W.N. Smith Papers, f22. Glenbow Archives.

[82] 7 March, 1925. W.C. Good papers.

the House of Commons. It is also worth noting that the non-Progressives, Irvine, Shaw and Woodsworth, were in some form of formal co-operation with the Progressive seceders.

The debates in the House in 1925 provide further evidence of the Ginger Group's continued existence. The Group did not always stand out as clearly from other Progressive M.P.'s it had in 1924, but this was because the rest of the Progressives voted more often against the Liberals. For example, thirty-two Progressives, including all of the UFA M.P.'s, voted against Prime Minister W.L.M. King's resolution to give government business precedence over that of private members on all Wednesdays until the end of the session. Irvine and Woodsworth also voted against the measure, while the quintessentially Crypto-Liberal Crerar, Forke, and McConica voted with the Government.[83] In two farm specific bills in 1925, the Australian treaty and the Canada Grain Act, the pattern of a large number of Progressives voting against the Government and Crerar and Forke recurred. Twenty Progressives voted against the Australian treaty, while another fourteen were paired. Only Crerar, Johnston, McConica, two British Columbia and one Ontario Progressive voted for it.[84] In the Canada Grain Act debate, Coote moved an amendment to allow a farmer to have his grain sent to the terminal elevator of his choice (an important change to help the wheat pools). Coote's amendment was supported by all Prairie Progressives except Crerar and Forke while most Ontario

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[83] House of Commons, Debates, 1925. pp. 1056-1057.

[84] Ibid, p. 4796.

Progressives other than the three Gingerites (Good, Elliot and Macphail) voted against it.[85]

The most significant aspect of the Ginger Group voting pattern in 1925 was that the central UFA did not compel the Alberta Gingerites to vote with the Progressive party. The Alberta five continued to vote with the other seceders as well as Woodsworth and Irvine. In 1925, however, the other UFA M.P.'s were voting with the Ginger Group and against Crypto-Liberals such as Crerar and Forke more often than before, as were many other Progressives.

The most important event in Parliamentary terms for the Gingerites' increasing freedom from the Crypto-Liberals was the 1925 federal election which left the Progressives a regional group with twenty-three seats on the Prairies, two in Ontario and only nine percent of the national vote. Nevertheless, because neither the Conservatives, with 117 seats, nor the Liberals, with 101, had a majority, the old parties had to gain support of enough Progressives to maintain the confidence of the House.[86] At the same time, the Progressive party was becoming less cohesive. As W.C. Good told J.J. Morrison in March, 1925, even before the election, there was no Dominion Progressive

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[85] Ibid. p. 4753. Crerar did not accept that the overwhelming solidarity of the Prairie M.P.'s in this debate probably meant that most Prairie people did not support his own position. He said, "It is not pleasant to find myself at variance with my colleagues form western Canada, but in my judgement they do not represent the opinion of the agricultural portion of western Canada in the amendment which has been moved by the hon. member for Medicine Hat. [Gardiner]" Ibid. p. 4710. (Gardiner's resolution, p. 4708, was compatible with Coote's, but was ruled out of order, p. 4710.)

[86] See Appendix A for electoral results.

Party.[87] The lack of caucus unity meant that uniform support of the farmer M.P.'s for either the Conservatives or Liberals was unlikely.

The problem for the Progressives in Parliament was whether to support King, who had fewer seats, or Meighen, whose politics were more different from their own. The Progressives most sympathetic to the Liberals would likely support King, and the Liberals knew it.[88] The Liberals, however, also knew that their support would not be enough to maintain the government.[89] The Conservatives' extra sixteen seats meant that they needed the support of only eight other M.P.'s. The Ginger Group, now consisting of the five UFA M.P.'s, Macphail, and Campbell, became a vital part of any governing formula.

The anti-partisan Gingerites, whose support was crucial for the Liberals, had less reason to support Mackenzie King. Irvine, who had lost his seat in Calgary, told W.N. Smith, "I am sure that [the UFA M.P.'s] are damned if they support King without giving Meighen a chance to offer any cooperative arrangement to them. If they support King

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[87] Good to H.M. Jackson, 31 March, 1925. Good Papers, volume 9.

[88] In November, 1925, Hudson told King that Forke believed the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Progressives would support the Liberals on the election of the speaker, any inoffensive proposed amendment to the address, a Budget which did not increase duties and on any general confidence motion. Hudson, to Forke, 2 November, 1925. A.B. Hudson papers. Forke also said he could not speak for Campbell and Evans who had withdrawn from the Progressive caucus.

[89] For example, on November 17, well after King should have heard of Forke's support, Haydon told Hudson that King would like to resign but the Quebec M.P.'s would not let him, and that the Governor General had refused to pass orders-in-council until after a vote of Confidence. Hudson, handwritten memo, 17 November, 1925 Hudson Papers.

in that way I shall be the first to oppose them."[90] Indeed, the Ginger Group was not prepared to support either party without giving both of them a chance to co-operate. The Liberals, despite strong efforts, were unable to secure the radicals' support by the end of 1925, as D. M. Kennedy demonstrated in a letter to Henry Spencer in late December, 1925: "In general terms I think King should be given a chance to see what he is willing to do. Though Meighen should also be invited to declare himself before a vote of confidence or no confidence should be given[sic]."[91]

The radical farmer M.P.'s finally made their choice based on a list of fourteen points they sent to both Meighen and King.[92] King wanted a coalition but would take

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[90] Irvine added, "No one knows better than our members that King cannot serve the West and Quebec at the same time. He may stall them off with promises but he will not come through." Irvine to W.N.Smith, 17 November, 1925. W.N. Smith Papers.

Some evidence suggests that the UFA M.P.'s, as a group, did not share Irvine's view. According to The Winnipeg Free Press, the UFA M.P.'s worked out an agreement on 25 November to co-operate with (as opposed to support) a Liberal government if the Liberals accepted a system of rural credits, the single transferable vote, and transferred control of natural resources to the Prairie Provinces. Winnipeg Free Press, 27 November, 1925. Clipping from A.B. Hudson Papers.

However, contrary to the Free Press report, Hudson wrote to Haydon on 27 November, 1925 showing that no agreement had yet been made with the UFA M.P.'s, although Hudson had read the newspaper report. Hudson to Haydon, 27 November, 1925. Hudson Papers. Furthermore, the following paragraphs of this paper show that no solid agreement had been worked out before January, 1926.

[91] Kennedy to Spencer, 24 December, 1925. Spencer papers, N.A.C. Kennedy added, "I think this should also be considered, King can be turned out anytime during the session, and then Meighen would be called on to form a government. Once however King is voted out and Meighen forms a govt. [sic] If Meighen is defeated than there is bound to follow a general election and the cry "unstable govt-" and the "Anti group cry" will be worked to the limit.

[92] The list included liberal trade relations with the United States, five points on railways, income tax, rural credits, transfer of natural resource control to Prairie Provinces, a national coal policy, re-evaluation of soldier settlement land, co-operative marketing and the alternative vote. List of 14 points with summary of King's and

This Cartoon from the Toronto Daily Star, 17 November, 1925, shows Meighen and King asking Forke for support he does not control. Clipping from Coote papers, f163.

whatever co-operation he could get. On January 22, he told Hudson that he had been seeking, and was still trying to work out, "a co-operative alliance between Progressives and ourselves," to carry out a legislative program,

> without a compromise on the part of either party.... To this end I should have welcomed a coalition with the Progressives, and representation of their members in the Government. Up to the present they have expressed an unwillingness as a party to consider representation in the Government.[93]

Meighen's responses. Spencer papers, N.A.C.

[93] Mackenzie King to Hudson, 22 January, 1926. Hudson Papers. My underline.

Meighen was reluctant to make any political concession to the farmer M.P.'s whose politics were very different from his own, although he was categorically opposed only to one point.[94] On January 9, he told Forke that in respect to the fourteen points, he stood by the Conservative party policies, adding, "So far as I know it has never been charged that my attitude as leader on any of these subjects has been equivocal or obscure.[95]

To the radicals, Meighen's reluctance seemed as much unwillingness to deal with a third group as it was about specific issues. Spencer, for example, reported that King dealt with the farmer M.P.'s officially and as a group while the Conservatives tried to gain support of the M.P.'s individually.[96] As Spencer later summarized the radicals' position:

> And when we'd gone through the speech from the throne carefully, we said, 'oh, there's nothing wrong with it except it is too empty.' We suggested nine pieces of legislation, they accepted seven. I said that was the determination for us to support the government. We weren't in favour of them, we were, it was, actually there was a straw vote taken before and

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[94] This point was the alternate vote. Ibid.

[95] Meighen to Forke, 9 January, 1926. Coote papers, f36.

[96] Spencer to Battle River UFA board, 8 March, 1926. Spencer papers, N.A.C. The difference in King's and Meighen approaches to the Progressives is further illustrated in King's earlier quotation, referring to the importance of Progressive support as a party. The difference may have been, at least in part, that the Liberals needed the support of almost the entire group while the Conservatives needed the support of less than ten. The radicals probably understood the politics behind King's machinations, since King's rhetoric in the 1925 campaign was sometimes hostile to the Progressives. (Mr. Black, a Yukon Conservative brought this up with the Progressives on 26 February, 1926 in the debate on the Speech on the Throne, House of Commons, Debates, 1926, pp. 1382-1383.) Regardless, the contrast between the Liberal and Conservative approach after the election helped the radicals give their support to the Liberals.

we preferred to give [the Conservatives a chance].[97]

Thus, by late January, 1926, the Liberals had solid support from Forke and like-minded farmer M.P.'s and consistent support of most of the Ginger Group, even though the latter did not particularly like voting with King.[98] However, four Progressives, M.N. Campbell, Fansher of Saskatchewan and Lucas and Boutillier of the UFA supported Meighen's January 18 motion that the Liberal party had no right to hold office since it had won fewer seats than the Conservatives.[99] The motion, defeated 123 to 120, further alienated the other radicals from Meighen, since the motion only made sense if one ignored the third group in the House. As Spencer informed the Battle River UFA board,

> [Meighen] completely ignored the existence of groups in the House. If this motion had carried, it would have meant that if at some future election four Groups were returned as follows - 80, 60, 60, and 45, the largest group, or the 80, should be at once called upon to form a Government, though in a minority by 165.[100]

The divisions in the House, with the majority of the Farmer M.P.'s supporting the King government, stayed the same until June, 1926. In this brief period the House of Commons passed a number of bills in the farmers' interests, including the resolution of soldier settlement lands, rural credits, an amendment to the Grain Act allowing farmers

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[97] Spencer interview with Una Maclean

[98] Coote wrote to his wife in February, 1926, "Am not enjoying life here very much. I begin to feel dazed. We have had a solid month of speech making, most of it useless repetition... I certainly hate to support either party but have to vote with one or the other. It grates on Miss Mcphail's [sic] feelings to have to vote for Mackenzie King." G. Coote to J. Coote. 5 February, 1926, f2.

[99] Fansher was a new Progressive M.P. in Saskatchewan (brother of an Ontario Progressive M.P.), and Boutillier was a new UFA M.P.

[100] Spencer to UFA Battle River Board, 8 March, 1926.

to direct their grain to the terminal elevator of their choice (like Coote's attempted amendment to the Grain act in 1925) and old age pensions.[101] However, the customs inquiry debate in June and July, 1926 ended the radicals' support for the Liberals, thereby bringing about the defeat of the government and an end to the farmers' balance of power.

The first significant change in the voting pattern came after Conservative H.H. Stevens moved to censure the Liberal government for irregularities in the Customs department. Woodsworth moved a subamendment which called for a judicial review but removed the censure.[102] Woodsworth's amendment was defeated 115 to 117, Boutillier, Campbell, Fansher and Lucas predictably voted with the Conservatives against it. However, D.M. Kennedy, the third group's representative on the Customs Inquiry Committee, also voted against Woodsworth's motion.[103] Kennedy's change was enough to destroy the Liberal majority.

When the debate resumed on June 29, the following Monday, King had resigned and Meighen had come to power. A Liberal amendment to strike the censure from the Stevens' amendment was defeated 119-107. The relatively large margin occurred because Coote, Gardiner, Garland, Kennedy, Macphail and Spencer and the standard four Progressives voted with the Conservatives. Stevens' amendment passed a few minutes

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[101] The Senate defeated old age pensions and altered the Grain Act amendment to make it almost meaningless. Spencer to electors of Battle River, 2 August, 1926. Spencer Papers, Glenbow Archives.

[102] House of Commons, Debates, 1926, p. 4933.

[103] Ibid. pp. 5068-5069. Coote and Macphail were paired and did not vote. The Liberal move to adjourn debate was passed shortly after, 115-114, Coote and Macphail voted with the Government and Kennedy did not vote. Ibid, pp. 5095-5096.

later, with the same group supporting it.[104]

Garland outlined the reason for the group's change. He noted that until almost that very day, "a most full and honourable and open system of co-operation has existed between the late government and the hon. gentlemen in this party." However,

> the day last week on which the Prime Minister of this country decided to fly away from his responsibilities, to fly from possible defeat, to fly from the carrying through of his legislation and his estimates, from that moment on we were placed in an entirely different relation towards him and his ministry.[105]

While Garland explained to the Liberals why the co-operation was over, he also noted that no new co-operation had begun with the Conservatives nor was such co-operation likely: "before this group...can afford to enter into a co-operative arrangement with hon. gentlemen opposite, we shall know what there policy is;"[106]

The Ginger Group was in an awkward position; they wanted to finish the session in order to secure some of their legislation but they would not support the Conservatives except on terms that Meighen had been unwilling to accept in January. The Liberals, recognizing the Conservatives' precarious hold on power, moved a non-confidence motion that the government had no right to pass money bills. All the Gingerites except Macphail, voted with the Conservatives.[107]

The five Alberta Gingerites became more directly involved in the Liberals' next

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[104] Ibid. p. 5155-5158. Woodsworth voted with the Liberals in both cases.

[105] Ibid. p.5206.

[106] Ibid. p. 5207.

[107] Ibid. pp. 5197-5198.

non-confidence motion which touched on the validity of the third party in the house. Garland, the central figure from the Ginger Group in the debate, stated that the farmers' vote against the Liberal government was, "a censure on the administration of the customs department and did not give hon. gentlemen opposite a majority." The Conservatives could not get a majority without the co-operation of farmer M.P.'s. Since no such co-operative understanding had been reached, "if the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen informed His Excellency that he was capable of carrying on, that he was capable of administering public affairs, he ill-advised and misinformed His excellency.[108] The small UFA group and Macphail, the loose M.P.'s in the House, supported this non-confidence motion; it passed, 96 to 95.[109] Meighen's government fell and the Governor General dissolved Parliament.

After the 1926 election, the National Progressive Party was no longer politically significant. The Progressives in Manitoba and Saskatchewan split into Progressives and Liberal-Progressives, the former being almost independent and the latter almost Liberals. Popular support for the Progressive movement in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, however, outlasted the party. Hudson, for example, told King in September, 1926, not to ignore the Progressive element of the Liberal-Progressive vote. "Such a course would in my opinion be a serious blunder. There are still in Manitoba and elsewhere, many people

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[108] Ibid. p. 5280.

[109] Ibid. pp. 5310-5311.

who regard themselves as Progressive rather than Liberal."[110]

The national farmer-reform party had run its course. The radicals were still independent of the old parties and the Crypto-Liberal Progressives were now de facto Liberals. The UFA no longer had working ties to an interprovincial organization, but increased its standing to eleven of sixteen Alberta seats, with Irvine back in Parliament as a UFA M.P. for Wetaskiwin. The UFA became the third group in the House of Commons, in close co-operation with Macphail, Campbell and the Labour M.P.'s. Forke joined the Liberal cabinet and the Liberal-Progressives sat with the Liberals.

Almost forty years later, E.C. Drury, the United Farmer of Ontario premier from 1919 to 1923, unintentionally explained one of the central reasons for the Crypto-Liberals' demise in a letter to W.C. Good: "you fellows when you met Crerar and Hudson in Winnipeg turned [King's 1921 coalition] proposal down, so nothing came of it. I think you made a made a [sic] big mistake."[111] In the same letter Drury wrote, "except for his mother, King, so far as I know, never sacrificed himself for a friend or principal", and, "His weakness lay in his softness and self-interest. He was never willing to lead, and never moved till he was sure public opinion was behind him, good politics but poor

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[110] Hudson to King, 18 September, 1926, Hudson papers, volume 2. Hudson was probably more correct than he wanted to be. In the 1930 federal election, the first after the Liberal-Progressives sat with the Liberals, the Progressive share of the popular vote in Manitoba and Saskatchewan declined by 5.4% and 16.1% respectively while the Conservatives' share increased by 9.6% and 16.6%. The Liberal share in both provinces fell less than 0.5%. The Progressive support in these provinces appears to have switched to the Conservatives rather than the Liberals. In Alberta during the same period, the Liberal share increased 6.1%, the Conservatives 2.6%. See Appendix A for figures.

[111] Drury to W.C. Good, 19 December, 1961. pp. 3-4. Good papers, volume 31.

statesmanship."[112] Drury it seems, realized, at some point, King's political cunning. That the Progressives in 1921 and afterwards had fallen prey to it seems not to have occurred to Drury even by 1961.

Meanwhile, in 1926, the five Alberta Ginger Group M.P.'s were less than halfway through their tenure.

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[112] Ibid, pp. 2-3.

Chapter Three
Farmer, Labour and Socialist: The Ginger Group and the CCF

> After the split in the so-called Progressives during 1921-1925, some of us used to discuss what might happen to the Canadian Parliament and Government if a number of really independent M.P.'s should increase, and how it might be possible to bring about that increase. It was generally agreed that about the only common basis for such a group would be a desire to develop in Canada a co-operative society, without attempting to decide in advance just what practical steps might be involved in this development....And this was the origin of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, of a federation of those willing to work for the development of a co-operative commonwealth.
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> W.C. Good, 1958.[1]

Labour in Canada after the First World War shared farmers' general political, economic and social concerns. In many cases, the two groups also shared specific reform goals. As the Ginger Group became increasingly independent of the National Progressive Party, so they became increasingly close allies of the labour M.P.'s. After the 1924 split, the Gingerites worked more closely with the Labourites than with other farmer M.P.'s. Following the 1926 federal elections, the small group of UFAers, a few independent farmers and the labour representatives were the only M.P.'s outside the old parties. These reform M.P.'s, who called themselves the co-operating groups, became a cohesive parliamentary group with an impact in Parliament out of proportion to their size. Nevertheless, the co-operating farmer and labour M.P.'s lacked the power to make the changes which the onset of the Depression made necessary. In searching for a way to

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[1] W.C. Good, Farmer Citizen: My Fifty years in the Canadian Farmers' Movement. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1958), p. 209. Garland, responding to a draft of this same passage sent to him by Good, could not recall such discussions, Garland to Good, 3 February 1955, Good papers.

achieve power, the co-operating M.P.'s led farmer, labour and socialist organizations to create the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. However, the Gingerites' political experiences, which had made them so wary of political parties, were not shared by most of the rest of the CCF. Because of this disparity, the Gingerites supported the platform of the Federation in varying degrees. Coote and Kennedy gave the CCF noticeably reserved support after the 1933 Regina Convention and none after their defeat in the 1935 election. Gardiner, Garland and Spencer stayed in the CCF after 1935, but they, too, eventually left. This chapter examines the origins of the Ginger Group's co-operation with labour, its culmination with the formation of the CCF and the reasons for their eventual withdrawal.

Before the creation of the National Progressive party, farmers and labour often co-operated in their political organizations on the idea that they shared fundamental reform goals. For example, farmers and labour in Alberta worked together within the Non-Partisan League (NPL) and between the NPL and the Farmer's independent political leagues to find an alternative to the old party system.[2] William Irvine, secretary of the League and publisher of its newspaper, believed that the contemporary popular movements, "are part and parcel of the onward sweep of society, now so evident throughout the entire world."[3]

The UFA superseded the NPL and the independent political leagues when it

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[2] Irvine to Proudfoot, 29 March, 1917, Lorne Proudfoot papers. Proudfoot to F. Strong, 17 March, 1919. Proudfoot papers.

[3] William Irvine, The Farmers in Politics. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), pp. 18-19.

entered into direct political action at its 1919 convention. Wood's theory of Group Government, which dominated the UFA's political ideology, led to more organized co-operation between farmer and labour within Alberta because it required that farmers co-operate with other groups. As Wood said in a campaign speech during Gardiner's 1921 Medicine Hat by-election, "It does not make any difference whether you want to [co-operate with labour] or not - you have to."[4]

In spite of Wood and Irvine's belief in farmer and labour co-operation, they recognized that the groups often had different short term interests. Such co-operation, therefore, was primarily electoral - when there were not enough farmers to elect a farmer candidate the UFA supported labour and vice-versa. Once the election was over, the representatives were responsible only to their own group. As labour activist Elmer Roper pointed out,

> Mr. Irvine, it will be remembered, is the Labor representative. He is only answerable to Labor and is not subject in any other way to any other organization. The co-operation was co-operation in voting strength only. The same applies to Robert Gardiner, the UFA member for Medicine Hat, who was supported by Labor.[5]

Farmer-Labour electoral co-operation usually meant that labour supported a farmer candidate, since farmers made up a greater part of most Alberta constituencies. For example, labour supporters in 1921 wanted to run their own candidate in one of the three

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[4] Transcript of speech by H.W. Wood, Empress theatre, Medicine Hat, 25 June, 1921. W.N. Smith Papers.

[5] Alberta Labour News, 14 October, 1922. cited in Alvin Finkel, "The Rise and Fall of the Labour Party in Alberta, 1917-42," Labour/Le Travail 16 (Fall 1985), p. 312.

Edmonton ridings (Edmonton East, Edmonton West or Strathcona) since Edmonton had a significant labour population. However, each riding was predominantly rural, and the respective UFA constituency associations wanted to run a farmer candidate. Kennedy's riding of Edmonton West, the last one to nominate its member, was labour's last chance. According to The Edmonton Bulletin's report of that UFA nomination convention, "While regretting a possible break with organized labor, the majority of delegates speaking on the subject intimated that they were willing to take chances with opposition from Labor in the coming election, although they thought Labor could not consistently oppose Farmers in the general movement for reform".[6]

The actions of the West Edmonton farmers illustrate different degrees of farmer-labour co-operation within the UFA.[7] Similarly, in Parliament, the eventual Ginger Group co-operated more closely with labour M.P.'s William Irvine of Calgary and J.S. Woodsworth of Winnipeg than the other UFA M.P.'s. After the Ginger Group split in June and July, 1924, the relationship between the Ginger Group and their Labour allies

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[6] Edmonton Bulletin, 13 October, 1921. p. 1. The opportunism of the Edmonton UFA associations seems something like what Richard Hofstadter believed was prominent in American farmer-populism, "When times were persistently bad the farmer tended to reject his business role and its failures to withdraw into the role of the injured little yeoman. This made the differences between his situation and that of any other victim of exploitation seem unimportant to him." C. Vann Woodward in Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: Form Bryan to FDR, (New York: Vintage Books, 1955) p. 47. However, Hofstadter's view would be far too limited to apply to the UFA's attitudes toward's Labour because even these three UFA constituency associations explicitly recognized that farmer and labour shared certain fundamental goals.

[7] The UFA constituency organizations in Alberta's heartland, an area supposed to be most similar to the United States, were more supportive of labour than those in Alberta's northernmost ridings.

became such that they thought of themselves as a cohesive group and a distinct part of Parliament.[8]

However, one should not ignore distinctions between the farmer seceders and their labour allies. The Ginger Group's struggle in the Progressives against a party organization had made them very cautious. A month after the original split, W.C. Good thought, "that it would be a mistake at the present time to try to draft a National Farmer-Labour platform. There are too many local differences of opinion, and as yet too many misunderstandings between organized agriculture and organized labor." In time, Good believed that the two could work their differences: "Meanwhile, there is no reason why there cannot be a local co-operation in the election of representatives and co-operation in Parliament by farmer and labor representatives."[9]

Nevertheless, despite of Good's long-term view, farmer-Labour co-operation in the 1925 election often went beyond what he called local co-operation. In Alberta, the Dominion Labour Party (DLP) supported UFA candidates in Macleod, Bow River, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, and West Edmonton; the UFA supported labour in East Edmonton and East Calgary.[10] The co-operative rhetoric of the UFA and DLP in the

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[8] In the debate on the Bank Act on July 11, 1924, Irvine referred to himself and Garland as part of the same group. When British Columbia Progressive McBride demanded to know what group Irvine was referring to, Irvine said, "I assure my hon. friend that I am not referring to him. I should never think of connecting his name with any group that is trying to do anything." House of Commons, Debates, 1924, p. 4343.

[9] Good to J.E. Armishaw, 14 July, 1924. Good papers, volume 7.

[10] Macleod and Bow River, Coote's and Garland's constituencies respectively, were overwhelmingly rural; the labour support reflects the miners in the Coote's and Garland's ridings (Gardiner was running in the new riding of Acadia in 1925 rather than Medicine Hat, while Kennedy was in Peace River rather than Edmonton West.) Irvine to the Rural

1925 election was at least as developed as it had been in 1921. For example, Wood's speech of September 26, 1925 sounds very similar to the 1921 election:

> If we turn away from labour, who are we to turn to? The salvation of the world depends upon the mobilization of a democratic strength sufficient to work social salvation and social redemption. The mobilization of this force depends upon the co-operation of democratic elements. It may be a difficult road to travel but there is no other.[11]

In a similar vein, William Irvine, again running as a labour candidate, told the rural voters of Calgary East that farmer and labour shared opposition to the party system and had a common interest in the development of a "truly democratic" political organization and co-operation of group representatives. "These principles are the foundation of the farmers' movement. In supporting me, you support these principles and support yourself. A vote for either of my opponents means a vote for the party system and a vote against the U.F.A."[12] The biggest difference for Irvine in 1925 was that he lost.[13]

In the short Parliament following the 1925 election, almost all the reform M.P.'s, labour and farmer representatives, co-operated with the Liberal party. This third group was uncharacteristically cohesive until the Customs debate, when the five Alberta

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Electors of East Calgary Federal Riding, 17 October, 1925. W.N. Smith papers.

[11] Young, Anatomy, p. 17.

[12] Irvine election letter, 22 October, 1925. In addition to general reform, Irvine pointed to his support of farmer MPs on the Crow's Nest Pass Agreement, the Grain Act, Rural Credits, and the amendment to the Bankruptcy act. Irvine to the Rural Electors of East Calgary, 17 October, 1925.

[13] In an interview in 1960, Irvine blamed his 1925 loss on Liberal gerrymandering. Irvine interview with Una Maclean, Glenbow Archives.

Gingerites and Macphail voted against the Liberals.[14] In the 1926 election, the UFA invited Irvine to run in Wetaskiwin, which Warner had lost in 1925. Labour candidate H.B. Adshead won in Irvine's former riding of East Calgary. The five Gingerites, along with Irvine, were re-elected. These six, the UFA M.P.'s most supportive of Labour, thus formed a majority in the eleven member UFA caucus.[15]

The UFA was now the official third group in the House of Commons, free to co-operate with whomever it liked, but unwilling to fuse with anyone. H.E. Spencer, secretary of the UFA group demonstrated its concern for its autonomy in a letter to J.S. Woodsworth laying out the post-election terms of co-operation:

> There is no desire on our part to absorb your group nor to be absorbed by it. We think that in view of the wishes of those we represent, as well as in view of past experiences, it is desirable that your group and our own, and indeed any other groups, should maintain their identity as such.

Spencer nevertheless recognized the need for close co-operation with the labour M.P.'s and noted that "a common interest in subscribed legislation will form a natural basis of our parliamentary co-operation".[16]

The structure which emerged from the combination of mutual interest and jealously of independence became known as the Co-operating Groups. The Co-operating Groups, which allowed the reform M.P.'s outside of the old parties to work together in Parliament without fear of losing their independence, were made up of four parts: the

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[14] See chapter 2, above.

[15] Jelliff, Kellner, Lucas and Speakman were also re-elected. Michael Luchkovich was elected as a new M.P. in Vegreville, which had been held previously by the crypto-conservative Boutillier. Canadian Annual Review, 1926-27, p. 53.

[16] Spencer to J.S. Woodsworth, 13 December, 1926. Spencer papers, N.A.C.

UFA and Agnes Macphail formed one distinct group; the six independent Progressives, five from Saskatchewan and B.W. Fansher from Ontario were another; A.W. Neill, by then an independent from B.C, was another; so too were the three labour M.P's.[17]

The Co-operating Groups developed into a comfortable parliamentary alliance and a more effective structure than one might expect considering that there were fewer reform M.P.'s than at any time since 1921. Much of the leadership of the groups came from the old Alberta Gingerites. In an article summarizing the Prairie M.P.'s in the Country Guide in 1928, Alexander Franklin wrote, "Among the Saskatchewan Progressives in the thirteenth Parliament, none was outstanding. The Alberta Progressives, later to become the UFA, did produce several outstanding men and it is perhaps due to their ability that the group retains its strength and driving power." Specifically, Franklin was referring to Coote, Gardiner, Garland and Spencer.[18]

The action of the Gingerites during the Beauharnois scandal between 1929 and 1931, most notably that of Gardiner and Garland, was a good example of how the Co-operating Groups worked together in Parliament. The scandal began after the developers of the Beauharnois hydro-electric project on the St. Lawrence River made payments to the Liberal and Conservative parties in order to gain their contracts. Since both old parties were involved, neither wanted the issue discussed in Parliament. The people who sought to make the scandal public, therefore gave the information to Gardiner and

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[17] Memo from H.E. Spencer to UFA federal members and Agnes Macphail listing the committee division among the co-operating groups. 15 February, 1928. Coote papers

[18] Country Guide, 15 October, 1928. pp. 32-33.

Garland, who, with the support of Woodsworth, Macphail and others in the Co-operating Groups, eventually brought about a select committee investigation.[19] The published results of the investigation were limited because neither the Conservatives nor Liberals wanted the details made public.[20] Nevertheless, the co-operating groups had given the scandal wide public attention, and, to anti-partisans it became a strong example of the excesses of both the old party system and private ownership of utilities.[21]

The increasing co-operation of Farmer and labour M.P.'s was evident in the more relaxed tone Spencer showed towards Parliamentary co-operation in 1929 than he had in 1926. Spencer told a meeting of the UFA and UFWA Central Boards and UFA M.P.'s,

> While the U.F.A. members and Miss McPhail[sic] were elected on a basis differing from that of the Progressives, in matters of policy it would take a powerful magnifying glass to tell the difference between them. If they did not consult one another in advance upon matters to come before Parliament, unnecessary friction might arise on points of detail. They therefore meet frequently as co-operating groups, Labour also participating and each group retaining their identity.[22]

The alliance between labour and UFA was not restricted to Parliament. For example, in the January 22, 1929, U.F.A. newspaper, Woodsworth spoke of united reform with rhetoric resembling Wood on the need for organization:

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[19] T.D. Regehr, The Beauharnois Scandal: A Story of Canadian Entrepreneurship and Politics. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 118; C.A.R., 1930-31. p. 65

[20] Regehr, p. 192.

[21] Ibid. p. 165. C.A.R., 1930-1931, p. 69.

[22] Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Central Boards of the U.F.A. and the U.F.W.A., representatives of Federal Constituency Associations and U.F.A. M.P.'s, July, 1929. UFA files, Glenbow Archives.

> The few today are strong because they occupy strategic positions and because the masses are ignorant and disinterested. Hence the need for education and organization. We must advance all along the line in industrial organization;on the political field; in our Knowledge of the system; in co-operative effort; in attaining new standards of values.[23]

Another example of the close co-operation between the UFA M.P.'s, particularly Gingerites, and the labour M.P.'s came from the Canadian Railway Employee's Monthly. During the 1930 election campaign, its editorial appealed for the re-election of the farmer representatives who had allied themselves closely to labour, lauding their role in winning old age pensions, pushing for tighter immigration control, and investigating the Beauharnois scandal. It also supported the farmers' push for governmental control of the banking system. The editorial was especially warm to Garland,

> who not only showed a wide acquaintance with the factors causing unemployment, but also with the proposals which have been made to deal with it. He stressed the misplacement of labour by machinery, the lack of purchasing power by workers, and the value of unemployment insurance as a necessary relief measure.[24]

Farmer and labour co-operation in 1930 followed the same structure as it had in the previous three federal elections. During and immediately after the 1930 election campaign, the radical M.P.'s still expressed their belief in the Co-operating Groups as a slow but potentially powerful alternative to the party system.[25] Coote, for example, told

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[23] J.S. Woodsworth, The U.F.A., 22 January, 1929. pp. 22-23.

[24] Canadian Railway Employee's Monthly, June, 1930.

[25] Although the co-operating groups showed close co-operation between farmer and labour MPs, in maintaining distinct groups they were less co-operative than the Farmer's Political Association and the Independent Labour Party in Saskatchewan, which nominated three candidates together as the Farmer Labour Party. Young, Anatomy, p. 21.

his electors that the new farmers' political movement in Saskatchewan would bring valuable reinforcements to the group.[26] Spencer said: "The attitude of the U.F.A. Group, together with the other groups associated with it in regard to the two old parties will be the same in the next Parliament as the previous ones, namely that we shall continue to ignore parties and deal with issues."[27] Woodsworth, although less sanguine than either Coote or Spencer, wrote, "No wonder both parties decry the coming of the groups; their growth would probably lead to the break up of the party system and meanwhile is- to say the least- decidedly inconvenient."[28]

The UFA held nine of its eleven seats in the 1930 federal election. T.O King, a new candidate in Lethbridge, and Kellner, in Athabasca, were the only UFA candidates to lose.[29] Jelliff and Kellner were now gone from the UFA federal caucus. Only Speakman and Lucas remained of the UFA M.P.'s who had stayed out of the Ginger Group in 1924. The balance in the whole of the co-operating groups had also changed, with three Labourites and only three other farmers: Macphail, Campbell and one other

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[26] Coote to the Electors of Macleod Federal Constituency, 11 July, 1930. E.G. Cook papers, f13. Glenbow Archives.

[27] Spencer, "Federal Affairs in Review," 1930 election brief, Spencer Papers, N.A.C.

[28] J.S. Woodsworth, "Co-operative Government," Queen's Quarterly , (Autumn, 1930), p. 653.

[29] King was candidate in place of Jelliff, who the Lethbridge federal UFA association refused to renominate for supporting the 1929 Liberal budget. William Kirby Rolph, Henry Wise Wood of Alberta. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 213.

Saskatchewan Progressive.[30] However, even though the UFA was now the majority in the Co-operating Groups and the old Gingerites dominated the UFA federal group, the Gingerites' position in the new Parliament diminished because of the strong Conservative majority, the first clear majority since the Progressives had been elected to Parliament.[31]

Changes even more important to the Gingerites were taking place outside of Parliament. The Depression and the UFA organization's years of complete independence from a national organization had altered the priorities of the UFA. By 1931, new factions with different approaches to the financial crisis were forming. Within the federal caucus the new divisions were similar, but not identical, to the old Ginger Group-moderate split. The more radical group, which included the majority of the Gingerites, believed the best solution to the financial crises lay in closer co-operation with the labour and a more socialist ideology. This faction came to the fore within the UFA organization at the 1931 central convention when Gardiner replaced retiring Henry Wise Wood as president of the UFA. Gardiner's political ideology was heavily influenced by Wood but Gardiner was comfortable in seeking a tighter alliance with the labour M.P.'s, who, after all, had been his close parliamentary allies for ten years. Wood, in contrast, still hesitated to organize politically with non-farmers.[32]

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[30] CAR, 1930. p. 635. 109.

[31] Coote and Spencer both expected a deadlock as in 1925 when they held the balance of power. Coote, to the electors of Macleod Federal Constituency, 11 July, 1930. Coote Papers. Henry Spencer, "Federal Affairs in Review"

[32] Garland later recalled Wood's aversion to the growing extra-parliamentary co-operation between the UFA and Labour: "The really difficult time [for Wood] came when the CCF was organized and the farmers of the province thought we should join up with the CCF, 'let's all get into this thing on a bigger scale.' And he [Wood] didn't like it. He

Nevertheless, the divisions within the UFA in 1931 were still rather inconspicuous. For example, the 1931 UFA Central Convention's declaration of its ultimate objective as the attainment of a co-operative commonwealth was a combination of socialism and social credit, another faction within the UFA.[33] However, the labour M.P.'s, with whom the UFA M.P.'s were aiming to co-operate, were not so ambiguous; social credit to them was a relatively minor issue. Thus the direction of the co-operating groups in Parliament favoured the more socialist faction and attracted the support of M.P.'s Gardiner, and Garland, UFA Vice president Norman Priestly and editor of The UFA, W. Norman Smith. M.P.'s Spencer and especially Irvine also leaned towards the above group, although they also supported monetary reform.

The Parliamentary origin of the group that would bring about a Co-operative Commonwealth came when the Co-operating Groups passed a motion in the Spring of 1932 appointing Gardiner and Woodsworth to investigate the possibilities of forming a national political organization.[34] Outside Parliament, Robert Gardiner initiated the

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didn't like it a bit." Garland Interview with Una Maclean

[33] The UFA defined a co-operative commonwealth as a system in which the masses controlled the system. All social means of production and distribution, including land, would be socially-owned and controlled - either in voluntary producer and consumer co-ops or, as with major public services and utilities, publicly-owned. The financial system was also to be democratized under a system of social credit. Definition of Co-operative Commonwealth, passed by UFA convention, January, 1932, in Declaration of Ultimate Objectives, ca. 1933. Coote papers, f53. See footnote 37, chapter four, below.

[34] Spencer said that this motion occurred in early 1932. Spencer to Good, July 25, 1954. Good Papers. Walter Young, citing a CCF pamphlet, said it occurred in May. Young, Anatomy, p. 19. The 1932 Canadian Annual Review reported that one of the earliest signs in Parliament of the new farmer-labour political organization was Gardiner's April subamendment to the federal budget which blamed fundamental defects in the economic system for the depression and called for government intervention. This

organizational meeting for the new Group, which took place in Calgary that August.[35]

In June, 1932, the M.P.'s and executive officers of the UFA met to draft a program prior to the Calgary meeting. The result was significant step away from the status quo of the Co-operating Groups. The program sought "to end the existence of poverty in plenty and to establish securely the foundations of the Co-operative state."[36] To achieve this goal, the reformers had to co-ordinate themselves and make a definite bid for power, the first since their part in the Progressive campaign of 1921. Power required different political organization, which began at the founding conference of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Calgary in July 1932.

The Calgary conference laid out the basic organization for the CCF.[37] It also highlighted some divisions among the farmers over the CCF program. The more radical farmers saw the socialist aspects of the CCF program as necessary and compatible with their interests. For example, at the Calgary conference, Gardiner questioned the idea that labour and farmer could never co-operate because farmers were capitalists. If farmers

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suggests that Young was incorrect. C.A.R, 1932. p. 48.

[35] Young, Anatomy, p. 19.

[36] Manifesto passed by UFA conference, 30 June, 1932. Spencer Papers, N.A.C. Typed copy of Priestly, "A National Program to End Poverty in the Midst of Plenty," UFA, July, 1932.

[37] UFA M.P's Coote, Gardiner, Garland and Irvine were at the conference. Garland was conference chairman and Gardiner was chairman of the nomination committee. Woodsworth was elected president and Irvine was the only UFA M.P. nominated to the executive. The presence of the three Gingerites suggests that the radical farmers had a significant role in the new co-ordinated Farmer-Labour-Socialist bid for power. Agnes Macphail had planned to attend but was unable to do so. "The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation", The UFA, 1 August, 1932. pp. 7-8.

were capitalists, Gardiner told the audience, it was because of what they owed rather than what they owned, since the farmers' chief possessions were debts.[38] However, moderate farmers in the UFA were wary of the socialization of land, even though the new CCF guaranteed their tenure on producing land. A UFA M.L.A. expressed this fear of nationalization of land when he wrote to Coote in March, 1933, "Everywhere it is the same. This policy is received with distrust. Personally I favour the crown lease as I think it would relieve us of our immense debts but the talk of Russian collectivisation has confused the issue."[39]

The joint political organization for the UFA and labour made the divisions within the organization towards socialism, divisions easily dismissed in a loose parliamentary alliance, much more significant. For example, while S. D. Clark called the CCF "an attempt on the part of reform leaders to instill new life into the farmer and labour movements," he also noted that the UFA was, "an economic and political organization of agricultural producers; not a party of Socialists or Anti-Socialists." Therefore, the new organization had significant limits:

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[38] Ibid. p. 7. Gardiner believed private property would actually increase and the new system would be better for farmers than capitalistically owned [mortgaged?] farms. Minutes of Meeting of UFA Board, M.P.'s and M.L.A.'s, Wednesday, 12 July to Thursday, 13 July, 13 July, p. 24-30. W.N. Smith papers, f104. Norman Priestly gave a similar interpretation of the UFA's land policy, which was only to nationalize land still owned by the crown. "[the land policy of the UFA] is intended to provide for the few people a maximum security. How many farmers of Alberta have security today, except such security as the new Debt adjustment Act can give them? In how many cases is not the real owner the mortgage company?" text of Priestly radio broadcast, "What the C.C.F. means to Agriculture" 13 March, 1933. CCF papers, N.A.C.

[39] Letter to Coote (probably from Lorne Proudfoot), 7 March, 1933. Coote papers, f53.

> though some of the U.F.A. members hold advanced views it is unlikely that the great body of farmers will fall in line with anything that smacks too much of Communism.
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> In short, the new federation may be a valuable contribution to social reform: but, for some time at least, it cannot be a cohesive Socialist party.[40]

Nevertheless, in spite of the differences within the UFA, well into 1933, all the old Gingerites and even the traditionally more moderate M.P.'s could still support the CCF because the direction of the CCF and the UFA's role in it were still being formed. Indeed, there was little to suggest that the UFA would turn away from the CCF.[41] In July, 1933, in order to define their attitudes towards the CCF before the Regina conference, the UFA board and M.P.'s, including Gardiner, Kennedy, Spencer, Irvine, Lucas, and Speakman, as well as Premier Brownlee and a number of M.L.A.'s, met.

Their meeting provides an excellent illustration of the varying degrees of support for the CCF and different interpretations of its program by those at the centre of the UFA. Irvine, who, had the most radical interpretation of the CCF program, was most eager to lead the UFA into the CCF. He believed that there was little point in reforming capitalism because capitalism had broken down. The economic system had to be reformed, with public control of resources and means of production of wealth.

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[40] S. Delbert Clark, "The United Farmers of Alberta," Canadian Forum XIII 145 (Toronto: October, 1932), p. 8.

[41] Garland recalled the early UFA support for the CCF: You couldn't have stopped them [the CCF supporters].... when the time came to decide whether the farmers, whether the UFA would go into the CCF or not, there was no doubt in the farmers' mind. The [1933] convention was so overwhelmingly in favour, it was a great pleasure for those of us who thought the time had come for more action on the economic and social side. Garland interview with Una Maclean. See also note 60, below.

Socialization of finance would be necessary, but monetary reform would only solve the monetary problem. Irvine emphasized that the UFA central convention had pointed the way for the UFA organization in choosing the CCF, and if the UFA did not follow such a program then it would be defeated by someone who did.[42]

Gardiner was also a strong supporter of the CCF. Like Irvine, he believed the most important problem was the underlying weakness of what he called the profit system. The profit system led to a concentration of wealth and inevitable depression; the only solution was to replace the competitive system with a Co-operative Commonwealth. To this extent, Gardiner's perception of the economic and social world was similar to Wood's belief in a co-operative rather than competitive society. However, Gardiner also thought that the state had to take direct control of equipment necessary to provide essential services such as power, transport and factories, as well as currency and credit.[43]

The only problem Gardiner could see for the UFA in the CCF was how to maintain its autonomy within the larger organization. Thus, he noted with some trepidation the tendency of central Canadian CCF propaganda to present the federation as a party. Nevertheless, Gardiner believed that the problems of the UFA joining the CCF would be surmounted easily as long as the UFA delegates at Regina stood by the 1925 UFA Convention's Declaration of Principles.[44]

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[42] Minutes of Meeting of UFA Board, M.P.'s and M.L.A.'s, 12 July, 1933, p. 5., 13 July, pp. 23, 33-34.

[43] Ibid, 13 July, pp. 24-20.

[44] Ibid, 12 July, pp. 2-3, 6. Gardiner said that the Declaration of Principles governed the nomination and control of representatives but not the powers of the UFA. Therefore, the Declaration would limit formal co-operation with other reformers only if

Kennedy wanted to support the CCF and believed its platform was so general that anyone but a rank reactionary could support it. However, Kennedy was concerned about the UFA's autonomy and the exact meaning of nationalization of land.[45] In both cases Gardiner answered Kennedy's concerns in ways which supported the CCF. Others at the meeting showed more concern than Kennedy about entering the CCF. Premier Brownlee, for example, believed the people would be unwilling to embrace the whole socialist platform of the CCF.[46] Speakman said that the group should not define how far they would socialize until they heard from their brain trust, the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR).[47] Speakman's trust in the LSR, a group much more socialist than himself, is further evidence that moderate UFAers did not clearly understand the CCF's direction. Indeed, the UFA directors and M.P.'s were unable to define for themselves either the implications of the CCF for the UFA or how they should approach the CCF at the Regina Conference. The UFA delegates thus went into Regina not entirely united and without any common understanding of the UFA's direction.

The Regina conference ended much of the UFA's uncertainty about the CCF program and organization. The resulting Manifesto, however, widened the division among the UFA factions: the moderates were less willing to follow the increasingly socialist CCF while radicals had nowhere else to go. Various descriptions of the Regina

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other CCF wings elected more members and the UFA M.P.'s wanted to enter the cabinet.

[45] Ibid, 12 July, p.4, 13 July, p. 23.

[46] Shields, an M.L.A. voiced the same concerns as Brownlee. Ibid, 13 July, p. 32, 39.

[47] Speakman did not mention the LSR by name. Ibid, 13 July, p. 24.

CCF conference show farmers as a foil to the extreme left wing of the conference, even though these farmers would have been in the left wing in most other organizations. Frank Scott of the LSR noted that while the body of farmer delegates,

> fully accepted the ideas of the necessity of replacing the capitalist system by a co-operative commonwealth, and recognized its own economic difficulties as being attributable to the normal workings of capitalism, it never indulged in and was sometimes baffled by the Marxian phraseology of the socialist labour delegates, and it vigorously supported the principles of constitutionalism and compensation for owners of nationalized industries.[48]

The problem for the farmers was that they did not control the direction of the conference. Scott believed that the farmer' lack of influence was a result of the more effective debating skills of the delegates of the "extreme" left from Toronto and Vancouver. W.C. Good later recalled a similar view of the conference: "I have too, a vivid recollection of the Regina meeting, composed of probably eighty percent farm organization delegates, silent and seemingly bewildered, and an aggressive and vocal minority."[49]

The summaries of the Regina CCF conference by Scott and Good are important for showing the farmers' declining influence in the CCF. However, Prairie farmers accounted for the farmers' lack of influence by noting farmers' disunity rather than strictly by differentiating between farmer and labour delegates. Spencer, for example, wrote that the Manifesto, "was largely drafted by some clever and progressive men and

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[48] F.R. Scott, "The C.C.F. Convention," Canadian Forum, vol. XIII, 156 (September, 1933), p. 447.

[49] Good, Farmer Citizen, p. 210.

largely accepted by a large audience; many of whom came from various parts of Canada and most were strangers to each other, and for this reason many took little part."[50]

The Western Producer provided another examples in contrast to the idea that farmers simply were duped by socialists and labour. It reported that Prairie farmer delegations interacted closely with labour delegates:

> Down the centre of the hall ranged the western delegations; Saskatchewan Farmer and Labor elements in apparent perfect accord. The same unanimity was apparent between the Alberta Labor group and the United Farmers of Alberta delegation with its history of solid achievement in provincial and federal political fields.[51]

Whatever the reasons for the farmers' lack of influence at Regina, they had lost influence over the organizational structure of the new federation. The dominant wings of the CCF tended to believe in the necessity of a strong central organization in order to avoid the same disintegration as the Progressive party. As a consequence, the old Gingerites had to face almost the same problem of as that which had driven them away from the Progressive party.

A debate between Good and Underhill in The Canadian Forum after the Regina conference illustrated the different conceptions of political parties. Underhill, who was

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[50] Spencer to Good, 25 July, 1954. Good papers, volume 31. In much the same way, Spencer believed that radical farmers' lack of unity immediately following the 1921 election caused their lack of influence in the early Progressive party. See chapter two, above.

[51] Western Producer, 27 July, 1933, p. 11. Wilfred Eggleston papers, volume 24, file 8, N.A.C. The Alberta delegation of seventeen members was made of eight Labor and nine UFA delegates, as well as the nine UFA M.P.'s.

primarily responsible for drafting the Regina Manifesto,[52] shared the Gingerites' belief that the old parties were dominated by big business, but he still believed in the necessity of political parties. He wrote, "The public cannot decide intelligently between half a dozen different proposals, and this is why most Anglo-Saxon thinkers have preferred the two party system to the European group system."[53] (Underhill probably did not intend to sound so much like Crerar had eleven years earlier.)

In reply to Underhill, Good, presented the old Gingerite view of parties:

> A new C.C.F. party, though it may, like a new broom, sweep clear at first, will inevitably degenerate and follow the same road as the old parties, if it adopts the same point of view as to the procedure. There will be the same suppression of independence, the same trimming, the same domination by the minorities.[54]

Good added, "If one could clearly see what happened in Ontario between 1919 and 1933, and what happened in Ottawa after 1921. [sic] without this inside view nothing I say will be wholly effective."

With reservations about the CCF organization as well as the CCF program, moderate UFAers, and even the less radical Gingerites, began to question the direction of the UFA within the CCF. For example, Coote wrote to Good in late October, 1933 that Priestly, a strong CCF supporter, had too much influence in the UFA. Although

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[52] Michael Horn, "The LSR, the CCF and the Regina Manifesto," J. William Brennan, ed. 'Building the Co-operative Commonwealth': Essays on the Democratic Socialist Tradition in Canada. (Regina: University of Regina Plains Research Centre, 1985), p. 30.

[53] Good, Farmer Citizen, p. 187.

[54] Ibid, p. 193. Good was the only delegate at the conference to vote against adopting the Manifesto.

Coote thought Priestly to be "a very fine chap," he felt Priestly was too far ahead of most farmers. "It may be that the rank and file are too far behind in their ideas in this regard, but the fact remains that we must have the votes of most of them if we are to get anywhere with the program."[55]

The question for the less enthusiastic Gingerite CCF supporters was whether their dislike and distrust of the old system outweighed their reservations about the CCF. As W.C. Good wrote Speakman two months after the conference: "I feel with you that there is not much hope along old lines and that so far as I can and as long as I can I should stay with the new political movement, and I am doing so."[56] The non-Gingerite UFA M.P.'s faced the same question, but were even more reserved in their support for the CCF. Speakman, for example, wrote in early November 1933, that, as a UFA member,

> we are forced either to break with the U.F.A. altogether or to become, in all essentials, members of the C.C.F. We have chosen the latter course, and are endeavouring to work inside that body, toward what we believe to be a saner and sounder attitude.[57]

The stronger CCF supporters in the UFA were less worried about the future of the UFA in the CCF for two reasons. First, they were more confident that the UFA would

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[55] Coote to Good, 24 October, 1933. Good papers, volume 9. Good's italics

[56] Good to Speakman, 29 September, 1933. Good papers, volume 9.

[57] Speakman to Good, 1 November, 1933, volume 9. Good papers. An interesting contrast to Speakman and the reluctant CCFers in the UFA is Elmer Philpott of the UFO. Philpott was more eager to support the CCF than Speakman, but could not since the UFO withdrew from the CCF. He wrote to Agnes Macphail, "The essential fact is that whatever we do we must work to bring in a program almost identical with that laid down at Regina provided that such a program is interpreted as the vast majority of its supporters expect it to be...Such being the case, the vast majority of people would say why not put all our weight behind the organization already formed to put it across?" Philpott to Macphail, 23 March, 1934. Macphail papers, volume 1.

keep its autonomy in the federation. As Irvine told the 1934 UFA convention, the UFA was still, "absolute master in its own particular sphere."[58] Second, the CCF supporters believed that the UFA could never reach its goal of a co-operative society by itself. For example, in a radio broadcast on October 11, 1935, Gardiner told the public that the profit system was the underlying problem and the UFA could never make the necessary changes by itself. To prove the point, he said that in spite of the many reforms secured in and Canada and elsewhere over the previous twenty-five years, "we are passing through the greatest depression that the present system has ever experienced."[59]

By the 1935 provincial and federal elections, the moderates in the UFA believed few farmers would support the UFA as part of the CCF. On the other hand, the CCF faction believed that the CCF was the UFA's only hope. Whether the CCF supporters were wrong is difficult to tell; the degree to which Alberta farmers supported the CCF became inexorably muddled by the growth of Aberhart's Social Credit League and the sex scandal involving UFA premier J. E. Brownlee.[60] The results of the 1935 elections are therefore an extraordinarily imperfect tool for understanding which of the Gingerite

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[58] Irvine, "The U.F.A. Philosophy and the Challenge of World conditions," Manuscript, January 1934, pp. 22-23. W.N. Smith Papers.

[59] Transcript of Radio Broadcast, Robert Gardiner, 11 October, 1935. p. 4. W.N. Smith Papers, f78.

[60] John Irving speculated, "The decision of the U.F.A. leaders to abandon the monetary reform and embrace socialism might have led to successful political action had it not been for the scandals and the social credit movement." Irving, The Social Credit Movement in Alberta, p. 150. Both Alvin Finkel and Irving suggested that the early UFA-CCF had a good deal of popular support, illustrated by strong support in three provincial by-elections in 1932 and 1933. Irving, p. 148. Alvin Finkel, The Social Credit Phenomenon in Alberta, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1958), p. 21.

groups were more popular among Alberta farmers. In any case, in the September 1935 provincial election the UFA failed to elect a single MLA while Aberhart's Social Credit League formed the provincial government. The federal election saw the defeat of all of the UFA/CCF M.P's, Gingerite and non-Gingerite alike.

The defeat of the UFA meant that although the CCF now had a smaller national caucus, it no longer had to contend with such a strong, autonomous sub-group. Frank Scott had illustrated the CCF's concerns about the independence of the farmers' organizations as early as 1933, noting that CCF conventions would eventually have to face the UFO and UFA's insistence on autonomy: "It is difficult to conceive of a program as radical as the C.C.F. being put into effect by anything short of a unified and thoroughly disciplined political party."[61] M.J. Coldwell expressed a similar belief, just before the 1935 election, that the CCF had to avoid becoming a non-party group. He remarked, the Progressive movement "was a movement whose aim was to free parliament and destroy the party machine. We elected 65 men who had no unifying philosophy and no very definite platform." The lack of a strong central party meant to Coldwell that, "we are being asked to repeat the disappointing experiment."[62]

The attitude of the CCF towards Gingerites' political demise was illustrated in Coldwell's post election eulogy at the meeting of the National Council of the CCF on November, 1935. Although he said, "Canada will miss their forward looking attitude,

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[61] Scott, "The C.C.F. Convention" Canadian Forum, vol. XIII, no. 156. (Sept. 1933), p. 448. The UFO left the CCF for good in 1934.

[62] Coldwell speech text, 26 September, 1935. Coldwell papers, volume 58. N.A.C.

their information and their social leadership," and added that their loss would soon be vindicated, he never said repudiated. Coldwell summed up the eulogy, "As secretary of the National Council I would like to record my appreciation, official and personal, for the leadership our defeated members gave the movement during dark days."[63] Coldwell, who tended to choose his words carefully, was strikingly final in his appreciation. The Ginger Group was gone and not expected back; its contribution had been made.

The end of the UFA in Parliament also meant that support of the CCF within Alberta fell to a small group of people, Gardiner, Garland, Spencer and Irvine the only ex-UFA M.P.'s among them.[64] Irvine was now a member of the CCF by way of the CCF clubs rather than through the UFA and disliked the still-federated organization of the CCF. He told the August, 1936 National CCF convention, "the Alberta organization is really in the process of being formed."[65] Elmer Roper was more direct, saying that "a good many of us" hoped the UFA would withdraw from party politics at its next

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[63] Meeting of the National Council of the CCF. 30 November, 1935. CCF Papers, N.A.C. Coldwell had run and lost as a Progressive candidate in the 1925 election in Saskatchewan. He said that he knew he was going to lose that race and used the campaign to promote progressive social and economic policies. In the same 1925 election, the farmer M.P.'s held the balance of power, exerting their maximum influence on the government. Therefore, what Coldwell was calling dark days were the UFA M.P.'s' halcyon days. Coldwell memoirs, #5, 29 March, 1963. pp. 5-6. Coldwell papers, volume 58.

[64] Mary Crawford, an Alberta CCF organizer, told Woodsworth in 1937, that the financing of the CCF was kept up by, "the loyalty of the few hundred people in the province who have been able to put into this fund [for salaries, including $1050 to Irvine and $250 to Garland]". She added, "It is to Mr. Roper and Mr. Irvine that the credit is due. For what has been achieved. [sic]" Mary Crawford to Woodsworth, 23 January, 1937. CCF. papers, volume 76, N.A.C.

[65] CCF National Convention minutes, 3 August, 1936, p. 5. Coldwell papers, volume 58.

convention. If this happened, labour would also probably withdraw, "leaving the C.C.F. clubs to organize the province for the C.C.F.," thus allowing a unified force with a clarified situation.[66] On the other hand, more right-wing UFAers tried to get the UFA out of the CCF for opposite reasons. In 1938, Garland informed the CCF that since the defeat in 1935, a number of UFA directors, specifically ex-premier Reid, ex-provincial speaker Johnson and Speakman had been active in the anti-CCF People's League and were trying to capture the UFA.[67]

In between those on the left and right wings who wanted the UFA out of the CCF, the last of the active Gingerites fought to salvage something from the farmer-reform movement by keeping the UFA a part of the CCF. Garland believed that without the UFA, the CCF would find it difficult to reach Alberta farmers. Furthermore, he believed that if the CCF supporters withdrew, the UFA would be in the hands of reactionaries who would use it against the CCF.[68] Gardiner helped steer the 1937 UFA convention to remain with the CCF federally, although it became independent once more at the provincial level. In 1938, Gardiner told the UFA convention, "I take second place to no one in my loyalty to the CCF. Long before I came to Alberta, I was a student of economics and felt that the present system would break down, and that people would be faced with the task of building up a new order that would serve them better."

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[66] Elmer Roper to Coldwell, 31 December, 1936. CCF papers, volume 76. N.A.C.

[67] Report by Garland on the UFA Convention. CCF papers, volume 76 N.A.C.

[68] Ibid. David Lewis shared Garland's belief that if the CCF turned the UFA away, the UFA's opposition could hurt them in Alberta as well as Saskatchewan. David Lewis to G. Williams, Saskatchewan M.L.A., February, 1938. CCF papers, volume 76. N.A.C.

Nevertheless, Gardiner recognized that the UFA, which he called the spearhead of progressive thought in Alberta, had not caught the imagination of the farmers of Alberta. He believed that reformers had to stay close to the people or, "you will only be a few people talking to yourselves instead of a great force for progress."[69] At its 1939 convention, the UFA withdrew from all direct political action, including endorsing or promoting any political party.[70]

The Alberta Gingerites' co-operated with labour as a result of their belief in fundamental democratic reform. To them, the most important object of the farmer-reform movement was to give access to power to those who lacked a voice in the traditional political system. The element of what could be called left wing thought in the Gingerites' support of labour issues should not be ignored, but it was secondary to their belief that co-operation with labour M.P.'s was the beginning of a democratic alternative to the party system.[71]

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[69] Statement made by Robert Gardiner to U.F.A. convention, attached to Ibid. Irvine replied to Gardiner with an uncharacteristic dearth of rhetoric. "In the name of common sense take up a definite attitude. Don't choose a dog-in-the manger stand. I would like to go forward to the setting up of the co-operative commonwealth with you, my friends. But if you refuse, we shall have to move to progress by ourselves." Ibid

[70] Priestly to Lewis, with enclosure, 31 January, 1939. CCF papers, volume 76. N.A.C.

[71] Even UFAers heavily involved in the CCF thought the UFA to be the more democratic organization. For example, David Laycock noted that Robert Gardiner, in his presidential address to the 1934 UFA convention, praised the Regina Manifesto as having the same fundamental purpose as the UFA's program but, "then commented that the CCF program 'in some respects was less advanced than our own.'" Laycock believed Gardiner meant that the UFA's stronger delegate democracy and explicit rejection of the party system made it less technocratic than the CCF. Laycock, Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies, 1910 to 1945, p. 168.

The process of the Gingerites' withdrawal from the CCF illustrates the primacy of their belief in democratic organization over their left wing thought. Coote, for example, believed more in monetary reform than in socialism as a solution to the depression. His support for the CCF prior to his defeat in 1935 came more from habit than belief. Even Gardiner, Garland and Spencer, who believed more strongly in the social democratic policies of the CCF, found no room for themselves in its increasingly party-like organization. Gardiner's active service in the CCF ended when the UFA withdrew from the federation in 1939. Garland left the CCF in 1940 and became Canada's High Commissioner to Ireland. Spencer ran again for the CCF federally in the 1945 federal election and was defeated, the last of the Ginger group to leave the remnants of the farmer reform movement. More than twenty years after Regina, in July 1954, he wrote W.C. Good about the UFA in the CCF, "The thing we wanted to avoid was the party system. To this extent the C.C.F. had been a disappointment, for we are back again in the party system."[72]

In February, 1955, Garland told Good, "I long felt that farmer and industrial worker and others might find it possible and advantageous to work together for common aims." Garland emphasized, however, that the UFA was his political home.[73] The CCF, it would seem, was the political home of the next generation of social democratic reformers.

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[72] Spencer to Good, 25 July, 1954.

[73] He added, "I think that Geo. Coote, Kennedy and perhaps others did not like the idea. Gardiner, with his old country experiences, Irvine, and a few others had similar hopes to mine."Garland to Good, 3 February, 1955. Good papers, volume 31.

Chapter Four
The Ginger Group, Financial Reform and Social Credit

> They want some leader or group of leaders to come and solve all their problems for them. It is not hard to see why fascism spreads. The average citizen wants his ideas ready made for him like Sergeant-Majors [sic] orders, He crabs and grumbles about the corruption of politics yet he is too damn lazy to lift a finger to make them cleaner. He wants a new social order handed to him on a platter and moreover he wants us to convince him in a single speech, not exceeding 1 hour, that the job can be done without any discomfort to anybody but the Holts, Bennetts and Flavelles.
>
> Elmer Philpott[1]

Reform of banking and credit were always essential to the Ginger Group. Throughout their involvement in the farmer-reform movement, they studied the financial system to find ways to relieve farmers of burdensome debt. The Alberta members, especially Coote, Garland, Spencer and their close ally William Irvine, devoted much intellectual effort and parliamentary debate to examining the production and distribution of money. Though most Progressives shared the Ginger Group's basic interest in credit reform, the Gingerites sought fundamental changes in the Canadian financial system. In this way, the Gingerites' belief in wholesale financial reform was characteristic of what distinguished them from the moderates.

The Ginger Group's consistent advocacy of financial reforms helped keep such ideas as the central bank and currency reform in the public eye between the waning of the post-war reform movement and the renewed popular protest of the Depression. However, William Aberhart, took over the monetary reform issue from the UFA M.P.'s

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[1] Elmer Philpott to Agnes Macphail, 23 March, 1934. Macphail papers, volume 1.

and their allies, simplifying the theory of Social Credit and expanding it into a religious, millenarian movement. The UFA credit reformers could neither follow Aberhart nor press their theories in the CCF. The old monetary reform M.P.'s thus became an anachronism in the new popular movements.

The financial system was always an important political issue for the UFA because the farmers' financial health was so closely connected to their debts and the prices they received for their produce. Farmers, who owed money to merchants and bankers, were at the end of the debt chain and thus bore the brunt of financial crises, such as the international shortage of funds in the summer of 1914.[2] Farmers blamed bankers, and more indirectly the inability of the Canadian financial system to provide enough money for the Prairie economy, for this vulnerability to loan calls. Joseph Shaw made this point in the 1923 Bank Act debate, noting, that although the Canadian branch banking system prided itself in allowing money to flow from a region where it was in excess to a region that needed it, "it is a strange thing that from the reservoirs of wealth in eastern Canada it costs so much to supply the needs of western Canada."[3]

The newest farmers, concentrated in the western Prairies, were particularly vulnerable since they had had less time to pay down their debts before the crisis. As Gingerite M.N. Campbell said in 1923, many farmers in Ontario and the Maritimes

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[2] Jeremy Adelman, "Prairie Farm Debt and the Financial Crisis of 1914," Canadian Historical Review, vol. LXXI, no. 4 (December 1990), p. 518. Adelman suggested that the high wheat prices and bumper crop of 1915 prevented a crisis similar to that of the 1930's. Ibid, p. 516.

[3] House of Commons, Debates, 1923, p. 4130.

inherited farms or at least had paid them off so interest payments were of less concern. "In a new country," he argued, "it is generally the poorer classes of men who come to carve out a home in the wilderness, and interest with them is a very vital problem."[4] Alberta was particularly full of new farmers with a great deal of debt to pay off. W. K. Rolph, in his biography of Henry Wise Wood, noted, "Financial assistance in a province as heavily burdened with debt as Alberta was more important than tariff reduction, and agrarian leaders devoted much of their time finding some solution to this question."[5]

The UFA took advantage of Alberta farmers' perceived servility to the financial system both in their basic approach to politics and in their political campaigning. Group Government, which described financiers as the organized class who exploited groups like farmers and labour, was an example of the former. The latter was illustrated by the UFA's highlighting the sometimes condescending and cavalier attitudes of Central Canadian bankers towards farmers' concerns. For example, a May, 1921 UFA directors' bulletin noted an article in The Monetary Times which stated that concerns over the Canadian banking system by any particular class were not very important, since the system had functioned satisfactorily for fifty years.[6] Another UFA bulletin in November, 1921 pointed to Edmund Bristol, a minister in Meighen's cabinet, who told Parliament on May 3, 1918, that the Canadian farmer, the most prosperous in the world, "goes to

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[4] Ibid. pp. 4118-4119.

[5] Rolph, p. 46.

[6] Commentary on article in Monetary Times of April 2, 1921, in UFA Directors Bulletin # 12, 18 May, 1921. Crerar papers, box 181.

town in his automobile and he spends his winters in Los Angeles."[7] In light of these dismissals of farmers' problems, the attitude of farmer representatives such as Agnes Macphail, who said in 1923, "Of Course, Bankers have ever been moral cowards," is hardly surprising.[8]

A further problem, less a result of the financial system but an important contributor to farmers' distrust of bankers, was the farmers' belief that Bankers encouraged farmers to borrow in good times but showed little concern when calling loans in bad times. In the 1923 Bank Act debate, Garland gave a personal example. He told the Commons that, a few years earlier, he bought stock on credit at inflated prices at his banker's urging:

> I admit that I should not have been so foolish, but I took it for granted that the bank manager knew the conditions and so I followed his advice. That kind of advice has been followed unfortunately by all too many farmers across western Canada.[9]

By 1921, the UFA had already begun to examine public control of the financial system, especially the production and distribution of money. The UFA's pool of theories included those of social credit economists such as Major C.H. Douglas and Arthur Kitson.

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[7] UFA directors' bulletin #21, 23 November, 1921. Crerar papers, box 181. Bristol's comments suggests a kind of inversion of the concept of the yeoman farmer of American populism. In the inverted version, the yeoman farmer was a vision of the farmer's opponents, who believed in an honest, hard-working farmer of old in contrast to contemporary, decadent farmers, with their cars and holidays in the South. Bristol's view suggests not only ignorance of the farmer's situation, but also self righteous condescension towards farmers whose luxuries were more likely things which city inhabitants took for granted such as magazine subscriptions and, later, radios.

[8] House of Commons, Debates, 1923, p. 4049.

[9] Ibid. p. 4127.

Social Crediters believed that a money supply more representative of a nation's potential production of goods and services, or its real credit, could solve chronic debts.[10] By offering a solution to the debt problem, the Social Credit theorists gained the credence among rural people which the financial community lacked.

The radical UFA M.P.'s and Irvine were the Parliamentarians most willing to apply the UFA's monetary reform ideas. The Gingerites, Irvine and Shaw were more concerned in 1921 about financial issues than the other five UFA M.P.'s for a variety of reasons. The Gingerites' views of reform issues tended to be more comprehensive than the other Alberta (and most other Progressive) M.P.'s. Furthermore, the Gingerites were least influenced by the Crypto-Liberals. Another reason was that, as newer farmers, the Gingerites were personally more concerned about debts. However, one should note that Lucas was also a new farmer, and personal farming debt does not explain Irvine or Shaw's interest.

Whatever their reasons, the specific target of the UFA credit reform M.P.'s was the decennial revision of the Bank Act, the act of Parliament through which banks received their charters, in 1923. The first characteristic of the these Members' approach to the Bank Act, which could be called their strategy, was to promote the study of finance among their constituents. For example, in February, 1923, Irvine moved to examine the financial system because Parliament needed more information before it voted on the upcoming Bank Act revision in order to challenge bank experts and avoid having "a

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[10] Kitson and Douglas's ideas were outlined in UFA Directors' bulletin #20, 18 November, 1921. Coote papers, f56.

banking act for bankers instead of a banking act that will secure a free flow of the life blood of industry through Canada for the next ten years."[11] The second characteristic of their approach, what could be called the object of their study, was credit, or more specifically, the means by which the financial system facilitated distribution of goods and services. As Garland said in the same debate, "If there is one thing that requires investigation in Canada to-day more than anything else, and for the investigation of which the people are steadily increasing their demands, it is this question of the basis and function of credit."[12]

When the debate on the Bank Act took place in the Commons in June, 1923, the UFA credit reformers were active at all stages of the bill. At the committee stage they helped to bring Major Douglas and George Bevington, a pioneer of credit reform in the UFA, as witnesses.[13] The reformers moved eleven amendments at this stage, all of which were voted down by the representatives of the old parties.[14]

In the debate in Parliament, the radicals tried to make relatively moderate changes to the Bank Act and to promote their concerns about contemporary credit. Some of the more moderate Progressives, such as Kellner and Lucas, recognized that the financial

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[11] House of Commons, Debates, 1923, p. 634.

[12] Ibid. p. 649.

[13] The Committee was made up of twenty one MPs, including Coote, Spencer, W.C. Good, Irvine, Kellner, J.T. Shaw, and Woodsworth. C.A.R. 1923, pp. 178-183.

[14] "1922-1935 List of Bills, Amendments, Motions and Divisions." Spencer Papers, N.A.C.

system was ill suited to Prairie farmers' needs, but they were vague about solutions.[15] The most moderate Progressives seemed positively afraid of the radical ideas. Crerar, for example, wrote to T. H. McConica, "shall we have a new system of credit which will enable people to secure the necessities of life without working for them".[16] Nevertheless, the Progressive caucus overwhelmingly supported five amendments to the Bank Act.[17]

The failure of the amendments, assured in each case by opposition from the old parties, was less significant to the radicals than the differences between them and the moderates which the debate underscored. The radicals especially disliked the moderates' refusal to support a filibuster to extend the Bank Act for one year instead of ten, an amendment which would have allowed more study of the Bank Act before setting it for such a long period. In their resignation letter one year later, the Ginger Group particularly noted the moderates' lack of support on this issue.

The credit reformers were more successful in promoting their concerns about credit. They made it clear that they believed the greatest flaw in the money system was its concentration in a few hands. As Gingerite ally J.T. Shaw said in the debate, the monopoly of banking corporations to issue bank notes meant that a bank was "in substantially the same position as a railroad corporation."[18] The credit reformers traced farmers' high debt to the private monopoly on credit. In Spencer's words, "It is because

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[15] House of Commons, Debates, 1923, pp. 4029, 4041.

[16] Crerar to McConica, 6 March, 1923.

[17] See chapter two above, note 58.

[18] House of Commons, Debates, 1923, p. 4103.

the people there [western Canada] have not got the sympathetic ear of the financial institutions, that they are crying out for relief."[19] They also blamed general economic weaknesses on this same monopoly. As Irvine said:

> Under the present industrial situation there is not enough being consumed to keep the wheels of production going round. That has transpired, because there is not sufficient purchasing power to enable the people to get all they want to consume. There is not sufficient purchasing power, because we have had a Bank act in force for ten years, which placed the matter of public credit in the hands of a few individuals.[20]

The 1924 Budget debate, another divisive one for the Progressive caucus, illustrated the continuing development of the radicals' ideas on credit reform. The central problem of the debate for the Progressives was whether they should support Woodsworth's amendment calling for more wholesale reform of taxation and thereby jeopardize the Liberals' tariff reduction.[21] Though Garland and Spencer spoke in support of a lower tariff, they believed the distribution of money was a more important part of the farmer's economic problems. As Gardiner said, "The question appears not to be so much whether we shall have a high protective tariff or a tariff for revenue, as how can we distribute the goods that are produced to the people who require them?[sic]"[22]

Spencer pointed to the need to have sufficient purchasing power to buy all the goods that were produced. He believed that modern science allowed for greater production with fewer people. Therefore, employment, and consequently consumption,

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[19] Ibid. p. 4103.

[20] Ibid. p. 4055.

[21] See Chapter II, notes 55-57.

[22] House of Commons, Debates, 1924, p. 2202.

fell. In Spencer's words, "The purchasing power of the people is ultimately determined by the payroll of the people."[23] Garland placed purchasing power even more directly at the centre of the farmers' plight: farmers received less money for what they produced than they needed for what they bought. The result, said Garland, "is either a seriously curtailed or wholly destroyed purchasing power."[24]

Gardiner and Garland proposed rural credits as a solution to high farm debts. By rural credits they meant loans which farmers could use to pay for their planting and harvest and pay back only after their produce was sold. Most other Progressives also supported rural credits, but the radicals believed that rural credits could only come with more money flowing through the system. As Garland had said in 1923, "All rural credit schemes in Canada today are based in the final analysis on the banks and yet we know that the banks are antagonistic to rural schemes."[25]

To make rural credits possible, Gardiner suggested creating a central bank operated by the government which would be wholly responsible for issuing money (at the time, banks in Canada could issue notes up to the value of their paid up capital). Provincial governments could take securities to the central bank to finance rural credits.[26] Garland, although somewhat less specific than Gardiner, also advocated a central bank to put the adminstration of the financial system ultimately, "in the hands of borrowers and not in

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[23] Ibid, p. 1939.

[24] Ibid, p. 2212.

[25] House of Commons, Debates, 1923, p. 4072.

[26] House of Commons, Debates, 1924, p. 2203.

the hands of joint stock banks or private mortgage companies which are governed by consideration of profit rather than of service."[27]

Gardiner, Garland and Spencer all advocated easing the farmers' financial burden, both in terms of debt and the cost of living, by adjusting the money supply.[28] However, their belief in such financial reform did not in itself account for the Ginger Group split. Certainly, the Gingerites were different from many, although not all, Progressive M.P.'s in that they believed that a fundamental change in the financial system was necessary to solve farmers' economic problems. Nevertheless, the chief contribution of the issue of banking and credit to the split was that it showed the radicals how a party organization hampered reform, thereby increasing the seceders' intrinsic dislike of political parties.

Banking issues declined in prominence after the Ginger Group split. After the 1925 election, when the Liberals' fragile hold on power left the radicals more able to affect directly government policy than at any other time, the UFA M.P.'s submitted fourteen points to King and Meighen, but only one point had anything to do with finance,

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[27] Ibid, p. 2215.

[28] Nevertheless, their ideas were subtly, but still noticeably, different. Spencer's description of purchasing power, for example, sounds less socialist than Gardiner's advocacy of equitable distribution. On the other hand, while Gardiner and Garland both spoke of public control of the money supply, Gardiner stressed the money supply while Garland stressed public control.

W.C. Good, the Ontario Gingerite M.P., had a more distinct approach to banking reforms. Good pushed fundamental banking reforms as enthusiastically as the Alberta M.P.'s, but was looking more in the direction of co-operative banks. However, the differences between Good and the Alberta Gingerites, especially in the 1920's, should not be over-emphasized. Good was also responding to the overcentralization of banking and the inability of the contemporary banking system to adjust to rural credits. Good manuscript, "What Shall be Done with our Banks?" 1923. Section 8, p. 4. Good papers.

and it dealt simply with rural credits.[29] Between 1926 and the early 1930's, credit did not have the same significance for the radicals that it had prior to the split. Though the Alberta Gingerites, along with Irvine and Macphail, had no moderates to hold them back, the need for reform was less pressing than it had seemed during the more depressed conditions of 1920 to 1923. Coote's letter to his constituents during the 1930 federal election campaign illustrated the decline in the priority of credit reform. Of five particular ideas he pointed to which the UFA M.P.'s had advocated during the previous Parliament, only the third suggests the kind of credit reform the Gingerites had described in the debates of their first Parliament.[30] Credit, as the UFA M.P.'s had come to understand it, was not yet an overwhelming popular concern.

The higher debt and unemployment of the Depression reinvigorated interest in monetary theories that could explain and purportedly solve the underlying weaknesses in the economy. Major Douglas's social credit theory in particular became an important part of the UFA credit reform M.P.'s explanation for the lack of money. For example, in an address in October 1930, Gardiner, the Gingerite least active in promoting Douglas's

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[29] Fourteen points, Spencer papers, N.A.C. There was, however, a debate on a national system of banking during the 1926 session. The debate was adjourned, but Spencer later wrote that it was the first time that the old parties realized that the subject of a central bank was debatable. 1922-1935 Notes on Speeches of Group, p. 7. Coote papers, f36.

[30] He listed them in order: a further tariff reduction for motor trucks, a commission to establish a national coal policy, a survey of Canada's whole economic system by economic experts to solve unemployment, representation for agriculture at the Imperial Economic Conference and whenever trade treaties were negotiated, and more government assistance in securing markets for agricultural produce. Coote to electors of Macleod Constituency, 11 July, 1930.

social credit, described the economic collapse in terms compatible with Douglas's A + B theorem. Gardiner said that money and credit were put in circulation by bank loans with interest that had to be paid back. The community could never pay back all its debts, since the volume of money in circulation equalled the principle without the interest. Because interest could only be paid back with further loans, a community's aggregate debt increased until the financial interests became worried and called in the loans. Bankruptcies would result and wealth would increasingly concentrate in the hands of national and international finance.[31]

By the spring of 1932, monetary reform was sufficiently important that the M.P.'s in the Co-operating Groups, especially Spencer, Coote and Irvine, sought some kind of united organization of monetary reformers. In April, Spencer and Irvine drafted a memo out of which grew the Canadian Monetary Reform League (CMRL), which tried to bring together monetary reformers to promote the general idea of monetary reform among the public and in Parliament. All the old Alberta Ginger Group except Gardiner and Kennedy joined the CMRL.[32]

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[31] Spencer to W.N. Smith, 10 October, 1930. Smith papers. The A + B theorem purported chronic debt existed because people received money from wages and dividends, called A, but the price of goods included wages and dividends as well as overhead costs such as interest, called B. Therefore, the community only had money equal to A, while the price of a good equalled A + B. Garland address at Legion Hall, Calgary, 21 December, 1931. W.N. Smith papers, f41. pp. 17-18. Both Gardiner and Garland assumed that money in circulation was based on banks' willingness to make loans rather than either bank deposits, as traditional economists said, or on the real credit of a nation, as the reformers advocated.

[32] Spencer to W.N. Smith with enclosure, 19 April, 1932. W.N. Smith files. Spencer was president, Campbell, Coote, Garland, Irvine and Macphail were on the provisional committee along with F.W. Gershaw, Conservative M.P. for Lethbridge,

Spring 1932 was also the beginning of the CCF which many of the CMRL M.P.'s soon joined. The duplicity and possible conflicts were not lost on Spencer or the others who, in November of 1932, decided to make the CMRL a strictly parliamentary body. They encouraged members of the League outside of Parliament to join other groups, "which are either specializing in or strongly advocating the need for monetary reform", specifically, the CCF, the LSR or the Canadian Currency Reform League promoted by W.C Paynter of Tantallon, Saskatchewan.[33]

It is not surprising that the UFA credit reformers saw the CCF as the vessel for monetary reforms in 1932 - there were manifestations of socialist thought in the group's economic theories throughout their parliamentary careers. For example, one of the fundamental aspects of the Gingerites' economic theory was their dislike of the Banks' private monopoly over Canada's money supply. They believed very strongly that control of currency should be nationalized. As Spencer said in the 1927 Budget debate, "I am one of a growing number who believe that inasmuch as the government has supreme power over all assets of the country on which credit or money is based, it should be its own banker."[34] Spencer's idea was similar to Woodsworth's in the 1923 Bank Act Debate when he said the right to issue currency "means the power to determine very largely what can be produced, where it can be produced and under what conditions it can be produced." and, "I submit that no such power as [determining the value of money]

Thomas Reid and H. Mitchell, also M.P.'s. CMRL pamphlet, 21 November, 1932. Spencer Papers, Glenbow Archives.

[33] CMRL Pamphlet, 21 November, 1932.

[34] House of Commons, Debates, 1926-27, p. 585.

should be placed in the hands of private individuals."[35]

Another aspect of socialism in Social Credit as promoted by the UFA M.P.'s was the equitable distribution of goods. Garland illustrated the connection between production, distribution and social justice at an address in Calgary in 1931 when he asked,

> What is the object of industry? To satisfy Greed? Not at all. The true object of industry today is to produce and distribute with the minimum of man power and machine power the desired quantity and kind of goods when and where required. There is no other real object for industry, If there is, it must be destroyed or the human race sinks into barbarism again, that is all.[36]

Social Credit became an integral part of the UFA's alternative to Capitalism in its definition of a Co-operative Commonwealth, passed at its January, 1932 convention: mobilization of the masses would allow for public control of finance, Social Credit policy would then replace the forces of production and distribution which operated under capitalism with a more equitable distribution of wealth.[37] Coote in particular advocated Social Credit for the eventual co-operative commonwealth. For example, during the Co-operative Commonwealth debate in Parliament in 1933, he said that the war against depression, unemployment, hunger and poverty,

> can be won only by scrapping the system which has brought about the present desperate condition and by the use of honest money issued only be a national government agency, and guaranteed by the wealth of the nation.[38]

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[35] House of Commons, Debates, 1923, pp. 4018, 4021.

[36] Garland, Address at Calgary Legion Hall, 21 December, 1931.

[37] See note 33, chapter three, above.

[38] C.A.R, 1933, p. 78.

The UFA M.P.s' advocacy of Social Credit affected other CCFers, at least in focusing financial reforms on currency. For example, in a radio broadcast in October, 1932, M. J. Coldwell said that, "the only possibilities of improved economic circumstances for the masses of the people," lay in the direction of, "the immediate reduction in interest charges and debt, and the elimination of this fatal contradiction of our financial system by establishing a socialized system of managed currency."[39]

Nevertheless, the UFA monetary reformers' advocacy of social credit was ultimately out of place in the national CCF, which did not believe that it addressed sufficiently the fundamental problems of capitalism in general or profit distribution in particular. For example, the 1934 UFA Convention passed on to the CCF national council a resolution, "that in any revision of the financial policy of the C.C.F national convention, consideration be given to the Social Credit Proposal of Major Douglas." The CCF convention modified the resolution to call only for a thorough examination of "the merits and demerits" of the Douglas Credit system (and "all other money systems that may from time to time be presented to the public") in terms of how well it fit into other CCF policy.[40] What little substance of Social Credit theory there may have been in the UFA resolution was lost in its substitute.

About the same time as the UFA's growing involvement in the CCF, the Ginger Group's monetary reform proposals, especially for the creation of a central bank, were

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[39] Text of Coldwell Radio Broadcast, 10 October, 1932, Coldwell papers. Note that this broadcast was after the founding of the CCF but before the Regina Manifesto was adopted.

[40] 1934 CCF Convention, CCF papers, volume 40. N.A.C.

gaining respectability outside of farmer-reform circles. The Gingerites had always supported the creation of a central bank but the banking community and the old parties opposed it. However, by 1932, even Prime Minister Bennett was willing to consider the suggestion.[41] In 1933, the Royal Commission on Banking and Finance recommended the creation of a central bank, and in 1934 Parliament passed legislation creating the Bank of Canada, which began operation on March 11, 1935.[42]

The UFA seemed aware of the change in environment regarding the central bank well before it became a reality. For example, in 1933, the UFA told the Royal Commission on Banking and Finance that proposals advocated ten years ago by UFA representatives,

> find support in the writings of well-known British economists; and financial measures which have recently been adopted in the United States bear points of resemblance to the propaganda which our Association has advocated.[43]

Increasing support for a central bank encouraged the UFA credit reformers, but it was hardly the wholesale financial reform which they advocated. The UFA reformers still believed in the necessity of Social Credit but because they were now part of the CCF, they were limited in taking political advantage of it. Furthermore, the reluctance of the UFA provincial government to institute social credit reforms hindered the credit reform

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[41] C.A.R, 1932. p. 65.

[42] C.A.R, 1934, p. 360, C.A.R, 1935-36. p. 20.

[43] Submission to Royal Commission on Banking and Finance in [sic] Behalf of the United Farmers of Alberta. 18 August, 1933. Good papers, volume 9.

M.P.'s. Support of social credit in Alberta therefore followed William Aberhart.[44]

The UFA credit reformers rejected Aberhart's interpretation of Douglas's social credit as superficial although they did not immediately recognize Aberhart as a threat. After reading one of Aberhart's pamphlets for the first time in June, 1933, Irvine told Smith: "The only part of this [pamphlet] which can be said to be the Douglas plan in the A+B principle, and the bookkeeping example." The rest of Aberhart's claims were, "not part of the Douglas system as I once knew it, nor would the results he claims flow from it." Irvine listed fifteen parts of Aberhart Social Credit which he believed were foreign to Douglas's system, the most significant of which involved Aberhart's plan to issue scrip. Irvine also said,

> [Douglas Social Credit] did not propose any fixed dividends for citizens on the basis of their loyalty; it did not propose to have salaries and wages paid in credit and not in money; it had no particular plan for unemployment beyond the hope that sufficient credit would cure it; it had no provision which would prevent the exploitation of the countries [sic] wealth;... it did not propose to tax heavily those who might refuse to deal with the national clearing house; it did not propose to enforce the expenditure by the individual of all income by the end of the year; it did not propose to write off the credit of any individual by the amount he failed to spend by the end of the year;[45]

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[44] John Irving, in his study of the Alberta Social Credit League, found no precise date when William Aberhart started to emphasize his own particular kind of social credit, but noted that by the autumn of 1932, Aberhart was making increasing references to Social Credit in his weekly radio broadcasts. (Irving, p. 51.) Irving gives a good account of the early growth of Aberhart's Social Credit between 1932 and 1935 in chapters three and four.

[45] The other parts which Irvine believed Aberhart had invented were: plans to abolish interest, to abolish profit, to provide a substitute for life insurance, to use current credit for purchasing government bonds, to put an end to inheritance, to abolish the principle of profit on necessities and contemplation of special direction to what should be produced. Irvine to W.N. Smith, 1 June, 1933. Smith papers, f22. Irvine's underline

Despite their different interpretations of Douglas's Social Credit, Irvine and Aberhart met in August 1933 and arranged a conference with Spencer, Garland, Smith, Irvine, Aberhart and perhaps Premier Brownlee.[46] Irvine even hoped to make the CCF the vehicle for Social Credit, suggesting to Aberhart that the CCF could use Douglas's proposals in its provincial platform - when Social Credit was held up by the federal government, the federal government would appear responsible for its failure. However, Irvine's early optimism was misplaced. The UFA M.P.'s and Aberhart were unable to reach any kind of concord on Social Credit. There was probably very little room in Aberhart's mind for the Gingerites' different interpretation, just as there was little room for the autodidact in the UFA M.P.'s collegial caucus.[47]

When it failed to come to terms with Aberhart, the UFA tried to counteract him. In March, 1934, it brought Douglas before the Legislative Agricultural Committee to explain the Douglas system of Social Credit in order to discredit Aberhart. Irvine, who moved to call Aberhart in front of the committee, told Smith that he had done so either to force Aberhart to adopt the "full Douglas Program" or show him up as a fraud. He continued, "Our opinion here [Ottawa] was that to get him before a Committee at which Douglas also appeared would compel him to accept Douglas-ism or else to indicate that

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[46] Irvine to Smith, 29 August, 1933. Smith papers. A meeting as described above took place on 25 October, 1933. Smith to Coote, 24 October, 1933. Coote papers, f7.

[47] Spencer later recalled his own bad personal rapport with Aberhart, "After leaving Ottawa I got interested in School and Municipal work and as I headed the School Trustees of Alta for five years I saw a good deal of Aberhart, and the more I saw of him the less I liked him." Spencer to Good, 14 August, 1954. Good papers, volume 51.

he was in disagreement."[48] However, bringing Aberhart before the committee was a serious miscalculation. Douglas was unable to win over Aberhart's supporters, who began dismissing his version of Social Credit. John Irving called it the most important single event in the transformation of Aberhart Social Credit into a "semi-political" phase.[49]

While the UFA credit reformers were sincere in their derision of Aberhart, they overemphasized the differences between Douglas and Aberhart because of concern for their own political survival. The public, and even other credit reformers, were less worried about such distinctions. For example, C.A. Bowman, editor of the Ottawa Citizen and longtime supporter of the radical Progressives, supported Aberhart (perhaps from ignorance of what was happening in Alberta), asking only that he not oppose those M.P.'s who supported Social Credit:

> The group of U.F.A. members in the federal House, along with Agnes Macphail, have exceedingly valuable parliamentary experience. I believe it would be a loss to parliament to have members like Spencer, Coote, Irvine, Garland, Lucas, Kennedy, Gershaw and Agnes Macphail defeated in the next election. Speakman, Luchkovich and Gardiner are sagacious members. Gardiner's Socialist reading had apparently blinded him, as it has other Socialist doctrinaires, to the possibilities of Social Credit, but he is an honest man whose influence is at least on the side of reform, even though it is based on the antiquated doctrinaires of Socialism.[50]

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[48] Irvine to Smith, 14 March, 1934. Smith papers.

[49] Irving, p. 86.

[50] Bowman to Aberhart, 3 July, 1935. Spencer Papers, Glenbow Archives. H.A. Boyd wrote a similar letter to Aberhart on 28 August, 1935, suggesting that Aberhart's Social Credit League not run candidates against Spencer or Lucas and perhaps not Coote nor Garland. However, Boyd felt that Gardiner was a socialist and should be defeated. Interestingly, Irving showed that both Boyd and Bowman misunderstood Aberhart in terms of Douglas. Irving, pp. 81, 91., A handwritten postscript on Spencer's copy of Boyd's letter said, "In November, I was branded as 'disloyal', I don't know on what grounds."

Of much more importance to the UFA M.P.'s than insufficient support from Douglas Social Crediters was the failure of their constituents to understand or accept the distinction the UFA was making between Douglas and Aberhart. Even UFA supporters rejected the UFA's attacks on Aberhart, who, under depressed conditions appeared to be the best hope. For example, C.W. Nixdorf of Airdrie told Smith, "It is useless as well as ridiculous to argue that there is any real material difference between Douglas and Aberhart." He added,

> now Aberhart because of his own genius forced the thing to an issue and it is certainly unbecoming for us to dictate terms of agreement but rather we should make the best bargain we can and fall in line to accomplish what we have been advocating for years.

Ironically, even though Gardiner was the Alberta Gingerite least supportive of social credit, Nixdorf also advised, "Turn the whole question over to Bob Gardiner and you and Priestly lay off and let us get out of this mess as gracefully as we can."[51] S.L Fraser of Claresholm illustrated a similar attitude in August, 1935, when he asked Coote to explain "the difference between the doctrine" in Coote's speech of March 26, 1935, "and the Social Credit Mr. Aberhart is trying to prepare the people for in Alberta. If there is any I fail to see it."

Fraser blamed the provincial UFA for failing to understand or support Social Credit, and added,

> I like your judgement and integrity and honor. And I sincerely hope and pray that if we take up S.C. federally we can count on you to lead us. It may be putting you between the devil and the deep sea, But there is only

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[51] C.W. Nixdorf to Smith, 11 March, 1935. Smith papers, f9.

one right and that is Social Credit.[52]

Even those who were sceptical about Aberhart and supported the UFA's attempts to discredit him seemed to realize his widespread popular support. Dan Hume of Cayley wrote to Coote, "Anyway, all you can hear around this part of the country is Social Credit and what a wonderful thing it is and it is really surprising how many folks are swallowing it hook, line and sinker."[53]

The UFA credit reform M.P.'s failure to limit Aberhart's popular support was not entirely a result of bad tactics. Their association with the provincial UFA, which was resisting any Social Credit, had become a liability. The provincial government's obstruction, which may have sprung from the most honest of political motives, made the UFA appear to be in league with the financiers.[54] The UFA had even opened themselves up to criticism that, like a political party, they had begun to seek office for the sake of power. For a movement that held itself up as an alternative to political parties, this change in appearance was deadly.

Ultimately, the UFA credit reform M.P.'s failure to counteract Aberhart came from the incompatibility of their own understanding of the reform movement with Aberhart's crusade. Part of the potential of Social Credit monetary policy had always been that it

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[52] Fraser to Coote, 12 August, 1935. Coote papers, f28.

[53] Hume to Coote, 6 February, 1935. Coote papers, f9. In the 1935 federal election, Cayley was one of 32 polls out of a total of 168 in his riding that Coote won. Canadian General Elections Return, 1935. pp. 618-620.

[54] As Fraser said to Coote, "I can't see how they [the UFA Government] are going to get us out of this situation and stick with the big financiers." Fraser to Coote, 12 August, 1935.

fitted so well into what Philpott described at the beginning of this chapter: people wanted an easily understood solution to their problems that would require only the rich to make sacrifices. In a 1931 address, Garland himself gave the impression that the potential of a Social Credit crusade similar to Aberhart's just slipped out of the UFA's hands:

> My own opinion, quite frankly, speaking not just as a prophet but as a common man is that the change is upon us and unless we take intelligent action nothing can prevent an immediate collapse. But don't be worried because it won't make you any worse off or me any worse off. The only people affected by any drastic change will be those who have so far benefitted to the extent of acquiring power under the old monetary system. They alone will be affected. It would be folly for me to give you any more detailed suggestions for change.[55]

However, the hallmark of the radicals in the farmer reform movement after the First World War was their belief in a rational society reached by consensus politics and fair economics. Thus, an emotional crusade like Aberhart's Social Credit League was antithetical to the Gingerites' belief that a rational citizenship carefully studied the issues.

Indeed, the strength of Aberhart's arguments was not so much their logic as their circularity: Social Credit was the solution to the people's problems, the enemy of Social Credit was big business. Therefore, anyone opposing Social Credit was in league with big business against the people. Smith illustrated the problem in dealing with this circular argument in a letter to Spencer in early April, 1935: "Incidentally, a Miss Gostick, one of [Aberhart's] propagandists, when asked what would be thought of Douglas if he did not endorse Aberhart's scheme, replied that it would prove that he had sold out to the

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[55] Garland Address, 21 December, 1931. p. 17.

monied interests."[56] Once a particular voter accepted Aberhart's approach, no amount of argument about Douglas theory could be effective.

The UFA, and especially the Gingerites, could not fight Aberhart's fire with fire and maintain their principles. Whether they could have been more successful in doing so is doubtful. They had been in politics fourteen years, and therefore could not represent the same kind of departure from the system as could Aberhart. In any case, the route they followed led to political disaster. In the 1935 federal election, the Ginger Group and all other UFA candidates, lost to Aberhart's candidates.

The defeat was most ironic for the strongest proponents of the Ginger Group, especially Coote and Spencer. An editorial in the Vancouver Daily Province after the election said,

> it is safe to say that the best of the lot [of Social Credit League M.P.'s] is a novice on the monetary problems compared with, say, Coote of Macleod or Spencer of Battle River. If Alberta is interested in bringing Social Credit influence to bear at Ottawa it is, of course, entirely justified in sending Social Credit members to sit in the Commons and speak and vote there. But the province would have been much better advised to have retained some of the old 'professors' instead of throwing them into the ditch because they refused to keep in step with the procession.[57]

The old Gingerites had politically outlasted the Progressive movement and played a significant part in shaping discontent into new reform directions. In the end, they lost to a successor movement for which they had unwittingly helped prepare.

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[56] Smith to Spencer, 2 April, 1935. Smith papers.

[57] Letter to Coote, October, 1935. Coote papers, f31.

Chapter Five
Conclusion

> You end your letter by offering us your personal sympathy for our individual hardships, which I suppose you thought was adroit, but in our opinion it only goes to show what we mention in the first part of our letter, that you have lost, if you ever had same, true Canadian Prospective [sic], but we are charitable enough to wish that future writers of Canadian history will be kind enough to sympathize with your ignorance instead of condemning you as traitorous to the best interest of our Country
>
> William Mitchell, on behalf of Circle-Bar Knitting Co., Kincardine Ontario, to W.C. Good.[1]

The Progressive movement shot into Canadian politics and, like ginger applied to the right part of an old horse, for a brief moment seemed to bring new vigour to a system already long in the tooth. But as quickly as it came, the movement dissipated, unable to overcome the structures and tenacity of the old politics. The movement, though, did not quite disappear. A few Progressive M.P.'s-those who had seceded to form the Ginger Group-kept the vitality and hope of the movement alive well into the growth of new protest movements during the Depression.

The problem in studying the Ginger Group is whether to interpret them from the viewpoint of the horse or the ginger. The former would mean analyzing how the Group affected the evolution of Canadian politics; the latter would mean analyzing the group as a manifestation of the farmer-reform movement. Even in the former terms, the Ginger Group was important. They were involved in a number of events which had an obvious, long-lasting impact on the Canadian political system, including the breakup of the Progressive party, the creation of the CCF, the promotion of Social Credit monetary

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[1] William Mitchell to W.C. Good, 31 March, 1924. Good papers, volume 7.

reform before Aberhart, and the precedent of a strong group of M.P.'s outside the two major parties. The Ginger Group was also involved in other issues with important, although less fundamental effects on Canadian politics, including the breaking of the Beauharnois scandal, the King-Byng crisis, the creation of the Bank of Canada and the introduction of unemployment insurance and old age pensions. All of these would have happened differently, some perhaps not at all, without the Ginger Group.

However, important aspects of the Ginger Group have been overlooked precisely because of attempts to fit them into the patterns of development of a political system to which it was anathema. The Ginger Group, the Progressive movement's most consistent parliamentary proponents, has been interpreted too often as a straightforward manifestation of a historical pattern of Alberta politics. Misunderstanding has been complicated by histories of the later protest movements: histories of the Social Credit have tended to present the Ginger Group as simply its populist forerunner while histories of social democratic politics have tended to portray the Gingerites as a proto-CCF, ignoring important and unique aspects of the post-war reform movement. Therefore, a better way to approach the Ginger group is from the perspective of the Progressive movement.

For the Ginger Group, the Progressive movement was a combination of regret for the loss of better times for Canadian agriculture which had existed prior to World War One and of hope for a better world which followed it. This combination of hope and regret underlay a popular rural reaction to traditional geographical and class centralization of economic and political power in Canada. If understood in its own terms, this reaction

allows us to see the evolution of Canadian history through a different perspective than our own. Such a study illustrates both the nature of the Gingerites and the Progressive movement and the problems inherent in the Canadian political system as it had evolved and as tenacious as it became.

The Ginger Group is an especially useful tool in understanding the Progressives because it was the heart of the radical wing of that movement, the section which sought the most fundamental reforms. As part of the radical wing, they were freed from the contradictions of the moderates within the Progressive party who wanted to affect changes within the very system which limited their influence on power. Thus freed, the Ginger Group were the most consistent Progressive M.P.'s in following the movement's democratic principles: the Gingerites sought political democracy in their attempt to change the party system, social democracy in their aim to bring forth the co-operative commonwealth, and economic democracy in their attempt to nationalize the financial system.

It is, of course, somewhat artificial to create one ideology for five people. Nevertheless, while there were differences among the five Alberta members of the Ginger Group, they shared a basic approach to politics characteristic of the radical post-war farmer-reform movement. Their actions throughout their parliamentary career, their split from the Progressive party, their participation in and eventual withdrawal from the CCF and their inability to deal with the Aberhart's Social Credit, all reflect, and can be explained by, this shared fundamental political approach. This shared approach was based on four closely related characteristics: anti-partisanship, bottom-up democracy, faith in the

good citizen, and belief in co-operation as the best and even perhaps inevitable form of social, economic and political organization.

Ideologically, the Gingerites were most distinguished from other Progressives by their aversion to traditional political party organization. Their anti-partisanship was a more radical version of the early non-partisanship tradition of farmers in the Northwest Territories. The Gingerites believed that political parties were, by nature, oligarchic organizations which presented themselves and often even perceived themselves to be democratic institutions. Political parties claimed to represent everyone, but in reality were controlled by those who were best organized -most often the economic elite. Minority interests within a party therefore had no significant influence.

The Gingerites' anti-partisan beliefs were guided by Wood's theory of Group Government, an alternative to the party system incompatible with the beliefs of Liberals, Conservatives and moderate Progressives who considered it a self-interested farmers' ideology. Indeed, Group government was thoroughly incompatible with the idea of a united, national political will since it supposed that an individual's political interests depended on the economic group to which he or she belonged. However, to the Gingerites, Group government was not selfishness but a recognition of class cleavages which allowed each group an appropriate voice. This view led them to seek co-operation with Labour because they believed that both groups were exploited under the contemporary system and therefore had a common interest in obtaining a political voice more representative of their size - a rough form of justice denied within traditional political parties.

The Crypto-Liberals, while pointing to flaws in the radical Progressive's ideology, seemed to recognize neither that their desire to re-align the internal politics of the Liberal party along a more farmer-oriented, anti-tariff platform was itself farmer specific, nor that the tariff was never a viable platform for a Canada-wide reform movement. The biggest obstacle in the way of a more farmer-oriented Liberal party was not the radical farmers but the political power of central Canada. Although the Crypto-Liberals failed to recognize it, Prairie farmers lacked power because they came from a region with a small share of Canada's population and were part of an occupational group with insufficient access to the institutions of power.

The consequences of the Gingerites' recognition of the weaknesses of the system in representing regional and occupational minorities was political longevity. The Progressive majority's failure to recognize the same weaknesses left them more vulnerable to partisan politics. They were limited in their political influence between 1921 and 1925 and were absorbed into the Liberal benches after 1926 by Mackenzie King's political machinations.

In respect to the successor movements, anti-partisanship in the CCF was different from the anti-partisanship of the Gingerites. The CCF sought an alternative to the domination in the Liberal and Conservative parties of the economic elites rather than an alternative to the general structure of a political party. The Social Credit League was the heir to radical anti-partisanship. Indeed, anti-partisanship was about the only part of the Ginger Group's ideology it shared. By 1935 Social Credit had superseded the Gingerites as the popular alternative to party organization.

The second aspect of the Gingerites' ideology was that they believed themselves to be part of the movement rather than leaders of it. At most, they thought of themselves as the vanguard of the movement, always believing that the people at large provided them with force and direction. In the vocabulary of the UFA and Wood, this was called bottom-up democracy.

During their tenure in Parliament, the Gingerites believed that they were following the political will of their supporters and that the UFA organization was the best representation of this political will. Because of the influence of the membership over the UFA organization - the local constituency associations selected their federal candidates and delegates from the locals directed the UFA central convention - it was not of crucial importance to the Gingerites whether they represented the constituency association directly, as they did before the 1925 UFA Convention, or through the UFA convention itself, as they did after 1925.

The Gingerites' belief in bottom-up democracy contributed to their political longevity in that they were for many years genuinely representative of their supporters. Political office tends to bring distance between the representatives and their people and their movement. For many Progressive M.P.'s, this alienation happened within their first session. Some, such as Crerar, even believed the process was necessary in order for M.P.'s to act in Canada's best interests. However, the Gingerites' belief in constituency and then convention autonomy significantly slowed the process. The Alberta Gingerites had the support of most of their farmers into the 1930's. Even when members of the Ginger Group began to lose their public support by trying to lead the UFA away from

Social Credit and into the CCF, they could still claim the support of the UFA Convention.

In contrast to the Ginger Group, the CCF's bottom-up democracy was tempered by its desire for enough central organization to avoid the disintegration of the Progressives. Considering that the CCF, farmer, labour, socialist, was less homogenous than the Progressive party, its increased centralization seemed necessary. Nevertheless, the organization of the Federation, increasingly directed from the centre, was a fundamental departure from the Gingerites' ideal.

Rhetorically, the Social Credit League was as democratic, at least politically, as the Ginger Group. Its emphasis on direct democracy recognized the longevity and effectiveness of the Gingerites, as well as the UFA's democratic rhetoric. However, the Social Credit League, created and directed by Aberhart, was not a bottom up movement. Its grass root institutions atrophied soon after the 1935 election. The Gingerites understood Aberhart's control, and in fact became political victims of his inability to accept different views on Social Credit.

The third aspect of the Ginger Group's ideology was their belief in the good citizen - the belief that the electorate was rational and actively sought to play a role in government. This belief in the good citizen was very much a part of the optimism of the post war reform movement. The organizations in which the Gingerites had begun their political careers, such as the Non-Partisan League and the independent political leagues, were created by large numbers of private citizens working to influence the state. In fact, the political strength of the UFA was based on their commitment to strong citizen participation.

The Gingerites' belief in citizenship also was tied closely to their belief that the electorate, given proper political education, would recognize which policies were in everyone's best interests. The Gingerites' role in accomplishing their political aims was therefore not to lead people but to promote and teach people about their aims. In this respect, the Gingerites' belief reflected the principles of the UFA, which was fundamentally an educational organization. One of the UFA's major roles was to distribute and co-ordinate ideas, thus allowing the maximum number to be examined and discussed by all. This distribution and co-ordination would allow the best ideas enter the organization's policy with a minimum of partisan and emotional influences.

The CCF was more similar to the Gingerites in its understanding of citizenship and political education than in any other aspects of the Gingerite ideology. The early CCF relied on the same kind of community involvement as had the UFA. Both organizations tried to win popular support by winning the public's minds. In this way, both reflected the active role of the citizen more common at the time on the Prairies than elsewhere in Canada.

Aberhart's Social Credit League, on the other hand, had an view of the citizen and education that was anathema to the Ginger Group. Where the Gingerites advocated and promoted public study of credit and banking, Aberhart appealed to emotion. While the Gingerites' conception of Social Credit monetary reform had a technocratic flavour - the role of the experts would only come after the people themselves had become well enough versed in monetary theory to press for a particular kind of reform - Aberhart relied entirely on experts. The public's only role was to vote him into office to begin the

process. Ultimately their differing views of citizens' political role was a fundamental difference between the Gingerites and Aberhart.

The fourth aspect of the Ginger Group's ideology was their belief that the ultimate goal of the farmer-reform movement was a co-operative society, a society in which a spirit of co-operation rather than profit and self-interest would guide mankind. In traditional farmer-populist terms this society was known as the co-operative commonwealth. The Ginger Group probably stood out less from rest of the UFA as a whole in regard to co-operation than in respect to any other of the four characteristics of their ideology. The co-operative ideal reflected the importance of co-operative organizations to the prairie farmers and also owed much to Henry Wise Wood's quest for the co-operative millennium. Nevertheless, without the ideal of the co-operative society, the Gingerites would not have had a focus for their broad political and economic reforms.

The Ginger Group maintained their ideology for fourteen years, even as the Progressive movement disappeared around them. Their continued political success reflected their consistent support of the post-war spirit of reform, a spirit for which they became the repository as the movement at large waned. When the onset of the Depression led to new reform movements, the protest at first took place within the organizations of the earlier farmer-reform movement. However, whatever the strengths of the post-war reformers, they could not claim any significant changes to Canada's economic and political system. Thus new groups, with which the Gingerites tried to work, formed different approaches to political and economic problems. The result was the departure of the Gingerites, since their continued participation in the politics of the

1930's increasingly compromised their old ideology.

The political defeat in 1935 of all of the old Gingerites except Macphail meant the end of the ideology which had they represented. Social Credit had the same dislike of political parties, but its democratic rhetoric was not reflected in its organization. The CCF, on the other hand, better represented the Gingerites' belief in co-operation and in the good citizen, but its organization was too much like the old parties. The successor movements came to believe that the Progressive movement was obsolete. The post-war farmer-reformers' struggle against party domination and for strong popular influence in government had been lost. Only certain reforms were possible within the structures of Canadian politics given the nature of the Canadian electorate. The successor movements defined their reforms within those structures and the consequent limits of public political discourse. As memories faded, so too did perceptions of the Progressive movement. The enthusiasm of the 1920's had gone, replaced by a more cynical and regimented populace.

Appendix A: Federal General Election Results with Graph

1921	Liberals			Conservatives			Progressives			Independents		
Province	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote
N.S.	16	136064	52.4%	0	87988	33.9%	0	35741	13.8%	0	0	0.0%
P.E.I.	4	23950	45.7%	0	19504	37.2%	0	8990	17.1%	0	0	0.0%
N.B	5	76653	49.4%	5	61172	39.4%	1	17447	11.2%	0	0	0.0%
Quebec	65	558056	70.4%	0	163743	20.6%	0	31790	4.0%	0	39477	5.0%
Ontario	21	351717	31.0%	37	445150	39.2%	24	329052	29.0%	0	9003	0.8%
Manitoba	2	29525	17.1%	0	46486	26.9%	12	83350	48.3%	1	13361	7.7%
Sask.	1	46447	20.7%	0	37345	16.7%	15	136486	61.0%	0	3610	1.6%
Alberta	0	27404	15.8%	0	35181	20.3%	11	104295	60.3%	1	6024	3.5%
B.C.	3	46249	29.8%	7	74266	47.9%	3	21786	14.1%	0	12739	8.2%
Yukon	0	658	47.6%	1	707	51.1%	0	0	0.0%	0	18	1.3%
Total	117	1296723	41.5%	50	971542	31.1%	66	768937	24.6%	2	84232	2.7%

Source: Canadian Annual Review 1921, p. 509

1925	Liberals			Conservatives			Progressives			Labour			Independents		
Province	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote
Ontario	11	392039	32.1%	68	691365	56.7%	2	108051	8.9%	0	9552	0.8%	1	19104	1.6%
Manitoba	1	34538	20.1%	7	70264	40.9%	7	48859	28.4%	2	18335	10.7%	0	0	0.0%
Sask.	15	82810	41.7%	0	51512	26.0%	6	62268	31.4%	0	0	0.0%	0	1914	1.0%
Alberta	4	44291	27.6%	3	51114	31.8%	9	50592	31.5%	0	8572	5.3%	0	6040	3.8%
B.C.	3	63506	34.8%	10	90032	49.3%	0	15829	8.7%	1	11463	6.3%	0	1888	1.0%
Total	101	1266534	40.1%	117	1467596	46.5%	25	282599	8.9%	3	53224	1.7%	3	87618	2.8%

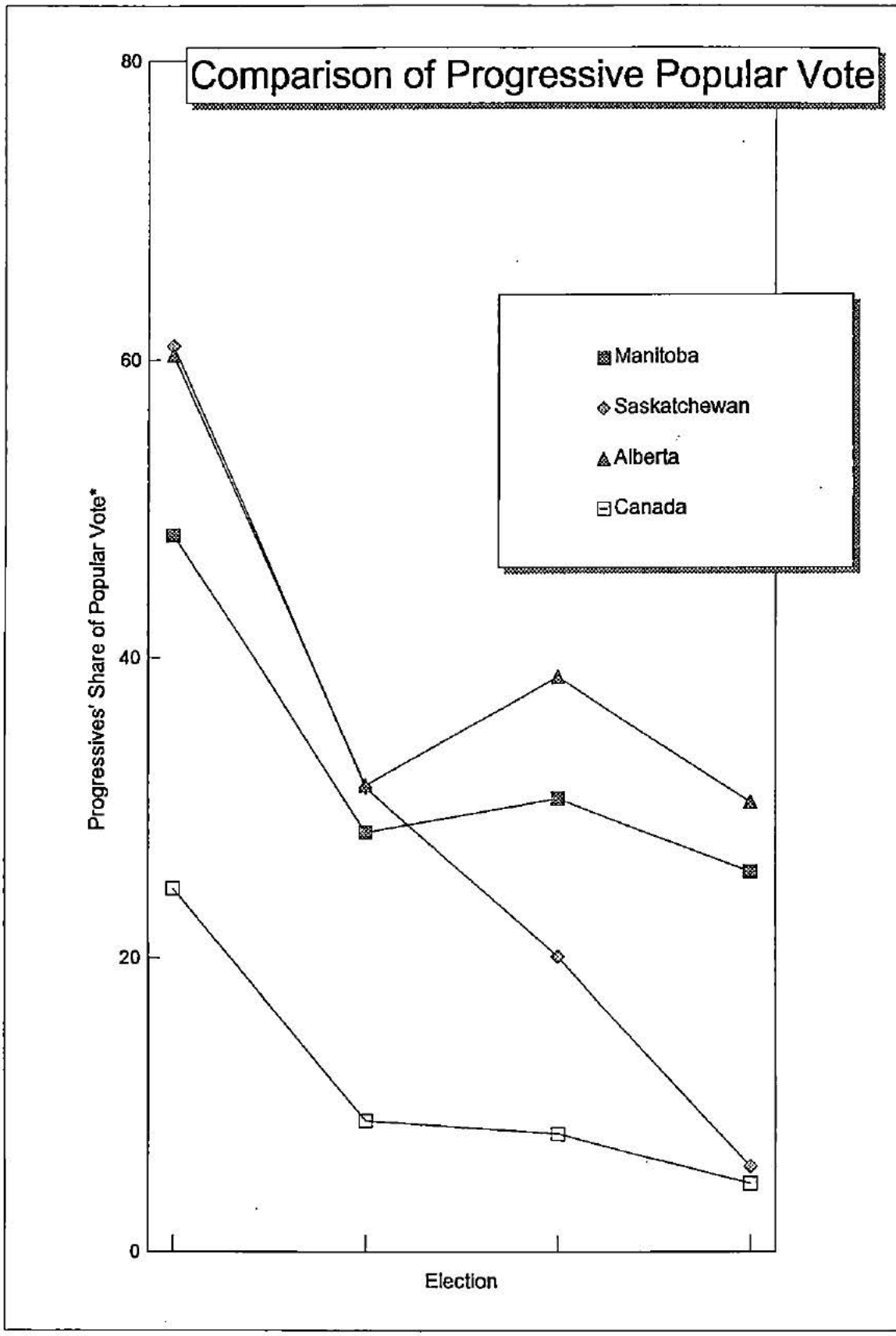
Source: Canadian Annual Review 1925-1926, pp. 45, 47.

1926	Liberals			Conservatives			Progressives			Liberal Progressives			U F A		
Province	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote
Ontario	25	441254	36.1%	53	680742	55.7%	2	50360	4.1%	2	38812	3.2%	n/a		
Manitoba	4	36242	18.4%	0	83100	42.2%	4	22092	11.2%	7	38279	19.4%	n/a		
Sask.	16	125849	51.3%	0	67524	27.5%	3	38324	15.6%	2	13413	5.5%	n/a		
Alberta	3	38451	24.5%	1	49514	30.9%	n/a	0	0.0%	n/a	0	0.0%	11	60740	38.7%
Total	101	1421804	43.7%	91	1504855	46.2%	9	110766	3.4%	11	89904	2.8%	11	60740	1.9%

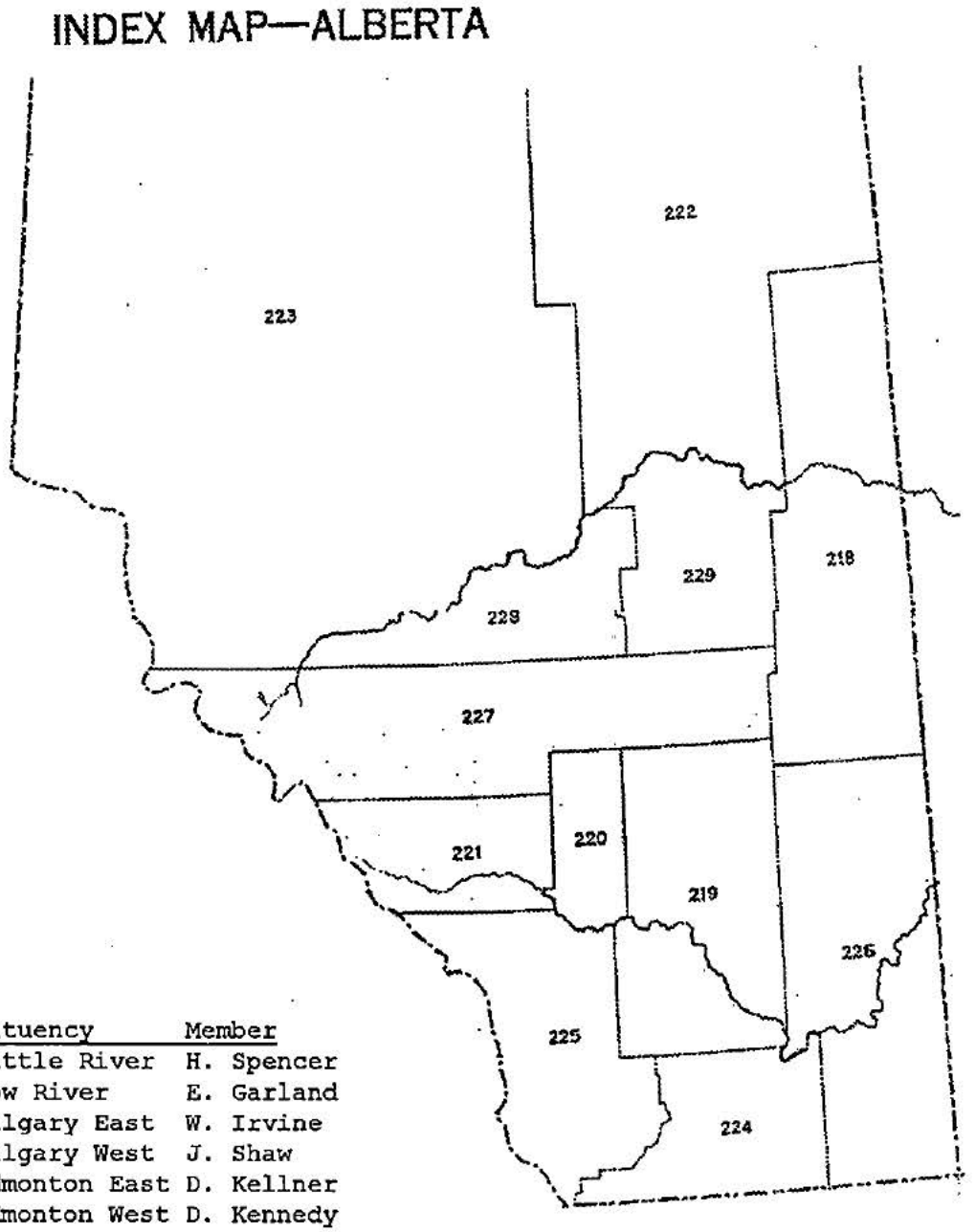
Source: Canadian Annual Review 1926-1927, pp. 47-48.

1930	Liberals			Conservatives			Progressives			Liberal Progressives			U F A		
Province	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote	seats	vote	% of vote
Ontario	22	590071	43.4%	59	745414	54.8%	1	12815	0.9%			0.0%			
Manitoba	1	37234	16.2%	11	111312	48.5%	0	0	0.0%	3	59155	25.8%			
Sask.	11	153673	46.5%	8	129420	39.1%	2	18718	5.7%			0.0%			
Alberta	3	60148	30.0%	4	67808	33.8%	0		0.0%			0.0%	9	60924	30.4%
Total	87	1715860	43.7%	137	1909955	48.7%	3	30933	0.8%	3	59155	1.5%	9	90924	2.3%

Source: Canadian Annual Review 1929-1930, pp. 109, 635.


Comparison of Progressive Popular Vote
80
60
40
20
0
Progressives' Share of Popular Vote*
Election
Manitoba
Saskatchewan
Alberta
Canada

Appendix B: Alberta Federal Constituency Map at 1921 General Election based on Department of the Interior, Electoral Atlas of Canada, 1915. 1915.



Constituency	Member
218 Battle River	H. Spencer
219 Bow River	E. Garland
220 Calgary East	W. Irvine
221 Calgary West	J. Shaw
222 Edmonton East	D. Kellner
223 Edmonton West	D. Kennedy
224 Lethbridge	L. Jelliiff
225 Macleod	G. Coote
226 Medicine Hat	R. Gardiner
227 Red Deer	A. Speakman
228 Strathcona	D. Warner
229 Victoria	W. Lucas

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