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Carleton University
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of Political Science

STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION
OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN ALBERTA
1935 - 1971

by Meir Serfaty

A dissertation submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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The undersigned recommend to the Faculty of Graduate
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"Structure and Organization of Political Parties
in Alberta, 1935 - 1971"

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PREFACE

This is a study of the way in which three opposition parties operated under a dominant party. The case of Alberta was chosen because it leaves no doubt as to the character of Social Credit as dominant in the system, and because the efforts of one of the parties culminated in the defeat of Social Credit.

Unfortunately, two parties have been left out of this analysis: the C. C. F. and the N. D. P. Focusing on both organizations would have given us a more total picture of the opposition parties, but several reasons have made their inclusion difficult. First, we have employed basically a historical analysis, which concentrates on the way the major opposition parties operated during different periods of predominance. Thus, the Unity Movement was chosen for the early period, the Liberal party for the middle period and the Conservative party for the more recent years. The C. C. F. and the N. D. P. were never the chief opposition. Second, these parties--particularly the C. C. F.--were surprisingly difficult to research. Past records were mostly unavailable, and there were some gaps of information that we found impossible to fill. Third, we believe that the thesis would have probably become unmanageably large with the addition of two more parties.

The findings of this dissertation corroborate to a large extent the findings of other Canadian political scientists.

I would like to extend my deep appreciation to the following persons: Dr. H. B. Mayo for his understanding, patience and sound advice; my advisors, particularly Dr. K. Z. Paltiel and Dr. J. Pammett; the many Albertans who gave me their valuable time; the staff of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute; Rose and Bud Laimon for their unswerving support; and most especially my wife, Laurie, for understanding and continuous help.

ABSTRACT

The role of opposition parties in systems of one-party dominance has not been well studied. This dissertation attempts to lay down a framework which will help analyze this role in a federal-parliamentary system such as Canada. Three of Alberta's opposition parties under Social Credit have been chosen for scrutiny.

The underlying contention of the analysis is that organizational theory in general, and party organizational theory in particular, may shed some light on the operations of political parties. Questions which the study attempts to answer include: What are the goals of political parties? What do they do? How do they operate? How are they constituted? What are their strategies? How does being in opposition modify them? How does being under a dominant party system affect them? How do they affect the dominant party?

A historical approach is also fruitful because it allows the observer to study parties as dynamic entities, which are constantly changing, even when they appear stagnant. At the same time, using the historical approach in a dominant party system is helpful because it separates the various stages of development undergone by the system.

The dissertation tests several propositions that have been advanced about Canadian, as well as non-Canadian political

parties. First, it finds that one must not over-generalize about political parties, unfortunately an all too prevalent tendency among scholars. Parties not only differ from one another; they are also subject to change from time to time. It is, therefore, almost impossible to provide a characterization of a political party which will apply to every period of development.

Second, it is difficult even to write about parties as entities in search of a single goal. It is more likely that various elements within the organization will have different purposes. Thus, a party may have a leader who is genuinely interested in obtaining political power. It may contain other elements who seek to benefit from affiliation in a much less public-oriented fashion. The dominant party system, by rendering oppositions generally powerless, makes it easier for the extra-parliamentary wing often to gain control over the intra-parliamentary party. At the same time it may increase the opportunities available for the federal wing to become prevalent over the provincial wing of the party, by turning the attention of its leaders to federal problems and away from provincial concerns. As a result, the provincial wing becomes less effective and less able to dethrone the dominant party, thereby sealing the latter's electoral success.

Finally, it is found that a semi-mass party with branches, strong centralization, vertically-articulated linkages and a hierarchical structure may be necessary to overthrow a dominant party. A traditional party may have to undergo changes if it hopes to be effective.

PART I
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

ONE PARTY DOMINANCE AND OPPOSITION:
THE ORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The lengthy and uninterrupted reign of Social Credit in Alberta from 1935 to 1971 has had few parallels in Canadian politics. Only the Liberals of Nova Scotia and Quebec, who governed from 1882 to 1925 and from 1897 to 1936 respectively, can boast of a longer tenure in office. As most cases where democratic one-party rule prevails, Alberta under Social Credit was chiefly characterized by the apparent inability on the part of all opposition parties to unseat the group in power. The combined legislative representation of the opposition parties failed to exceed one-third of the total even after their strongest performances in the 1940 and 1955 elections. These parties were more likely to emerge from a provincial election with a legislative contingent ranging between five and ten per cent of the total.

Social Credit, then, would appear to be a prime candidate for the designation of a dominant party. Given the obvious relevance to our analysis of the concept of dominance as well as of the nature of Social Credit's dominance in Alberta, it is desirable that they be studied in some detail. Having done this, we shall lay down a framework which will enable us to

investigate how the opposition parties functioned in Alberta.

The Study of Dominance

One of the major problems consists of reaching an agreement regarding the nature of the dominant party system. Some American political scientists have tended to claim that only systems where one political party won all elections, and where these were not even contested by other parties, should qualify as such. In these systems there was a large degree of factionalism within the dominant parties, which made these systems actually "party systems within the dominant party."¹

Secondly, a dominant party system was said to exist in several states, which would be normally considered to have two-party systems. These were what Leiserson called "cyclically competitive" two-party systems. In them, one party predominated for a lengthy period of time and was then replaced by another party, which in turn would become predominant, and so on.²

Thirdly, and a variation of the second category, a dominant party existed in a party system where one single party controlled the government for a long period of time. In this type no opposition party of any strength would appear: these parties would be weak and unable to achieve, separately or combined, sufficient strength to challenge the larger party successfully. The difference between this and Leiserson's category resided in the fact that no cyclical tenure of office emerged in the former.

Despite their differences, in all cases governed by the three previous categories, one single party obtains the majority of seats and forms the government. In the fourth type which has been suggested, a party may become predominant even though it has not been able to obtain a legislative majority, and must, therefore, form a coalition or minority government. This is the more typical Western European phenomenon, and was originally alluded to by Duverger.³ Dominance could, thus, take place within multi-party, two-party and one-party systems.

It would appear to be foolish to suggest that all these types of predominant party systems have much in common. Other than the salience of a political party, one could not compare Alabama with Italy or Alberta. What, if anything, may we ask, have all four types of systems in common? Sartori defined a predominant party system as follows:

The type of party pluralism in which no alternation occurs over time, even though alternation is not ruled out and the political system provides all the opportunities of open and effective dissent, i.e. for opposing the predominance of the ruling party.⁴

More comprehensively, Duverger noted:

A dominant party is a party larger than any other, which heads the list and clearly out-distances its rivals over a certain period of time.... It is possible for it to lose it exceptionally at one election...while still retaining its general pre-eminence.... Every party that is larger than all others over a certain period of time is not necessarily dominant in character. A party is dominant when it is identified with an epoch; when its doctrines, ideas, methods, its style, so to speak coincide with those of an epoch.⁵

The dominant party, then, is a party which has become institutionalized. Typically, the party is a mass party, which

appeals to a broad section of the population., It is composed of a hard core of voters. The party is at the centre of the political spectrum, although the extent to which this is so varies from country to country; in other words, the right-left continuum is relative. In most cases, the dominant party's wide appeal contrasts with the opposition parties' sectional support.⁶

Focusing on party dominance--no matter under which category--is analytically useful for two reasons. First, a fiercely competitive two-party system or a diffusely competitive multi-party system obviously does not allow an easy answer to a crucial political question: which is the centre of power in the political system? We are in partial disagreement with Duverger who concluded, after considering party systems that "the centre does not exist in politics; there may be a centre party, but there is no centre tendency.... There are no true centres, only superimposed dualisms."⁷ This may well be the case in two-party systems and in multi-party systems, but in predominant regimes there exists an ideal situation in which one party evidently holds the reins of power and therefore also the centre of power in the system.⁸

Second, focusing on one-party dominant systems is clearly advantageous from another related viewpoint: in helping to ascertain the nature, extent and role of the opposition. There may be understandable confusion in studying the opposition in alternate party systems because although there exists an opposition (with a capital "O" as Potter would say)⁹ neither

the government nor the opposition remains fixed, and the analysis which applies to an opposition party at a given time may not apply equally to the alternative opposition party. Similarly, there may be confusion in identifying the opposition parties in pure multi-party systems without dominance because the opposition there is vague, diffuse and constantly shifting. In both these types there is difficulty separating government and opposition except at a given point in time, all of which makes generalizations hard to make. On the other hand, when we turn to dominant party systems, this serious obstacle is obviously overcome: one can study opposition parties' fortunes over a period of time and assess their role regarding the dominant party, which constitutes the centre of the political system.

The Alberta Case

By comparison with other Canadian provinces, Alberta has been blessed with a seemingly large number of political studies. This is particularly the case with regard to Social Credit. Indeed, this party has been one of the most thoroughly and well studied in Canada. Specifically during the 1950s, the Canadian Social Science Research Council commissioned a series of works dealing with various aspects of the Social Credit phenomenon.

It was through the efforts of these writers that plausible explanations were offered for the emergence and continued electoral success of the Social Credit Movement in Alberta. Thus, J. C. Irving interpreted the advent of Social Credit

as a result of three different, though related factors: its philosophy, its leadership, and its strategy.

According to Irving, Social Credit, led by Aberhart, was a response to the conditions prevalent in Alberta during the Depression. It succeeded in exploiting what Irving called "the preferred group tendencies" of Albertans. It accentuated "the extremely hostile attitudes toward the existing economic system,"¹⁰ a tendency which had been earlier encouraged by the U. F. A. Social Credit fostered the desire for meaning, eagerly sought by the average Albertan. The Movement indicated most pungently "the discrepancy between the abundance of goods produced...and the shortage of purchasing."¹¹ It held out a promise for the satisfaction of basic needs of food, shelter, clothing etc. Social Credit also "brought order into a then confused world." The Alberta population, says Irving, was "at once bewildered and had the will to believe."¹²

To these philosophical and psychological factors responsible for the emergence of a protest movement, Irving added Aberhart's leadership. As the author puts it, it is doubtful that Social Credit "would have won political power in Alberta without his leadership."¹³ Aberhart identified the "true believer" with Social Credit's Christian fundamentalism and with its promise of realizing the Biblical prophecies.

Finally, adding enormously to the strength of the Movement, was Aberhart's ability to organize it, as well as to dramatize and exaggerate Alberta's condition of servitude to "the big Eastern concerns. He utilized political propaganda,

particularly through the medium of the wireless, with an effectiveness seldom matched either before or after in the Canadian experience. By means of this strategy, he managed to demonstrate convincingly that Social Credit was a peoples' movement, and that it would not fail to replace and eliminate the alleged dominance exercised in Alberta by big business and big finance.

Whereas Irving's interpretation dealt solely with the advent of Social Credit, C. B. Macpherson's book went two steps beyond. His study attempted to provide an explanation not only for the emergence of Social Credit, but also for the heavy prevalence in Alberta--and elsewhere in the Canadian West--of third parties. Furthermore, by devising a general theory, his analysis was now applicable to the continued electoral success enjoyed by these third parties, as well as to their rise.

Macpherson's link between the rise of protest movements and their prolonged domination consisted of what he referred to as the quasi-party system. Alberta, he claimed, had a non-party tradition. Thus, the alternate, or two-party system, never took root in that province. Turn-overs occurred rarely and the overthrow of a particular party was followed by its near, if not total, obliteration at the hands of a new political party.¹⁴

Macpherson related the complete success achieved by these parties to the social structure prevalent in Alberta, as well as to historical conditions. The province was characterized by a homogeneous class composition composed of a petty bourgeoisie, and by a persistent subordination of that class (and their provincial representatives to the federal government. The provincial

economy was heavily dependent on the federal government for its growth, particularly regarding the export of its agricultural products. Indeed, the province had not gained the right to control its own resources until 1930.

These two conditions featured in Alberta favoured and perpetuated the quasi-party system. Class homogeneity made opposition seem unnecessary: "Alternative parties were not needed either to express or to moderate a perennial conflict of interests." On the other hand, "the quasi-colonial position of the western provinces made it a primary requirement of their provincial political systems that they should be able to stand up to the national government."¹⁵

Thus, what developed was a system where one party-- a non-traditional party--arose, which reflected best the political culture of the province. The national political parties controlled their Alberta Branches; it was, therefore, inconceivable that the electorate would continue to support provincially any group which was unable and unwilling to resist exploitive national legislation.

In this fashion, Macpherson explained, Albertans had first turned to the U. F. A., a group which was essentially anti-party, in that it did not accept the traditional aggregative functions performed by the Liberals and Conservatives. The U. F. A. believed itself to represent a single economic class, the farmers, and was proud of that identity of interests. Similarly, when the single commodity producer and the petty bourgeois found that the U. F. A. had abandoned their interests,

they turned to the only alternative which effectively voiced their concerns: the Social Credit.

In both cases, it was implicit in Macpherson's analysis, these political parties had arisen when previous parties had ceased functioning as sound representatives of the prevalent Alberta class. There was, therefore, no reason why parties which continued to serve those interests adequately would have to be disposed of; hence, the length of tenure enjoyed by the U. F. A. and Social Credit was not only normal and expected, but also inevitable. Only if the Albertan social structure underwent change, would changes in the party system occur and develop. Writing in the early 1950s, Macpherson did not foresee an end to the quasi-party system in Alberta.¹⁶

Irving's and Macpherson's works have become classics in the study of Canadian social movements. Macpherson's analysis has confronted some very heavy criticism. This criticism has taken two forms: on the one hand there are those who claim that quasi-partyism has never existed in Alberta; they reject his thesis in toto. On the other hand, some insist that his theory may be sound but that other factors must be also held responsible for the quasi-party system.

The former type of criticism is exemplified by S. M. Lipset. In a two-dash part review which appeared in Canadian Forum¹⁷ shortly after the publication of Democracy in Alberta, he objected to the characterization of Alberta as a sui generis quasi-party system. He contended that it was wrong to suggest that only one party had totally dominated Alberta's political

arena. At no time under Social Credit or U. F. A. rule had the government party obtained more than 55% of support; even this figure was rare, as some elections witnessed a minority government in terms of votes cast. That opposition parties never had large representation was due to their number--three or four usually contested the seats--as well as to the intrinsic bias of the plurality system. As he put it:

In a fairly homogeneous geographical unit such as Alberta, the lines of opinion division are more or less the same in each constituency. Thus, even with a small lead, the dominant party can sweep almost all the seats. If Alberta or Saskatchewan were to adopt a system of proportional representation, we would soon see the end of one-party rule.¹⁸

Lipset also criticized the assumption on which Macpherson based his thesis. First, he claimed that third parties had arisen in Canada with greater frequency than in the U. S. because of the absence of the primary system and the dependence of provincial parties on their federal branches. Lipset concluded that the peculiarities of Canadian politics "are to be understood not as the result of the breakdown of the democratic party system...but as the failure of the British parliamentary system to work in a society with complex internal divisions."¹⁹ He argued that

Canada is faced with the problem of disciplined national parties in a complex federal union.... Given the tight national discipline imposed by a parliamentary, as compared with a presidential system...the Canadian solution has been to support different parties on the provincial level than those which they back nationally.²⁰

Part of what Lipset appeared intent on emphasizing

was that dominance was not an inherently Albertan or even Canadian phenomenon. Indeed, "the fact is that turn-over in office is not the normal pattern in democratic politics."²¹ Dominance could, and did thrive in many other systems where the socio-economic conditions prevalent in Alberta did not exist.

Macpherson made gigantic strides in attempting to explain the success of third parties in Alberta, particularly that of Social Credit. Other writers have suggested less profound but no less important factors that must be noted. Long has indicated that Social Credit perpetuated a malapportionment which had existed in Alberta since the early years of provincial status. Rural seats, as was generally the case throughout Canada, were clearly favoured in distribution, to the extent that some urban constituencies were at least three times the size of rural constituencies. As Long points out, slightly more than 27% of the voters elected half the provincial legislature.²²

Social Credit obtained its major source of support from the rural areas. Indeed, with the exception of the 1940 and the 1955 elections, only four opposition candidates had been elected outside Edmonton and Calgary until 1971. However, it is easy to over-exaggerate the importance of mal-distribution as a factor accounting for Social Credit's continued predominance. The party was equally strong in the cities, generally sweeping well over half the seats of the larger metropolitan areas.²³

The second factor responsible for Social Credit's success was leadership. We have already alluded to Aberhart's place in capturing political power in 1935. Upon his death in 1943, his most trusted disciple, E. C. Manning, took the mantle of the party. He made Social Credit an unbeatable force during succeeding decades. His control of the party became assured after the final revolt of 1947. It resulted in the dismissal of Byrne and Ansley, two of the last Douglassites from the cabinet. His personality impressed Albertans. His paternalistic leadership style, his moral stature, his ability to avoid scandal about himself and about his party, his great sobriety, modesty and administrative ability, produced a mystique of invincibility around him.

His philosophy also appealed to the Albertans. As J. Barr puts it: "He knew when to stand firm and when to bend before an irresistible wind."²⁴ His government, despite protestations to the contrary, became a Big Government, but always retained an aura of conservatism.²⁵

Finally, Manning led a province that, after the 1947 oil discovery at Leduc, had become one of the wealthiest in Canada. Prosperity made his leadership easier to exercise. It allowed him to provide a high level of services and public facilities without high taxation. As Barr says: "Affluence was a constant cushion for the government. What Manning did was manage this affluence very effectively."²⁶

The Assumptions of the Study

Our attempt in this dissertation will consist of showing that, even though all the factors dealt with do help explain the predominance of Social Credit, a very important one has been left out of studies conducted thus far: the opposition parties. We are not suggesting that there is a direct and sole causal link between the way the opposition parties operated and Social Credit dominance. Nevertheless, there is a clear relation between the two that must be explored.

Attending to the opposition serves several purposes. First, it will help us determine how, and why, one party (the Conservatives), and not others (Independents and Liberals) succeeded in dethroning Social Credit. Second, and related to this, the success of Social Credit, is closely intertwined with the failure of its opponents to organize adequately. It is imperative that the internal factors responsible for the electoral success or failure of the opposition be fully investigated in combination with the well-known external factors, such as Manning's popularity or economic progress, in order that we may comprehend the durability of the regime. Third, these opposition parties are interesting in themselves: their goals, their strategies and tactics employed to achieve them, their internal dynamics and problems, their identity crises, all present us with a challenge that must be met if we are more fully to understand the success of a predominant party, the failure of its alternatives (if indeed we may even speak of

"alternatives" in these systems) both in Alberta, and by and large in other similarly structured systems.

Although one of our chief hypotheses is that dominance may radically affect the nature of the opposition parties, one must begin from the assumption that opposition groups are full-fledged political parties. Whether one believes that their ultimate goal is winning power (a characteristic that appears to be a prerequisite of all political parties), the fact remains that the opposition groups are generally organized like most political parties. They also perform at least the function of recruiting candidates for office. Whether other functions are performed or not is a matter for empirical investigation.

A second assumption is that party organization may provide a most appropriate focus for our study, as well as a coherent framework of analysis. All parties have some form of organization. By centering on it, it is possible to enquire into what parties do (their functions), how they are constituted (their structures) and how these considerations affect, and are affected by their operations (their processes). At the same time, the political party as organization reflects and affects the political and party system of which it is a part.²⁷ The focus on party organization can help analyze such diverse topics as policy formulation, ideology, the effects of federalism and of the parliamentary system (on a political party), as well as intra-party democracy and control, allocation of authority etc.

The third assumption of this study is that no single party organization model has gained sufficient reputation

to be used to the exclusion of all others. An eclectic model, which heavily borrows from much of the existing party literature, will be utilized in this dissertation.²⁸

A second reason for the need to utilize a variety of models is the lack of theory on Canadian party organization. Information on this area has woefully lagged behind.²⁹ It is of course important to realize that Canadian parties are not organized like American parties because of the different type of federalism of which they are a part, and because of the parliamentary system. At the same time, British and European organizational studies are generally also of limited utility to Canada because of the latter's federal nature.

Unfortunately, the tendency has been to generalize about the nature and character of party organization in Canada. It appears as a sound task to study as many Canadian political parties and organizations as possible, in order to ascertain the validity of these generalizations.

The fourth assumption underlying our analysis is that organizational theory can be used with beneficial results in the study of political parties. Lee Anderson has demonstrated³⁰ that many of the issues raised in general organizational theory may be applicable to parties. Parties are, after all, social organizations if we define them as "a social system that has an unequivocal collective identity, an exact roster of members, a program of activity, and procedures for replacing members."³¹

We must not, however, exaggerate the value of organizational theory. For one thing, as March indicates, there is no

single body of well developed theory of organization: "Organizational theory is a collection of incongruous elements."³² Moreover, the party as an organization may be sui generis and hence impossible to merge with other organizational types for analysis. Organizational theory then, if it is to be relevant, must be used in combination with models that have been found of value in studying party organizations.

A fifth assumption of our approach is that the historical narrative, if it is analytical as well as descriptive, may be the organizational structure best designed to reveal the evolution of political patterns over time. It is not enough to attempt to characterize parties in a static fashion, by considering their organizations at a given point. Parties are dynamic entities which reflect their times, or at least their leaders' perceptions of those times and their own place in the political system. Parties are, therefore, liable to change their organizations from time to time. Changes observed in their structures, may be accompanied by changes in the functions that they perform, and in party processes. This is, unfortunately, an all too often forgotten aspect of the study of parties as organizations. Just as parties change depending on whether they are in government or in opposition, transformation may also occur within opposition parties over time.

The final assumption is that parties must be seen as shaped by the individuals who act as their leaders. This is particularly the case in non-programmatic parties. Parties may be indeed considered entities with lives that transcend

the mere aggregation of the individuals composing them. However, as we shall see, the goals and functions as well as the structures of political parties are greatly affected by their leaders motivations. As Eldersveld points out: "The party is a mutually exploitative relationship--it is joined by those who would use it; it mobilizes for the sake of power those who would join it."³³ Because of the very special relationship that develops between the parties and their leaders, we shall concentrate on that relationship in our study.

A Framework for Analysis: The Goals of Political Parties

One of the foremost questions posed of organizations is: what is their purpose? The question is so important that goal analysis has become one of the two models by which organizations have been normally studied. An organization, according to the model, is "a rationally conceived means to the realization of expressly announced goals. Its structures are understood as tools deliberately established for the efficient realization of those group purposes."³⁴

One does not have to search very far to find typical definitions of political parties which include their goals. What differentiates a party from other groups, says Eldersveld, is "its primary goal (to occupy at least some of the governmental leadership posts) by its competitive-electoral relationship with similar groups and by its special pattern of public support and adaptation strategists."³⁵ In a more blunt fashion,

Schlesinger posited the search for public office as the sole most important goal of political parties.³⁶

In a theoretical sense, this appears to be the single feature which distinguishes the political party from other groups. As will be seen, parties have been said to perform a variety of functions as well. The question is whether the goal approach which postulates that parties seek power, is a normative or an empirical statement. It would be necessary to know the avowed aims of the party concerned, in order to determine whether it is seeking certain goals. The fact is that parties seldom announce their goals explicitly. We are more likely to assume that the party's goal is public office, because it serves as the instrument utilized by people who seek that office. Only individuals have goals; the party is merely a tool. This statement takes us to the study of people's motivations for joining political parties. It is not unlikely that individuals whose goal is other than political power, may help modify the primary goal of the parties themselves.

An empirical proposition would be: do the leaders of political parties seek public office? Although our immediate reaction would be to answer affirmatively, the possibility remains that some may not be. In his study of the P. S. I., Barnes has suggested a highly provocative theory in this regard: he believes that "man seeks rationally to maximize the returns of his investment. These returns are usually... conceived in material terms."³⁷ The theory of collective action posits that man in large organizations is the rational,

calculating creature of classical economics. Thus, he argues, the people who belong to parties may be more interested in party office (which is secure) than in public office.

Barnes' theory appears to be of particular appeal when studying parties that are seemingly uninterested in political office. It applies to many of the so-called "ideological" parties, to which office-seeking is not a primary goal. We suggest that it may also apply to many opposition parties in dominant party systems. It may help explain why some parties whose chances of electoral success appear remote, continue to survive, while others do not.

Of some importance in terms of goal analysis, because of its effort to link the individual with party goals, is Wilson's The Amateur Democrat. He differentiates two sharply contrasting party types, the "professional" and the "amateur."³⁸ The "professional" is a politician and sees winning, or power, as an end in itself, as his sole goal. A party led by such a style of politician is similarly constituted to attain power. The "amateur," on the other hand, sees winning--in which he is indeed very interested--as a means to the end of fulfilling the public interest.³⁹ To the "amateur,"

Politics is the determination of public policy and public policy ought to be set deliberately rather than as the accidental by-product of a struggle for personal and party advantage.... The ideal amateur... sees each battle as a crisis, each victory as a triumph, each loss as a defeat for the cause. The professional tends, by contrast, to develop a certain detachment towards politics.⁴⁰

The difficulty in goal analysis stems from the assumption that we must make about the purposes of political parties. In order to overcome this difficulty, we suggest as a hypothesis that a) not all parties--or their leaders-- have as their goal the attainment of public office; b) that this may be seen from an examination of the realities of the party organizations themselves. Questions would include whether or not the parties are adequately organized to perform the electoral function as well as the motivations of their leadership and the obstacles which they may face in organizing.

The Structure of Political Parties

The second approach to the study of organizations is the "natural system" approach. It is defined by Gouldner as one in which the goal of the organization is only one of several important needs to which the organization is oriented. In this model

The organization strives to survive and maintain its equilibrium, and this striving may persist even after its explicitly held goals have been successfully attained. This strain towards survival may even on occasion lead to the neglect or distortion of the organization's goals.⁴¹

The value of this approach is that it enables the analyst to delve not only into the multi-faceted aspects of party tasks, but also on the structure of the organization itself. By means of such analysis, we can determine the nature and role of political parties. Whereas structural

analysis focuses on questions pertaining to the constitutions--both formal and informal--of organizations, functional analysis center on their operations.

Inherent in the system model is a functional orientation to organizational analysis. We are following Anderson's warning that "it is possible to adopt a functional approach without necessarily being committed to structural-functional theory."⁴² We shall deal with structures first.

An emphasis on the structures of organizations is worthwhile for what it tells us about the characteristics and nature of the organizations. Structural analysis focuses on the role of the organization, the salience of membership, the distribution of power, the recruitment of leadership, the extent of intra-party democracy and control, the degree of autonomy vis-à-vis other organizations and the link between parts of the structure.

It is with respect to structures that parties tend to differ the most. Duverger's typology of parties has been extensively used since his Political Parties appeared, to compare and contrast the American and the European types of parties.

According to Duverger, parties could be distinguished along several dimensions. We shall concentrate here on some which are particularly well-known and which have been shown to be greater utility in the analysis of political parties.

The first distinction is that between direct and indirect parties. The direct party is composed of indiv-

iduals who join the party as individuals; the indirect party is one composed of groups which have become affiliated with it as groups. Duverger recognizes that there are no longer parties which are wholly indirect. Even the British Labour party, the epitome of an indirect structure, is now a "mixed party in which individual members are found side by side with affiliated members."⁴³

It must be emphasized that there is a difference between indirect structure, on the one hand, and what Engelmann and Schwartz call "political action support."⁴⁴ The former implies formal affiliation by whole groups; the latter only electoral backing by whole groups, a phenomenon which is very wide-spread among political parties.

The second distinction regards the basic elements of the organization. Duverger acknowledged the existence of four types of component units of political parties: the branch, the caucus, the cell and the militia. Since the latter two categories apply to totalitarian parties, they will not be considered here.⁴⁵

The caucus consists of a small number of people, and does not appear interested in enlarging its membership; in fact, it is a closed group which does not readily admit new members. It may have offices and officers (president, vice-president, treasurer etc.) but these do not correspond to a very strict division of labour. Its activity is seasonal, and reaches its peak at election time. The caucus members may be co-opted

because of their influence on other people in the same trades, or because of their acquaintance with electoral techniques.

Duverger believed that the direct caucus style of political party is an archaic structure, the remnant of the typical bourgeois middle class 19th century political party. The American caucus, on the other hand, accepts people of very different opinions and diverse social positions.

The branch differs from the caucus in that it is an integral part of the whole party, and its separate existence is inconceivable; on the other hand, the word caucus evokes an autonomous reality, capable of living on its own. Unlike the caucus, the branch is extensive and tries to enrol members; it is wide open and appeals to the masses, not to a selected coterie of nobles. It is a permanent organization, meeting regularly between elections. Its role is to educate the masses, and particularly its members in the beliefs of the party. The hierarchy in the branch has definite offices, with well specified duties.

The branch is regarded by Duverger as less oligarchic than the caucus, at least in theory. At the same time, the branch is inspired by a high level of efficiency, aimed at obtaining the services of as many supporters as possible. Despite this theoretical democracy, the conduct of meetings and general affairs by the branch is little different in practice from that of the caucus.

Another basic property of parties--articulation--⁴⁶ focuses attention on the manner in which the units of the party are

bound together. There is weak and strong articulation corresponding basically to the caucus and the branch respectively. In the former, each unit is free to organize within the federation of the party, since little is laid down concerning the internal structure of the association. The Radical party of France which, Duverger indicates, exemplifies the weakly articulated structure, "resembles an incoherent agglomeration of associations linked by vague and variable bonds, resultant upon hidden intrigues and rivalries between cliques, struggles amongst factions and personalities."⁴⁷

In the strongly articulated party, on the other hand, regulations are clear regarding the tasks to be performed by each branch. Such tasks are prescribed by the central office. There exists detailed and progressive levels of organization--from branch through to regional conferences, congresses and national committees--as well as acknowledged channels of communications and control. Duverger claims that this form of articulation is generally more democratic than the weak articulation. In the latter, despite appearances of factionalism and democracy, each unit tends to be controlled by oligarchic groups.⁴⁸

Duverger also indicated that articulation has direction. He differentiated between horizontal and vertical links and between centralization and decentralization. Vertical links are those that join two bodies subordinate to one another (for example, the executive committee and the branches). Horizontal

links join two bodies on the same level (for example, two branches). Vertical links may be seen in all parties that have strong articulation. Duverger notes that there is no party with only horizontal links. The distinction is one between parties that have only vertical links and parties with mixed links, both vertical and horizontal.⁴⁹ He adds that whereas branches hardly ever communicate with one another, contacts between caucuses are far more numerous, as would befit essentially autonomous units.

Vertical and horizontal linkages define ways of coordinating the basic elements of which the party is composed. Centralization and decentralization, on the other hand, define the way in which power is distributed among the different levels of leadership. The two are not always complementary (i.e. vertical links with centralization and horizontal links with decentralization).

There are four types of decentralization: local, ideological, social and federal. In the first type, the local leaders of the party come from the grass-roots, enjoy wide powers and make most of the fundamental decisions; the central office has little or no influence over them. Typical of this category are American parties.

Ideological decentralization entails the granting of a certain degree of autonomy to different wings and tendencies within the party. Socialist and Conservative parties fall under this type.

A party is said to be socially decentralized when it grants power to specific economic units and interests (classes) within the party. The party becomes a semi-corporate structure, with different socio-economic factions attempting to obtain a greater share of the spoils. Christian Democratic parties are usually of this type.

Finally, federalism tends to decentralize political parties. This is, however, not always the case. Duverger says that where federalism is the result of regional divisions without accompanying severe cleavages, decentralization of the parties is not justified and may not occur. On the other hand, in a "nation where distinct groups have not been able to find expression for their individuality in the federal structure of the state, it is important to give it expression within the parties."⁵⁰ Although Duverger does not mention any parties, the Liberal party of Quebec would be considered an extreme case of decentralization with respect to the Liberal party of Canada. We shall return to this most important category below.

A third general way of identifying political parties, writes Duverger, is according to the differences which are observable in membership policies. The two major categories are the cadre and the mass party. The cadre corresponds to the caucus, the decentralized and the horizontally linked parties; the mass party is also a branch party, and is more centralized, more tightly knit and vertically linked.

Enrolling new members is the most important consideration guiding the mass party: "Without members, the party would be

like a teacher without pupils."⁵¹ It places great emphasis on educating its members as thoroughly as possible in the principles that govern the party. The mass party needs members also for financial reasons: given its claim that it is a democratic party, it must attempt to spread the financial burden over the largest possible number of members.

The cadre party, on the other hand, is said to appeal to a "few big private donors, industrialists, bankers, or important merchants,"⁵² to meet campaign expenses. This type of party has few members. Even when it does admit them openly, as many now do, other criteria show their cadre tendencies: either there is an absence of any system to register members, or the party lacks a mechanism to make regular collections of subscriptions. Moreover, these parties do not stress figures, and when they do, they are either highly inflated or they are kept secret. In the cadre party, members are not important, except as providing evidence of broad support.

The cadre and mass parties are, then, divided by an ideological gap. Few right-wing parties are mass parties, says Duverger. If they are, they do not support the idea wholeheartedly, and are merely emulating their more socialist counterparts. Similarly, it is unlikely that a left-wing party will have a cadre structure.

Despite the shortcomings of his book,⁵³ Duverger has made a major contribution by stimulating an interest in the systematic analysis of party organization within a comparative conceptual framework. No other political scientist has approached

the study of political parties from such a general angle, - or made so many observations about the different forms of party structure.

Another question that must be answered in our analysis is: who controls the party as an organization? Originating with Michels,⁵⁴ the general view to which Duverger himself conforms, has been that political parties, like most organizations, are necessarily oligarchical and hierarchial. As Michels argues, the functional division of labour and the need for leadership leads to an increasing gap between the leader and the mass, to the expansion of the power of the leaders through the organization and to apathy on the part of the mass. All these result in an entrenched oligarchical elite.

The notion of oligarchy has been most persuasively attacked by Eldersveld. First, he believes that political parties are adaptive, clientele-oriented organizations. Parties have "open recruitment practices, dictated by their desire to win elections." This permissive recruiting leads to sensitivity on the part of the leaders to the needs of the sub-groups that compose the party. The organization, then, becomes highly flexible. The higher the degree of adaptation (i.e. non-restriction of membership), the more difficult is internal managerial control. This may help multiply the factions in the party, lessen operational efficiency and make goal-orientation an ideological consensus non-congruent.⁵⁵

The parties' second structural property, says Eldersveld, is that they represent coalitional balances in the society.

They see a need to include all types of social, economic and ideological sub-groups in society. Unavoidably, this results in conflict between them, which must be handled with tolerance and flexibility.

Even though Eldersveld agrees that rule by a few cannot be prevented in organizations, he believes, third, that parties do not display a tendency towards total control by a self-sustaining elite. Power is diffused within the party structures according to "strata commands." The sub-coalitional units within the party hierarchy or discreet units outside the hierarchy retain a large measure of autonomy. These strata remain the centres of conflict adjustment within the organization and provide an effective counterbalance to the powers of the higher ranks of the hierarchy. In fact, units of the higher echelons often defer to those at the local level, since the latter represent the real basis of the parties' strength.

Fourth, this "stratarchy" prevents the emergence of a managerial class within the organization. Parties are characterized by plurality of career groups, the products of the coalitional balances in society. This refers not only to professional or class differentiation, but also to ideological career groups. Most important, those in power can be replaced by individuals with totally unsympathetic goal or class perspectives.

By giving us these properties of political parties, Eldersveld has shown that political parties cannot be considered in the same light as most bureaucratized organizations:

"In particular, the bureaucratic prerequisites of impermeability, depersonalized human relationships, the strict devotion to regulations and rule enforcement, precise allocation of obligations, duties and roles, discipline and sanctions, even low circulation of personnel, are found wanting in most party structures."⁵⁶

The Functions of Political Parties

Generalizations regarding the functions performed by political parties abound. Merriam's typology of party functions has been widely accepted.⁵⁷ He included as party tasks: selecting personnel for office; conducting or criticizing government; formulating public policy; providing political education for the masses; being intermediaries between individuals and government. To these may be added others such as conducting and winning elections; injecting coherence into government; simplifying electoral choice; democratizing elections; integrating the population; articulating and aggregating interests.⁵⁸

Sorauf distinguished between the manifest and latent functions of political parties. As he put it: "The party performs certain tasks (the manifest ones) that ensure its own successful functioning, at the same time performing others (the latent ones) that contribute to the functioning of the entire political system."⁵⁹ Manifest functions are those overtly and consciously performed, whereas latent functions are the more indirect contributions made to the operations of the political

system.

The question is seldom asked: do all parties perform all these functions to the same degree? Are all functions performed by all parties equally in all systems? We are in agreement with Barnes who pointed out that it is no longer sufficient to distinguish between what totalitarian and democratic parties do. It is now necessary to differentiate further among democratic parties.⁶⁰

Attempts to stress the extent to which specific parties perform certain functions do exist, however. One may clearly separate the so-called European School from its American counterpart. The former include Duverger, Michels and Neumann among others; the latter include Epstein, Wilson, Downs and Schlesinger.⁶¹ Throughout their respective works emerges the view that parties are different in the European continent from the U. S. A. Thus, the typical American cadre party is not seen as the major goal-definer, but as one of many linkage mechanisms between government and people, as aggregating, although not articulating interests, as being seldom involved in government, as building consensus and supporting the status quo. Its major function is that of winning elections. As Epstein says, the party "may have other purposes as well and still be regarded as a party, provided that the electoral purpose is prominent if not dominant."⁶² By contrast, the continental European mass party is seen as the main goal definer in the system. Elections are won only to implement these goals. The party remains the primary institution linking the government and the people;

the party articulates and represents interests. It becomes a reformist institution, interested not so much in building consensus as in institutionalizing conflict. Neumann says that the party's "primary task...is to organize the chaotic public will.... They are brokers of ideas, constantly clarifying, systematizing and expounding the party's doctrines."⁶³ Winning and holding power are subordinate to the programmatic function.

The two types of political parties that we have characterized above are ideal. The task rests on the observer to apply this typology of structures and functions systematically to specific case studies in the hope of isolating the similarities and differences among the organizations. The task is particularly interesting in the Canadian context, where relatively little effort has been devoted to an examination of the organization of different parties.

Canadian Party Organization

There is no wealth of information on the organization of Canadian political parties. What follows is basically a summary of some of the major findings on topics of relevance to our analysis. First, Engelmann and Schwartz point out that "Canada's major parties fit the model of the cadre party."⁶⁴ They have individual members, but little emphasis is placed on them. Their structures are professionalized and bureaucratized. Only two elements--some groups of prairie farmers and some immigrants--have diverged from the typical Canadian cadre tendencies. The former category was represented by the U. F. A.

and the Social Credit of Alberta. In both, membership policies operated along the basis of a mass party, although power was highly centralized. The second group was responsible for forming the C. C. F. and the N. D. P. Both of them claimed to be mass parties, although in practice some factors have made them take over some traits more characteristic of a cadre party.⁶⁵

Second, all Canadian parties including the C. C. F. and the N. D. P. remain what Duverger called direct parties. None has had a totally affiliated interest group or groups. Labour has generally granted "political action support" to the C. C. F. and the N. D. P. However, no Canadian political party has received or accepted affiliation by any single interest group in terms of membership.⁶⁶

In some respects, Canadian parties resemble weakly articulated organizations.⁶⁷ There is little or no horizontal linkage between the constituencies. Relations between headquarters and constituency organizations are generally intermittent. In effect the constituencies themselves have irregular structures as befit a typical cadre/caucus party, concentrating on nominations and campaigns. Constituencies are completely dormant in places where the parties lack strength. Unlike typical caucus/cadre parties, however, the Canadian traditional parties have little in the way of factionalism.⁶⁸ Other than a few exceptional cases, unity around a leader is the norm. The durability of the leaders "is the most obvious indication of their dominant position."⁶⁹ Engelmann and Schwartz hold the parliamentary system responsible for this durability.

Canadian party structures are undoubtedly affected the most by the country's federal structure. A relatively large amount of research has been conducted on this topic. The research has been well summarized by Donald Smiley.⁷⁰ He claims that there are basically two models of federal party systems, the integrated and the confederal. The integrated party system is characterized by several features: first, electoral dependence, whereby national and provincial parties draw largely on common voter allegiance; second, the same party organization is used to select and elect candidates on national and provincial levels; third, leaders characteristically move between national and provincial office; fourth, donors contribute to the party as such; there is no distinction in party finance between the two levels; fifth, federal and provincial parties share a common ideology; finally, the major political parties contest elections at both levels.⁷¹

The confederal party system is the polar opposite of this model. Because Smiley cuts a wide swath, and because we are interested particularly in the relations between federal and provincial wings of the parties, we shall concentrate on the second dimension for the purpose of this study.

A study by H. Jacek and others⁷² in three Hamilton constituencies concluded that the Liberals are the least integrated of all the parties. Autonomy between their federal and provincial organizations seemed to be the rule to a larger extent than in the N. D. P. or the Conservatives. In effect, the trend is away from integration and towards a more confederal form of

relationship in all parties. Smiley believes that the Liberal and Conservative parties are no longer federations of provincial parties.⁷³

The best study conducted so far regarding the relations between federal and provincial organizations is E. R. Black's article on the Conservative party in British Columbia.⁷⁴ Because of their relevance to our analysis, his major findings may be listed:

1. Canada's major parties do not fit the model of unified country-wide parties with hierarchically inferior provincial subdivisions: major party supporters do not exhibit the necessary degree of commitment.
2. Both the structure and the internal operation of a major party resemble that of the Canadian system of government. The sovereignty of provincial party units is as real and extensive as that of the provinces with respect to Ottawa.
3. Just as the virtual independence of a provincial government's policy-making depends to a considerable extent on its provincial resources, so the effective control of provincial organization by the local officers depends upon the local unit's political resources in comparison with those of the central party: such resources are considered to be size and commitment of membership, financial capabilities, quality and appeal of leadership, and, of course, electoral success.
4. Party organizers must deal with three types of active members: those whose political interests are primarily expression in central-government goals, and those whose interests are multifaceted or else are concentrated on some aspect of political life comprehending both spheres of government such as the attainment of ideological objectives or general governmental power for the party.
5. A party's policy objectives and organizational requirements in the federal and provincial arenas are often quite different, but both sets of leaders must rely in large measure on the same relatively small group of people and on the same resources for their field work.
6. The interests and energies of the party machinery within one province cannot be converted readily

and with equal efficiency to both federal and provincial objectives. Attempts to treat the party as if it were readily convertible impose almost intolerable stresses on the organization, stresses which may be expected to become manifest in difficulties between the party leaders.

7. The public or private character of the expression and resolution of internal party differences is a reflection of the leadership skills and institutional machinery with which the groups are endowed, and of the party's electoral morale.
8. Even where a provincial party organization is controlled by relatively ineffectual persons, if they are determined in their leadership, representatives of the central party can undertake "corrective" action only at considerable risk.
9. The provincial party is a highly-charged organism, with many internal stresses and tensions, which must be capable of frequent integration with as many as nine others of similar nature to produce a country-wide mechanism focussing its power on system-wide problems.
10. The pattern of authoritative relationships between central and provincial party groups will depend upon whether public office is held by one, neither, or both of the two party groups. These relationships will also be affected by the nature of any "rehabilitative" process through which an out-of-office party faction may be going and by the degree of ideological and policy solidarity between the central and the provincial units.⁷⁵

According to Van Loon and Whittington, Canadian parties do not fit the model of a hierarchical structure. The lines of communication from top to bottom within a political party are generally very weak. It approximates more clearly the stratarchy model posited by Eldersveld. There is said to be little co-ordination between the federal and provincial organizations and between these and the constituency organizations.⁷⁶

The same authors have provided us with a list of functions performed by Canadian parties as a whole. They readily admit that "if political parties fail to perform some functions that we think they should perform, other institutions such as

the bureaucracy or interest groups are capable of taking it over."⁷⁷ However, no exceptions are given by them regarding the adequate performance of these functions by specific Canadian parties.

Political parties in Canada then, are said to provide managers and decision-makers for the political system, and help to organize it, while keeping with the requirements of a parliamentary form of government. Second, political parties train political decision-makers. Third, they act as brokers, mediating between competing interests in society. Fourth, parties aggregate and articulate interests. Van Loon and Whittington admit that some provincial parties do not perform the former function, if they are small and their populations are not diversified.

Interestingly, they do not mention policy-making as a function of political parties. They consider that this task is performed by politicians, the bureaucracy and, to some extent, by parliament.

Political Parties as Oppositions

Thus far, we have concentrated our analysis on parties as organizations, as structures performing certain functions. The final problem that must be dealt with is: how do political parties operate when they are in opposition in general, and in opposition to a dominant party in particular? What strategies do they utilize?

The most sophisticated framework devised in order to study opposition parties, is undoubtedly R. Dahl's. He developed a model in his Political Oppositions in Western Democracies.⁷⁸ He contended that oppositions could be characterized by the strategies which they used while attempting to become the government. These strategies range from the strictly competitive to the coalescent. In the first strategy, the purely competitive, the opposition would concentrate on seeking to gain enough votes to win a majority of seats in parliament and form a government. A second strategy consisted of the opposition concentrating heavily on entering into a governing coalition, gaining as much power as it could from intra-coalitional bargaining. A third strategy would have the opposition parties seeking to affect decisions outside the governmental structure. As Dahl put it: "Failure to get into the cabinet need not prevent it from gaining some of its goals by hard bargaining in quasi-official encounters."⁷⁹ Quasi-official agencies included pressure group activity intra-party bargaining, legislative maneuvering etc. The fifth and final strategy, the purely coalescent, would have all parties combine forces when the political system was threatened.

Opposition strategies would differ depending on the following features. First, whether the opposition was concentrated or not. In political systems where it was combined in a single organization, competition would be sharper than in those where many parties existed. Second, the extent of normal competitiveness also had an impact on the strategy chosen.

Whereas some political systems had had a long tradition of co-operation, others had not. In these systems, the opposition would not be contented with anything short of total power.

Third, a strategy would be affected by the number of sites where policy was made. Thus, systems where the legislature was the only area of competition would tend to become more rabidly competitive than those where authority was spread amongst several different sites. Finally, the strategy used would depend considerably on the opposition's avowed goal. Competition would become fiercer and the chances of co-operation minimized if the parties' intention was to change the socio-economic and the political structure of the system.

Dahl did not analyze opposition parties in dominant systems. Indeed, the literature is silent with respect to the strategies which opposition parties developed--or failed to develop--during the reign of a dominant party. Equally important is the impact that the parliamentary, electoral and federal system have on the organization of opposition parties in the context of the dominant party system.

We have already seen that the stronger wing tends to gain predominance in federal-provincial party relations. Thus, a provincial wing which is perennially out of power is more likely to be permanently bound to the federal wing. Similarly, the opportunities open to the dominant party to reshape the electoral map and to change the electoral system, will tend to undercut the opposition parties' attempt to prove effective. In both these cases, their structures may become increasingly

weaker as the parties continue to show their powerlessness.

The parliamentary system also affects political parties. It makes essential the formation of two organizations, one intra-governmental and one extra-governmental. The first is ready to take over control of the government and it includes legislative caucuses and the cabinet or shadow cabinet. The second is concerned with vote mobilization and leadership selection. It is composed of constituency organizations, annual conventions and executives.

The parliamentary system tends to make the intra-governmental part dominant. However, the extra-parliamentary structure may become stronger when the party has had little experience in government. Engelmann and Schwartz, none the less, argued that "any experience in government, even in the position of the opposition, aids the power position of the intra-governmental party structure."⁸⁰

Thus, predominance within the party system affects the organization of the opposition parties. Duverger was the first writer to examine, albeit perfunctorily, this effect. He claimed that:

If domination is prolonged, the opposition is reduced to impotence; such a situation occurs chiefly in the two-party system, which it modifies considerably. It sometimes happens that the opposition, being kept long out of office, assumes a more violent and extravagant attitude.⁸¹

Duverger also noted the tendency for countries under this type of system to lose interest gradually in political campaigns and elections because of the ineffectiveness of the opposition.

Finally M. Pinard, while agreeing implicitly with Duverger, went one step further. After studying provincial cases where a predominant party had been thrown out of office, he concluded that the existing opposition was so ineffective that new parties were more likely to be electorally successful. In fact, the one-party dominant system was said to be an "antecedent necessary condition for the rise of such movements."⁸² At the same time he admitted that his model was not "a deterministic one.... There remains the possibility that a weak traditional party could be rejuvenated against all odds to the contrary."⁸³

Conclusion

We may now identify some of the hypotheses that will guide our research in the next six chapters. First, it is our thesis that the manner in which the opposition parties operated may account in some part for the continued electoral success of Social Credit. We intend to show this by enquiring into the goals pursued by these political parties. It has been stated that, whatever their avowed goals, we must delve deeper into the motivations of the individuals who led the organizations.

Our hypotheses are, firstly, that in some cases, politicians may seek offices other than public-governmental; and secondly, that when their primary goal is the attainment of governmental power, they may stumble against a variety of obstacles which impede the realization of this goal. These obstacles may be: (a) the existence of an extra-governmental structure which

controls the intra-governmental one; b) the lack of autonomy of the organization and its dependence on another, whether political or otherwise; c) the inadequacy of its own structure to achieve this goal.

Rather than zeroing in on the avowed goals of a political party--all parties claim to seek power--we shall deal with the realities of the organizations, as seen through the operations of their structures.

We seek to characterize political parties and to investigate the extent to which the nature of the structure is responsible for inadequate performance. The questions here may be put thus: are cadre parties always interested in power? How do membership policies affect this drive for power? How does intra-party democracy affect the operations of political parties? Are these and other salient features, as Duverger implied, present always in clusters (e.g. mass party with strong vertical articulation branches and strong centralization)?

One of our major contentions is that opposition parties are affected by a variety of sub-systems: federalism, parliamentary government and the electoral system. We hypothesize that a dominant party, if sufficiently entrenched, aggravates--although not necessarily brings about--lack of autonomy and power on the part of the intra-governmental organization of the opposition parties. By seemingly minimizing the possibility of attaining power, the goals of opposition leaders become altered; public office may become subordinate. At the same time, by losing interest in political conduct, the opposition

may allow the dominant party to tighten its grip even further. This state of affairs reflects upon the performance of functions by political parties. The parties may fail to integrate, articulate or aggregate because office and/or political principle may become secondary. For the same reasons, even candidate selection and recruitment may be affected by lack of interest and by apathy.

It has been said that "domination bears within itself the seeds of its own destruction."⁸⁴ Although opposition parties tend to become steeped in a stupor which belies their avowed purpose while operating under this party system, the opportunity for revival exists. The conditions under which such revival may occur, will vary. When the new leaders focus on power, the party undergoes a modification in its structure. This, in turn, affects its functional role, the party's relation to other organizations and finally its view of the dominant party.

Whether the party will be successful in achieving its new goal is open to question and depends upon many factors. What remains true, is that the change undergone in the leaders' perception of their goals, will have altered also their perception of dominance, which will then be automatically challenged.

NOTES

1. V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics in State and Nation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 320.
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PART II

THE EARLY YEARS: THE COALESCENT OPPOSITION

CHAPTER II

THE UNITY MOVEMENT I: THE SEARCH FOR CO-OPERATION

1935-1940

Continuing the trend begun by the United Farmers of Alberta in the 1921 election--in which the traditional parties were routed and displaced as significant elements of the Alberta political scene--the Social Credit victory in 1935 was decisive. Along with the attainment of total power by a newcomer, the defeat suffered by the opposition parties was no less total. The U. F. A. failed to win a single seat in the legislature and the "traditional" parties--Liberals and Conservatives--saw their ranks decimated to five and two members respectively.

During the years immediately following the Social Credit's access to power in Alberta, a series of efforts aimed at political re-alignment took place in the province. These efforts had serious repercussions on the status of all opposition parties during the next period. More indirectly, they affected subsequent patterns of opposition reaching to the eventual defeat of Social Credit in 1971. The fateful years of 1935-45 witnessed the emergence of three allied non-partisan groups, the People's League, the Unity Council and the Independent Movement, all formed in order to achieve the

goal of unity. That period was also characterized by three other events: the withdrawal from provincial politics of the Conservatives and the U. F. A. as well as the emergence of an ideologically intransigent C. C. F. These years also served to focus on the vacillating position held by the Liberal party of Alberta, and on its failure to grasp the prevailing political mood in the province. The Liberals were split: on the one hand, many influential members of the party continued to believe that the Liberals could manage to defeat Social Credit on their own; on the other, an ever increasing number of party leaders were now of the opinion that only a united opposition could destroy Social Credit.

The first decade of Social Credit rule shed some light on the gradual de-radicalization undergone by the Movement after the abortive attempt by Aberhart to implement his election promises. This aspect has been competently and exhaustively considered elsewhere and will not be pursued here.¹ Rather, our aim in this and the next chapter is to inquire into the effects that this decade had on political re-alignment in Alberta, as well as the effects that this re-alignment had on the political future of the opposition parties.

This early phase of Social Credit reign must of necessity focus on the Unity Movement² because it was around this Movement that mergers occurred, and that numerous disputes regarding the role, size, goal, nature and overall strategy of the opposition took place. Also, in varying degrees, all opposition parties of the era--including at times the C. C. F.--

were attracted by the notion of uniting in a common front in order to depose Social Credit. However, only the Conservatives whole-heartedly submerged their identity totally into the larger group.

The Unity Movement very nearly met with success in the 1940 election. Some of its leaders felt--perhaps justifiably--that had the Liberals given their whole-hearted support, Social Credit would have been thrown out of office. Because they had not, however, and because Social Credit consequently lost its radical impetus, the Movement disintegrated gradually but irretrievably, leaving a political vacuum in the province which was not to be wholly filled until the Conservatives staged their successful reorganization campaign in the mid-1960s. It may indeed be argued that the Movement had a negative effect on the opposition parties, since its disappearance left them exhausted and disoriented as to their objectives.

The Unity Movement was, significantly, one of protest, very much in the tradition of U. F. A. and Social Credit. Naturally, its adherents were of a different type from those supporting the other parties. In a way, however, they had a common belief: the Alberta electorate, they all held, had repudiated the old established parties in 1935. What distinguished the Independents, however, was their firm belief that the trend toward radicalism in Alberta was not due to any intrinsic need by Albertans to turn toward extreme solutions in times of need. They blamed this trend on the inability of the established parties to fill the political vacuum

through their foolish determination to remain strictly competitive in times of economic distress. The parties should forget their slight differences in philosophy and fuse into an all-encompassing, non-partisan Movement. In this way the parties would successfully restore the business-type of government, to which, the Independents believed, most Albertans actually aspired.

The Early Opposition: The People's League

Most political parties that contested the 1935 election believed in their ability to seize power. The U. F. A. was in disarray, unable to deal with the problems of the depression and torn by scandals and dissension. Despite their protestations that depression was a world-wide problem, and that only Canada as a whole had sufficient power to remedy the situation, the party had deemed it appropriate to put forth a 16-clause platform to alleviate the problems of Alberta. Premier Reid was unable, however, to contain the tide within a significant section of his own party which was in favour of a more radical solution to the Alberta situation. At any rate, his lack of vision was apparent in the party's Manifesto which contained only piece-meal proposals for alleviating the effects of the depression, but no long-term planning or solutions.³

The Liberals were being branded, despite their problems, as the most likely successors to the tired U. F. A. A series of efforts aimed at consulting every conceivable economic

group in Alberta, had been launched by them. As a result a platform had been devised consolidating the proposals made by all these groups, proposals which ranged from farming to business.⁴ In a sense, their eventual failure was inherent in this approach: rather than taking the lead, they were content with blindly accepting all groups' reactions to the crisis and their recommendations. This tactic had as its obvious objective to demonstrate the party's democratic nature. However, it resulted in a platform that was sufficiently vague and inconsistent to be of little use.⁵

Before proceeding with the other parties, one must make an important note of a convention that had taken place in Edmonton in 1932. Spurred by the Edmonton wing, the Liberals had then decided to separate the two wings of the party-- federal and provincial--in order to fight the provincial elections from a more independent line.⁶ This action seems to have been made more possible by the temporary absence of the federal Liberals from power in Ottawa. It could not be reasonably expected, however, that many years of federal control would be overthrown by this theoretical separation, particularly when large sections of the party retained an extremely close connection with the federal MPs.⁷ In any event, the efforts directed at achieving some autonomy were short-lived. The 1937 convention, as we shall see, determined once more to reverse the decision, re-establishing a formal union with the federal branch.⁸

The Conservatives were by far the weaker party.

34.

Notwithstanding the prestige enjoyed by its leader, D. M. Duggan, the party had long ceased to consider itself as an alternative to be reckoned with. Curiously enough, its platform spoke of co-operation with the other non-Social Crediters, rather than of victory. Unlike the Liberals, who enjoyed support from a few rural constituencies, the Conservatives' support was restricted to the big cities. Because of the prevailing multi-member constituencies they had been able to gain one or two seats in Edmonton and Calgary with some consistency, since Alberta's entry into Confederation.

The genesis of the Unity Movement in Alberta, then, cannot be found in any of the two major Alberta parties. Only the Conservatives, a minor force, were prepared to form a loose coalition government. It is interesting also that because of their negligible importance and their self-perceived weakness, they, alone of all parties, seemed to see clearly the inroads that Social Credit was making. It was, however, the Economic Safety League, a formation of businessmen, which most vehemently presaged the alleged danger of Douglasism gaining a foothold in Alberta. This group subsequently put up the most rabid fight to the Social Credit onslaught.⁹

Considering that the election took place on August 22, the League's entry into the political arena in July was if anything ominous. By focusing directly on Social Credit and not the U. F. A. as the major threat, they had inadvertently helped shift the electorate's attention to the

newcomer and away from the alternatives. The Boards of Trade of the cities made patently clear that they had formed ~~this~~ organization as a "concrete expression of the united opposition to Aberhart's Social Credit proposals."¹⁰ The Drumheller Board of Trade was followed by those of Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Calgary and Edmonton in offering their support to the League.

The League had obvious leadership connections with old parties. Both its President, Dr. W. Egbert, and its secretary, J. Gouge, were Liberals, and other executive members were Conservatives. Although the League stayed out of direct political action, its alleged machinations provided the evidence that discontented, destitute and desperate farmers and shopkeepers needed for what they suspected was the collusion of business with the established parties. The League, then, appears to have turned an electorate desperate for sincere radical solutions to their problems to the only Movement which offered these, and also the only one which was considered credible and able to implement them: the Social Credit.

The business communities of Calgary and Edmonton were undoubtedly the hardest hit by the proposals made by Aberhart during his first year in office. Three acts were particularly harmful to them: firstly, the decision to refuse to pay the debt owed by provincial government to the bondholders in April 1936; secondly, the issuing of prosperity certificates in the same month; and finally, the passage of the Debt Adjustment Act, in August 1936, which arbitrarily eliminated all interest

owed to creditors by debtors throughout the province, and which was retroactive to July 1932.

Banks, mortgage companies, ~~insurance~~ agencies, bondholders and other financial people and institutions were greatly affected by these and other similar measures of Social Credit. J. J. Bowlen--who had succeeded Howson as interim leader of the Liberal party--¹¹ was moved to write to Mackenzie King, emphasizing the danger of the situation and warning that "the time has come when the Federal government should step into the picture...by disallowing the legislation."¹²

As a reaction to these Social Credit moves, committees were struck by the financial groups under the leadership of the Boards of Trade with the aim of forming a front designed to prevent Social Credit from carrying out its program. Although it is apparent that direct political action in the provincial field had been contemplated by these groups as early as April 1936, their immediate reaction was to establish channels of communication with the traditional parties in order to create a strong alliance.

The Calgary and Edmonton Boards approached Duggan and Bowlen informally after the ~~Bank~~ Adjustment Act had been passed. Although emphasizing his opposition to Aberhart, Bowlen remained non-committal; not only was the idea of political co-operation between the parties alien to him, but he firmly believed that the federal government was in a better

position to deal with the situation. On the other hand, Duggan, soon became a strong supporter of the idea of co-operation. This position was in consonance with both his unfaltering opposition to Aberhart and his earlier expressions of interest in co-operation.

The Calgary Board of Trade, a staunch backer of the Conservative party, then, began contemplating merging its strength fully with that party via a formal political and economic alliance. It is evident that they quickly realized the inherent political weakness of the Conservatives. After consultations with Duggan, the decision was reached to form an entirely new organization, completely separate from the Conservatives. It was the Board's hope that an independent group would be in a better position to obtain positive response from the Liberals and perhaps even from the U. F. A. They recognized that support from these bodies was essential if the movement for co-operation was to attain a sound and broad political basis and a measure of success.

A Conservative party executive meeting, hastily convened on October 1936, gave its full support to Duggan and called for "co-operation with any bona fide movement, political partisanship to be forgotten in the interests of the people and the province."¹³ That no vote of dissent was recorded to this motion is a measure of the executive's high confidence in Duggan, as well as the sorry state in which

the party found itself in the provincial arena.

It now appears as certain that the Liberals were not formally asked to participate in the formation of the People's League, which rapidly followed the Conservative decision.¹⁴

The League did not approach the leaders of the Liberals and the U. F. A. until the beginning of November.¹⁵ In any case, Bowlen himself had not expressed at this stage any interest in a body which he suspiciously viewed as a mere extension of the Conservative party. When the offer of co-operation finally arrived, Duggan, who had become the political spokesman for the group, set uncompromising terms for its acceptance:

"There must be no sidestepping of the question [he said]; any action taken must be without reservation."¹⁶ He also indicated that the League expected all parties to merge into a united provincial party which would, if necessary, even nominate its own candidates.

Although the League was originally Calgary-based, steps were taken soon after its inception to establish branches elsewhere in Alberta. By November 4, executives had been appointed in Edmonton and Red Deer, with three organizers in charge of the Northern, Southern and Middle regions.¹⁷ At a Red Deer meeting in November, the aims of the League were clarified: firstly, the League would unite for common action and effort

"persons who believe in free speech and free press, the maintenance of democratic institutions and the access of all to the courts of justice;" secondly, it would advance mutually acceptable methods of solving Alberta's economic and social problems; and thirdly, it would endeavour to help establish branches throughout Alberta.¹⁸

The League grew in great strides during its first few months of existence. By November, it claimed 13,000 members and 50,000 by December 1936.¹⁹ Although the figures are likely to be exaggerated, it is clear that the League had quickly become a force to be reckoned with. The extent of popular support was said to show that such a movement--establishing a united front against Social Credit--was regarded by the public as a credible and legitimate alternative to the existing parties.

Despite this popularity, the response of the other parties to the overtures made by the League was discouraging. The U. F. A., utterly repudiated in the 1935 election, was now seriously considering withdrawing from politics. In January 1937, a rather subdued convention had been told by President Robert Gardiner that support had dropped sharply. This was evident in the steep decline in membership from a high peak of 37,000 in 1921 to a low of just over 5,000 in 1937. As C. Johnston, a former Speaker of the Legislature, put it:

What should have been a powerful agrarian force has degenerated through successive stages into a society

whose major activity has been proselytizing for one of the minor political parties in Canada.²⁰

Although leaving the political arena was now being contemplated, no agreement was reached regarding the path that the party would take in such eventuality. There appeared to be emerging several factions within the party. One faction, led by former Premier R. Reid and by A. Speakman favoured joining the unity forces. They were unable, however, to sway many members to their position. Another faction, headed by R. Gardiner, preferred the option of seeking close ties with the C. C. F., along the lines worked out at the federal level since 1933. Only a month after the convention, Gardiner proposed to the executive council that "the executive of the U. F. A. be authorized to arrange through the C. C. F. council for the drawing up of a C. C. F. provincial platform to be submitted for their consideration and to be brought before the next convention."²¹

The third faction, and the one that finally determined the party's immediate future role, felt that a cautious attitude should be adopted. Any far-reaching decision, such as withdrawal from politics, needed to be postponed until all members had had an opportunity to reflect on the future. By adhering to the third option, the convention merely put off a decision which, most members agreed, was inevitable. Within the next two years, defections continued at an increasing rate, both within the party hierarchy and within the rank-and-file of the party. Some members joined the People's League, whereas

others went to the C. C. F. and still others to the Liberals.

The Liberal party's dilemma was even more acute. The People's League tended to regard support from it as of greater importance than that from the U. F. A. which was widely viewed as a spent force. Consequently, the League decided early after its foundation to place negotiations with the Liberals as its priority. The League was to find, however, a party that was still fairly enthusiastic and organizationally active. The Liberals had undoubtedly lost a great deal of support in the 1935 election. Their representation had fallen from twelve to six members. Nevertheless, there existed a significant section within the party that strongly believed that the Liberals remained the only viable alternative to Social Credit.

In terms of the League's subsequent efforts in the direction of unity, the annual meeting of the Calgary East Liberal Association ominously defeated a motion which read: "We are prepared to join with all such political associations or parties with similar views even to the extent of forming a non-party government."²²

The reasons for the Liberals' cool response to the League's overtures were varied. Firstly, they held the belief that the League was Conservative-inspired and urban-based; as such they maintained that co-operation with a movement of such narrow scope would seal Social Credit's chances of re-election. Secondly, as we have mentioned, the party had lost its leader and was now in the midst of arranging for a leader-

ship convention to be held in the summer of 1937. Thirdly, and perhaps more important, the Liberals were convinced that any co-operative enterprise would see the recognized parties lose their identity with the Liberals standing to lose more than any other party given their prestige both provincially and federally. Fourthly, there were also serious questions regarding more immediate matters; for example, how would "a brand new faction appeal to the electorate, how would candidates be selected without friction between the 'old elements'?"²³

All things considered, the external situation did not appear very promising for the League. However, if the Movement's attempts to seek co-operation did not come to fruition, it clearly made up for this deficiency by the impetus aimed at organizing its own structure. On January 5, 1937, an executive council was established in Calgary, consisting of eight members including three businessmen, two ranchers, one farmer, one physician and one coal operator. The executive went to pains to stress that it was made up "of men who in by-gone years followed various political faiths" and were now determined to "establish sound, sane business government in Alberta."²⁴

A few days later, at a convention in Calgary, a provincial executive was elected by representatives of several constituencies of the provinces.²⁵ It excluded some rural communities from which support had not been forthcoming. The new executive was composed of 210 members. The council, conscious of its Conservative image, insisted that the

membership was quite representative of all professions and of most constituencies. There were barristers, farmers, insurance agents, businessmen and professional men, with three members representing each of the federal constituencies, and the rest co-opted by the executive council itself. In terms of party breakdowns, there were said to be seventeen Liberals, fifteen Conservatives, five U. F. A. and three without political affiliation. It was stressed that the council was only provisional, as it awaited a positive response from the Liberals to become a permanent body.

The convention discussed, but postponed for a future meeting, the most crucial of all matters: whether the League should continue as a wide-reaching advisory body, or whether it should enter fully the political arena. In view of this postponement, the body did not select a leader, permanent officers, or a political platform. Clearly, the League was patiently awaiting the Liberals' decision before determining its future course of action.²⁶ Because of the coolness of Liberal reception, no decisions of any consequence were made at subsequent meetings either. The League limited itself to reiterate that it stood "ready for action."²⁷

Pressure was mounting now on the League to make its position clear. This pressure came from some of the executive members as well as from the rank-and-file. Therefore, at its March 5 executive meeting the League emerged with the first complete statement regarding its aims and its conditions for political co-operation:

The People's League of Alberta believes that political party cleavage prevents united action by persons holding as individuals the same views on the more important provincial issues and is a destructive force, detrimental to the best interests of the province. It is, therefore, abundantly clear that some unifying force is required to bring about a sane, sound and progressive government. With a view of attaining this objective, the People's League of Alberta as a non-partisan organization, offers itself as such unifying force.²⁸

Having expressed both its goal and its basic position, the desire to continue their talks with the U. F. A. and the Liberals, the League decided to lie low at least until the Liberals had had their convention, scheduled for June.

Rallies were arranged at various points of Alberta in order to advance their ideas and enhance its support, but except for a rally that took place in April, and in which an estimated audience of one thousand was harangued to action, most other gatherings appeared to be small.²⁹

As if the obstacles provided by the U. F. A. and the Liberals were not sufficiently damaging to the League, Social Credit was now on the offensive, deriding the League's efforts and its alleged links with business, finance and mortgage companies. So strong and frequent were these attacks that the League's secretary, A. L. Drew, was moved to appear in a radio program to insist that, quite contrary to claims, the League was in financial difficulty, facing the threat of annihilation.³⁰ Rumours were, however, not quelled by this effort. The League never fully succeeded in shedding the image of an enterprise

backed by big business, an image which was all too real.

The Liberals

It was becoming evident by mid-summer 1937 that the Liberals held the trump card in any talk of co-operation with the League. The latter was still unsure about its aims. It had not decided whether to get involved directly in politics or whether to remain merely as a unifying factor without direct political ambitions. In the meantime, the initial impetus to organize had subsided and the lack of effective decision-making was becoming glaring, seriously clouding its future. The Liberal party evidently remained the last hope for the viability of the Unity Movement. Its 1937 convention was one of the most thoroughly publicized in Alberta political history. Three crucial items were on the convention's agenda: firstly, the selection of a new leader; secondly, the matter of inter-party unity and co-operation, thirdly, the re-organization of the party along pre-1932 lines.

The momentous 1937 Liberal convention opened in Calgary on June 4. It was clear from the beginning that two distinct factions were emerging concerning all three items. One was headed by the Calgary delegation led by J. J. Bowlen, and had the active backing of Senator Buchanan as well as other top officials. It stood for some variety of compromise regarding co-operation but was against complete unity. Its primary intention was not to close the door to future co-ordination

of activities with the League.

The other group, much less clearly identifiable, but equally influential, centered around Harry Ross and C. H. Grant, two Edmonton-based lawyers and long-known mavericks of the Liberal party, who had the support of a critical personality; Jimmy Gardiner, the federal Minister of Agriculture. This group was absolutely firm in its opposition to any suggestion of a united front against Social Credit and was endorsed most vociferously by the Edmonton Bulletin, the Alberta bastion of Liberalism.

It is difficult to re-enact what transpired at the convention, given that no minutes were kept of the deliberations.³¹ It is clear, however, that the Calgary delegation got its way on two of the items which it favoured, whereas the Edmonton group was favoured visibly by the third item.³²

On the matter of leadership, Bowlen saw his nominee elected unanimously. The new leader was E. L. (Leslie) Gray, a soft-spoken, 41 year old man who had had considerable experience in the Alberta Civil Service, where he had served ten years as Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs under the U. F. A. government. He was currently manager of the Eastern Irrigation Project in Brooks, an agricultural expert--although not a farmer--and a businessman. Unlike Bowlen or any of his fellow MLAs, however, Gray had no political acumen, experience or credentials. In fact, it was a hope sustained by Bowlen and Buchanan whose protégé Gray clearly was--that he would project the youthful, rural image which the party needed.

His complete lack of political experience, however, was to do him a great disservice. For the next three years, as will be seen, he became the centre of controversy. Gray was to fall victim not only to the mood changes undergone by the Liberal party and to the various powerful factions within it, but also to the clever manipulations of the leaders of the Unity Movement.

Gray owed his selection as Liberal leader to the fact that he was free of involvement in the regular disputes between the party's wings. It does not appear likely that he was the first choice of any of the other potential candidates and party stalwarts--especially the Edmonton wing which resented selecting Bowlen's protégé. No other candidate appeared to offer his rural qualifications or to be even partially acceptable to all factions. Moreover, it had become an established practice for the Alberta Liberals to circulate their leaders geographically. Thus, Gray, a Southerner, and backed by the Southern faction, succeeded Howson, an Edmonton lawyer.

The convention was also called to make what was to be a weighty and far-reaching decision. The question was whether the Liberals should merge the federal and provincial branches into one formal organization. As we saw previously, the 1932 meeting, temporarily free from overpowering federal interference, had determined to separate the two branches with the hope that this would make it more likely for the Liberals to fight their own campaigns in the province. Now, a powerful section of the party led by the Edmonton branch and supported most vehemently

by Jimmy Gardiner, was pressing for the acceptance by the convention of a re-unified organization. A committee had been set up by the executive council in November 1936 to look into this alternative and under the chairmanship of C. H. Ross--a union supporter--it had unanimously called for fusion.³³

During the night of June 4, a debate took place on this issue. Speakers on behalf of the federal constituencies were in favour of a merger, whereas most provincial leaders and many followers remained adamant and spoke in favour of retaining the distinction that had been won so painfully in 1932. After arduous discussion, the convention agreed to table the motion for the next convention. However, with the appearance of Jimmy Gardiner at the convention the following morning and his harangue renewing the call for the fusion of the two organizations, it was agreed to take the matter up once again. The motion was unanimously passed--quite wondrously in view of the heated arguments of the previous night--by the convention. No dissenting votes were even recorded.

This decision was crucial for the Liberals, because as we shall see in a subsequent chapter, it helped make the provincial party totally subservient to the federal counterpart and to the federal leaders, whose prestige provincial politicians could not hope to match. Subsequent actions by the provincial party were to reflect this stranglehold. It was to minimize seriously the efforts made by future leaders to take an independent stand on issues of significance to both the

party and the province.

Given that the convention unanimously desisted from formally taking up the issue of unity, Gray's acceptance speech was significant. In it, he only lukewarmly came out in support of co-operation with other groups. He saw his goal as seeking to work with all those parties and groups which were opposed to Social Credit. Adherence to Liberalism, however, remained a critical rider in attempts to establish any basis for negotiations. On the other hand, he assertively emphasized that "if you are nominating today the leader of a narrow political party with an inflexible platform and a limited membership of only the followers of the party, I warn you not to consider my name at all."³⁴ Without mentioning the League by name, Gray stressed his desire to seek co-operation, as long as it was guided by what he called the "Liberal spirit." To this end, he stated that he was prepared to call a conference of all interested parties in order to iron out difficulties, thereby reaching results acceptable to all.

The reception to the first admission by a Liberal leader that some co-operation seemed necessary, was guarded but optimistic. Duggan, speaking on behalf of both the League and his own Conservative party, declared his unconditional support

for any type of effort towards unity. Reid avowed his intention to meet with the Liberal leader to discuss the question. E. Roper--Secretary of the C. C. F.--claimed that he was willing to confer with Gray but would not take any action until "we have some rather definite intimation of the kind of program upon which we would be asked to co-operate."³⁵

Only newspapers received the announcement with the utmost enthusiasm. In particular, The Rebel--a weekly which had sprung up after Aberhart took over and which most fanatically opposed Social Credit--editorialized:

As parties are best instruments for gaining an end, party differences may well be, and indeed should be, brushed aside in circumstances where the problem before the people as a whole is of such a vital nature as to call for united action on the basis of the fundamental principles underlying all parties built upon British Concepts of democracy. ³⁶

Similarly, the Calgary Herald, another rabid opponent of Aberhart recognized that Gray had admitted there was no room for narrow partisanship and that unification was needed and wanted by all.³⁷

The first real test for all parties' intentions and their respective meaning of the concept of unity came when at the beginning of August, a by-election was called to fill the seat vacant by the death of G. H. van Allen, Liberal MLA for Edmonton. Because Edmonton had largely voted Liberal in 1935,³⁸ there existed the belief among the Liberal stalwarts that the Liberal party should go it alone and attempt to obtain the seat.

The People's League had called a meeting for August 10 with the objective of bringing together all parties in a single nominating convention. The Conservatives soon agreed to have a unity candidate, provided he would run on a Unity slate, and not as the nominee for a particular party. 39 Meetings were held between the Liberals, the League, the Conservatives and some UFA interested members in order to reach agreement on the mechanics of the election. The League and the Conservatives were of the opinion--in line with their stand on full-fledged unity--that a joint convention ought to be called in which a candidate would be elected by members of all parties. The Liberals, however, were facing a grave dilemma which concerned not only whom the nominee should represent, but also who he should be.

A split was clearly developing with the Edmonton branch of the party. Whereas Bowlen and other provincial leaders felt that Gray should become the candidate, the Edmonton branch was firmly of the belief that the nomination should definitely go to a local man. As the Bulletin put it: 40 "It seems presumptuous for any little coterie of persons connected with the small minority groups to propose to assist the Edmonton Liberals to find a Unity candidate for the vacant Liberal seat." The paper was also bitter that the Southern Liberals, especially from Calgary, who "had been saved by the Preferential voting system from losing their deposits" would now try to dictate to the "Liberal North" which was "twice as strong...as the South." Moreover, a rumour was quickly

spreading that Gray had been participating in talks with the Unity forces. These were allegedly designed to arrange a compromise, allowing Gray to run as the sole candidate of the anti-Social Credit forces. Thus, there was clearly a double fear sustained by the Edmonton Liberals: not only would they be giving the seat to an outsider--even if he was their leader--but also in the process, they would be turning it over to the Unity forces.⁴¹ This fear had moved Mayor Clarke of Edmonton to hint that if Gray did not refrain from running, or at least from running under a Unity banner, he would enter the contest himself: "If Gray is going to stand for the financial buccaneers, he cannot stand for Edmonton."⁴²

Despite this rift, which underlay some of the grave problems facing the Liberals, the support of Gerald O'Connor, Liberal MLA for Edmonton, and the urges of party leaders in the South were sufficient to move Gray to make a decision: he let his name stand for nomination. This decision was given support by the League when the President of its Edmonton branch, speaking on behalf of the various parties in the committee, informed the Liberals that they would endorse Gray as a candidate for all parties.⁴³

After Gray had accepted the challenge, the Edmonton Bulletin reflecting the voice of Edmonton Liberalism, editorialized that "there is real danger that Mr. Gray will not be able to lead a united Liberal party in Alberta when the general election is called"⁴⁴ Liberalism, continued the paper, "has a greater mission than merely sinking principles

for office." Criticizing the Unity Movement as the formation of former Prime Minister Bennett,⁴⁵ the paper wrote a special editorial under the heading "Save Liberalism from Betrayal" in which it strongly condemned Gray's decision both to run for Edmonton and to do so as a Unity candidate.

For the first time in Liberal history--and pray it be the last--a convention of Liberals has been called to go through the motions of selecting and endorsing a Liberal candidate, already chosen for them by a committee of the Tory party, the Tory-led and ruined UFA Party and of a party promoted by the mortgage and loan companies. Having first declined a nomination as a true Liberal loyal to the Liberal platform, the proposed candidate has accepted a nomination from the Tory and money interests as a basis for fusion. He now requires the Liberal Party of Edmonton to swallow its pride and its principles, and formally endorse him for the use of the money interests who fear true Liberalism.⁴⁶

The paper called for all true Liberals to attend the convention and "pass a resolution affirming...its adherence to the policies of Liberalism, and another, phrased in unmistakable terms, dissociating itself from the political trafficking to which Mr. Gray has lent himself, and expressing condemnation of such retrograde leadership."⁴⁷

It was in this atmosphere of suspicion and recrimination that the Liberal nominating convention took place on September 20. The Edmonton stalwarts, despite this call to action, had realized that any tough stand against Gray in an open convention would irretrievably harm the party beyond repair. Consequently, apart from O'Connor, no Edmonton MLA or executive member of high standing attended.

the convention. It did not stop Harry Ross, leader of the rebels, from appearing on a radio program the same night. He bitterly accused the League of interfering with the democratic nature of the parties by severely splitting them while attempting to form a new one.⁴⁸

The convention itself took place without incident. Gray promised that, despite rumours, he would run as a Liberal. He was equally prepared to lead "negotiations with the other parties very much along Mackenzie King's style." He admitted his value to be greater in the rural constituencies rather than the cities; however, "overwhelming pressures" had been placed on him, as leader of the party, to seek election. Interestingly, extremely long speeches were made by Gray and Bowlen, whereas short and lukewarm ones were added by the Edmonton representatives. Delegates unanimously elected an unopposed Gray to represent the party in the coming by-election.⁴⁹

Despite Gray's promise that he would attempt to co-operate with the other parties, no coalition force was struck between Liberals and the League. Both agreed that Gray should run, but they could not agree as to whom he should represent, the Unity forces or the Liberals. Talks broke off when Gray received a letter from the Edmonton constituency in which, in no uncertain terms, the executive reminded him that he had been selected as a Liberal.⁵⁰ Consequently, Gray decided that, in order not to alienate the Edmonton branch any further, he would break off talks.

Faced with this turn of events, the League was compelled--to save face--to put up its own candidate. Gray, as expected, won the seat by a 5,000 vote margin, but the League candidate did extremely well, polling more than one-third of the vote.

Gray's success in becoming elected reaffirmed many of the Liberals' beliefs about their basic strength. Even those sympathetic to the Unity Movement were now having second thoughts regarding the feasibility and advisability of going ahead with any type of co-operative endeavour.

For its part, however, the People's League was making some inroads into both rural and urban areas, to judge from the large number of people that turned up at their meetings. The League organized a series of rallies which were huge successes. For example, 8,300 attended a Calgary meeting, 2,500 one at Red Deer, 3,200 at Lethbridge, 2,000 in Medicine Hat and 700 at Vegreville.⁵¹ These enthusiastic rallies vividly demonstrated that the League had the support of a fairly large sector of Alberta's population, and that it included not only businessmen, but also farmers, ranchers and other independent voters.

The League was, however, once again being accused by several quarters--especially Liberal and Social Credit--of being a group heavily financed by business interests in Toronto and Eastern Canada.⁵² In order to assuage the very strong feelings that were developing in this respect, the executive resolved to embark on a half-hearted effort to seek financial

endorsement from the population at large; the drive was, however, a failure.⁵³ It is rather difficult to believe that finances were a problem for the League, but it appeared compelled to show its autonomous status by measures of this type, which only helped pinpoint its weakness.

In the meantime, Liberal co-operation was still being actively sought. What was construed as the first formal admission by them that they had participated in talks with the League came in November 1937. Addressing a group of Calgary Young Liberals, Gray acknowledged this fact but reiterated that during negotiations "I came to one very definite decision--the old line parties cannot be broken down.... Too many stalwarts will not let it be done." Consequently, he went on to call for the building of "a strong Liberal organization as a certain means to defeat Social Credit."⁵⁴ His speech appeared to sound the final death-knell for any hopes of Unity. The meeting was heavily publicized by the Liberals and Jimmy Gardiner himself sent Gray a note congratulating him on his "sane performance."⁵⁵

Three events occurred in December 1937, which were to climax this exciting period of Alberta politics. First, a decision was reached by some U. F. A. locals to condemn fusion with the Unity Movement. They went as far as to order expulsion from the ranks of those who favoured co-operation. Although such harsh measures had been rejected by the 1937 convention of the party, speakers in support of affiliation with the League had been heavily criticized. There was,

therefore, little indication that the U. F. A. was about to engage in a co-operative venture with the League.⁵⁶ Agreement with the U. F. A. was now so remote that Duggan was relieved by the convention's decision to remain in politics rather than join the C. C. F., as he had expected.⁵⁷

Secondly, on December 2, what was billed as the first by-election in which a Unity candidate was running, took place in Lethbridge.⁵⁸ The seat had been vacated by the resignation of a rebellious Social Crediter. J. C. Campbell, a well-known local physician, was drafted as the Unity candidate in a straight fight with Social Credit. The Unity Movement won the seat in an election which was quieter than had been expected. Whereas the Liberals--who had decided to stay out--accepted the victory merely as a vote against Social Credit policies, the People's League trumpeted it as evidence not only of the legitimacy but also of the strength of the Unity Movement. The win was understandably hailed as "proving the necessity of co-operation" and "demonstrating the value of unity."⁵⁹

Although the Liberals had decided not to run a candidate in an area where Liberalism was hardly popular, public opinion had it that the party was now beginning to recognize the value of co-operation. The Liberals' reply to this view was swift and blatant and came in a radio address prepared by Gray. Apparently urged now by Bowlen as well as by the Liberal executive, Edmonton and Jimmy Gardiner himself, Gray was forced to admit his total rejection of unity of any kind

by declaring that the People's League was a dictatorial organization, dominated by a "senior force" in the East and "the wealthy instrument of big finance." The League had changed the principle of co-operation, he continued, to that of subservience. Gray then described his experience with the Movement during the last few weeks. He was especially hurt about what he regarded as Duggan's clear-cut goal: the demise of the Liberal party at all costs, a goal which, in his view, had replaced Duggan's earlier objective of unseating Social Credit.

He insisted that the Liberals were still in favour of co-operation. Autonomy of all parties, however, ought to be preserved. He felt that the formation of a new group--the Unity Council--that was rumoured, would pose a very serious obstacle. This new body, it was his understanding, wished to elect a leader, and sought the merging of all political parties. He would have accepted, he continued, an advisory council "recognizing constituency autonomy, requiring no new leader," but such all-encompassing political body could never expect to obtain the support of the Liberal party. "We know [he continued], that the People's League is the handmaid of the Conservatives and that party is strictly urban. How can such a movement ever expect to win any elections or the support of our Liberals or the U. F. A.?"⁶⁰

Having exploded his bombshell in the face of the League, of the Conservatives and even, a rather sly move, of the not yet formally born successor, the Unity Council, Gray then set out

his own conditions for co-operation in a future election: firstly, each party would retain its identity, and support should be given by all for the stronger party in each constituency; secondly, the Unity Council ought to be composed of non-politicians, set up merely to advise; no dictation by them to the parties ought to be permitted; and thirdly, the future government to be formed should be one which "recognizes the rights of all organized co-operating groups to participate."⁶¹

Reaction to this speech was quick and bitter. The newspapers were the most salient exponents of unity and they rejected Gray's remarks critically.⁶² What was far more significant, perhaps, was the little support that Gray obtained from within his own party for his speech. In fact, as we shall see later, the executive of the party had not been notified of the last section of his speech and had not given its backing to co-operation in any form whatsoever. Only Charles Grant, President of the Edmonton Liberal Association, lukewarmly endorsed Gray's stand as "logical."⁶³

The People's League itself, in what was to be its last public broadcast, voiced its disapproval of the speech in a radio talk by G. Auxier, secretary of the Edmonton branch. He accused Gray of "desiring the premiership of this province rather than unity" insisting that "neither he nor any other politician can stop the Unity Movement in Alberta.... People are sick and tired of squabbles and wish to elect not a Liberal, a Conservative or a U. F. A. er but a good citizen." In reply to Gray's accusation of Eastern domination and financing of

of the group, Auxier reported that the League had spent less than \$10,000 since its formation, "without a cent of it coming from outside Alberta." In effect, he acknowledged that the League was short of funds and had been compelled to discontinue its radio broadcasts because of lack of money.⁶⁴

The Unity Council

Faced by this series of recriminations, allegations and suspicions, unity of the parties appeared more remote than at any time since Gray's election as leader of the Liberal party. Regardless of which side was to be blamed for the breakdown, it had become increasingly evident since its foundation that the People's League could not possibly hope to unite all parties under its aegis.

The League had suffered from several severe shortcomings. First, its links with big business--despite protestations to the contrary--were all too patent. It was born out of the necessity, as perceived by the Boards of Trade of the province, to stop Social Credit. Such an economically uniform body could not seriously expect to rally all the people of Alberta. Secondly, the League had been hurt by allegations that it was controlled by Toronto-based corporations and was unable to convince any one satisfactorily that the Movement was Alberta-born and Alberta-inspired. Thirdly, the League and its Conservative partners, could also see that a new overriding body was required to consolidate their still

undefined but largely separate roles as well as to facilitate and accelerate the possible co-operation of other parties under a common banner. Fourthly, the League was run as a business corporation; no serious attempt was ever made to make it democratic. Constituencies were clamouring for a more representative structure in which they could remain largely autonomous.

Because of all these considerations, the possibility of establishing a new body was being discussed as early as June of 1937. Talks between the League and the Conservatives had led to the formation of the Unity Council, which had the objective of serving as a common denominator for all interested political parties. However, the Liberals, still suspicious outsiders, were as reluctant to join any such council wholeheartedly as they had been previously when unity was merely a slogan and an image. It was because of this rejection that the Unity Council found itself seriously impaired, even before it was officially launched.

The People's League and the Conservatives had agreed to the formation of a council which would act as a super-political party; the Liberals had not. Now both partners could only await a change of mood on the part of the Liberal leadership. Mostly because of this fact, the Council never became a party. It projected itself as an "advisory body" in the hope that it would be able to enter the political arena as a distinct political force after the Liberals had become more conducive to full-fledged co-operation.

The Unity Council of Alberta was launched on December 9, 1937. It was led by John I. McFarland, a former partner of R. B. Bennett in the Grain industry, and the first Chairman of the Canadian Wheat Board, established by Bennett in 1932. His name had been rumoured as a possible leader as early as August of 1937.⁶⁵ In order to dispel doubts of Bennett's interference, the groups favouring unity had decided to wait for Gray's views on co-operation before proceeding with McFarland's appointment. After Gray accused the League in his address, the League retorted with the immediate establishment of the Council.

The Council tried to encompass all groups: there were four Conservatives; four representatives of the League; three members of the U. F. A., but no Liberals. The executive council consisted of McFarland, F. Gillies, of the League; Reid, a U. F. A. er and F. Collicut and J. Crawford, Conservatives.⁶⁶

The mass media had reacted quite sternly to Gray's speech, blaming the Liberals for their unwillingness to forget party labels in the struggle against Aberhart. The Ottawa Liberals were deemed the culprits because of their intransigence to unity. Gray denied any such interference and said that "no individual or organization desires to co-operate with another which has no strength to offer in the partnership."⁶⁷ He insisted that it was up to individual constituencies to decide on the extent of co-operation that it would give the Movement but "any interference...by some self-appointed urban referee force from outside the constitu-

encies will be resented."⁶⁸ He warned that should such squabbles continue for long, Social Credit would be returned.⁶⁹

The Unity Movement was sufficiently unclear about its aims to support Gray's allegations of confusion and lack of direction on its part. For instance, McFarland's first radio address, in which he retaliated against Gray's speech, contained a conflicting statement regarding the nature of the Council. The Unity Council, he claimed, was not a political party. In the same speech, nonetheless, he estimated its high value in the ability to submerge all party difference in one single group.⁷⁰ Later, when he saw that the Liberals were becoming increasingly less convinced of the value of unity, McFarland concluded that the Movement would have to go it alone; the goal is unity but the Unity Movement "is not concerned with the unity, fusion or co-operation of political parties in reaching this objective."⁷¹ The goal now, as he put it in a pamphlet that circulated widely throughout Alberta, was "to unite all people who desire to establish responsible government for the re-building of confidence within, as well as outside the province."⁷²

As these statements make clear, the Movement was not-- and perhaps could not be--sure about its nature and role.

It believed on the one hand, that it should act as a super-party and on the other as a non-party in search of power, a blatant contradiction in terms. It did not emerge offensively, placing the blame for the lack of unity on the Liberal party.

It was fighting a defensive battle vis-à-vis that party, by avoiding any reference to itself as a political party. It is still not clear what it expected to gain through this strategy except perhaps in its hope to appeal to the Alberta electorate on a non-partisan basis, a stand which seemed fashionable in those desperate years.

At any rate the Movement was behaving, if not formally then informally, like a political party. Its highest priority had become the formation of constituency associations throughout the province, headed by non-professional politicians who deeply agreed with the aims of the Movement. The Unity Council was, however, not greatly successful in this respect.⁷³ Although it had promised that each constituency association could select a delegate to represent it within the council, McFarland had grown restive by March 1938 about the slowness of organization and had already decided to co-opt several prominent persons into the council, without awaiting the action on this issue.⁷⁴ Constituency organizations were not forming as rapidly as he had anticipated except in the large cities.

That the Movement was proceeding quietly and slowly and that the Liberals could not be happier about the new situation may be gathered by a letter from Gray to Grant where he gleefully concluded "that the Unity Movement seems to be quite dead at present--as it should indeed be."⁷⁵ The Liberal stand was once again clarified at the 1938 convention, where Unity failed even to be considered on the agenda.⁷⁶

The Unity Movement had its own conference in the same month. In it, for the first time McFarland focused on the

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strategy to be utilized by the Movement both before and after "victory." The emphasis was on constituency organization, which lagged behind, and on constituency autonomy, as long as all agreed on the defeat of Aberhart. Moreover, McFarland stressed again that party lines of any kind would have to be dropped. After the victory at the polls, the problem of selecting a leader would be decided by the elected members themselves.

The most glaring weakness of the Movement at this stage was its complete disregard for the formation of a platform on which it would stand. The convention could not agree on a single policy, other than very vague proposals on the debt issue and the need to use "honesty and courage in agriculture and natural resources."⁷⁷ F. M. Grisdale solemnly warned the convention that this matter would have to be settled quickly, for "we can't go out just with a lofty ideal and hope to get anywhere."⁷⁸ Working out any such platform was left for another time. It is interesting to note McFarland's own views on the subject because they carried the Unity Council through the next election--and indeed through the 1944 election as well:

I personally view political platforms as of secondary importance, because they have mainly been used prior to elections for the purpose of securing office and power.... I have always believed the best and only sound plank in a political party platform is the character, moral worth and administrative ability of every member of the government.⁷⁹

The Unity Movement was going through a steep slump through the summer of 1938. An Athabaska by-election was being fought after the death of the Social Credit incumbent, C. H.

Ross. As was now normal, Unity Council consulted with the Liberals about the possibility of nominating a joint candidate, but the latter, pursuing its lone stance, refused to co-operate under any circumstances, nominating its own candidate. The same day, the Council hurriedly announced that they would not run a candidate because "we are opposed to taking an official part in by-elections previous to the next general election."⁸⁰ This was surprising but it demonstrated that the Movement's fortunes were at a low ebb. Furthermore, the results, although favouring the Social Credit candidate, showed that the Liberals had received a larger vote than they and the Conservatives combined in 1935, and it served to encourage the Liberals greatly in their determination to remain separate.

This by-election had an immediate effect on the Conservative party that must be noted. Rumblings were becoming noticable now for the first time since Duggan had been given full support by the executive in 1936 to proceed with co-operation. The Edmonton Conservative Association had signalled in no uncertain terms its disapproval of the Conservatives' decision to stay out of the Athabaska by-election merely because the Unity Council had itself resolved to stay out. It was being hotly contested whether the Conservatives stood to lose the most from the inertia presently evident within the Movement. The Association called for an immediate convention of the Conservative party in which these and other matters would be discussed. It also demanded that a provincial organizer be

appointed in order to ascertain Conservative strength in the province and the views of staunch Conservative supporters and members on the declining Movement.⁸¹ Duggan replied to this proposal by submitting his resignation to the executive council of the party and by stating that he would be working actively to ameliorate the present slump of the Unity group, whether as a Conservative or not.

The executive council of the Conservative party was hastily convened to deal with this unforeseen eventuality. It gave Duggan a vote of complete confidence by asking him to stay on as leader of the party, working toward the goal of unity.⁸² The executive agreed, however, that the decision to ally itself with the Unity Movement had been made rather undemocratically by the executive without consultation with the membership at large. A convention was called for February 1939 in order to ratify this decision--the first Conservative convention since 1934--and the 225 delegates attending it unanimously gave Duggan their support for the venture. The membership resolved that any Conservative candidate in the coming election should stand as a representative of the Unity Movement.⁸³ The party formally agreed to stay on in provincial politics, but no meetings of the provincial executive were to take place until 1950 and no conventions were called until 1952. It is obvious that the party was not in a condition to fight elections on its own and had found in Unity a cause enabling it to sink its identity.

Duggan's courageous stand boosted his own prestige

and favoured the Unity Movement as a whole. By November 1938, the Council's fortunes appeared to be on the rise. Figures released by the Council showed that twenty-eight constituencies had now been organized, mostly over the past two months. With the Conservatives now formally and legitimately an integral part of the Movement, renewed efforts could be aimed at wooing all the other parties.⁸⁴

Whereas in the course of the previous three conventions the U. F. A. had resolved to stay in politics, the situation prior to the January 1939 annual meeting had become extremely critical for the party. President R. Gardiner--who as we saw favoured the C. C. F.--was busily attempting to persuade a fairly strong faction that the U. F. A. could no longer claim to be a viable force in Alberta. He mentioned a steep decline in membership as indicative of its rejection by the electorate and recommended abandoning the political field and reversal to its original role as a co-operative economic movement. After a depressing convention, the delegates voted on January 19, 1939 to withdraw from active participation in the political arena.⁸⁵

In determining to vacate the field, the conference rejected fusion with any other movement. Each individual member was urged to follow his own convictions and support the political party of his choice. This decision appears to have helped the Unity Movement's own chances of success. Firstly, the C. C. F. failed to benefit from any planned fusion. Secondly, the Liberals, who, urged by Jimmy Gardiner, had been

actively seeking U. F. A. support, were alone now as the voice of inter-party competition. Thirdly, the Movement gained the backing of a considerable number of former U. F. A.ers who now began to campaign actively on behalf of Unity.

These two political events--the withdrawal of Conservative and U. F. A. forces from politics--helped make the Unity Movement, once again, the focus for the opposition struggle against Social Credit. The Liberals were as adamant as usual, but the Unity Council proceeded along its slow and painful path of solidifying its position in constituencies across the province. By May 1939 a constituency survey showed out of a total of fifty-six, thirty-six ridings had now been fully organized by the Council.⁸⁶

At any rate, the Liberal party and its leader were fast losing ground. The party was in shambles, split between those who adhered firmly to a separate path, and those who were becoming more ready to support Unity. Constituency organizations were badly neglected and no overall provincial organization had been struck to fight the coming election campaign. Thus, whereas most Liberals still sympathized with O'Connor's call for an "immediate campaign advancing the Liberal platform and policies and a vigorous organization of Liberal forces and the nomination of a Liberal candidate in each constituency,"⁸⁷ few believed in the feasibility of implementing that demand. In March 1939, an event took place which--allied with increasing disorganization and suspicion of his own leadership--made Gray realize that some form of

co-operation provided the only escape for a disconcerted and disunited party.

In the course of that month, the Social Credit government announced that certain financial irregularities had been found in the Eastern Irrigation Project, formerly headed by Gray, and that it had proceeded to dismiss the present Board of the Company.⁸⁸ Although the Provincial Auditor's subsequent report disclosed no irregularities, the government decided to take legal action against the Company. Gray himself was not directly implicated, but felt this move was launched to discredit him. Later, the court commission appointed for this purpose found no irregularities implicating Gray, and proceeded to clear the Board, which was re-instated in July 1939.⁸⁹

Despite this happy ending, the investigation and its aftermath compounded the already shaky position sustained by Gray within his party. The Liberal machine, under R. Barrowman, was becoming increasingly opposed to Gray's leadership, and the executive council was just short of calling for his resignation.⁹⁰

This state of affairs within the Liberal party may help explain Gray's sudden and desperate approach to the Unity Council. In a broadcast on April 1939--which was not cleared with the Executive of the party--Gray offered co-operation with the Council. He still insisted that parties not be allowed to break down, or new ones formed. However, he agreed to take "whatever steps they [the constituency organizations] feel necessary to secure the best possible candidate to present the

largest possible cross-section of opinion." He offered to allow constituency organizations of all parties to get together and resolve their differences locally by deciding that whichever party would muster the greater support in a constituency would be permitted to run its candidate. He reserved the right, however, for any individual Liberal constituency to put forth its own candidate if it did not agree with the choice of a joint convention. In the same broadcast, he called for a meeting of the leaders of all parties in order to eliminate their differences.⁹¹

Gray and McFarland met in May. Gray appears to have suggested co-operation on a strictly equal basis with the Unity Movement but this was rejected as unacceptable by McFarland, who, taking now the initiative, and conscious of the Liberals' weakness, was becoming seriously inclined to the idea of forming a new full-fledged political party out of his Unity Council.⁹²

The same offer was also made at a meeting of the provisional council. Gray's proposal called for co-operation, with the proviso that the parties would maintain their own platforms, but joined with others in electing Independent candidates to represent the constituency as a whole. Once again, McFarland surprisingly rejected this outright--surprisingly because he had advocated a similar basis for co-operation only six months earlier. He emphasized that Unity "would not compromise in its efforts to achieve a non-partisan uniformity...forgetting every other label but unity."⁹³

Gray was disappointed with the new hardened position of the Unity forces. He claimed that whereas originally the Movement wanted to bring all parties behind one candidate in each riding, now it wanted to launch a new political party, with a leader, conventions and platform. I am not prepared... [he concluded] to sit in the formation of a new political party."⁹⁴

Gray had lost his gamble and now had to face a deeply disturbed Liberal executive. Barrowman and others, who had not been notified of these negotiations, became incensed. They scheduled a meeting for the executive to which neither Gray nor the other MLAs were invited to attend, making more palpable the serious rift that had developed between them. Barrowman exploded at the meeting by admitting that the Liberal party was in shambles as a result of Gray's leadership. Some portions of his speech are excerpted here because of the light they shed both on the state of the party and on their lack of confidence in Gray.

There was a time three years ago when I was confident that we could elect a Liberal Government in this Province but the past two years of advocating different types has resulted in chaos and confusion. Instead of having one Leader we now have half a dozen leaders in every constituency. Party discipline is gone and party leadership is gone and in its place we have a host of political adventurers with whom the party leaders have to maneuver for personal support... The results [of the talks on co-operation] have been disastrous from the standpoint of the Province and the Liberal party. For two years the organization has been neglected and the morale of the party has broken down.

Very little contact, if any, has been continued with the Liberal associations in each constituency and the Liberal leaders in each of the constituencies have been left without any guidance, suggestions or encouragement, while viewing around them and through the press...the organization efforts of the People's League and the Unity Movement to provide Leadership for the Province that the Liberal party was duty-bound to provide. To such an extent has this situation progressed that outside the cities, there possibly are not three constituencies south of Edmonton where the Liberal party have any real chance of winning an immediate election.... Had Mr. Gray's latest offer to the Unity Movement been accepted it would have meant the liquidation of the Liberal party in this Province and I advance it as my considered opinion that the result would not have been as fortunate to his personal fortunes as he had hoped."95

Barrowman went on to admit that the Unity forces had approached him with the view of by-passing Gray and dealing directly with the executive. Their only alternative now--given the utter disorganization of the Liberal party--was to co-operate with the Unity Movement, while ensuring that collaboration would not entail the dissolution of the Liberal party.96

The Liberal party was visibly ready to capitulate. For the next few months, therefore, members of its executive negotiated with members of the Unity Council directly, without the assistance of politicians. The Liberals were content to salvage their party name, for one of the conditions under which they entered negotiations was that no new party would be formed in order to fight the election. Otherwise, it appears that the terms agreed upon by both parties were beneficial

to the Unity Movement.⁹⁷

First, in Calgary and Edmonton--both of which had multi-member constituencies--the parties themselves should get together and decide on an adequate slate to be submitted to the electorate. As far as practicable, such a slate would encompass the principle of equality. Second, in all other constituencies, it would also be up to the groups involved to determine which party had the best chance of carrying the riding; whoever was accepted as the likeliest candidate to succeed, would have the subsequent total support of all the parties. No candidate would be supported by either executive who had gone against the wishes of the constituencies in joint conventions by standing as representing a particular party. Third, in order to facilitate the electorate's choice in a straight fight with Social Credit, all candidates, whatever their political affiliation, would be known as Independents.

The arrangement worked surprisingly well in most constituencies. Only Grouard and St. Albert, which had already nominated their candidates at the time of the agreement, failed to support the executive's recommendations. Most branches were, of course, in no position to put up any opposition for as Barrowman himself had said, few were organized and "in most of the Southern constituencies, the Liberal executive would not even consider putting up a man."⁹⁸

In practice, Independent candidates ran everywhere, with joint conventions of Unity people, Liberals and at times

Conservatives, deciding on the advantages of each potential candidate. In Calgary and Edmonton, however, no joint conventions were called, and slates were filled according to a formula agreed upon by each constituency organization.

Edmonton provides a good case study of the operations of this arrangement in the cities. The Edmonton Constituency Unity Association resolved early in June 1939 to ask the Liberals that a joint convention be called at which candidates would be nominated to run for the constituency representing all three parties--Unity, Conservatives and Liberals.⁹⁹ The Liberals were opposed to this arrangement in principle. They still believed that their party should not be fully submerged and should retain a certain degree of autonomy. Therefore, an executive meeting of the party proposed that each party select three candidates and that all of them be ratified by a joint convention, running on a "Citizens slate."¹⁰⁰ This formula was accepted totally by the Unity Association.

Having finally ironed out their major difficulties, and being for the first time united as to the common goal, the Independents--as this uneasy coalition came to be called--seemed to be ready to battle Social Credit in the last days of that eventful summer of 1939. However, the advent of the war in Europe, and Canada's subsequent involvement, gave the Movement a serious blow. Attention turned to the war and for the first time in five years, away from politics. Nominations ceased to be important, and Social Credit became secondary in importance to the Unity Movement by comparison with the war

effort. Party activity came to a halt.

In this atmosphere, it was not perhaps strange that when Aberhart called the election for March 1940, the Unity Movement was largely unprepared. The heavy support that had existed for the Movement had lost its impetus; most candidates were selected less than four weeks before election day. At the time the election was called, only twelve candidates had been selected, so that nominating conventions had to be convened quickly, thereby resulting in extremely poor organizing performances.

Several factors militated against the Unity candidates once they had been painfully selected. First, most of them had no idea as to what precisely the Movement stood for; its sole known aim consisted of defeating Aberhart and his radical experiment. A cursory reading of the newspapers of the day as well as some of the candidates' speeches, gives one indeed the distinct impression that their stand was essentially negative; no positive proposals were ever suggested. Indeed, the Movement seemed fully to favour such a plankless position, as we have seen through McFarland's statements earlier on the lack of necessity for platforms. This utter disregard for policies may have been largely due to the inability of such disparate groups of people to agree on a platform common to all of them.

Furthermore, the Independents were still not a party, at least not in the formal sense of the term. They could not therefore be expected to emerge with a set of proposals as

political parties were known to do. As the Calgary Herald wrote: "no independent candidate is put under a pledge to support certain principles or party tactics....He is left free, if elected, to use his best judgement on every question."¹⁰¹ Each individual constituency organization was left to its own devices and the result, not unexpectedly, was that none of them came out with anything closely resembling a specific platform.

The second problem was that of leadership. As long as there was hope of attracting the Liberals, making such a move was felt to be disastrous for the Movement. When the talks with the Liberals were under way, this party vehemently opposed any such move as harmful both to its future chances of success in Alberta and to its status as a political party.¹⁰² The decision was made by the Unity Council that the matter of selecting a new leader should be postponed until after the election. Rumours spread prior to the election that A. Davison, popular mayor of Calgary and an Independent candidate, would be formally asked to take over the position¹⁰³ and lead the Unity forces to victory, but the rumour was quelled after the Liberals once again showed their opposition and threatened withdrawal from the co-operative venture.

Thirdly, an important problem to contend with was that of organizing the constituencies themselves. Each constituency was completely autonomous and was left to make its own decisions regarding the manner of achieving co-operation. The Unity Council, as an advisory body, could not interfere in the affairs

of the constituency unless specifically asked to do so. This meant, in effect, that in the matter of running the campaign, organization in the majority of cases was left to people without previous political experience. Organization work was carried out intermittently and with little electoral skill, although with some enthusiasm.¹⁰³

To these serious internal problems encountered by the Unity forces, an external one must be added. The vacating of the provincial arena by the U. F. A. had left the way open for the C. C. F. to enter it fully.¹⁰⁴ In 1937, W. Irvine was appointed full-time provincial organizer. A special convention in 1938 committed the party to full-scale political activity within the province and it proceeded to establish local club organizations. The 1939 convention, finally unfettered by any remaining ties to the now defunct U. F. A., set out to elect a leader for the movement, a well-known politician and first Alberta C. C. F. Member of Parliament, Chester Ronning.

The C. C. F. had received offers to join the Unity force but it soon became only too clear to them that their own Movement had nothing in common with the conservative nature of the Independents. Indeed, its 1938 president, William Irvine, launched an all-out campaign to attract Socreds who had lost interest in the wobbling party. In a pamphlet entitled "Let Us Reason Together: An Appeal to Social Crediters and C. C. F." he emphasized the similarities between the two, allies as they were in their hatred for big business and their handmaids, the established parties. Despite its late entry, the party put

up candidates in all but fourteen constituencies for the 1940 election. Although it failed to elect a single member, it helped de-polarize what could have been a straight Independent-Social Credit battle.

Despite these problems--to which must be added, of course the half-hearted Liberal co-operation--the Unity Movement had managed to combine all conservative opposition parties and factions. Independents ran in all but two of the fifty-six constituencies (Grouard and Edson had no Independent candidates), representing nearly every conceivable social interest.

The campaign was surprisingly quiet, clearly pitting the two forces against each other, with the C. C. F. a very distant third. Despite the five tumultuous preceding years, no proposals of any consequence were put forward by either group. Whereas the Social Credit fought what it called the "Money Power Plan for Alberta," the Unity forces concentrated completely on Aberhart's performance and on what they called "Province Before Party," which became its election slogan. Both groups failed to hold large demonstrations of support for their cause or to involve the population to any considerable degree.

The election was close, the closest in Alberta history. Although only nineteen Independents were returned, they polled only 2,000 votes less than Social Credit (See Table I). As their leaders were to repeat only too often after the election, only second choice C. C. F. votes--which they claimed had gone overwhelmingly to Social Credit in the existing pre-

TABLE I
Legislative Seats, Percentage of Popular Votes by Political Party, 1935-1971

Election	Total Number of Seats		Social Credit		Conservatives		Liberals		CCF and NDP		Total Popular Vote	% Voting
	No. of Seats	% Popular Vote	No. of Seats	% Popular Vote	No. of Seats	% Popular Vote	No. of Seats	% Popular Vote	No. of Seats	% Popular Vote		
1935	63	54.2	56	88.9	2	6.5	3.2	5	23.1	7.9	301,752	82.6
1940	57	42.9	36	63.2	*	*	*	*	*	*	308,864	75.0
1944	57	51.9	51	89.5	*	*	*	*	*	*	282,106	69.3
1948	57	55.6	51	89.5	*	*	*	*	*	*	294,793	64.1
1952	61	56.2	52	85.2	2	3.7	3.3	4	22.4	6.6	298,335	59.4
1955	61	46.4	37	60.7	3	9.2	4.9	15	31.1	24.6	378,179	68.0
1959	65	56.3	61	93.9	1	23.9	1.5	1	13.9	1.5	413,515	63.9
1963	63	54.8	60	95.2	*	12.7	9.2	2	19.8	3.2	403,444	56.2
1967	65	44.6	55	84.6	6	26.0	9.2	3	10.8	4.6	498,341	63.9
1971	75	41.1	25	33.3	49	46.4	65.3	3	1.0	1	639,862	72.0

* In 1940 and in 1944, Conservatives and Liberals fought the election together under the banner of the Independent Movement with the following results: 19 seats, 43.8% of the popular vote and 33.6% seats (1940); whereas in 1944, 3 were returned for the same movement, with a total of 23% of the popular vote and 3.5% of the seats.

SOURCE: Government of Alberta, Provincial Election Returns, 1935-71

ferential system--robbed them of a victory. As we have seen, it is at least as likely that their own shortcomings, the war and perhaps even the anti-climactic aftermath of exhausting years of bitter and prolonged negotiations among themselves, had all contributed to their defeat.

NOTES

1. Mostly by Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta and by Irving, The Social Credit Movement in Alberta, *passim*.
2. Although the "Movement" itself was never named formally, the term "Unity Movement" appears to have been most popular with the press and politicians of the time. After the 1940 election, it came to be called "the Independent Movement" because the candidates who had run under the banner of unity (which was incidentally never achieved) were referred to as Independents.
3. Irving, The Social Credit Movement in Alberta, pp. 353-4.
4. Ibid., pp. 354-6.
5. Ibid.
6. This information was contained in the Edmonton constituency file available in the Alberta Liberal Association Papers (hereinafter referred to as Liberal Papers), Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta.
7. In particular, Senator Buchanan, the publisher of the Lethbridge Herald had an extremely close friendship, as can be seen from their enormous mutual correspondence. See the J. J. Bowlen Papers (hereinafter referred to as Bowlen Papers), Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta.
8. As we shall see, it was Jimmy Gardiner, the federal Minister of Agriculture, who most vehemently opposed the present division of the two organizations, and he had powerful allies in Grant and the whole Edmonton branch of the party.
9. See the numerous advertisements carried by the Economic Safety League during that month, especially the Albertan, August 8, 1935, and in the files of The Calgary Board of Trade Papers. Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta. Also consult Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta, pp. 321ff.
10. Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta, p. 321.
11. Howson, as was common with the Liberal leaders since the 1921 debacle, was happy to stay for a time in the position (he had become leader in 1932), awaiting a vacancy in one of the many federal government-appointed positions. In his case, he was made an Alberta Supreme

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Court Justice. For the Liberal Party penchant towards patronage, see Chapter IV.

12. In a letter from Bowlen to Mackenzie King, dated September 4, 1936, Bowlen Papers, loc.cit.
13. Calgary Herald, October 2, 1936.
14. The League's formal name was the Independent Citizens League, but it was always known as the People's League.
15. Bowlen letter to Buchanan, November 13, 1936, Bowlen Papers.
16. Calgary Herald, October 23, 1936.
17. Calgary Herald, November 4, 1936.
18. Ibid.
19. Calgary Herald, December 4, 1936.
20. Calgary Herald, January 14, 1937.
21. Calgary Herald, February 25, 1937.
22. Calgary Herald, January 9, 1937.
23. Calgary Herald, November 14, 1936.
24. Calgary Herald, January 5, 1937.
25. Calgary Herald, January 16, 1937.
26. Ibid.
27. Calgary Herald, February 25, 1937; see the March 15 and 29, 1937 editions for other meetings.
28. Calgary Herald, March 5, 1937.
29. Calgary Herald, May 1, 1937.
30. Calgary Herald, June 1, 1937.
31. The following remarks are put together from a very careful reading of the Calgary Herald, Edmonton Journal and Edmonton Bulletin editions of June 4, 5 and 6, 1937.
32. The perennial rivalry between the Calgary and Edmonton branches of the party is dealt with in detail in Chapter IV.

33. See Executive Council meeting of November 14, 1936, in the Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
34. Calgary Herald, June 5, 1937.
35. Calgary Herald, June 6, 1937. This was the C. C. F.'s only overture to co-operation.
36. The Rebel, June 11, 1937.
37. Calgary Herald, June 5, 1937.
38. 14,063 votes had gone to the Liberals, whereas Social Credit had received 13,661, and 9,000 to all the other candidates. Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1936.
39. Calgary Herald, August 7, 1937.
40. Edmonton Bulletin, August 15, 1937.
41. This fear appears to have had some justification because for the past month, Gray had vowed to seek close ties with the League, although he also promised never to abandon Liberalism in the process.
42. Edmonton Bulletin, September 16, 1937.
43. Letter from S. W. Field, President of the Edmonton branch of the League to Gray; quoted in its entirety by the Edmonton Bulletin, September 14, 1937.
44. Edmonton Bulletin, September 27, 1937.
45. This rumour appears to have some validity. Bennett had held discussions in Calgary regarding the feasibility of a united movement with the League, and had indeed proposed the name of his friend, John I. McFarland, to lead it. From an interview with J. Percy Page, March 1972. Also, see a letter from J. Gardiner to Bowlen, dated November 16, 1937, in which he claims to have proof that Montreal and Toronto business is behind Bennett in giving the Movement impetus; Bowlen Papers, loc.cit.
46. Edmonton Bulletin, September 16, 1937.
47. In a letter to Buchanan, dated September 25, 1937, Bowlen acidly complained of the poor reception given Gray in Edmonton, and accused Ross and other Edmontonians, especially the editors of the Edmonton Bulletin of insincerity and of attempting to split the party. See Bowlen Papers, loc.cit.
48. Radio broadcast; in Liberal Papers, loc.cit.

49. Minutes of the Liberal Nominating Convention, September 20, 1937, ibid.
50. Letter from Ross to Gray, dated October 17, 1937, ibid.
51. See the Calgary Herald of September 9, 18 and 27, and October 15 and 23, 1937 for details on these rallies.
52. Gardiner's findings in Eastern Canada regarding the close links between Toronto and Montreal, and the League had been given full publicity in the Edmonton Bulletin throughout September.
53. Calgary Herald, October 19, 1937.
54. Calgary Herald, November 6, 1937.
55. Gardiner to Gray, quoted in a letter from Gardiner to Bowlen, November 16, 1937, Bowlen Papers, loc.cit.
56. Calgary Herald, December 1, 1937.
57. Calgary Herald, January 17, 1938.
58. This was the first election in which a candidate was running under the banner of Unity. Of course, in the previous Edmonton by-election, a candidate had stood under the auspices of the People's League.
59. Calgary Herald, December 3, 1937.
60. The radio speech was quoted verbatim--as was common in those days--by the Calgary Herald, December 7, 1937.
61. Calgary Herald, December 7, 1937.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Broadcast by G. W. Auxier, Secretary of Edmonton Branch of the People's League, December 10, 1937, The Calgary Board of Trade Papers, loc.cit.
65. Calgary Herald, August 10, 1937.
66. For a complete list and political affiliation of the members of the Provisional Council, see ibid., December 10, 1937.
67. Calgary Herald, December 14, 1937.

68. Ibid. Gray seems to have had his sights during this month on effecting closer co-operation with the U. F. A. following a letter from Gardiner to Bowlen (November 16, Bowlen Papers, loc.cit.) in which he strongly suggested that the Liberals consider this option. Whether coincidentally or not, Gray had been involved at that time with a series of tours of rural areas in which he emphasized the Liberals' closeness with, and understanding of, the farmers as a group. In fact, he had several times hinted at the possibility of striking an alliance with the U. F. A. See, for example, his speech to the Liberal convention of February 2, 1938, quoted in the Calgary Herald, February 3, 1938 under the heading "Gray Pays Tribute to Alberta Farmers."
69. See Calgary Herald, January 5, 1938 for his speech.
70. Calgary Herald, January 8, 1938.
71. Calgary Herald, February 4, 1938.
72. "Alberta's Solution: Unity" (Calgary: Unity Council, 1938). Cf. this with Grisdale's comments on the raison d'etre of the Unity Council: "The Unity Movement does not intend to break down the present political parties. It merely establishes a temporary structure upon which an emergency may be met." A radio speech given on August 9, 1938, available in the J. Percy Page Papers (hereinafter referred to as Page Papers), Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta.
73. Calgary Herald, January 8, 1938.
74. Calgary Herald, February 19, 1938, for the names of appointees and also March 3/ 12 and April 9, 1938 for further additions of members.
75. Letters from Gray to Grant, dated April 5, 1938, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
76. Calgary Herald, June 14, 1938.
77. Calgary Herald, June 23, 1938.
78. Calgary Herald, June 25, 1938. Grisdale was, of course, a former Minister of Agriculture in the U. F. A. government.
79. Calgary Herald, August 10, 1938. See the speech given by McFarland to the Cochrane constituency, ibid.
80. Calgary Herald, September 30, 1938.

81. Calgary Herald, October 13, 1938.
82. Calgary Herald, November 4, 1938. Duggan rightly argued that the Conservatives had never had any significant support in Athabaska, and that for them to attempt to put up a candidate there would be folly. Indeed, the same argument could be used to explain the Unity Council's decision to stay out. At any rate, Duggan claimed that the election had demonstrated the need for unity since the Liberal candidate had been cleanly defeated.
83. Calgary Herald, November 19, 1938.
84. Calgary Herald, November 26, 1938.
85. Calgary Herald, January 20, 1939.
86. Calgary Herald, June 12, 1939.
87. Minutes of the Executive Council of the Liberal Party meeting, April 25, 1939, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
88. Calgary Herald, March 24, 1939.
89. Calgary Herald, July 3, 1939.
90. Calgary Herald, January 7, 1939.
91. A broadcast delivered April 28, 1939, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
92. Calgary Herald, June 13, 1939.
93. That this offer was not accepted by the Council cannot be explained except in terms which were not publicized, but for which there is some evidence. It appears that Gray had offered his services as the leader of the Movement in exchange for the co-operation which he was offering the Council. Barrowman's comments are indicative of Gray's ideas: in a speech delivered July 1, 1939 to the executive of the party, he pointed out that Gray had made such an overture, and that this offer was tantamount to the demise of the Liberal party; "the results," Barrowman warned, "would not have been as fortunate to his personal political fortunes as he had hoped"; Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
94. Calgary Herald, June 13, 1939.
95. See the minutes of this most crucial executive meeting, July 1, 1939, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
96. This was done in what appears to have been a quasi-legal

contract drawn between the partners. See Minutes of the executive meeting with the Unity Council, July 13 and 14, 1939, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.

97. For a summary of the arrangements, see the minutes of the meeting of the executive of the Liberal party, July 1, 1939, ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. Letter from the Edmonton Constituency Unity Association to the Edmonton Liberal Party Association dated June 21, 1939, Page Papers. Page, the President of the former, was later to become the President and leader of the Independent Movement.
100. Minutes of an executive meeting of the Edmonton branch of the Liberal party, July 27, 1939, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
101. Calgary Herald, February 20, 1940.
102. See the Edmonton Bulletin, February 26, 1940 for the first allegations that A. Davidson was already the leader of the movement. For a detail of these allegations, see the Calgary Herald's editorial "Sabotage" of February 28, 1940.
103. There were twenty-six farmers and ranchers, and thirteen teachers and businessmen with the rest from assorted professions. The most interesting fact about them was that only eight had any past political experience whatsoever (not unlike the Social Credit), in most cases as former U. F. A. leaders or as civic politicians.
104. For information on the background of the Alberta C. C. F., see the booklet entitled "The Story of the Alberta C. C. F., 1932-1948," which was submitted to the 1948 convention of the party. Available in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation Papers, Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta.
105. Edmonton: Commercial Printers Ltd., n.d.

Pool Room

CHAPTER III

THE UNITY MOVEMENT II:

THE COLLAPSE OF COALITION POLITICS

1940-1945

The period from 1935 to 1940 was undoubtedly one of the most exciting in the political history of Alberta. It was dominated by the fruitless attempts on the part of Social Credit to introduce its radical program in the province. At least of equal interest were the efforts by the People's League and the Unity Council to consolidate the strength of all parties opposed to Aberhart. Whereas the Conservatives had been successfully wooed into this arrangement, it is evident that the efforts were less productive with the Liberals, and not at all fruitful with the C. C. F. and the U. F. A. Ideally the Movement had hoped to form a new party by the fusion of all existing groups, but this attempt had fallen short of its sweeping objective. Consequently, it had to content itself with striking an uneasy electoral alliance, a goal which had been originally clearly secondary. The Movement, however, continued to hope that after the election, the newly elected representatives of the coalition would decide in favour of forming a new party.

In fact, educated rumours were circulating in Edmonton less than a month after the election that a new party, to be named Provincial Rights party, would emerge from the first

meeting that the successful Independent candidates had scheduled for April 20. Dr. Campbell--the first Unity MLA and therefore the senior Independent--had called this meeting with the ostensible purpose of co-ordinating the Independent forces and the candidates who had been elected.¹ This was to be done, according to that meeting's agenda, by appointing a House leader and a provincial organizer.

Inertia and Indecision

The Independent Movement, a formation which had come into being by fits and starts, was compromised before the first meeting of the candidates by a premature announcement made public by the Edmonton Liberal Association, its most rabid opponent. The Liberal executive met and unanimously passed a resolution cautioning the two Liberals who had been elected as Independents--Bowlen and H. J. Macdonald of Edmonton--that a new party was in the offing. Furthermore, a letter forwarded to them warned that "no member nominated by a Liberal convention ought to take any part in or be party to the establishment or promotion of any new party calculated or intended to eliminate or displace the Liberal party or carry on political activities in opposition thereto."²

Contents of the Letter were subsequently leaked out by an unidentified member of the Liberal executive--probably E. C. Fisher, the past president of the Association--³ to the Edmonton Bulletin. This paper deemed it appropriate in

turn to publish it, thereby seriously undermining the role of the Liberals and the Independent conference before it got under way. Macdonald, who had been selected by the Edmonton constituency, wrote to Grant expressing his desire to co-operate with the Independents, for "as you know, I was elected on a Citizens' slate in opposition to the Aberhart government;" but, he went on to insist in the letter, "that does not mean that I have the slightest intention of joining any new political party or movement."⁴ Bowlen, who reminded the Edmonton Liberal Association that he had not been elected by them, went further in his attack on the association, referring to the letter as "a dastardly thing to put out when those men [the Independents] came here to do business."⁵ The feud, as will be seen, was to be prolonged and bitter during the next two years, and affected the discussions being held regarding inter-party co-operation.

It is evident that a valid point had been raised by the Edmonton Liberal Association, which feared for the future of the Liberal party. The Independents in the House were vastly different from any other group of coalition parties. Because the term "Independents" appeared to underline the group's non-partisan nature, the Liberal MLAs contended that their role as Independents did not conflict at all with their role as Liberals. However, the Edmonton Association suggested, it was impossible to be both Independents and Liberals. The misunderstanding stemmed from the fact that the Edmonton constituency and many of the Independents themselves believed that the group ought to be considered a political party, whereas the Liberal

MLAs did not accept this view. The latter maintained that, formally, the group was merely an electoral and political coalition without any partisan intentions. Later, when such intentions became clearer, Bowlen and Macdonald refused to be regarded as part of it.

When the Independents met in Edmonton, they were deeply preoccupied with the puzzling problem of its role. It is not surprising that the meeting, which was optimistically referred to by Davison as "most successful, augur[ing] well for a united opposition in the House,"⁶ fell far short of that assertion in reality. No decision of any consequence was reached by the MLAs. Frank Laut, member for Banff-Cochrane, led a group, composed mostly of rural members, that was extremely suspicious of the intentions of their urban colleagues. The MLAs believed that the selection of a provincial organizer was contrary to the Independents' earlier position which consisted of emphasizing strength and autonomy of individual constituencies.⁷ This position seriously undermined the urban members' ideal of forming a cohesive, disciplined group.

Similarly, there was little or no accord regarding the choice of a new House Leader. In this area, the two Liberal members led the opposition faction. They vehemently resisted the idea of a cohesive Movement building up around a House Leader. They suspected that, selecting such an individual, would confer the status of party to the group. Given a lack of agreement on this score, the matter was left for future consideration.

The only resolution that was passed without much discord was one agreeing to the formation of a group which "will act in harmony and co-operation in the floor of the House, while reserving to each member the right to express his individual opinion at all times."⁸ Finally, the Independents agreed to call a meeting of the defeated and successful candidates by December, with the purpose of "encouraging each constituency to establish a permanent Independent organization" and of discussing questions of public interest.⁹

The full import of the failure of this first meeting was to be felt only later. The Independents had three more gatherings in the remainder of 1940. These were intended primarily for the MLAs to get acquainted with each other and to plan a strategy for the coming session of the legislature. These meetings closely resembled the first one. They totally failed to reach long-range agreement on matters of crucial importance to the Independents' role and organization. Indeed, a cursory examination of the minutes of these meetings fails to suggest that the Independents were concerned, or willing, to deal with this most basic of all issues. Neither the June 22, nor the August 15 meeting, nor the one taking place on November 16, showed any appreciable grasp of the critical stage at which the group found itself.¹⁰ The members were satisfied with suggesting that Aberhart consider a special session of the legislature (June meeting), with rejecting the idea of a new provincial bank (August meeting) or calling for the adoption of the Rowell-Sirois report on federalism (November meeting).

No allusion was even made to organizational matters, or the status of the Movement itself.

An example may serve to bring into relief the apathy which was enveloping the members so early in the life of the group. Percy Page was one of several Independents who had showed an interest in setting up an Independent newspaper which would serve as the mouthpiece for the organization, and for communicating with the constituents. The idea was rejected by most other members as too costly and unnecessary, particularly in view of the already overwhelmingly favourable reception accorded the Independents by most newspapers. It was agreed, therefore, that a bi-monthly bulletin would be sufficient at this time. A five dollar fee was asked from all the members at the end of July in order to subsidize the publication.

Two months later, nine members had not even paid their contributions and the bulletin ceased publication the following September.

Quite unrelated to this, in October a new bi-monthly began publication, the Spotlight, under the editorship of H. Windross. For the next six years, this newspaper, which was heavily subsidized by business organizations close to the Independents, became the unofficial organ of the party. Windross however, also became the severest critic of the inertia increasingly prevalent within the ranks of the Independents. He noted that the Independents had failed in the 1940 election because the constituency organization had been left to the last few weeks. The editor encouraged the group to become

active organizationally. In particular, he concluded, "a leader has to be selected immediately by the movement if it is going to achieve success."¹¹

The first annual convention of the Independents took place in December 1940. The fourth meeting of MLAs had decided that each constituency would be entitled to send three representatives to it, with Edmonton and Calgary entitled to nine each. When delegates representing thirty-four constituencies met in Edmonton, two questions were debated. They concerned the establishment of an organization and the selection of a leader for the Movement.

Three groups figured prominently. Firstly, there were those who felt that the Movement should run its course, that no attempt should be made to organize any further province-wide or to select a leader. Secondly, a faction was of the opinion that both matters ought to be considered immediately. Thirdly, a large number of compromisers believed that the Independents should meet and discuss these matters again at a future, yet unspecified, date. That the Conference finally decided to adopt the last proposal shows the inability or unwillingness of the Movement to organize into a party.

The strong autonomy of some constituencies became apparent at the convention. The Camrose constituency defied successfully all efforts to set up a large all-encompassing organization, and was supported in this belief by fifteen other constituency organizations. Moreover, there was the realization that no man among the Independents had the qualities of a leader.

Some, like Speakman and MacLachlan were former U. F. A.ers; some like Davison and Duggan, were Conservatives. Bowlen was a Liberal. The remainder were people with little or no experience in politics and neither well-known nor supported by any constituency other than their own.

The convention then, resolved that, given the lukewarm reception to both matters, they should be postponed. The only resolution passed unanimously was one allowing MLAs to select their own House Leader at the next meeting of the caucus.¹²

The January 1941 meeting of the caucus was crucial for the Movement because it indicated conclusively that the Independent group was anything but cohesive. Clearly, after the return of nineteen members to the legislature, the rural/urban cleavage had manifested itself in the uneasy relations among the members themselves as well as in the decisions that had been made by the group. At no time was this more evidently expressed than at this caucus meeting, held to elect a House Leader. Two contenders had been nominated: A. Davison, a former mayor of Calgary and J. Walker, a Warner farmer and ranchman. Only eighteen MLAs attended the meeting--Speakman was ill--and five ballots were necessary to break a tie that occurred between them. That they failed to reach a compromise and that Davison himself had to opt for stepping down in order to avoid a stalemate and a subsequent rift, is highly instructive of the inability of these people to trust and agree with each other. They showed their obstinancy by clinging tightly

to their own positions, expecting the other side to compromise.¹³

In any event, the meeting itself determined that no permanent House Leader would be chosen and that elections for the position would take place each year.¹⁴

Great hopes had been pinned by sympathizers of the Movement on the first session of the new legislature. As Davison himself put it: "there has never been before in the history of the province of Alberta such a strong opposition."¹⁵ The calibre of some members appeared to be, indeed, very high: Spcakman had many years of experience as M. P. for Red Deer; J. J. Bowlen was a former Liberal House Leader and an experienced politician; A. Davison was one of the most popular and aggressive mayors that Calgary ever had; A. Duggan was a former leader of the Conservative party; Percy Page, although a neophyte in politics, was extremely popular as the capable coach of a world-renowned girls basketball team and an upstanding Edmontonian. Two lawyers, J. Mahaffy and H. J. Macdonald, gave the opposition the balance that it needed in conducting debates. Although the other twelve members were inexperienced in the arts of politicking and debate, it was expected that they would make up for this deficiency by showing an aggressive interest in attacking Aberhart.

The session was, however, anti-climactic. Walker's maiden speech was the epitome of understatement. In fact, in his address, he limited himself to accuse the government of wastefulness and to request that roads in the South be properly attended to. He went on to incriminate the C. C. F. as robbing

them of a victory in 1940 and accused Aberhart of "carrying on unfriendly relations with the Dominion government."¹⁶ Only at the end of his speech did he appear to show the aggressiveness expected of an acting opposition leader: "We condemn you [he said] for designing...to set up a dictatorship.... We condemn you for trying to control free speech and the press; for trying to get control over banks and industry."¹⁷

The speech was so bland on the whole that it led the editor of the Calgary Herald to recommend that "although Walker has acquitted himself creditably," a new permanent leader ought to be selected immediately.¹⁸ The Spotlight received Walker's address very coolly. It insisted that he was not a party man and, therefore, he was not accustomed to the task of opposition leader. The paper wondered whether the Independents had not lost the chance that a united opposition had been waiting for, to be able to tear down Aberhart and ridicule his position.¹⁹

It was somewhat expected that Walker's maiden address would be devoid of fire and issues, because of his mild manner and lack of parliamentary experience. Unfortunately for the Independents, other well-known figures performed even more poorly. Duggan, for instance, exulted over the Independents' electoral showing, bluntly asked that the legislature introduce proportional representation as an electoral system.²⁰

The highlight of Davison's speech came when he requested an enquiry regarding the current Social Credit provincial organizer who was alleged to have committed a minor misdemeanour.²¹ This, and other charges that he brought against the party, were

never followed up after the original speech and he himself admitted lacking any major evidence.²² Bowlen's accent was on his belief that Attorneys-General should be lawyers, and he spent the major portion of his own address debating the reasons for this position.²³ For his part, Mahaffy the legal and financial expert for the group and one of its most intelligent members, merely advised the government to "test the legality of the act" that the Social Credit had passed establishing Treasury Branches throughout the province.²⁴ As was to be the case throughout that and subsequent sessions, poor research and the lack of follow-up questions became major handicaps.

The Spotlight was becoming alarmed by what it called the "lukewarmness and complacency" of the Independents. Windross warned that they would not defeat Social Credit by meeting in convention once a year and "then falling into guilty sluggishness, indifference and apparent somnambulance."²⁵ This was the first of a series of scathing editorials aimed at the Independents which became an increasingly common occurrence during the following years. By November 1941, Windross admitted that "the group has not made any very remarkable impression on the electorate or in the legislature....; efforts fell short of what had been anticipated."²⁶

The paper blamed this inertia on the Independents' lack of organization and leadership. It argued that this had rubbed off on the members' attitudes, mood and dispositions. Page admitted that no proper research had been conducted to put up

a solid opposition, and no division of labour, designed to share the tasks of opposition, had taken place.²⁷ The result was a disastrous session for the Independents.

The Liberals in the meantime, were pressing ahead with plans of their own. Noticing the poor performance put up by the Independents, they appeared determined now to re-enter the provincial arena. Jimmy Gardiner continued to write to both Grant and Bowlen, urging them to forge ahead with plans to re-organize across the province as the best antidote to prevent the Independents from emerging as a strong force.²⁸ Consequently, the provincial Council met on September 1941. It resolved to start a re-organization campaign, by establishing strong constituency organizations and by naming a leader to replace Gray. Gray had resigned immediately after his defeat and had accepted a federally-appointed position in Saskatchewan. It was determined that a convention would be called the following year in order to allow the party time to re-establish its credibility.

The party's two-fold aim proved impossible to realize. First, as Senator Buchanan pointed out in a letter to Bowlen, the search for a leader was not to be an easy task: "you know, [he wrote], how hard it was to get a man to meet all the requirements [in 1937]: Has any new apostle appeared in the meantime? For the life of me, I can't think of a name that would unite the party and give it some prospect of getting anywhere."²⁹ In fact, it appears that Buchanan and other Liberal moderates outside Edmonton were now inclined to think in terms

of working close to the Independents. A paragraph in the same letter substantiates this position:

Leadership is the all-important matter. Unless an outstanding man can be found to lead the opposition forces, I don't know how we are going to get anywhere. If the Independents choose a Conservative, the die-hards [of the Liberal party] will "raise the devil" and if they choose a Liberal, I suppose the Conservatives will be inclined to be suspicious.³⁰

Second, the Liberals found that re-organizing in the midst of a war was an even more arduous enterprise. Constituency organizations failed to answer letters sent to them by the Council. Most of them appeared deserted of Liberal supporters.³¹

The Independents, in the meantime, had come to the realization that their own role had to be clarified quickly if they hoped to retain a semblance of credibility. Consequently, the second convention of the Independents was publicized as the last attempt to obtain some results regarding the future of the Movement. The meeting took place on November 1941 and was attended by delegates representing twenty-eight constituencies, including Calgary and Edmonton.

The convention had been called for the specific purpose of "discussing and deciding upon the future status of the Independent Movement."³² Items on the agenda included the establishment of an organization, as well as the appointment of an executive and the passage of a resolution. The latter was harmless enough³³ but a counter-resolution was tabled that "the entire proposal be referred to the pro-

vincial constituencies in order that the people themselves may consider the said proposal and instruct their delegates regarding the wishes of the people." Although this resolution was defeated after a heated debate, it showed the extent of animosity within the Movement, the autonomous nature of the constituencies and the inability of such "delegate-style democracy" to come to grips with the need for decision-making.

The main business then ensued. After a prolonged debate in which some constituencies threatened to leave the Movement, the convention agreed to form an association with an executive and to organize constituency units across the province. A nominating committee was convened and it appointed twelve people to act as members of the provincial council.

The council's responsibilities were laid down as follows: 1) to promote the adoption of Provincial policies; 2) to elect its own officers; 3) to convene conferences with leaders of other groups in order to co-ordinate effort of "those who desire the establishment of responsible and progressive government"; 4) to organize constituency units; 5) to prepare a program of immediate and post-war policies for the group; 6) to take such action, in co-operation with the Independent members of the House, as the circumstances may from time to time warrant; 7) to fill vacancies in the Executive Council; 8) to arrange for a permanent headquarters "to assist...in the formation of a strong organization throughout the whole province"; 9) to arrange for conventions

in the future.³⁴

The Association insisted that its activities and those of the Executive Council were restricted to provincial affairs. All members of the association would have complete and unqualified freedom of action in the field of federal party politics. Indicative of the feelings of large numbers of the delegates on the Movement itself, the convention decided to alter the proposed name of the Association (United Citizens Association of Alberta) to the more neutral Independent Citizens Association.

The first real step toward party status had finally been taken. In true characteristic fashion, however, the association did not go to work immediately on any of its objectives and a great deal of time elapsed between word and action. For instance, a president was not chosen until May 1942, five months after the association had been established; a leader was not elected until 1944; a platform was hurriedly put together two months before the election itself, and by one man, P. Page; finally, constituency organizations never got off the ground. Indeed, even the formation of a headquarters for the Movement was constantly postponed in view of the unwillingness of rural areas to consider Calgary or Edmonton as alternatives, or to suggest an equally acceptable rural headquarters. In only one sphere did the Independents provide action to accompany their resolutions: in their now obsessive attempts to co-ordinate and solidify the opposition to Aberhart. We shall return to all these matters shortly.

A couple of days after the meeting took place, the Edmonton Liberal Association demanded and obtained assurances from Bowlen and Macdonald that "they intended to have no part in the formation of any Independent party."³⁵ Two meetings were arranged between these members and the executive of the provincial Liberal association. Clearly, the Liberals were now looking suspiciously at the Movement because--despite its formal non-party status--it had taken what the Liberals felt was the final step toward becoming a full-fledged partisan force. At a time when they were attempting to look for a new leader and to build an organization, the Liberals could ill afford to lose the services of their two members in the legislature. Therefore, both were urged to dissociate themselves in no uncertain terms from the new "party." Consequently, Bowlen and Macdonald were pressured to make an official break with the Movement. This rift came in a letter which read:

We wish to make our position as Members of the House clear so that there may be no possible misunderstanding. We are sitting as Liberals as we do not belong to the Independent Citizens' Association, and we are not to be considered as Members of the Independent group in the House.³⁶

In a similar vein, the party President, P. Miller, wrote to the Independents, rejecting their call for a unified effort and reiterating the Liberal wish to remain a provincial entity.³⁷

The second session of the legislature was among the shortest and most uneventful since Social Credit had seized power. For the first time, no controversial legislation was introduced. The role of the opposition seemed less disorganized

and depended largely on the speaking abilities of some of its members. In the Spotlight's own words "the Independents are now getting used to the rules and regulations and limitations of parliamentary procedure."³⁸ The main thrust of opposition attacks centered upon charging the administration for waste on several projects, for its extensive use of patronage and its lack of action in some agricultural areas.³⁹ Speakman's work as the new House Leader was dubbed "excellent" although his reply to the speech from the throne was merely a carbon-copy of past performances by other Independents in the House: they continued to achieve a psychological uplift out of the reference to the enormous inroads made by the Movement in the 1940 election.⁴⁰

After this short session, the Independents once more turned to attempting to solve their internal problems. Its executive council met in May to elect a President and it unanimously decided on P. Baalim, a former Lethbridge Liberal who had been largely responsible for the successful 1938 campaign which saw Campbell win a seat in Lethbridge. His major asset, therefore, consisted of being "one of the best organizers in the province."⁴¹ He also claimed to remain a Liberal with close links with his party. The President quickly promised action on the objectives of the last convention, especially in regard to efforts aimed at organizing province-wide.⁴² Having taken this painful first step toward forming an organization, the Independents demurred once again on the subject of leadership, and due to the lack of agreement on the

issue, postponed consideration for a future yet unscheduled time.

The condition of the group was tested in the by-election of October 1942, which was called in Edmonton as a result of Duggan's death. The group's organization was found seriously wanting. J. F. Lymburn, a former U. F. A. Attorney General, was nominated to run on the Independent ticket. The Liberals, who were attempting to return to the provincial field, put up their own candidate. Page was the organizer for the Independents. He endeavoured to present an image of over-confidence. No organizational work was done in the constituency, other than sending an open letter to the voters where Page ~~stated~~ that Independents should get the vote (no reasons were given for this insistence).⁴³ As was the case in 1940, no effort was made to write up a platform. When asked about this deficiency, Page stated:

We cannot offer attractive programs in order to get votes. We believe in facing every problem squarely, discussing them fairly and without bias and when conclusion is reached, doing our level best to bring about the desired results.⁴⁴

The Independents were now fighting two major adversaries. The first was Social Credit, whose nominee wasted no time calling Page "a tool of monied interests, the fifty big shots and reactionaries."⁴⁵ The second challenge came from Roper, C. C. F. provincial secretary and his party's runner, who also saw fit to bring back painful memories of the Brownlee government and Lymburn's close links with it.⁴⁶ The C. C. F.

itself fought a hard-hitting campaign based on an efficient organization. It had failed to gain any seats in 1940 and its leaders felt this was perhaps its last chance to demonstrate the party's provincial credibility in Alberta.

The results were clearly a repudiation of the Social Credit and the Independents--as well as the Liberals--with Roper emerging the winner. Social Credit had never been strong in the capital, but the Independents had received a sharp rebuff from an electorate who had supported it convincingly in 1940. The Spotlight commented that there was no sign of activity in the party and concluded that "there seems to be an idea in the ranks of supporters of the Independents that things will fall into their lap without any effort."⁴⁷ The paper looked to the C. C. F. as an example of what the Independents ought to do in the way of enthusiasm, aggressiveness and organization.⁴⁸

The Liberals and the Independents: Co-operation by Default

The Independents' only reaction to this upset was a sudden outburst of energy on the part of Page. He appeared determined to reorganize the Edmonton branch of the party, by enrolling a more active membership and by appealing to the young people, with whom Page was popular, to join the Movement.⁴⁹ Once more, however, nothing concrete was done after this initial promise and the Independents fell back into their regular stupor.

Unable to act in any positive direction, leaders,

in their regular pattern of behaviour, blamed someone else for their errors and problems. Thus, Page concluded in an article which he wrote on the Alberta opposition that "the strength of any government depends on the strength of the opposition. Liberal ranks have broken down. Bowlen and McDonald will still support the Independents but will sit as Liberals. This has greatly weakened the Independent Movement."⁵⁰

An interesting transformation was now taking place in Alberta. Aberhart was becoming less and less radical in the year before his death, and the Independents were becoming increasingly concerned with the C. C. F. as a new radical force in the province. In fact, since Roper's triumph in Edmonton, MLAs and the mass media had turned their attention toward the C. C. F. and away from Social Credit.

This change of heart was nowhere more evident than in the 1943 session of the Legislature where the new House Leader, of the Independents, Page, his own star rising within the Movement, quoted poetically from E. Burke in his efforts to show that "the Independent Movement was neither ultra-conservative nor ultra-radical but...showed the methodical advance of civilization." He went on with a vehement attack on both Social Credit and its new ally, the C. C. F., which opposed this gradual progress.⁵¹

For its part, the Liberal party was now in a dire and desperate situation. As was mentioned earlier, the Association had opted for returning to provincial politics in early 1942,

but nothing substantial had been achieved by the end of the year. Indeed, on February 16, the Treasurer of the organization sent a note to all card-holding members, requesting their co-operation in obtaining new membership. His meager objective was for each member to secure six new members. The goal was clearly not so much to raise money (although the Liberals were having difficulty in this area) as to "educate the population in the Liberal way."⁵² This campaign obtained the unimpressive addition of 108 new members.

Bowlen was evidently biding his time to leave active politics and was seeking a federal appointment. Gray assured Bowlen in a letter that he was doing everything in his power to obtain a good position for him. Gray, however, discounted a Senatorial role because of the lack of vacancies.⁵³

The party as a whole was in disarray and greatly discouraged by the sound defeat suffered by Buchanan in the Edmonton by-election, as well as by its inability to find a new leader. The party's fortunes were at such a low ebb that its executive was forced to come out in mid-1943 in favour of co-operation with the Independents as the only realistic alternative. A scathing criticism of the meeting at which this decision was reached, was made by Page Rideout, an old Liberal stalwart:

Though I regret to say so, yet I was very reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the Liberal Association of Alberta has developed into a sort of glorified Imperial Club, which organization is functioning for the benefit of the lawyers of Calgary and Edmonton.... The meeting did not want to exercise the necessary physical strength

required to work out a programme, platform and policy of development for the party...but appeared quite content to go to the people with no programme other than to mock and ridicule the party.⁵⁴

Negotiations began to take place between the two groups.

The goal was an electoral alliance along the same lines as in 1940. The major personalities involved were Baalim and R. Montgomery, President of the Liberal party. The Liberal Executive Council met in June to discuss specific plans for collaboration. Not surprisingly, there were some misgivings about the Independents. Several Edmonton members remained opposed to any compromise. Macdonald hastened to assure Liberal faithfuls that none of the leaders favoured "anything which would result in the disintegration of the Liberal party."⁵⁵ The Council, therefore, decided overwhelmingly to go ahead and empowered two committees of seven--Northern and Southern--to carry out the details of an agreement.⁵⁶ These committees met several times during the coming months with similar ones which had been struck by the Independents.

Early in August 1943, a tentative agreement was reached. The following items were part of it and allowed constituencies a great deal of flexibility, while emphasizing that the major points were not debatable:

1. There is to be co-operation--not amalgamation.
2. Each political party co-operating has the right to maintain and build up its provincial and constituency organizations.
3. Each provincial constituency is to have complete autonomy. The constituency may co-operate with the other parties or designate a straight Liberal or Independent

man if so desired.

4. A new Council of the Independents is to be formed, consisting of two members from each rural constituency and ten members from each of the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, making a total of 114 members.
5. The Independent council is to appoint an Executive committee of ten members, five from the north and five from the south, with the President of the Independents as chairman of both committees.
6. All publicity, including public announcements, must be made only through a joint publicity committee.
7. This basis of co-operation is to be in force for the purpose of the forthcoming General Election only.⁵⁷

The most important of all principles of co-operation was undoubtedly the establishment of the new Independent Council, empowered to elect an executive committee. Both of these would be drawn, as equally as practicable, from within the ranks of the Conservatives, Liberals, Independents and U. F. A. The actual allocation of seats was not spelled out in detail. The Council appeared to be a compromise between total amalgamation on the one hand, and a mere electoral coalition on the other. It allowed for a greater degree of centralization and over-all decision-making than would be the case under a simple understanding between the parties. Significantly, however, each constituency organization was allowed full freedom to decide on its own terms of co-operation. This was a loophole that, deliberately or not, seriously minimized the far-reaching agreements reached by the executives of the two parties.

The agreement may be said to be, on the whole, the

closest that Alberta's opposition parties have ever come to union in theory. Some individual constituencies resisted the terms of the agreement as "sell-outs,"⁵⁸ but since each constituency allowed freedom to accept or reject the principles worked out by its leaders, no rebellions took place. Windross editorialized "that the time had now come to concentrate on a program of propaganda and organization."⁵⁹ The paper called for an immediate appointment of an organizer, and the early assembly of a leadership convention. To this end, it wrote, "no time should be lost; already too many months have been wasted on needless delays and consultations: conference and committees must result in definite plans at once."⁶⁰

It was against this backdrop of co-operation that the Northern and Southern committees met in September in order to decide on the next item of priority for the Movement: the election of a leader. The Northern committee appeared to have been disposed toward an early convention. A new leader, it felt, would give the weaker North the incentive to organize. The Southern committee, which claimed lack of preparation, was successful in holding the convention date off until January 1944.⁶¹

The Debacle

A by-election had been called for December 1943 to fill a vacancy caused by the death of A. Speakman, an Independent member from Red Deer. This by-election was the watershed for

the Independent Movement because at this stage it found itself leaderless, platformless and now decidedly fighting two enemies. The Movement had taken seven years to gather force, as it were, to defeat Social Credit, when a new force had appeared on the horizon which caused them even greater concern: the C. C. F. Windross himself now admitted, "the real danger is not Social Credit now but Socialism."⁶²

In Red Deer, the Independents had considerable difficulty obtaining the services of a fairly unknown figure, Dr. W. Edgar (who was later to become the President of the Liberal party). More critically, they failed to agree on a platform and had an utterly chaotic and weak organization. The results, which clearly favoured Social Credit, were taken almost with relief by a pathetic Page who hailed it as "a repudiation of the subversive C. C. F.ers."⁶³

The Red Deer by-election had demonstrated that the Independent cause had ceased to have any great validity. Social Credit, under the new leadership of Manning, was rapidly becoming a more respectable force and was quickly replacing the Independents as the voice of Conservatism in Alberta.

It was only too painfully obvious that time was getting short for the Independents. Of all the objectives set down by the formation of the Movement in 1942, only one had been achieved: the understanding reached with the Liberals. The other three were still in the air until January 1944, when a convention was called in Calgary. The convention had a three-fold purpose: to elect a provincial leader for the Independent Movement;

to draft a platform and to launch an offensive to get constituencies on the road to effective organization.

Each constituency was entitled to send eight delegates, with Edmonton's and Calgary's share being forty each. The Independents invited the new Liberal partners to participate in the conduct of the convention. Most of them co-operated, albeit begrudgingly, but the powerful Edmonton constituency decided to stay aloof from this convention.⁶⁴

The convention was anti-climatic. Only two nominations were made for the leadership. D. Elton, former Red Deer mayor, decided to step down prior to the voting and this made the decision unanimous in favour of J. Walker, former House Leader. It is a matter of debate whether the Independents could have chosen a better leader. Although Walker had proven his sincerity, he was neither a party man, nor a politician, nor an exciting figure. The choice was, as Page was to admit later, the only feasible one. It was one which provided the alienated rural element of the Movement with a needed psychological victory. Furthermore, it enabled the Movement to fight the election under a leader who had no ties to the big interests or parties by which the Independents were still allegedly controlled.⁶⁵

Concerning the second item, Page, who was now party president, had sent out notes to all constituency units. In them, he asked for advice regarding the policies which the Independents should adopt in their platform. By January 14, two days before the convention, Page admitted disappointingly that "unfortunately, many of those on whom we relied for assistance

in drafting the platform have not forwarded us their ideas."⁶⁶ This was an understatement for the fact is that Page had to prepare the platform himself after he failed to receive a single recommendation.⁶⁷ All the policies covered in the platform were extremely vague and completely undefined. His draft was presented to the convention and accepted without any discussion. This was perhaps the first time in the history of a political party in Canada when the plank on which a party fought an election was totally written by one man!

Finally, in respect to the third item scheduled for discussion by the convention, Independents were harangued by the leader and the President to go back to their constituencies and establish viable organizations to fight the coming election. No suggestions were made as to the appropriate methods to achieve this goal and no guidelines were offered for them to follow, other than "to give help whenever requested."⁶⁸

As we have seen, it had become routine for the group to settle down for long periods of time after having reached an important decision and this time was no exception. By the end of April 1944 Page resorted to sending an open letter to all the constituencies, urging them to convene and select a nominee for the coming election. Only two ridings had nominated candidates at this stage. The Spotlight complained that the Independents were totally unprepared for the general election and that "only a miracle might give the group a fair representation in the legislature."⁶⁹ The paper blamed this inertia on lack of aggressive leadership and unleashed what amounted to

its greatest condemnation of the Movement to that date. Large numbers of supporters, it claimed, wanted leadership. Its leader, however, was not projecting a sound image of energy and enthusiasm. It was becoming evident, the editor commented, that "nobody wants to join in a half-hearted easy-going cause that has no definite aim for victory and that suffers from an inferiority complex."⁷⁰

When the election call came in June 1944, the move caught the Independents by surprise, even though four and a half years had elapsed since the last election. Page complained that "we were given to understand in the House that another session would be held prior to a provincial election and our people have been much more interested in the war effort than in preparing for an election."⁷¹ Once again the leaders were resorting to the tendency to blame external forces and circumstances to cover up their own weaknesses.

The Movement was by this time, however, completely spent and had collapsed throughout. No co-ordination between the central council and the constituency organizations took place and chaos reigned everywhere. The delicate negotiations that had taken place with the Liberals were now quite useless. Once again, the provincial wing was being urged by the federal Liberals to abandon the Movement. Both Jimmy Gardiner and James McKinnon, the newly elected M. P. for Edmonton, and Minister of Trade and Commerce, wrote to Bowlen, indicating their displeasure with the arrangement.⁷²

Following in quick succession, a total of fourteen

constituencies in which the Liberals had a modicum of strength, decided to go on their own. To retaliate, the Independents put up their own candidates without consulting the Liberals in twenty constituencies. In eight of them, including Calgary and Edmonton, Liberals and Independents ran candidates in opposition to each other. To crown this breakdown in the agreement, five constituencies were left without a Liberal or Independent candidate to vote for.⁷³

The campaign itself was a disaster. For one thing, the Independents had failed to present a unified front. Even more important, however, no platform, no "slogan something to catch the imagination, to inspire the enthusiasm and capture the loyalty of the public" were provided by the group.⁷⁴ Social Credit under Manning had legitimized its rule and the business community itself was becoming more sympathetic to the newly-found conservatism of the Premier.

The Independents, therefore, rather than concentrating on Social Credit--who after all still was responsible for their very existence--turned against the C. C. F. as the primary adversary. For instance, advertisements put up by the Movement read: "all good growth is slow growth. Keep that in mind. Don't be carried away by the avalanche of C. C. F. 'visiting visionaries,' who will try to convince you that they can introduce Utopia overnight."⁷⁵ Little was said against Social Credit. Although the Independents tried to assuage the feeling of bias against C. C. F. by assuring everyone that the "Independents cannot choose the lesser of two evils,"⁷⁶ the

understanding was that they would prefer a return of Manning rather than a new experiment in radicalism.⁷⁷ It was this fear that dealt the Movement its most critical blow, for in the midst of the campaign, the C. C. F. was swept to power in Saskatchewan. This created a panic in Alberta which helped Social Credit, but wiped out the Independents.

The election result was clearly a debacle for the Independents. Only three of them were elected, two in Calgary and one in Edmonton. None of the fourteen Liberals was returned. Page concluded philosophically that "it just wasn't in the cards for us to win and the people simply became panicky." The President, however, warned against considering the Movement as having outlived its usefulness. "Other parties [he said] have been defeated and have come back. There is no reason to believe that we won't do likewise."⁷⁸

The election had dealt the Independents what some regarded as a fatal blow. Page however, and some other members of the council were reluctant to give up. He sent a letter to some of the more prominent supporters of the Movement in order to ascertain whether "there is a place in the provincial field for an organized Independent Movement."⁷⁹ He suggested that a convention take place so that the work of re-organization could begin. The executive met in December 1944 to argue the case. Although only seven members were present, they decided to carry on in provincial politics, but wisely adopted a resolution deferring a convention for a later date.⁸⁰

Although clearly repudiated, the Movement had deemed it

appropriate to prolong its existence. Its experience during the next three years was extremely painful. First, in December 1945, the Liberals held an executive meeting at which they decided to re-enter fully the provincial arena. Second, and most significantly, in May 1945, Manning advised the legislature that Alberta's debt would be refunded to the investors to the amount of \$113 million and that credit would be fully restored in the province. This action formally terminated the Social Credit experiment in Alberta and sounded the death-knell of the Independents. The section of business which had previously lent them its support and maintained the Movement financially, now suddenly and completely abandoned the party. Page was to put this most poignantly in a letter to Bowlen:

I feel let down by several very influential men who wanted me to continue my opposition to Social Credit [after the 1944 election]... They made me believe that it was a service I owed to the public but I am beginning to think they had their own interests in mind. In any case, now that the government has taken care of them through the refunding scheme, they have forgotten that I even exist. Such appears to be the usual run of politics--perhaps you know all this better than I do myself.... I had taken no previous part in politics and was merely a "babe in arms" in that respect. 81

A third event, however, helped to prolong the agony of the Movement. This was the rather lukewarm attempt of the Conservatives to return to the provincial field. After an agonizing postponement of any decision in their January 1946 meeting,⁸² they finally resolved to withdraw from the provincial arena indefinitely in April 1947.⁸³ Page and a few of the survivors of the Movement took this as a new lease on life.

for the Independents.

That the Independent Movement was moribund became evident to all but the most idealistic by June 1947. At that time, thirty Independent supporters and former MLAs met in Calgary and decided to call a convention for the following Fall. A circular letter was sent to one hundred former sympathizers, in order to establish whether such a convention would serve any valid purpose. Only twenty replied and of these, only five showed any enthusiasm in keeping the group alive. Needless to say, the convention was postponed.⁸⁴

Despite the disappearance of the Movement, Page decided to stand as an Independent in the 1948 election. He reasoned his behaviour this way:

The Liberals would never ask me for they feel that I was largely responsible for the Independent Movement in the first place and they will never forgive me for that. On the other hand, if I were to run as a Conservative, it would be immediately charged that I was merely an under-cover Tory all along.⁸⁵

Page ran a campaign at which--epitomizing the Independents' weakness from the very beginning--he never worked.

As he put it in a letter to Bowlen:

I am competing in the present contest with very little enthusiasm. I have found to my surprise and regret that people who have been associated with me have been only too willing to let "George do it".... I am doing very little in the way of campaigning, and will not mind if I am elected or not.⁸⁶

That both he and Laut--the only other Independent candidate in 1948--failed to get elected, shows the extent of the de-

bacle which met a movement that only eight years earlier had been at the threshold of power.

Conclusion

The factors responsible for the failure of the Unity groups were both inherent in the organizations and alien to them. Both before and after 1940, the Movement was in the hands of men who were not politicians. Their capacity to compromise was minimal, their sense of the practical and feasible was often shadowed by an idealism that placed them above political expediency and into the realm of indecision.

The most critical example of this trait was their obsessive need to seek alliance with the Liberal party at the price of inability to proceed with other very critical matters.

What were the internal problems of the Independents? First was their inability to reach a decision regarding their own status. As we have seen at length, the Movement never formally became a party. Its leaders' most fervent wish was to make it one, by submerging the strength of all existing parties. When this effort failed, and after long indecisive periods, the Independents resolved to make their group as close to a political party as it would ever be. They were unable, however, to generate any enthusiasm for the idea from the Liberals. Their efforts culminated in the temporary establishment of an ambiguous and vague partisan force--which

still stubbornly claimed to be non-partisan--with a very weak leader and an organization, which was never fully distinct or tightly-knit.

Second, the Movement was characterized by a marked degree of idealism, which contrasted with its lack of political acumen. Its goal was established early: defeat Social Credit forces. By comparison, everything else appeared pale in importance. That the Movement was poorly organized did not really bother them. The early People's Leaguers believed that a party could be organized like a corporation, with no effort to establish representativeness. Later, the less business-oriented members of the Unity Council and the Independent Association believed, by contrast, that because each constituency had been clamouring for a degree of autonomy, they should be allowed to guide as well as to organize themselves fully without any aid from the centre. In any case, constituencies were never co-ordinated; there existed a misguided belief that things would fall into place, that no real organization was needed as long as a sizable section of the polity agreed with the avowed aims of the Movement. Even worse, this early constituency autonomy created an impetus of its own, making it impossible for the organization--when it was finally set up--to provide any leadership for constituencies which now felt entitled to run their own affairs.

Naturally, some leaders paid lip service from time to time to the need for organization, but at no time was action

taken to accompany such resolutions. It could be argued that, given the small margin of the defeat suffered by the Independents in 1940, a sound organization would have given them a victory in that critical election. After defeat, they continued to cling tenaciously to the idea that organization was indeed not important. Organization was perhaps not critical in 1940, when two distinct parties were pitted against one another, with an electorate able to separate the two. In 1944, when the party scene became crowded and Social Credit less of a distinct alternative vis-à-vis conservative parties, the lack of organization was fatal.

Moreover, the Movement never seriously adhered to the notion that a leader was necessary. In the beginning it was impossible to elect a leader because doing this may have permanently alienated the Liberals. Later, when the Liberals had, at least tacitly, capitulated, none of the existing personalities with leadership abilities was acceptable to everyone. Some had too close links with other political parties. None of the others had shown any appreciable qualities qualifying them to lead. In the end, they settled for a lacklustre figure, who possessed neither vision nor the required power to hold the party together.

Finally, the Movement lacked a uniform and viable set of policies. As we have seen these were regarded as secondary: the emphasis was on good, business-like government. Policies did not seem to them to play a significant part in

such a return to sanity. In Laut's words "platforms have been made mainly use of for the purpose of securing office and power."⁸⁷ One may ask, did the Independents not want power? Far fetched as it may seem, the question is worth considering. One would be inclined to believe that the Movement was, from its inception, led by circumstances. It was caught up in a whirlwind of its own making; once in it, it was not sure how to proceed.

Most people who were prominent in the Movement were not politicians, and were not particularly adept at playing the game of politics. Their original objective was set under conditions of panic. These people firmly believed that radicalism had to be eradicated from Alberta. After this was accomplished--through forces external to themselves--they were forced to proceed by events and by their own inertia. Furthermore, one must agree with Windross who suggested that the Movement suffered from an inferiority complex: its indecisiveness, its pettiness and lack of vision were only too patent and hurt it considerably.

To their unwillingness and inability to act as an adequate alternative must be added the problems which arose between the rural and the urban members of the Independents. The rural MLAs believed that the organization was controlled by the big cities and resisted all attempts to enlarge this control. On the other hand, the Edmonton and Calgary MLAs, only too aware of this charge, bent backwards to ensure that

the rural members did not feel like outsiders, giving in to their wishes only too often for the sake of maintaining harmony.

If all these problems hurt the Movement greatly, external circumstances dealt it a fatal blow. By 1942, as we have seen, the depression was over and the half-hearted protest radicalism of Albertans had been replaced by a more stable return to conservatism. Aberhart did recognize this fundamental fact, when he nearly lost in 1940 and began rapidly to scale down his radical reforms. Manning, a perspicacious reader of the Alberta mood, accepted conservatism fully as soon as he succeeded his Teacher, thereby making the Independents' early objective obsolete. Manning successfully appealed to the essential conservatism of Albertans in the face of a new radical newcomer, the C. C. F. Business, alien to politicking, but interested in stability and efficiency, was only too happy to withdraw its support from a movement that was agonizingly making its deficiencies obvious.

Finally, and underlying the fundamental weakness of the Movement, was its inability to convince the Liberal party that it was a non-partisan force. The Liberals were continually suspicious of a movement which had had its origins in the People's League, a business and Conservative-oriented group.

It is undoubtedly true that the Conservative party had been the first to accept the idea of inter-party unity.

There is insufficient evidence to assert that the whole idea of Unity was conceived by the Conservatives as a means of strengthening their position in a province where its weakness was well-known. Page, the last surviving Independent when this author was conducting his research, rejected this theory.⁸⁸ The Liberals and C.C.F.ers, of course, supported it.

What available information exists of its genesis would appear to indicate that indirectly, the Liberals had rightly suggested that the Independents were dominated by the Conservatives. Traditional Conservative backers--the moneyed interests-- had conceived of the Movement. These people desired the end of the Social Credit experiment. They were aware of the Conservative weakness and were prepared to forge a union designed to align all anti-Social Credit forces together. That this inter-party union was successful to some extent is corroborated by its membership, which included people of many political persuasions.

That the Liberals had fully collaborated in the onslaught against Social Credit is explained by the concerted efforts on the part of Jimmy Gardiner and, since 1940, James McKinnon, to prevent a joint strategy, even if this meant a Social Credit victory. Both federal leaders claimed to have proof that R. B. Bennett and Eastern business interests had established the Movement, and that "Bay Street buccaneers were behind the attempt to obliterate the Liberal party from

Alberta."⁸⁹ Both Gardiner and McKinnon were Ministers, had great prestige and influence as well as utilitarian power. Their recommendations were seldom rejected by the Alberta Liberals; this accounted for their reluctance to collaborate wholeheartedly with the Independents.

It is still not clear what the Unity Movement hoped to gain with an alliance with the Liberals. It could be argued that the Liberals would bring the Movement a greater modicum of strength and legitimacy. It may also be argued that in their idealism, the Independents sincerely believed that partyism should be, and would be, forgotten in times of distress.

More realistically, the Independents appeared to be hiding their fundamental weakness behind the Liberals. By placing full-fledged alliance with them as a priority throughout, other important considerations were conveniently postponed. A considerable section of the Alberta electorate made clear between 1935 and 1940, that it did not mind which party defeated Social Credit, as long as it was a strong alternative to it. These people also believed that a united opposition was such an alternative. Moreover, Liberal strength was restricted to very few areas, such as Edmonton, Grouard and St. Albert.

Had the Unity Movement been truly interested in unifying the Alberta opposition against Aberhart, it could have done so by taking the initiative and solidifying its own

strength. It could have, then, placed itself in a position which the Liberals would have ignored at their own risk. That the search for a Liberal alliance was a pretext for deeper internal problems, was shown by its inability to settle any of the outstanding issues facing it even after the Liberals had formally joined, in 1939 and in 1943.

In essence, then, the strategy of coalition politics, as well as subsequent efforts to defeat Social Credit, failed due to a variety of reasons. Underlying them all was the perennial mistrust between Conservatives and Liberals, a mistrust that was kept alive by federal-- rather than provincial--circumstances.

NOTES

1. Advance notice of April 6, 1940 meeting; available in the Frank Laut Papers (hereinafter referred to as Laut Papers), Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta.
2. Letter from Grant to Bowlen, April 19, 1940, Bowlen Papers, loc.cit.
3. This is put very explicitly by Grant in a letter to Bowlen, dated April 26, 1940, ibid.
4. A letter from H. J. Macdonald to the Edmonton Liberal Association, April 25, 1940, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
5. Edmonton Journal, April 23, 1940.
6. A letter from A. Davison to members of the caucus, April 22, 1940, Laut Papers, loc.cit.
7. Lethbridge and Camrose were at the head of this "rebellion".
8. Minutes of the first meeting of the Independents, April 21, 1940, Laut Papers, loc.cit.
9. Ibid.
10. See the minutes of these meetings in Laut Papers, loc.cit.
11. Spotlight, December 16, 1940.
12. Ibid.
13. An interview with Percy Page, loc.cit.
14. Other officers were elected without contest. Davison became the caucus chairman, Page, Secretary, and MacLachlan, whip.
15. Spotlight, November 1, 1940 in a column entitled "Current Comment."
16. Spotlight, February 28, 1941.
17. Ibid.
18. Calgary Herald, February 28, 1941, in an editorial entitled "New Leader is Critical."
19. Spotlight, February 28, 1941.

20. This was repeated in an article entitled "Government Holds Office Under a Minority Vote" which appeared in the Spotlight, February 21, 1941.
21. Spotlight, February 28, 1941.
22. Spotlight, March 21, 1941.
23. Spotlight, February 28, 1941.
24. Spotlight, April 4, 1941.
25. Spotlight, June 6, 1941.
26. Spotlight, November 7, 1941.
27. Interview with P. Page, loc.cit.
28. Letters dated July 26, 1941; to Bowlen, available in the Bowlen Papers, loc.cit.; to Grant, in the Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
29. Minutes of Executive Council of Liberal party, September 27, 1941, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
30. In a letter dated September 19, 1941, Bowlen Papers, loc.cit.
31. At least, no replies were seen by this writer in the Liberal Papers, loc.cit. MacDonald, interviewed by the writer, agreed on this point (June 1973).
32. As stated in a circular of the Movement, dated December 10, 1941, available in the Lawt Papers, loc.cit.
33. This involved Aberhart's alleged speeches made on a radio program ("Today and Tomorrow"), where he continuously derided the Dominion government, and praised his party and Social Credit policies. These had been made--the Independents claimed--with public, and not with party funds. The Independents clamoured for "action to be taken to prevent Aberhart from making any similar statements."
34. Minutes of the Independent convention, December 10, 1941, Lawt Papers, loc.cit.
35. Executive meeting of the Edmonton constituency, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
36. Letter dated January 29, 1942, Bowlen Papers, loc.cit.
37. P. Miller to Page, January 9, 1942, Page Papers, loc.cit.

38. Spotlight, February 27, 1942.
39. Ibid.
40. "Spotlight, February 13, 1942.
41. Spotlight, May 15, 1942.
42. See the editorial "Independents on the Move," Spotlight, May 29, 1942.
43. See this letter in the Page Papers, loc.cit.
44. Ibid. The letter is a typical exercise in self-defensive tactics, without positive proposals or recommendations.
45. Spotlight, September 18, 1942.
46. Spotlight, July 24, 1942.
47. An editorial "Time for Action," Spotlight, October 23, 1942. This type of heading became extremely common after the mid-1940s with Windross taking a highly critical view of the Independents' inactivity.
48. Spotlight, July 24, 1942.
49. Page's notes in his diary, Page Papers, loc.cit.
50. Spotlight, November 6, 1942.
51. Spotlight, February 26, 1943. Compare this view with the Edmonton Bulletin's less sympathetic comment that the session was one "of the mildest and most boring on record," March 1, 1943.
52. Note from the Treasurer to the constituencies, February 16, 1942, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
53. March 20, 1942, Bowlen Papers, loc.cit.
54. A letter from Page Rider to Bowlen, June 16, 1943, ibid.
55. Executive meeting of the Edmonton Liberal Association July 1, 1943, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
56. Minutes of the executive meeting, April 28, 1943, ibid.
57. Terms of the agreement are available in a letter sent to all constituencies by the Alberta Liberal President, Montgomery, dated August 6, 1943, ibid.
58. The Edmonton Bulletin frequently claimed that the move-

ment was still the vassal of monied interests, finance and mortgage companies. See the issues of August 15, 18 and 21, 1943.

59. Spotlight, August 13, 1943.
60. Ibid.
61. Spotlight, September 24, 1943, in an editorial entitled "A Discouraging Decision."
62. Spotlight, August 13, 1943.
63. Spotlight, December 17, 1943.
64. Letter from the Edmonton Liberal executive to Page, dated December 31, 1943, Page Papers, loc.cit.
65. Interview with Page, loc.cit.
66. Spotlight, January 14, 1944.
67. Confession made during interview with this writer, loc.cit.
68. See minutes of the convention, January 19, 1944 in the Page Papers, loc.cit. Page felt that, in general, the constituencies would not have allowed any interference, and that therefore the executive had to tread lightly. In interview with author, loc.cit.
69. Spotlight, May 19, 1944.
70. Ibid.
71. Spotlight, July 7, 1944.
72. Letters dated February 13 and March 15, 1944, respectively, in the Bowlen Papers, loc.cit.
73. Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Peace River, Ponoka, Wetaskiwin and McLeod; and Claresholm, Lac Ste. Anne, Pincher Creek, Rocky Mountain House and Stony Plain, respectively.
74. Spotlight, July 7, 1944.
75. See the advertisement in the Spotlight, July 21, 1944.
76. Spotlight, August 4, 1944.
77. It is an interesting comment on the chaotic situation in which the opposition found itself in the province that McKinnon wrote to Bowlen in the following amazing fashion; "I hope that things will go reasonably well for

us and that the Manning government will be returned," in a letter dated August 7, 1944, Bowlen Papers, loc.cit.

78. See his article "Independents Defeated Through Panic of Electors" in the Spotlight, August 18, 1944.
79. Letter dated September 23, 1944, Page Papers, loc.cit.
80. Spotlight, December 22, 1944.
81. Letter from Page to Bowlen, dated October 8, 1946, Bowlen Papers, loc.cit.
82. Meeting of the executive and subsequent letter to Page, January 12, 1946, Page Papers, loc.cit.
83. Calgary Herald, April 23, 1947.
84. A copy of the letter sent by Page, dated July 3, 1947, Page Papers, loc.cit.
85. Dated June 2, 1947, Laut Papers, loc.cit.
86. Letter to Bowlen, July 26, 1948, Bowlen Papers, loc.cit. Page became a Conservative in 1952 and was returned for Edmonton. He was to become Lt. Governor in 1959. For some aspects of his later career see Chapter V.
87. Radio address by Laut as Independent candidate, August 10, 1948, Laut Papers, loc.cit.
88. Interview with Page, loc.cit.
89. J. Gardiner to Grant, April 30, 1938, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.

PART III

THE MIDDLE YEARS: THE OPPOSITION IN THE WILDERNESS

CHAPTER IV

THE LIBERAL PARTY: THE DECLINE OF AN ORGANIZATION

1945-1971

By the end of World War II the Liberal party of Alberta was in shambles. There was no properly constituted provincial organization, no leader, no constituency strength, no morale remaining within its ranks. The party, like the Independents and Conservatives, had dissipated its strength during an entire decade, fighting internal as well as external forces in search of an identity. It had half-heartedly opted for one in which it did not find itself comfortable. An overwhelming force had driven them to ally themselves with a movement which had no clear notion of its own place in the political scene of Alberta.

When the Liberals decided to make a final break with the Movement in December 1945, and re-enter the provincial scene, the mood was one of cautious optimism.¹ The Liberals were still regarded by many as the most qualified party to pursue the objectives of the Independents and to provide effective opposition to Social Credit. On the other hand, the obstacles facing the party seemed insurmountable. What little organization there was, existed in long-held bastions of Liberalism. These included parts of Edmonton, and to a lesser

extent Calgary, St. Albert, Grouard and some Northern areas. More important, the organization in these areas centered around the federal MPs and their organizations. Moreover, to a large extent, even these organizations ceased to exist between elections. They seldom held meetings, and only during elections did the machines spring back to life.²

As we have seen, the Liberals had decided to combine the provincial and federal wings of the organization in their 1937 convention. This had been done at the time with the hope that the two would work with greater unity of purpose. In effect, what it had accomplished was to confirm an already well established fact: federal politicians and a federally-oriented executive,³ who had previously controlled the organization,⁴ were to increase that hold during the remainder of the period under consideration to the extent of strangling any opportunities for provincial revival.

Rebuilding the Organization: The Early Years

The years spent flirting with the notion of forming a united opposition had dealt the Liberal party a nearly fatal blow. The organization had formally ceased to exist in 1942. Thus, when a meeting of interested Liberals was called in November 1945 at Red Deer, only some seventy staunch supporters attended. Interestingly, no misgivings were expressed about reactivating the defunct organization. The two surviving Alberta MPs--McKinnon and M. Deschenes--were partic-

ularly persuasive in convincing the membership the fortunes of the Liberals federally would be enhanced if the party fought provincial elections as well. Consequently, the meeting overwhelmingly decided to re-enter the provincial arena, thereby formally dissociating themselves from the Independent Movement. The meeting also unanimously agreed to establish a temporary executive body and to appoint Wes Stambaugh to the position of President. A farmer, and a businessman and a brilliant organizer, Stambaugh was perhaps better equipped for the position than most. As a contemporary Liberal recorder put it: "He spoke the language of the people in the small towns and on the farms."⁵

The task ahead was arduous. Except for those areas mentioned above, the Liberal banner seemed beyond repair. Stambaugh--single-handedly for two years and then accompanied by part-time workers--set out to revive the party throughout the province. He did this by availing himself of lists of names of former Liberals from old records and hoping to find these people still alive and prepared to become active. To quote again from Miss Grodeland's account:

On one occasion he arrived in a fair-sized town, armed with the names of six people reputed to be good supporters. Enquiry led to the information that four of these now lay in the local cemetery. A call to the supposed place of business of the fifth took him to the office of the Social Credit member for the constituency. The story in this case had a happy ending for he did discover the sixth to be a living, active, honest-to-goodness Liberal, whose help he was able to enlist.⁶

The party, then, had to be completely re-organized.⁷

During 1946 and early 1947, Stambaugh succeeded in rekindling old sparks of Liberal support in towns throughout Alberta. He found, however, that Liberal backers were somewhat sceptical about becoming completely involved in the task of establishing new organizations at a time when no leader had been elected and no proper structure for the party had been established. Thus, Stambaugh was only able to extract from them a promise of future support and co-operation in searching for additional membership. By early 1947, Stambaugh was convinced that their demands had to be heeded if the party was to become fully operative.

His chief task consisted of obtaining the services of a new leader, the first since Gray's resignation in 1940. The executive gave him complete freedom in his search for a suitable candidate. This was an arduous undertaking if we keep in mind that the party had not elected any MLAs since 1935 and that it counted less than 500 members. Most of these Liberals were too rooted in their own communities, and they were largely unknown elsewhere. They could not be expected to serve adequately as leaders of a party that was now attempting to rebuild itself.⁸

It appears that, as early as 1946, Stambaugh had asked Harper Prowse to run for the position. Prowse was an Independent MLA, formerly a captain with the Canadian Army in Italy. He had become a member of the legislature as an army representative in 1944. A former newsman, his grasp of facts as well as excellent and forceful oratory, made him the most

attractive opposition member in the Alberta assembly. As an independent member, he felt free to criticize Social Credit as well as the other parties, which in the early years included the Liberal party in Ottawa.

After the war ended, Prowse had come to the realization that if he planned to continue in politics, he would have to ally himself with a political party.⁹ He despised Social Credit and Stambaugh now offered him the opportunity to obtain the highest position in a party in one single bound. Because of his qualifications and winning personality, he became not only Stambaugh's protégé, but also the unanimous choice of the party hierarchy.

A leadership convention--the first since 1937--took place in Edmonton in June 1947. Two important goals were achieved at this meeting. First, a decision was reached to elect a brand-new formal executive as well as ten regional vice-Presidents. This constituted the first steps taken by the Liberals towards the establishment of a full-fledged organization.

The second task was that of electing a new leader. Three names were nominated. J. Wheattey, a former U. F. A. member and farmer from Chancellor; J. H. Tremblay, a former MLA from Grouard, and currently attached to the Canadian embassy in Paris; and Harper Prowse. Although Tremblay had allowed his name to stand, his position abroad made him an unlikely contender. Wheattey, on the other hand, was quite popular with some of the farming communities. Despite this

opposition, Prowse only needed one ballot to defeat his two opponents by a clear majority.¹⁰

The convention had been attended by delegates representing all but two provincial constituencies. In over two-thirds of these, only a modicum of support existed and no formal organization had been established yet. Prowse vowed that his work for the next few years would consist of building the Liberal party of Alberta from the grass roots. The chief principle to which he promised adherence was that of allowing each constituency complete autonomy "to carry out the work in the manner best suited to its particular area."¹¹ While permitting this basic freedom to develop,¹² Prowse set as a high priority the appointment of a full-time organizer for the province. His job would consist of maintaining a communications link between the provincial office and individual constituencies, on the one hand, and to spread "the message of Liberalism throughout the province,"¹³ on the other. It was 1950 before Prowse appointed James Connors as a full-time organizer; but since the latter's part-time appointment in 1948, both attempted to organize each constituency and local community in the province, working as a team.

The next provincial election was expected in 1948 and Prowse quickly turned toward the immediate goal of fighting that election. To this end, he sent out a circular to the leaders of constituencies warning them that, in order to succeed as a political organization, a three-pronged thrust

was necessary: firstly, building an "efficient, enthusiastic and active constituency"; secondly, finding "the best man in each constituency to run under our banner"; and thirdly, drawing up a "sound, sensible platform which will show the public just what we plan to do when they put us in power."¹⁴ He clearly indicated, however, that although the central office would be willing to help achieve these tasks, the bulk of the responsibility for organization ought to be borne by the individual constituencies.¹⁵

Despite his initial efforts, Prowse had reason to be discouraged about the early fortunes of Liberalism in Alberta. By April 1948, only two constituencies (Grouard and Spirit River) had put up candidates. Prowse complained bitterly of the "defeatist attitude" prevalent in Liberal ranks. This attitude, he claimed, was owed to the inability of the Liberals to win a general election since 1917. As a result, too many people were not "looking or working to win the election, butto form the opposition."¹⁶ This complaint was to become commonplace during his tenure of office.

Prowse was disappointed with his first election as leader. The Liberals--who had quickly put up thirty-two candidates--were able to return only two members. The calibre of the candidates had been generally high, but Prowse blamed the constituencies for not living up to their responsibility. They had failed both to organize within the districts, and to suggest issues of interest to the constituencies. He maintained that many Liberals had chosen to vote for Social

Credit because the "opinion leaders" in the communities had not generated sufficient enthusiasm and had even failed to clarify to potential Liberal supporters that a Liberal candidate was actively running a campaign in their constituencies. Furthermore, he complained that the policy committee of the party had been left entirely on its own in the drafting of a platform. Subsequently, it had been compelled to prepare a highly abstract document, "a created platform" and not one that had "come from the people of the province."¹⁷

This may seem a strong and unfair attack on a party which had only too recently been awakened from a long slumber. However, Prowse was realistic in assessing the Liberal party's chief woe as apathy. Indeed, he spent the next decade attempting unsuccessfully to fight this apathy.

Despite this early blow to the Liberal fortunes, Prowse continued in the path that he had developed since his attainment of the leadership. He remained a strong believer in the importance of organization and of awakening the enthusiasm of the rank-and-file to bring about the revival of the party. In a speech delivered to the 1949 convention, he reiterated that the coming federal election would not be won:

By having cabinet ministers out from Ottawa to speak to us. We certainly can't win it by having the provincial leader running all around the country. We tried that. Nor by picking the best candidates. The only way... we can win is by each of us going home to our constituencies and making sure we go out and work and speak about Liberalism. It is a fine thing. It is the party of the people of this country.¹⁸

Despite reverses, the Liberal party had clearly attempted to re-enter vigorously the provincial arena. It is therefore puzzling that Prowse decided in 1949 to change his early strategy of working towards the establishment of viable provincial organizations. Undoubtedly, the executive believed that both federal and provincial constituencies existed to help each other. As Stambaugh made clear in a speech to the 1952 convention:

Our organization is federal and provincial. There is no difference. I want you all to know and get that in your minds, that we are at the call and service of either of our organizations, federal or provincial.¹⁹

What this meant, in effect, was that the provincial leader was expected to participate fully in federal campaigns. Thus, Prowse seemed to be following directives when he became extremely active in the 1949 federal election. J. McKinnon had decided to step down in Edmonton West and Prowse helped in the organizational campaign of McKinnon's successor, G. Prudham. Prowse was also asked by the executive to appear in many other nominating conventions.

His address to the 1949 convention was solely devoted to examining ways and means of increasing the political fortunes of the party at the federal level. This epitomized the unity of purpose of the two branches of the party. Considerable efforts and time were spent in strengthening the party's federal stand, while provincial constituencies were allowed to lie dormant. The Liberal priorities clearly lay with the federal party, and the provincial leader was expected

to aid in this effort to increase representation in Ottawa.

Their efforts in this direction appear to have been crowned with success, for the party was able to return five members, among whom was Prudham. Following the tradition instituted by McKinnon, Prudham, the freshman businessman from Edmonton West, received a portfolio in the St. Laurent cabinet, that of Mines and Resources. This put him in a great position of power from which he was to hinder repeatedly Prowse's efforts to build an organization.

For his part, Prowse continued with his organizational work by receiving full authority from the executive and the 1950 convention to establish a new constitutional structure for the Liberals. It was hoped that changes in the structure of the party would enable him to carry out that work more efficiently. By June 1950, he had worked out a plausible plan for the province. Prowse conceded that "our attempts at organization in the past have not gained us the results we require for political effectiveness because of the magnitude of the task of organizing the entire province." Accordingly, responsibilities would be broken down so that no one "will have a job too big to cope with and so that we can give a maximum number of people an opportunity of participating in this...work."

The plan called for a division of responsibilities through a clearly established hierarchy. There would be a leader, ten regional directors responsible for the overall organization of the province and working in close co-operation

with the provincial organizer, who would now be a full-time worker. Regional directors would be responsible for appointing constituency convenors, who in turn would oversee the work of district convenors. These officers would be aided in their task by block and poll captains as well as by committee men, ~~the last~~, and yet perhaps the most important link in the chain of command, since they were responsible for getting out the vote.

This proposal, then, had a two-fold goal. On the one hand:

The rank and file will have a feeling that they are a necessary and active part of the organization with the intention of ensuring that the Liberal party in both the organization and development of policies is run by the rank and file advising, criticizing and working in co-operation with the leader and officers and not dictated from the top.

On the other hand, however, democracy would not make the party a fully efficient machine. It was necessary that a certain degree of centralization occur, "so that it will be possible at any time to assess the work that is being done by each key worker and compare it with the work done by others."²⁰

In essence, the plan did not differ from many other party organizations across Canada. Except for a very few constituencies, however, Prowse was unable to carry out this ambitious organizational plan as originally proposed. Realistically, he had broken down the implementation of the plan into parts. The establishment of constituency convenors was the top priority. By February 1952, however, he²¹ was expressing obvious disappointment that the vast majority of

constituencies had been unable, or unwilling, to co-operate. The only link in the chain of command which was established were the offices of regional directors. The others were hastily appointed by Prowse himself at election time.

The vast organizational plan was postponed due to several new developments which had intervened since the federal election of 1949. First, James McKinnon had retired from active participation in the political scene of Alberta to become a Senator. His absence affected the vigor of the Liberals. Second, President Stambaugh, a tireless worker and close ally of Prowse, had also become a Senator and was now unable to continue working for the Alberta Liberals with the same determination as before 1952. Although he remained as President of the party for one more year,²² Prowse was not able to utilize his valuable services as a full-time advisor and a prestigious source of contact with the same frequency as before.

Third, Prowse was increasingly showing signs of inability to separate his provincial office from the business of federal politics. He worked extremely hard for elections and by-elections. This served to dissipate his strength and that of party workers when provincial elections took place.

Moreover, Prowse was developing a new strategy in preparation for the all-important 1952 election, a strategy which did not take province-wide organization as a priority. By his own admission, the period between October 1950 and December 1951 was spent away from organization work in the province as a whole, and in the fighting of three campaigns

in by-elections, two provincial and one federal. This was done, he claimed, in order to test his organizational plan and its effectiveness.²³ He hoped that "the combined effect of those successful campaigns will do more to stimulate interest in Liberalism in the province than anything else."²⁴

It would seem that the results were very gratifying. The Liberals won Grouard and doubled their total vote in Olds. It is difficult to agree, however, that the long-term results were as rewarding. For one thing, unless they reflect an over-all organizational strength, by-election victories for opposition parties are seldom more than Pyrrhic gains²⁵ and there is little doubt that the Liberal organization left much to be desired. Perhaps of greater significance was the fact that an excessive amount of money and time went into these campaigns. As we shall see, funds were subsequently restricted and the two very costly by-elections were greatly responsible for this. Finally, the Liberal organization elsewhere in the province was severely affected; little work was done until a few months before the election.²⁶

A fourth, and most consequential development for the Liberals was the dispute that arose between Prowse and Prudham during the period of the by-elections. We must recall that Prowse worked very closely with Prudham's campaign in 1949. Relations appeared to be good until late 1951 when Prudham began to question the validity of Prowse's strategy in Alberta. Prudham felt that the Liberals as a whole had no chance of getting anywhere in the province and that they had obviously

failed to generate the necessary enthusiasm. Consequently, he decided to set up his own federal office in Edmonton. He went on to dissociate himself from the failing provincial Liberals, a link which, in his estimation, could only hurt his own fortunes. Secondly, Prudham was involved in Ottawa in a campaign promoted to diminish the Alberta Liberals' ability to spend money. Following Stambaugh's retirement from the presidency in 1952, the position had been taken over successively by C. B. Carignan of Fairview and W. Edgar of Innisfail. Unlike Stambaugh, who during his active years had been extremely close with the party bagmen in Ottawa, and who intimately knew and was highly respected by all Alberta Liberals, Carignan and Edgar were obscure figures and lacked extensive support or connections.

As a result of this vacuum of power, Prudham was successful in convincing the federal Liberal bagmen and finance committee men that he should be put in charge of the distribution of funds for the province. He was unhappy with what he considered were vast sums of money spent in the by-elections and the 1952 general election, while the results were hardly encouraging (four Liberals were returned in the latter). After obtaining that position, he set out to place demands on Prowse in return for allowing him to use specific funds. It is not clear what condition Prudham set as indispensable for his aid in the spending of funds.²⁷ These were found unacceptable by Prowse, who decided to turn directly to Liberal

supporters for help.²⁸ In a meeting of the executive, he explained that "the future of the party in Alberta was in the balance" unless money was forthcoming; otherwise, he warned, the party would not be able to survive.²⁹

The executive was non-committal and unwilling to take a united stand against Prudham. They only agreed to send letters to Liberal members across the province requesting help. That the situation was serious at this time, is evidenced by Browse's appeal in the letter in which he said that the alternative to acceding to this request for funds would be "closing our headquarters, losing our staff and to all intents and purposes abandoning all effective efforts in organization and education."³⁰

The issue appeared to have come to a head, but in characteristic Liberal fashion, no showdown occurred. Under pressure from McKinnon and Stambaugh, Prudham agreed to loosen the tight purse strings in mid-1954, and the party continued to exist, although with less money from Ottawa. Periodically, it submitted requests for funds from its supporters, who obliged with small contributions.³¹

Another thorn in Browse's side was certainly the insult which he received in March 1954 when he wrote to Prudham, and asked him to appear in a radio broadcast to discuss the steps taken by the federal government to encourage oil exploration in Alberta.³² Manning, he said, was continually leaving the impression "that it is the Alberta government and the Alberta government alone which is responsible for the activity." Prud-

ham very curtly refused to accommodate, claiming that it was his belief that provincial and federal politics should be kept strictly separate, and that he would not mingle in provincial affairs in any way.³³

Prowse himself appears to have lost some of the interest in politics which had drawn him to the Liberal party after the war. He decided to take up studies in law at the University of Alberta in 1953. This undoubtedly affected his performance both inside and outside the Legislature. H. J. MacDonald--his lieutenant in the legislature--recalls that, between 1962 and 1955, he was left alone to conduct the role of opposition. Outside the House, Prowse displayed a very low profile, preferring to allow Connors to take over the little organizational work taking place in the province.

The Liberal party, then, appeared by 1955 to be in the doldrums, moving to a nadir when it had never reached a zenith since its revival. Whereas previously Prowse and others had firmly believed that organizational work would benefit the party considerably, they admitted openly now that Social Credit, and Manning in particular, were unbeatable forces. An interesting demonstration of this viewpoint as early as 1952 was one of MacDonald's broadcasts during the election that year which he entitled "The Need for Opposition." In it he argued that Manning was "running wild" for lack of opposition and urged everyone to send more Liberals to Edmonton to watch over the haughty Social Crediters.³⁴

Then, as the Liberal party appeared headed for ob-

livion, the Landeryou-Lee affair exploded in full force on the Alberta scene.³⁵ It served to give Prowse and his colleagues in the Legislature a new breath of life and it helped Prowse become, once again, the excellent speaker and organizer that he had been previously. The Liberals determined to become the spearhead of the campaign charging Social Credit with gross corruption and nepotism. They achieved this effectively both inside and outside the Legislature.

Manning, characteristically, wasted no time asserting his own innocence and took the bull by the horns. He promised the establishment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the allegations and then dissolved the Assembly--prematurely, for the first time in Alberta history--and called for new elections in May 1955.

Despite the fact that the election call caught the Liberals by surprise, they reacted favourably and swiftly to put their own house in order. Funds were made available to fight an effective campaign. Within a month, the party had nominated forty-eight candidates, and the leadership--if not the constituencies themselves--was involved in fighting its best campaign before the Alberta public. The mass media saw it as the first opportunity to defeat Social Credit and by and large, sided with the Liberals.³⁶ An enormous amount of publicity was generated by the Liberals. Despite the efforts by all to refer to other issues during the campaign,³⁷ the Landeryou-Lee affair itself provided sufficient ammunition for the opposition.

Although this was the first election since 1940 which was being fought with Social Credit clearly on the defensive, the Liberals could only hope--as the Independents did in 1940--that public reaction to the Socred excesses would be sufficient to give them a victory. In fact, Liberal organization was, as had been previously, conspicuously absent from most constituencies. Liberal candidates, on the whole, were hoping to be able to ride the wave of discontent. Indeed, one of Prowse's major problems during the campaign consisted of convincing his own candidates that the Liberals could win. In a stern letter sent to all the candidates shortly before election day, he warned them about the negativist attitude which they were displaying. Candidates, he said, were inclined to talk in "terms of strengthening the opposition rather than in terms of forming the government.... We must show confidence [he continued] in our ability to succeed...; or the public will fail to give us their confidence."³⁸

The Liberals had reason to be happy at the election results. For the first time since 1917 their representation had become respectable. Moreover, of the fifteen Liberals elected, only five were from Calgary or Edmonton, which meant that the majority of the new MLAs came from small towns or from rural areas.

However, the election of 1955 had clarified for the Liberals what they already felt was too painfully obvious. Manning, and not Social Credit, was the cause of their defeat. The Liberals had fought their best campaign since the 1910s

and the electorate appeared to have been discontented with Social Credit. Yet, the election had merely improved the Liberal position, but had failed to give them a victory. The 1955 election had indirectly strengthened Manning's own hand, granting him an aura of invincibility, which he had temporarily lost, and which remained with him until the time of his retirement in 1968.

Prowse was naturally disappointed with the defeat. His position within the party appeared secure still, but it is not clear whether he retained any interest in continuing the struggle. He continued to be most bitter toward his own Liberals who had failed to think positively during the campaign.³⁹

Prowse convinced the executive to allocate funds for pursuing, before the Royal Commission, the case of the alleged corruption of Social Credit officers. To this end, the party hired a lawyer. The Commission took over a year to report its finding. Subsequently, it exonerated not only Manning and the party, but even the ministers who had been allegedly involved in the conflict of interest. The findings of the Commission dealt a severe blow to Prowse himself; he had personally accepted responsibility for the Liberal party's large expenditure in representations before the Commission.

Aside from Prudham's, the first rumblings against Prowse's leadership as well as the most powerful and regular ones, came from H. J. MacDonald, deputy leader of the party and a Calgary MIA. It has already been mentioned that ever

since 1952, when Prowse began to attend Law School in Edmonton, MacDonald was left to carry the main burden of speaking for the Liberal party in the Legislature. Prowse continued after 1955 absenting himself from the legislature, appearing only irregularly when important or controversial issues were discussed. MacDonald's prestige as deputy leader and acting leader continued to grow within the enlarged Liberal caucus. Although he does not appear to have had any leadership ambitions, he was actively exploring the possibility of finding a replacement for a discouraged and demoralized Prowse.⁴⁰

One of the chief difficulties experienced by the party in the 1955-59 period was financial. After the expensive electoral campaign and the heavy subsidy for the Royal Commission, the party had been compelled to borrow substantially in order to continue to operate. Needless to say organization suffered enormously as a result. Little work was carried out until after the 1957 federal defeat, a defeat that was particularly impressive in Alberta. Liberal strength from the province was decimated to one member, the lowest number since 1935. The purse strings were once again loosened after this fiasco and the executive instructed Prowse to see to it that the Liberal organization was improved.

A meeting of all regional directors in the province was arranged on September 1957 and subsequent meetings took place also between representatives of all the constituencies and the leadership. It was the biggest effort ever made by the Liberal leadership to listen to the problems of constit-

uencies as a prior condition for solving them. The purpose of these meetings, in Prowse's words was:

To enable us [the Liberals] to present a complete program of action for the Liberal party...and to enable those of us who are charged with the responsibility of speaking publicly for the Liberal party to know what our people want us to say.⁴¹

The constituencies replied massively to the request for these meetings. The problems facing them, Prowse found, were as varied as the constituencies involved; but several points were made by most of them equally:

1. Liberals are too modest. A belief exists that Social Credit cannot be beaten; the ensuing negative approach is obviously harmful to the party.
2. The party has become a one-month party. The organization fails to work between elections. Despite the rather democratic nature of the organization, and perhaps because of it, apathy reigns at the grass roots for lack of motivation.
3. The party has difficulty obtaining the services of adequate figures to run for election, despite public protestations and assertions to the contrary. Nominations occur too late, sometimes well into the election campaign for these individuals to perform sufficiently well.
4. The party's major problems reside in its inability to touch both young people and the common man. Their needs must be taken care of if the party is to become a viable force.⁴²

If most of the constituencies had been perceptive enough to realize their problems, no one seemed to know how to proceed. Having had their first open opportunity to contribute to party policy-making, the constituencies and the regional organizations failed to give any advice to the party

heads on how to deal with these problems. The leadership was left to draft proposals on its own. The working out of possible solutions was shelved when Diefenbaker handed the Liberals a second stunning defeat a year later.

The Liberal party outside the Legislature was at least willing to look into ways of increasing support. It is evident that they had not found new methods to scrutinize Social Credit or to provide new issues inside the House. The Liberal members' balance sheet in the 1955-59 legislature was pitiful. Few incisive questions were asked and debate took place in a routine and uninspired way. The only exceptions were provided by Prowse's skillful interrogation of the government during parts of 1956 and 1957, when alleged corruption by Social Credit was still an issue.

Then, in 1957, the government introduced Bill 95. The bill contained a proposal to give dividends to the people of Alberta. This was designed to distribute part of the increase in revenue accruing to the government from oil royalties. The Liberals committed the error of rejecting such dividends as unwarranted "until the requirements of the Province and Local governments for educational facilities, health and hospital facilities, conservation of our natural resources, roads, public works, assistance to the poor and needy are all fully met and satisfied."⁴³ The Liberals, like their Conservative counterparts, refused to accept a proposal that clearly smacked of early Social Creditism.⁴⁴

The dividend was the first to be given by Social Cre-

dit despite its original support for the idea. It was less an attempt on the part of the Socreds to stage a philosophical come-back than a magnificent symbolic coup by Manning, allowing Albertans to share in the increasing wealth of the province. Liberal as well as Conservative suggestions that the money could be spent elsewhere to increase government services, however sensible, failed to gain acceptance by a population who had reason to be grateful for Manning's generosity.

The faltering Alberta Liberals, still looking for a role to play and unable to find and outline one, reached a new turning point, followed by a rapid descent, when Diefenbaker resoundingly won the vote of Canadians, Westerners and Albertans in 1958. Prowse had staked his own political future on this election and had resolved to resign if the Liberals lost convincingly in Alberta. Having failed to elect a single member in that contest, Prowse immediately tendered his resignation.

Thus, Prowse and the provincial wing of the Liberal party did not survive this defeat because the federal and provincial wings were so indistinguishable and inseparable that the defeat suffered by the federal candidates was immediately viewed as a defeat for the provincial wing as well. This defeat resulted, in the short-run, in the resignation of Harper Prowse. In the long run, it brought about the discomfiture of the Alberta Liberal party provincially.

The Decline

Under Harper Prowse, the Liberal party of Alberta had been characterized by sudden spurts of activity followed by long periods of somnolent apathy. Certain traits that became more visible in later years, were already apparent during Harper's leadership. First, leaders of the Liberal party were seldom allowed to become more than titular heads. Strong personalities such as Prowse, became disillusioned with their inability to forge ahead because of obstacles. These obstacles included, at various times an executive jealous of its power, or a prestigious and powerful MP who might feel entitled to being regarded as the provincial leader of the party.

Second, the party was already showing signs of disintegrating provincially at a time when it appeared to have been most popular (1955-59), merely because the federal wing was going through a slump. Third, the rank-and-file was already giving evidence of unwillingness to rescue and support a leader fully in times of difficulty. As was to be amply demonstrated later, herein resided the Liberal party of Alberta's greatest tragedy: party leadership--elsewhere a lofty position--was not coveted. In fact, it was eventually to become a liability.

The Liberals were preparing for a convention in mid-1958, a convention whose principal object was the election of a new leader to the post vacated by Prowse in March of that

in attempts to draw into the race people of high calibre. The Mayors of Calgary and Edmonton, D. Mackay and W. Hawrelak, were well-known Liberals who were said to be interested in the leadership. Other hopefuls included H. J. MacDonald, Ralph Walker, a Raymond farmer and oilman and son of the former Independent Movement leader, and Grant McEwan, noted historian and agriculturist, and currently MLA in the provincial legislature.

There is some evidence suggesting that Hawrelak had considerable support from the party's North and most urban centres, whereas McEwan was considered strong in Calgary and agricultural areas. Hawrelak decided against entering the race reasoning that he had "responsibilities to the people of Edmonton."⁴⁵ More likely, his strong and mercurial personality did not appear to sit well with the executive.⁴⁶ The race lost much of its interest with the withdrawal of Hawrelak. Walker held views similar to his, but did not possess his ability to appeal to the people. He became, however, the favourite of the youth and reformist groups within the party.

The convention was anti-climactic. To no one's surprise, McEwan won handily, defeating R. Hall--a dark horse from Athabaska--and Walker, in the second ballot. McEwan was the nominee who had received the blessing of the executive as well as the personal support of H. J. MacDonald, who had earlier decided to stay out of the race.

Less important than the question of the leadership,

was a series of resolutions and policies which were to carry the party through the next election and that the convention quickly accepted as a package. Allegedly, the time factor had been responsible for the hurried passage of a vague platform. A disgruntled youth wing objected to the mellow tone of most of the policies drafted by the executive. The Albertan editorialized:

There was considerable evidence at the convention that the policy that was handed down failed by a wide margin to inspire even a majority of the delegates. The very fact that the policy was handed down with no chance of open and honest debate could prove a serious handicap. The alternatives facing the convention were acceptance of the various policies or the threat that there would be no policy at all. Such a procedure may be useful in concealing basic disunity within the party; it fails to make that disunity disappear.⁴⁷

That this was a true assessment of the situation is evident from the absolute lack of directives that went out of Liberal headquarters to the constituencies when the provincial election was called for June 1959. The election was characterized by the inability on the part of the Liberals to focus properly on the fundamental issue on which the Social Credit was standing in that election: the future development of Alberta. The Liberals⁴⁸ came up with a "twelve point action program" based on the platform passed during the 1958 convention. It did not come close to the detail of Manning's proposed five-year development program, which promised increased benefits in health, welfare, education, roads etc., all to be subsidized by increased oil royalties. As Bill Gold of

the Calgary Herald put it:

The Liberal program had its general merits but was poorly presented to the public. It lacked specific punch; no drama was injected.⁴⁹

One reason for this was, of course, that the policy platform read more like a vague set of proposals than specific, well-worked-out policies with appeal. The second, and perhaps most important reason, was the lacklustre image projected by the mild-mannered McEwan, who was never able to attack Manning's blueprint with determination and conviction.

The results of the 1959 election were more than disconcerting to the Liberals. They were almost completely routed, their strength in the House being cut down to one member. Of significance, was the alarming drop that the Liberals sustained in the popular vote, from 31.1 in 1955 to 13.9 (see Table I).

The 1959 election had seen the tide of the opposition turn. The decrease in Liberal support went to the Conservatives. The latter, despite their inability to send but one candidate to the Legislature, had undergone a sudden jump in popularity (from 9.2 of the popular vote in 1955 to 23.9).

Reckrimination quickly followed the election. An exodus to other parties from party high positions as well as from the rank-and-file began to take place. The latter was all the more depressing in that it left the Liberals without any significant grass roots support and therefore without any effective organization at the local level.

The situation in high echelons was as desperate. Party

regulars, who had previously given their support and time despite adverse party fortunes, were having second thoughts. Some became apathetic, others began to bolt the party. H. J. Macdonald recalls that the 1959-62 period was one of continued reverses for the Liberals. Membership figures were decreasing at an accelerating pace and lack of effective leadership made it impossible to correct the situation.⁵⁰

The effects of this exodus were to be felt almost immediately as the Liberal party of Alberta, always a party where professionals heavily predominated, now became the dominion of one of their groups: the legal profession. They were to exercise during the remainder of the period under consideration an almost total control over the failing organization. For the next ten years, two-thirds of the top party positions were to be held by them.⁵¹ This, as we shall see, had grave consequences for the party.

It came as no surprise, then, when its leader resigned in 1961. He certainly lacked the dynamism--however irregular--that characterized Prowse. His leadership had been one of the most obscure and passive in Liberal party history. No organizational attempts of any kind were made during his three years as head of the party. He had presided over the Liberal party at a turning point in its history: the beginning towards a steep decline.

During the early 1960s some groups within the party were clamouring for changes which would make it a viable force. In fact, one of the major criticisms levelled at the party by

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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

its youth wing had consisted of pointing out the Liberals' inability to take a firm stand anywhere within the political spectrum of Alberta. It was difficult to tell exactly where the party stood philosophically. During the past two decades, it had acted simply on inertia, proposing policies which could not systematically serve as alternatives to Social Credit's own platforms.

With the advent of the Conservatives to the Alberta political scene in full blast during 1959, one thing had become only too evident: the right in Alberta had become instrumental in altering the party's philosophy temporarily--believed that the chief reason for the decline of the Liberals was that they had failed to attract what they called "the left-of-centre vote."⁵² To them, the alternatives were clear: remain within the stream of conservatism, in which case the party--considering its present state--would fail to revitalize itself; or attempt to move in a leftward direction, thereby gaining not only new converts, but also a well-needed impetus to become aggressive, vigorous and different. If the party followed the latter direction, it would certainly keep alive the enthusiasm of its organizers and supporters.

By 1962--curiously at the same time as the lawyers had gained power at the top echelons--this wing had asserted itself. It gained command of the leadership convention that was taking place to find a replacement for McEwan. The majority of the convention voted not only to elect Dave Hunter--a left-of-center former mayor of Athabasca--as their leader⁵³

but also to provide the Liberals with a new direction in their policy platform. The convention passed resolutions demanding the nationalization of water, electricity and "whatever other resources as appear necessary."⁵⁴ Both of these steps were taken over the protestations of the executive and their unsuccessful attempts to prevent them.

The situation that existed within the Liberal party at this time was paradoxical. The executive did not seek to impose a leader on the convention, a feat which they could not accomplish before a determined membership. However, the newly appointed leader could be "persuaded" to change his direction after he had taken over the position. This could be made possible simply by withholding the necessary powers--and money--that he required in order to implement his organizational or educational plans. Consequently, the same constituencies and individuals who had vociferously supported him during these conventions would become disenchanted with his inability to act and would give up supporting him. It would then become an easy task for a well-entrenched executive to summarily dispose of him.

Such an ignominious fate befell Hunter, who had been forced to become increasingly conservative after his election as leader. Even during the 1963 campaign, when the Liberals made the nationalization plank part of their platform, the Calgary Herald perspicaciously noted that "the Liberal power [nationalization] plank was intended to be pushed in some areas of the province, and quietly forgotten in others."⁵⁵ Calgary

was a city where Hunter was never able to speak in behalf of this plank. That the Liberals increased their vote in 1963 (see Table I), was heralded by the reformers as evidence that their cause was right.

Hunter's attacks on Social Credit became more sparse after this election. Despite his protestations that charges of vacillation and lack of courage on his part--charges that were made against him by dissidents--were ill-based, discontent was growing. Ironically, his leadership was being challenged by the Edmonton branch of the party, which had three years earlier spearheaded his victory. Tom O'Dwyer, a leader of that branch, promised a "sharp and concentrated attack on the leadership" during the upcoming 1965 convention.⁵⁶

Another dissenter, P. W. Jones, also from Edmonton and a lawyer himself, was far more severe on the leadership of the party. For the first time in Liberal history, he focused his attack on the executive of the party which he claimed "has lost complete contact with the working classes in the province." Hunter, he continued, was as responsible for this as the executive that "controls him." Although himself a lawyer, Jones ascribed the problems facing the party as being exacerbated by the dominance of lawyers who were in it "for what they can get out of it personally."⁵⁷

These two men and their followers went to the 1965 convention in Edmonton determined to call for a new leadership meeting. They appeared to have considerable support. Their ranks were silenced after Hunter delivered a fiery speech.

during which he demanded that:

Dissident supporters who could not support the party line should either stay quiet or get out of the party.... No political party on the march to form a government can stand internal disagreement.⁵⁸

This tone seems to have been sufficient to quell the rebellion that was brewing. At a subsequent committee meeting dealing with leadership issues, the two dissenters and their supporters failed to raise a vote of no confidence against Hunter.

The convention had also decided, in a direct reversal of the 1962 plank, that power and water would no longer be taken over by a Liberal government in the province. Such a government would set up a water and power authority to link the government with private enterprise.⁵⁹ This position was clearly more in tune with the desires of the leadership as a whole. However, it dealt Hunter a severe blow. Only a few days earlier, he had reiterated his support for such take-over and, indeed, had claimed growing backing by Liberals on this issue.

Despite the vote of confidence which he received at the convention, then, Hunter had lost an indirect battle with the executive. He was now looking for a justification to resign. His way out came when the Athabasca Liberal Association offered him the Liberal nomination of that riding for the forthcoming federal general election. He tendered his resignation immediately after he had received the nomination.

The Liberals were once again leaderless. A flurry of

activity was to surround the selection of a new leader, scheduled for January 1966. For one thing, the Liberals had suffered another setback federally in November 1965 by failing to elect a single representative. This, they argued, made it all the more imperative that a strong personality be quickly chosen to take them out of the doldrums.

Another problem facing the party was that the two most likely contenders, M. Maccagno and Bill Dickie, the current Liberal MLAs, flatly refused to be considered in the running. Given that they also alluded to a vague "lack of time" as the chief reason for their decision, one must conclude that they were not sufficiently interested in the leadership itself. This conclusion appears to be the more valid as both men had considerable support from within the rank-and-file.⁶⁰

Four candidates declared their intention to run: A. Berry, a Calgary alderman and businessman, was the clear favourite of the executive; R. Russell, executive director of the party and one of its ablest organizers as well as a firm believer that the Liberal party needed to be reformed; and two dark horse lawyers, R. D. Broughton of Ponoka and W. J. Freeland of Peace River. Three ballots were required to break the deadlock between Russell and Berry, with the latter finally emerging victorious. He vowed to turn immediately to the main task which he considered to be the building of a strong organization and the need to attract more young people to the party.⁶¹

Given that Berry was the party executive's own favourite,

it is rather surprising that relations between the two failed to develop on a friendly basis. It would appear that Berry was found less pliable to the executive's machinations than they had expected. Almost from the beginning, the two were headed for conflict. By October, the issue of leadership came to a head. Berry warned the executive that he intended to appoint the chairman of the finance committee. Like Prowse before him, Berry held the belief that he would only be able to consolidate his position as leader by gaining a predominant role over the administrators of the party. Money, as we have previously seen, was critical. In his efforts he faced an executive that was bitterly opposed to giving up its power. Without consulting Berry, it met in secret and appointed its own nominee, Nick Taylor, a Calgary oilman and past party President.⁶²

The result of this action was not long in coming. Berry immediately tendered his resignation. He claimed publicly:

From the beginning some members of the Executive believed that I should be bound by their decisions...that they could by resolution direct me in any course of action.... They have attempted to usurp the role of leader.⁶³

Berry, whatever his shortcomings as the member of the "urban" and Calgary, wing, had attempted to give some badly needed impetus to the moribund structure of the Liberal organization. He had resurrected some of the ideas utilized by Prowse--and promised serious research in areas of policy and organization. For example, the notion of establishing regional

directors was employed for the first time since Prowse had placed emphasis on them as the link between the leader and the constituencies. More important, he had focused on the executive as the culprit and had set out to democratize a rapidly congealing clique by forcing it to give up some of its power.

After the promise of revitalization had come to naught only ten months after Berry had made it, the party found itself in serious disarray. Berry's resignation came only a month and a half before the January 1967 convention, which was expected to be taken up with matters dealing with the forthcoming provincial election. It became an impossible task to convert this convention into one devoted to electing a new leader. Furthermore, the party brass was at a loss to find potential leaders willing to serve after the ignominious defeat handed Berry. Russell was willing to run, but the party executive was highly suspicious of his efforts to re-organize the party structure. Therefore, the decision was reached merely to select an interim leader to lead the party until after the election.

It was only on this condition that Maccagno, then House Leader, agreed to take over the reins. Evidence of the sorry position of the Liberals at this time was his rather half-hearted acceptance of the post and the fact that there was absolutely no challenge raised against his lone candidacy. No one, other than Russell, appeared seriously interested in becoming leader of the Liberal party.

Factionalism and discontent were now becoming the order

of the day within the party. Bill Dickie, an MLA and influential Calgary Liberal, proposed that the Liberals and Conservatives ought to join ranks in order to help put up a significant struggle against Social Credit in the coming election.⁶⁴ This was immediately turned down by the executive and by his own constituency. Hunter, the former leader, again called for sweeping reforms within the party if it intended to survive.

When the election was called for May 1967, the Liberals were unprepared to challenge the Socreds. Rumours spread that they were offering a deal to Social Credit, thereby attempting to hold on to one of their own seats.⁶⁵ Maccagno, an otherwise gifted politician, was unable to put some spark into the campaign. Although originally scheduled to appear throughout the province, he wisely decided to stay in his home riding and attempted to salvage his own seat.⁶⁶

The election routed the Liberal party. It managed to keep the three seats it held before dissolution, but its percentage of popular vote dropped perceptibly to 10.8 per cent, the lowest ever held by the party. More ominously, all but five Liberals lost their deposits. The Liberals had won three seats because of the personal popularity of Dickie, Maccagno and Switzer. They cannot be construed as votes of confidence in the Liberal party as a whole.

Although the defeats being suffered by the Liberals were becoming increasingly more severe, the party executive continued to defy all challenges to its authority. After a

restless summer, the forces of those who were openly criticizing the leadership and the Liberal performance were on the rise. By the time a new convention was called for November 1967, these forces had prepared an all-out attack on the leadership. If successful, it would have meant the resignation of Maccagno and his ally, President Jean Lemieux. The revolt came from the Calgary constituencies which claimed that "the party executives don't serve effectively the needs of Southern Alberta constituencies because it is based on the Northern part of the province."⁶⁷ The malcontents staged a vote of non-confidence in the leadership, but lost overwhelmingly.⁶⁸

The ease with which the challenge had been staved off and the absence of any rebellion against the organization as such, indicates the general lack of awareness on the part of the rank-and-file of the serious situation in which the party found itself. Despite the sharp drop in party membership from an estimated 12,500 to 2,000 over a two-year period--a charge which was denied by the executive despite their unwillingness to provide more accurate figures⁶⁹--the Liberals continued to drag along, seemingly unconcerned or at least unable to establish a better image for themselves. It was, however, becoming clear that their unwillingness to look introspectively could only be postponed and that the party would have to be shaken up from its roots if it hoped to survive.

The stage for the ultimate fall of the Liberal party of Alberta--set in events which had taken place since the early 1950s--was provided by the 1968 convention. It went down in

history as the noisiest, most confusing, chaotic and rebellious ever held by the Liberals. By this time, Maccagno, who had been unable to move the party forward in any reasonable direction, had resigned and a leadership convention had been set for April 1968.⁷⁰

The 1968 meeting was handed a large package of proposals which had been drafted in a painstaking and detailed manner by a thirty-man policy committee.⁷¹ An open rebellion occurred when Lou Faber, a Calgary lawyer, challenged the meeting's right to pass resolutions in the thirty minutes which had been allocated for discussion. Despite his protests and those of many other delegates, the resolutions were put to a vote by the executive. One by one, they were defeated by the convention. In open defiance of the party stalwarts, less than thirty-five people remained seated to hear Maccagno's farewell speech. Delegates challenged the election of Peter Petrasuk--a Calgary lawyer and oilman--as President, on the grounds that the executive refused to give voting figures of the contest. Although the election stood, two-thirds of the delegates walked off in protest against what they had regarded as heavy-handed methods employed by the executive.⁷²

The 1968 convention was the first time that the rank-and-file of the party challenged the authority of the party executive. All signs appeared to point in the direction of a final showdown between the executive and the rest of the party. However, this showdown failed to take place. The

intervening factor which prevented it was Trudeaumania, which swept through Alberta--though to a lesser extent than other areas of the country--during 1968.

The Alberta Liberal party had reason to be happy with Trudeau's accession to power. He provided some distraction from the discontent that was plaguing it. Also, for the first time since 1955, an increase had become noticeable in the membership cards purchased throughout Alberta. A strong Liberal contingent had gone to Ottawa on the coattails of his 1968 victory--the strongest since 1953--and a ray of hope guided the Liberals of Alberta. Provincially as well, they felt, the Liberals had hit rock bottom; the party had to be on the upswing. In reality, of course, Trudeau's affect did little more than conceal for a time the serious problems facing the party.

The Debacle

In its attempt to provide a new leader for the party and new directions for Alberta, the executive had called a leadership convention for April 1969. Mel Hurtig, an Edmonton publisher, headed the Policy Committee, which had been meeting since 1967. It had drafted a series of resolutions as a framework within which the new leader would be able to operate. His unique left-wing and nationalistic touch was evident in the document that the committee put before the convention. It called for free medicare without premiums, placing marijuana in the Food and Drug Act, and lowering the

voting age to eighteen. It also demanded that a re-distribution of seats take place in Alberta along the one-man, one-vote principle.⁷³

That all these resolutions passed by huge majorities and, equally important, that they were discussed fully before the leader was selected, demonstrates the sharp contrast with the 1968 convention. Everything ran smoothly.

*Four candidates appeared before the convention hoping to become the next leader of the party. They ranged from the right, represented by Dr. A. Branigan, an Edmonton physician to the extreme left, which put up T. Midgley, a University of Alberta student. The centre positions were held by Bob Russell, the perennial runner from St. Albert and by Jack Lowery, a clerical minister who had become an executive member of a Calgary firm. Three ballots were needed but Lowery finally broke an impasse and won over Branigan by a slim fifteen-vote majority.⁷⁴

Lowery was a newcomer to politics, just as Frowse had been previously. He boasted that he had become a Liberal only two years earlier at the bequest of his wife who had herself joined the party in 1965. Thus, he felt unattached to any of the party's miserable performances in the previous years or even to Liberalism as such. Describing himself as a reformer, he held views to the left "on social development policies and to the right on fiscal policies". He also claimed strong religious fervour. Thus, as he himself confessed, he acted and felt more like a Social Crediter than a Liberal. He ad-

mitted in an interview that Social Credit had done a very creditable job and that he had himself supported the party several times in the past. The party, however, was getting too old, and Albertans were ready for a change at the helm.⁷⁵

During the year after his election, Lowery was to be used as a pawn of powerful individuals within the party. This time, however, the game of politics, as played by the Liberals, was extended beyond the party boundaries, and nearly brought about the demise of the Liberal party.

There was an ever increasing number of Southern Liberals, who had supported Lowery's bid for the leadership, and who believed that Social Credit, particularly since Manning's resignation, had become a Liberal party of sorts, especially in its social policies. Because of this, and because it was a winning combination in Alberta, these people held that it was rather unnecessary for the Liberal party to actively oppose it provincially. Thus, they concluded, a merger of the two could, and indeed should, take place. The Liberals would benefit greatly federally, given that Social Credit had all but abandoned this field.

Behind the move to merge with Social Credit were Pat Mahoney, a Liberal MP from Calgary, Senator Harry Hays, Peter Petrasuk, former party President and Rod Sykes, Mayor of Calgary.⁷⁶ Interestingly, Bud Olson, a former Socred and now a Liberal MP, opposed any such undertaking.⁷⁷

Social Credit was in some difficulty provincially at this stage. Manning had resigned. The party was also saddled

with a ~~real~~ image and Socred organizers were avidly eyeing any opportunity to enhance their position in the cities. Some hoped that the Liberals could contribute the help that they needed. Moreover, those Socreds behind the merger move expected to be on the receiving end of much of the patronage doled out by the federal government.⁷⁸

The Liberals, on the other hand, could benefit by leaving a rather barren provincial arena and drawing active support from the Social Credit organization for federal elections. Some MPs, particularly Pat Mahoney, were actively considering the formation of a new federal Liberal organization, which would include all three Prairie provinces. Because this would require active participation from parties other than Liberals, Mahoney was now of the opinion that two Alberta Liberal organizations were no longer needed. He wanted the provincial Liberals to disband so that Social Credit could be brought fully into the new coalition.⁷⁹

Lowery, as we have seen, had the perfect credentials for doing the rather unpleasant job of burying a political party, i.e. lack of experience as a politician and as a Liberal. He approached Premier Strom with the offer of co-operation. It appears that Strom was reluctant to become involved in such a move, but his advisers persuaded him to meet with Lowery. Strom, therefore, met Lowery several times over a period of six weeks.

When news leaked out of these meetings, Strom immediately declared that "we have not solicited the support

of any other political party [but] we would be prepared to welcome those members of the Liberal party or any other who wish to join and work with us."⁸⁰

The reaction to the news within the Liberal party was mixed. The Northern Liberals repudiated the move, whereas the Southern Liberals generally welcomed it.⁸¹ Most vociferous among the dissenters was Mel Hurtig who immediately resigned all connections with the provincial Liberals. He maintained that "it is the worst form of political expediency and a prime example of politics for power alone, completely forgetting what political parties are all about."⁸² Hu Harries, an Edmonton MP, intimated that some federal Liberals had been behind it, or had at least tolerated it. Bob Russell was even more outspoken in his comments. He suggested that if Lowery and the Calgarians were to move the Liberal party into a coalition with Social Credit, he would form an independent Liberal party before the coming provincial election.⁸³

After Strom quickly broke off negotiations with the Liberals, Lowery was left to face an incensed executive. It is clear that at least some of them were aware of the move. Petrasuk, an influential figure within the executive and currently vice-President, supported it openly. It is, however, impossible to decipher the extent of support for the idea of withdrawing from provincial politics.⁸⁴ In any case, the executive publicly rapped Lowery for tak-

ing steps without the explicit "consent of the executive." Although Lowery was publicly given a vote of confidence, his position had become untenable and he resigned in February 1970.

Lowery resigned shortly before the March 1970 Liberal convention. This meeting appeared to be the last chance for the Liberals to come to grips with their problems and attempt to find solutions for them. It was inevitable that the future of the provincial Liberals would be an important issue to be discussed. In fact, the convention was devoted to what Mahoney called "self-psychoanalysis, group therapy and self-condemnation."⁸⁵ Although the question of joining the Socreds was not directly raised, the possibility of separating the federal and provincial organizations was, and it became the main theme of the conference.

In his call for a swift separation of the two, Mahoney made an odd partner with Russell. Both agreed on the importance of separating them, although for different reasons. For Russell, the question was "whether the provincial Liberal party can carry the old party hacks, federal bagmen, dispensers of political patronage and other political parasites through a provincial election and attain any credibility with the voters."⁸⁶ Mahoney believed that by separating the two organizations, not only "would the federal party be able to draw support from Socreds, but the provincial party itself would be able to possess greater freedom to form policies in their own area, without concern for fed-

eral interests.⁸⁷

This position was challenged by Olson who admitted "having great difficulty understanding why a different party structure would achieve Liberal purposes any more effectively than the former one."⁸⁸ He agreed with the majority of the executive and rejected such separation. The motion put by Mahoney to this end was soundly defeated by the convention.

The consequences of this decision were not long in coming. The Alberta Women's Liberal Association folded because of total apathy and lack of interest. Many women became actively involved in Lougheed's Conservatives.⁸⁹ Reports were coming in daily of defections by Liberals to either Conservative or N. D. P. camps, decimating their already small membership.⁹⁰ This had decreased from 15,000 during the late 1960s to less than 2,000 by March 1971. A curious example of the situation that was becoming a common occurrence, was what developed in Calgary. There, a member of the executive for the Calgary Center constituency of the Liberal Party Association was also President of the Social Credit Bow Constituency Association.⁹¹

A most unfavourable series of developments for the Liberals was their critical position in the Legislature. Maccagno had resigned his seat in order to join the federal government's National Parole Board, in 1968. Bill Switzer had died in late 1968 and his Edmonton-Jasper seat had been won by Conservative Bow Dowling. The third Liberal in the House, Bill Dickie, joined the Tory caucus in November 1969,

claiming that the Liberals had moved too far to the left. In effect, he was known to have had a serious altercation with Mahoney in 1968 over the nomination at Calgary South constituency, which the latter had won. As a consequence, the Liberals entered 1970 without a single representative in the legislature.⁹²

With the party in such dire straits, the question during 1970 became whether the Liberals should indeed stay out of the provincial field, at least for the next election, as some had suggested, or whether it should do so permanently, as Hu Harries now believed.⁹³

The only person who seriously believed that the Liberals were in need of leadership and that they should not bow out of the provincial arena was Bob Russell. He continued to press for a leadership convention through the President of his St. Albert Constituency Association, Rod Woodcock. Not without reason, Russell was suspected of actively campaigning for radical changes in the structure of the party. He was, therefore, unable to convince the executive of the desirability of holding such a convention.⁹⁴

Despite this setback, Russell had not given up on his desire to lead the Liberals. Under his instigation, the 1971 convention was asked to turn itself into a leadership contest. Such a decision required two-thirds majority. He was unable to obtain that margin; nonetheless, he received the support of a majority, which called for a new meeting to elect a leader the following March.⁹⁵

The March convention selected a leader, but was otherwise one of the saddest episodes in the history of the party. Fewer delegates attended than at any time in recent memory --320, while the average attendance was close to 800 members. Ominously, no MP turned up at the conference, again an unusual event in itself when it is remembered that it was a leadership convention. There was no hoopla, no enthusiasm evident among the delegates and no serious candidates other than Russell, who won easily on the first ballot.⁹⁶

In the regular swing to which Liberals had become accustomed, Edmonton achieved a clear control of the executive as well as of the leadership itself, with the President, one of the vice-Presidencies and several other positions going to that group. Calgary, on the other hand, had sent a relatively small contingent to the convention and was not rewarded to the same extent as the Edmonton branch.

Russell's speech to the delegates was conciliatory. He stressed that he "reserved the right to propose solutions that are needed provincially." His goal, as he saw it, was evident: "I don't think," he said, "that people will support us until they realize we speak for Albertans and are not just apologists for the federal party."⁹⁷ He promised to begin reforming the party immediately after the election that was expected during 1971.⁹⁸

The 1971 election campaign was an uphill and frustrating battle for Russell who by July--a month before the election--remained the only nominated candidate for the Liberal

party. He was not able to find more than ten candidates willing to file nomination papers, and sadly admitted that people did not appear to have any interest in working for the Liberals. This was particularly the case in rural areas.⁹⁹

After election returns were compiled, it was evident that the Alberta voter had given the Liberals their most resounding defeat: only one per cent of the eligible voters had cast their vote for them. The Liberal party had reached its nadir in provincial politics.

Conclusion

Our account of the Alberta Liberal party should have made evident that the party has been continually on the decline since 1935 with but a few moments of lucidity and renewed vigor. It would also appear that this decline has been perhaps not as much the result of problems external to the party--such as the alleged anti-Liberal mood of the Alberta electorate--as it has been internally motivated. In particular, we must indicate its inability to find an adequate role to play in provincial politics.

We have also seen that the Liberals' decline cannot be really pinpointed at one point in time. Indeed, there may have been potential turning points in party development when a shift of direction may have served to stop this decline. As examples, we may cite Prowse's fairly successful leadership or at various times during the 1960s when renewed efforts

at organization and image-building may have helped the party's sagging fortunes.

However, without suggesting that the decline was inevitable, it may be argued that nothing short of a revolutionary internal upheaval could have altered the party's downward trend. Its leaders were, by and large, pawns of the party power-brokers, whether the executive or the federal members of parliament. Thus if once in power, these leaders dared modify the role of the party, they were ruthlessly ousted. There was not a leader other than Hunter--and perhaps Russell--who gained supremacy from the grass roots, working his way solely through close collaboration with the rank-and-file of the party. All were promoted by an executive and all were obligated to co-operate with these executives and their own conception of the party's role. If the leaders raised objections to this treatment, they were summarily disposed of.

The Liberal party of Alberta is an interesting case study of the operations of a two-level one-party dominant system. During 1935-71, there was a one-party dominant system in Alberta. There was also close to a perfect predominance by the federal Liberal party. Particularly in Alberta, and except for two occasions, 1940 and 1955, the opposition parties played the game of politics without ever really believing that they could unseat Social Credit. In this gloomy atmosphere, one of the basic functions of political parties --the search for political power--was seriously impaired. Nowhere was this more evident than with the Alberta Liberals.

However, because the federal government was almost continually in their hands, the provincial party could never cease to exist (cf. the case of the Conservatives; see Chapter V). This predominance made it possible, and even necessary, for the provincial organization to continue being viable in order to support the federal party. This, however, was not all that the party did. It continued to operate because a large amount of benefits accrued to the people who actively participated in the party. The central government was bountiful and generous in its granting of patronage. Thus, the Liberal party slowly became the domain of opportunistic elements, solely interested in enhancing their own personal prestige, and not in political power.

The consequences of this observation are numerous. Our analysis for the remainder of the chapter will concern itself with elucidating some of them. First, these people contended, it was not really necessary to have two organizations--one federal and one provincial--distinctly vying for supremacy. Years of opposition made their inter-connection inevitable. Given this link, then, it was just as inevitable under the existing political circumstances that the prestigious federal wing of the party would gain and maintain supremacy over the provincial wing. Exceptions, of course, were provided during election time; the basic purpose of the provincial organization was, after all, to keep alive the Liberal vote between federal elections.

A question may be raised: why would the federal pol-

iticians not gladly accept a Liberal revival provincially? The answer may lie in the fact that this would diminish their power considerably.¹⁰⁰ Either the provincial wing would now gain supremacy, as a result, or the two would have to become distinct and operate on an equal basis. In either case, given the federal nature of Canada, friction was bound to result between the two wings when, in the course of their respective tasks, they may be at odds with each other. Consequently, the electorate may be compelled to choose between them as rivals and one of the parties would become the loser.

It is unlikely that this complicated argumentation went through the minds of politicians. In fact, the vast majority of federal politicians--although not provincial--whom this writer interviewed, strongly disagreed with this view. One finds it impossible to conceive of any other reason why they would put obstacles in front of--rather than removing them from the path of--their provincial counterparts.

It has been said that, since the late 1910s, Albertans have been reluctant to support the Liberals, provincially as well as federally, because they have perceived their own role as that of victims of the predominant Liberal government in Ottawa. That there is some truth in this statement appears from their tendency to turn to third parties; this tendency has been observed with some frequency also in other Western provinces.¹⁰¹

It is difficult to argue, however, that the people of Saskatchewan, for example, have any less reason to be anti-

Liberal than Albertans. After all, for long periods of time, the basic economic and social conditions were nearly identical in both provinces. Why, then, did the fortunes of the Saskatchewan Liberals always remain high whereas those of their cousins in Alberta keep on reaching even lower ebbs? Historical circumstances may be brought to explain this, of course, but only partially.¹⁰² For, whereas in Alberta the Liberal party was defeated by the U. F. A. and this brought about a permanent period in opposition, the fact remains that Saskatchewan Liberals never lost sight of their importance in the political system of Saskatchewan. They ensured that the federal party would not gain a superior position vis-à-vis them to the extent of dominating the provincial organization. Thus, they were able to maintain their independence and their ability to deal with Saskatchewan problems in ways which the Alberta provincial wing was never able to do.¹⁰³

A second major consequence of the two-level one-party dominant system was that, after the two organizations had become combined in the Alberta Liberal party and the federals had gained supremacy, it was only a matter of time before people would join the Party for reasons other than the search for political power. We must now enquire who these people were, how they achieved control of the organization, for what purpose and with what results.

There is no doubt that the Liberal organization shows strong tendencies towards control by a small group of individuals.¹⁰⁴ In effect, this is not very different from the

situation said to exist in many other organizations.¹⁰⁵

What distinguishes the Alberta Liberal party is the disproportionate share of power that has been held by lawyers. It is true that only one leader since 1937 was, or rather, became a lawyer--Prowse. It is also true, however, that the Liberal executive has, particularly during the 1960s, become their domain. As much as two-thirds of all positions of authority were held by men of the legal profession. This author conducted a painstaking survey of professions of various executives in the 1960s and found that 85% of the President and 79% of the vice-Presidents of the Liberal party were lawyers during that period.

As we have seen throughout our narrative, leaders were the constant target both of federal politicians and of their executives. A power struggle appears to have taken place between executives and federal politicians during this whole period as well. The executive of the party was in a secondary position whilst powerful individuals--i.e. Ministerial candidates--were being sent to Ottawa. McKinnon, Prudham, and to a lesser extent, Deschenes, and some of the Senators, such as Buchanan, and Stambaugh, kept the executives as well as the party leaders in constant check. When the federal party was routed during the Diefenbaker onslaught, a power vacuum occurred in the provincial party, which was quickly filled by an assertive executive. The irony was that, as their own star was on the rise, the political chances of the party were diminishing.

There was a fresh attempt by the newly elected Liberal MPs during the late 1960s to re-assert their predominance; hence, Mahoney's desperate efforts to dissociate the two wings from one another, efforts that were directed towards controlling--or at least regaining partial control of--the organization. That he failed was the result of the merger fiasco, as well as to the premature death of the federal Liberals in Alberta, with their routing in 1972. It is interesting to note that the executive is in such control over the Liberal party today that they were successful in 1973 in deposing Russell and installing a member of their own clique, Nick Taylor. The stranglehold has been completed.¹⁰⁶

The question now arises: why have lawyers been so active within the party? Granted that they are perfectly equipped, as Matthews indicated,¹⁰⁷ for political combat. The other reason, however, lies below the surface. Lawyers have been the natural recipients of much of the patronage that the federal government is able to grant. These include four senatorships, twenty-five judgeships to the Alberta benches, a multitude of Queen's Counsels, the ability to represent the federal government in litigation with provincial governments as well as with individuals, and the opportunity to handle C. M. H. C. mortgages. To these must be added, of course, the many administrative positions available in government. In general, lawyers are better equipped to receive many of these favours than any other single profession; in fact, some of the jobs could only be performed by them.¹⁰⁸

The problem with patronage, however, is not that it exists. After all, this is an inevitable fact of political life. It is that it has favoured the lawyers so heavily and so singly; and that as a result the party has become the domain of a group of individuals only too susceptible to forming a clique. More important, as Russell himself said, "when a political organization and the provincial leader of the party are preoccupied with the dispensing of political patronage, then they are prostituting themselves and doing a disservice to the membership of the party."¹⁰⁹ What we find, then, is a group of people who monopolized power and were on the whole unconcerned with the party as a viable force provincially, if not federally, as this might rob them of much of that power.¹¹⁰

We have seen that the Liberal party is controlled by very few individuals. Within this narrow control, two different geographical groups have persistently vied for predominance: the Calgary and the Edmonton branches of the party. Both wings have held power for nearly equal periods. Whether an implicit arrangement exists or not--and no one would confirm or deny this--leaders representing one or the other wing, have alternated. While Howson, Prowse, Hunter, Mattagno and Russell were clearly from the "Northern" or Edmonton wing of the party, Gray, McEwan, Berry, Lowery and Taylor have represented Calgary and the "South." Executives also have rotated; it has been common for an Edmonton leader to have been supported by an Edmonton-dominated executive, while the same tendency has

occurred with Calgary. Needless to say, given that executives in the Liberal party consist of thirty-odd people, we are not suggesting that all, or even a majority of them came from those areas. However, the President and other top officers, particularly the chairmen of committees, belonged to the same branch.

There has existed, philosophically, a tendency on the part of the Edmonton Liberals to regard themselves as the true repositories of Liberalism, whereas Calgary has traditionally been much more prone to seek compromises. Thus, the Edmonton branch has always been more centrist or leftist, while Calgary has tended toward conservatism. It is not surprising that a large proportion of Calgary Liberals became Conservatives during the 1970s, and a not inconsiderable number joined the ranks of Social Credit. It is, of course, dangerous to generalize about tendencies, but sufficient evidence has been brought to bear on both these assertions in this and previous chapters.

How was power monopolized by federal politicians and by the executive? In many cases--Gray, Prowse, Berry, Maccagno and Lowery--the leaders owed their very positions to these individuals or groups. Federal politicians were able to control leaders because of their prestige. The executives were able to do the same because of their ability to close ranks and act in unity. Another partial answer may be the great apathy that has reigned within the Liberal rank-and-file, a fact that has already been dealt with.

However, in our search for plausible reasons behind the exercise of this control, the power of these individuals to command the purse must be rated very highly. Political parties need money in order to operate effectively. Here it is necessary to emphasize both the raising of revenues and the spending of these funds. Finance chairmen play a very important role in both positions. Their appointment is naturally an essential and critical one for the parties.

In cases where no dispute exists regarding the fundamental aims of a political party, such an appointment rests with the executive in close consultation with the leader. However, as the case of the Alberta Liberals makes clear, when both were at loggerheads, such an appointment is not a formality. Leaders such as Prowse and Berry, who dared openly challenge the executive or a federal leader in charge of handling monies, saw their positions become untenable.

The problem became exacerbated by the existence of the chairman of the maintenance fund, or bagman, a person in charge of allocating money for the party's operations between elections. Most Alberta leaders found it impossible to operate efficiently, as aid for federal politicians always took precedence over help to provincial concerns.¹¹¹

The ultimate result brought about by all these problems facing the Liberal party was that it was never able or seriously willing to concern itself with Alberta and its problems. Certainly, platforms were written, some of them containing suggestions of considerable value. They had been

designed only as reactions to particular provincial situations, rather than concerned with long-term planning and solutions.

A possible exception to this was the attempt in 1966 to promote a new direction for Alberta's future. In November 1965, a Liberal "thinkers' conference" took place at Banff.¹¹² It was decided there that long-term planning was necessary, in order to provide leadership for the province. A special committee was struck, headed by a Calgary lawyer, G. McKinnon, who had been one of the prime movers for this, and who had prevailed upon the executive to appoint it. A policy committee composed of sixty-five members, representing all constituencies, was the result. In turn, the committee was divided into twelve subcommittees, each one concerned with a particular area of governmental affairs.

By August 1966, a new policy committee had been formed, to receive the results of the research and to translate them into specific policies. The idea was to make the 1967 convention a policy meeting. With the resignation of Berry, however, the full effort was postponed. The convention was only asked to ratify some of the short-term proposals which carried them through the 1967 election.

This exercise in piece-meal proposals was once again attempted in 1968, with catastrophic results. As we saw, the resolutions were so poorly worded that every one was rejected.¹¹³ The serious problems with which the Liberal party had to deal at this time had made policy discussion super-

fluuous.

In 1967, Peter Regenstreif was commissioned to look into the prospects of Alberta Liberalism. His analysis, entitled "Alberta Study"¹¹⁴ was based on a survey of 570-odd respondents. Almost everyone interviewed carried the impression that the Liberal party was dominated by strongly conservative people.

Basing themselves on these findings, the Edmonton Young Liberal Association prepared a forty-page report which was handed over to the senior officers in Edmonton. It recommended that "to survive as a party, we must move distinctively to the left."¹¹⁵ It asserted that the alternative in Alberta to the existing conservative parties, resided in occupying the centre-left area of the spectrum. The Liberals would, then, supplant the N. D. P., a party which the vast majority of the Alberta population suspected as too radical.

John Hutton, the writer of the report, agreed that the old guard would be opposed to any change. "There are some party members," he said, "who will benefit more from maintaining our present circumstances in Alberta.... If they are successful in maintaining influence in this direction...they will bury themselves and the Liberal party in Alberta on the provincial scene." Then he added the following remarks, which clearly pointed to the major issue of policy-formulation: "to win votes in the West, you have to look Western.... It is essential to show that we are not in Ottawa's back pocket."¹¹⁶

The advice rendered by this group of concerned Liberal

supporters was rejected by the provincial executive. Problems of leadership prevented those recommendations from being brought before subsequent provincial conventions. In any case, the party organization could not accept a proposal that would mean undergoing a radical change in the very organizational structure of the party that would be required prior to its implementation.

To conclude, the Liberal party of Alberta has found itself, through its recent historical development, faced with the dilemma which it has been unable to solve: can an organization continue to function as a political party when it pursues paths which lead in a direction running counter to that of most political parties: the search for political power, the upholding of political principle, or both. The answer appears to be clear: the Alberta provincial Liberal party has long ceased acting as a party either of principles or of pragmatic political action. It has become the epitome of a decaying political organization.

NOTES

1. See, for instance, the Spotlight, December 7, 1945 and the Calgary Herald, December 4, 1945 for favourable reactions.
2. Personal interview with H. J. MacDonald, July 1973.
3. By this I mean, people whose sights were set on receiving patronage from federal sources. This point will be expanded in the concluding remarks of this chapter.
4. This had been the case since 1921, when the Liberals had been defeated provincially. L. G. Thomas makes the remark that the Liberals whilst they were in power, enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy from the federal party. See his Conclusion, The Liberal Party of Alberta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959).
5. Helen Grodeland, Liberalism in Alberta (n.p.; n.d.), p. 4.
6. Ibid., p. 6.
7. Edmonton was the most active of all areas. There, however, the organization centered around the figure of James McKinnon. He had built this organization himself, and was surrounded by a coterie of supporters, who owed their first allegiance to him rather than to the Liberal party as such.
8. One of the major ills of the party was the fact that the vast majority of supporters were older people. Prowse, therefore, provided a much needed youth appeal--he was in his 20s--and was to attempt to appeal to the young people of Alberta.
9. It is not completely clear whether he was indeed overly interested in politics. MacDonald recalls that Prowse went through long periods of complete withdrawal from the political scene.
10. Minutes of Nominating Convention of the Alberta Liberal Association, June 24 and 25, 1947, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
11. Ibid.
12. Constituency autonomy is indeed something the Liberals have always been proud of.
13. See the minutes of the convention, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.

14. Circular dated August 17, 1947, ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. A circular sent to constituencies, dated April 7, 1948, ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. A speech to the Liberal convention, February 2, 1949, ibid.
19. Speech to the Liberal convention, January 30, 1952, ibid.
20. H. Prowse, "Outline of Organization Plan for the Province of Alberta," a pamphlet sent to regional directors, June 1, 1950, ibid.
21. A letter sent to constituencies, dated February 2, 1952, ibid.
22. The great influence that Stambaugh had on the Liberal party organization can be gleaned from the decision reached by the executive to alter the constitutional clause. Through this action, senators, and politicians in general, were barred from holding the presidency of the party. See minutes of the Executive meeting, November 26, 1949, ibid.
23. A letter dated November 16, 1951, and sent to the regional directors, ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. They can be usually identified as attempts on the part of the voters to express a view to the incumbent party that they retain ultimate control. This would appear to be a perfect occasion to awaken a party, without necessarily wishing to hand it a defeat. Needless to say, a series of defeats may be a sign of rebellion. Social Credit won only six of the eleven by-elections called during its whole tenure of office. These do not include those where the party won by acclamation.
26. Of course, to be fair to Prowse, it ought to be kept in mind that the Liberal organization was so poor throughout most of Alberta that concentrating on a few of these was perhaps the only feasible strategy.
27. The writer was unable to obtain any information about

this point.

28. See his words to Liberal members, September 11, 1953, meeting of the Liberal executive, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
29. Ibid. One must not fail to note the sense of urgency in his words.
30. Letter to members of the party, October 2, 1953, ibid.
31. According to MacDonald, drives did not bring in more than about 2,000 dollars.
32. Copy of a letter to Prudham, dated March 6, 1954, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
33. Reply from Prudham, March 9, 1954, ibid. It is interesting that he appeared prepared to interfere with the provincial party.
34. A broadcast delivered by H. J. MacDonald, ibid.
35. It followed the finding that two Sacred cabinet Ministers (Landeryou and Lee) had bought a government building and had subsequently rented it back to the government, thus breaking a section of the Legislative Assembly Act. Manning immediately obtained their resignations.
 It was subsequently established by Prowse that many members of the Social Credit party had borrowed money and carried accounts with Alberta Treasury Branches. This was done before the Legislative Act--which allowed them to do so--had come into force. The question was whether this Act was retroactive--as Manning believed--or not. Suggestions then were made that Manning and his cabinet were involved in covering up for their own corruption, and that many ministers were using their offices for personal gains.
36. See the Calgary Herald and the Edmonton Journal of June 28, 1955, and previous days as well, for comments on the chances of the Liberals in this election.
37. Prowse himself, was of the belief that other policies should also be emphasized, in order to give the impression of being a true alternative to Social Credit. See the letter to Liberal candidates, June 3, 1955, Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
38. Ibid.
39. A circular, July 13, 1955, ibid.

40. Evidence of MacDonald's rising position was the MLAs' decision to empower him with the task of identifying feasible ways to enhance the Liberal position in Alberta. He offered several suggestions to better the Liberal fortunes. He asked that committees be set up within communities, to obtain information about problems plaguing them. The purpose was "to determine what problems are foremost in their minds, and what solutions they believe would be satisfactory." See a memo sent to constituencies by MacDonald, dated August 1956, ibid. Some constituencies met with the general public in the course of the next year, but MacDonald failed to receive the support he expected.
41. Letter to regional directors, September 27, 1957, ibid.
42. See the minutes of a series of meetings conducted with key Liberals, September 11-18, 1957, ibid.
43. See McEwan's speech in the Legislature, February 4, 1949, available ibid.
44. That this is not necessarily Social Creditism can be seen from the fact that this dividend has become an increasingly popular step for governments with a surplus. The Manitoba N. D. P. has been giving what they refer to as "property tax credit" to the electorate since 1973. Lougheed took a similar step in 1972.
45. Edmonton Journal, November 1, 1958.
46. There is some evidence for this. On the other hand, a great many supporters repeatedly appealed to him to run. as one put it: "Hawrelak could have led us to victory. He has everything we need.", ibid.
47. Albertan, November 4, 1958.
48. Lethbridge Herald, June 6, 1959.
49. "June 22 Considered Most Probable Date," April 10, 1959.
50. MacDonald's interview, loc.cit.
51. This point is taken up again in the concluding analysis.
52. An interview with Dave Haggarty, a Liberal organizer of the 1960s, January 1972.
53. Hunter was truly the only Liberal leader to have been elected by a convention over the protestations of the executive.

54. Calgary Herald, January 16, 1962.
55. See Calgary Herald for the charge that different aspects of the platform were emphasized in different communities; June 10, 1963.
56. Albertan, January 20, 1965.
57. Edmonton Journal, January 23, 1965.
58. Albertan, January 25, 1965.
59. Calgary Herald, January 25, 1965.
60. Bill Dickie in particular was urged to run, as he was an extremely popular choice in Calgary and Southern areas.
61. Albertan, January 17, 1966.
62. Nick Taylor is the present leader of the Alberta Liberals.
63. Albertan, November 8, 1966.
64. Albertan, February 8, 1967.
65. This was the Edson riding where Bill Switzer was unopposed by the Social Credit, so that anti-N. D. P. forces would hold the seat. Switzer's rival was Neil Reimer, then N. D. P. leader; see the Edmonton Journal, May 4, 1967.
66. Maccagno was facing some problems in this regard. He had sided with N. Turcott, the lone N. D. P. member before dissolution, when the latter disclosed that he had evidence that E. Hinman, the provincial Treasurer and A. Hooke, Minister of Municipal Affairs had used their offices for private gain. The N. D. P. was trying to use this issue to unearth what they had believed to be a scandal. As it happened, the N. D. P. found no such evidence (interview with Nancy Eng, President of the N. D. P., August 1973). Maccagno had to convince his constituents that he had inadvertently become involved in this affair and fully retracted his position. See the Calgary Herald, May 9, 1967.
67. For the disputes and animosities between Calgary and Edmonton, see below, Concluding Analysis.
68. Calgary Herald, November 11, 1967.
69. Calgary Herald, November 24, 1967:
70. Maccagno, who had been a theatre operator at Lac la Biche, his home riding, was made a member of the National Parole

Board.

71. For information on this committee, see pp. 211-12.
72. Calgary Herald, November 4, 1968.
73. Calgary Herald, April 26, 1969.
74. Calgary Herald, April 28, 1969.
75. That he had a strong affinity for Social Credit is demonstrated by his decision to join this party after he resigned the Liberal leadership. See the Calgary Herald, April 28, 1969 for the in-depth interview conducted with Lowery. The article ran under the heading Personality of the Week.
76. It is informative that Sykes had been elected on November 1969 in a Socred-Liberal coalition, breaking a 35-odd year stranglehold of the city by the Conservatives. D. MacKay had been the only other mayor, who had been said to have Liberal sympathies. See the Edmonton Journal, December 31, 1969.
77. Ibid.
78. See R. Russell "Alberta Needs an Independent Liberal Party" Edmonton Journal, January 14, 1970.
79. Mahoney appeared to wish to form a new party 'roughly equivalent to the Quebec and Ontario wings of the Liberal party of Canada, that is to say, one of great influence in Ottawa. See the Albertan, December 31, 1969.
80. Edmonton Journal, December 30, 1969.
81. At no time was the split between Calgary and Edmonton so evident as over the merger affair. Edmonton, which had always prided itself on being the bastion of Liberalism in the province, had once again proof that Calgarians were just opportunists, not true Liberals. Cf. the Edmonton Bulletin's tirades of the late 1930s against Bowlen--a Calgarian--and the Calgary branch as a whole.
82. Edmonton Journal, December 30, 1969.
83. Albertan, December 31, 1969.
84. The members of the executive interviewed denied any prior knowledge of the affair. This experience was perhaps close to Gray's own endeavours to approach the Independents in 1939, which resulted in an executive incensed

at the leader. See Chapter III.

85. Albertan, March 2, 1970.
86. Edmonton Journal, January 14, 1970.
87. Edmonton Journal, March 2, 1970.
88. Ibid.
89. Calgary Herald, April 20, 1970.
90. Calgary Herald, February 4, 1971. Lowery himself, became the principal Socred lieutenant in Calgary of Premier Strom. See Barr, The Dynasty, p. 228.
91. Calgary Herald, February 19, 1970.
92. Albertan, November 24, 1969.
93. Globe and Mail, January 30, 1971.
94. That the executive did not want Russell to take over the leadership is clear from its unwillingness to call a meeting to discuss whether a leadership convention should take place. This had thwarted, or at least hindered, Russell's efforts to campaign for his leadership. Finally, Petrasuk, party President, called a meeting of the executive with three days' notice. Russell and his allies were unable to gather support and lost the vote by a large majority. See the Albertan, October 19, 1970.
95. Calgary Herald, January 8, 1971.
96. Edmonton Journal, March 15, 1971.
97. Albertan, February 1, 1971.
98. Russell was unable to carry out any of the reforms that he had planned. Not only was he unsuccessful during the 1971 election, but he lost two more by-elections as parachute candidate. He resigned in 1973.
99. Lethbridge Herald, August 5, 1971.
100. This would seem to agree with Black's suggestion that ultimate dominance within organizations lies upon the party wing that holds power at a given level. See his "Federal Strains Within a Canadian Party" in H. G. Thorburn, ed. Party Politics in Canada (2nd edn.; Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice Hall of Canada, 1967), pp. 130-140.

101. See, for instance, W. D. Young, Democracy and Discontent (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1964), Introduction.
102. Whereas the Liberals in Alberta suffered a stunning defeat in 1921, the Saskatchewan Liberals remained in government almost uninterruptedly until 1944. Whereas in the former province, it ceased being an alternative as early as 1921, the Saskatchewan Liberals have remained an alternative until today.
103. Thatcher's altercations with Pearson during the 1960s attest to this point.
104. There does not seem to be, however, a hierarchy within the power structure. Rather, it would appear to be a "circulation of leaders" (not of elites), with executive members remaining within a position of power continually, although always in a different post.
105. See Robert Michels, Political Parties (New York: The Free Press, 1966.).
106. It is unlikely that this control will disappear as long as Alberta remains a barren territory for the federal Liberal party.
107. D. R. Matthews, The Social Background of Political Decision-Makers (New York: Doubleday, 1954), pp. 30-32.
108. Other possible sources of patronage include legal business through the Farm Credit Corporation, Industrial Development Bank, the Veterans' Land Act, federal criminal prosecutions etc. Whereas senatorships and the positions of Lt. Governor have generally gone to retiring politicians rather than executive members, much of the other work--including judgeships--have been the domain of the executives.
109. See "Alberta Needs an Independent Liberal Party," op.cit.
110. As we saw, as the influence exercised by the federal politicians increased, that of the non-politicians in the executive decreased.
111. The problem of finances is aptly treated in G. Anton, "The Liberal Party in Alberta" (Unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Calgary, 1972), pp. 44-6.
112. Calgary Herald, December 22, 1966.
113. Calgary Herald, November 4, 1968.

- 114. A paper prepared for the Alberta Liberals, March 1967.
- 115. Edmonton Journal, November 10, 1969.
- 116. Ibid.

CHAPTER V
THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY: THE EARLY PHASE OF
DEVELOPMENT
1950-1965

The Conservative party had never been an important force in Alberta until 1958 when Diefenbaker won all 17 federal seats. A cursory look at both the federal and provincial electoral histories of the province show that apart from the federal election of 1917--which in some ways was an extremely unusual one¹--the Conservatives never managed to obtain a majority of representation. The party was traditionally unable to gain any considerable foothold in the province because, to a larger extent than the Liberals, they were linked in the minds of voters with big business and the large cities.² The urban image was so powerful that no Conservatives were elected provincially outside the cities from 1917, when they ceased to be the major opposition party, until 1967.

It was perhaps this dismal record which allowed the Alberta Conservatives to make a blunt decision concerning their future. This came in 1937 when they voted to all but formally vacate the provincial field indefinitely in favour of fusion with the newly formed Unity Movement. Few parties could have taken such a momentous step unreservedly; the fact

was that the Conservatives had been at a low ebb in Alberta. The executive decision to withdraw from provincial politics was merely an admission of their powerlessness, coupled with their desire to consider other more beneficial alternatives.

Return to the Provincial Scene

In early 1945, after the Independents had foundered in the provincial arena, the Conservatives began to explore the possibility of returning to the provincial field. After nearly a year of deliberations, the Edmonton Association, which had originally called for the talks, decided against such a move. The party also resolved to pay at least lip service to a continuing support for the moribund Independent Movement.³

The federal executive of the party made it clear a year later that the party had no intention of joining the Liberals in the struggle to unseat Social Credit.⁴ When the election of 1948 took place, the Conservatives gave official backing to Page's Independents. The latter, however--as Page himself had pointed out⁵--had been abandoned by the Conservatives, who appeared to be quite satisfied with the newly found conservatism of Premier Manning.

With the final demise of the Movement after that election, however, certain elements within the Conservative federal organizations, especially the Youth and Women's wings began a reappraisal of the party fortunes in the province.

They believed that a vacuum had been created in the province that needed to be filled. Spearheaded by J. V. H. Milvain and D. Harkness, both well-known Calgary Conservatives,⁶ they began to consider the possibility of establishing a provincial organization.

Milvain--who was to become the Stambaugh of the Conservative revival--was inclined to the belief that whereas the party's chances of success provincially remained slim, its entry into the provincial field would help revive interest in Conservatism. Harkness maintained that the voter could not be expected to believe that the Conservatives were an alternative federally to Social Credit, if they were quite content to allow it to run provincial affairs unopposed and unhampered. Ultimately, however, the reason for considering a re-entry provincially was best expressed by Harkness when he indicated that "party supporters should be given candidates to vote for in provincial as well as federal elections."⁷

There were strong rumours in 1950 that Manning would be retiring soon for health reasons, and the possibility remained that Social Credit would subsequently lose its cohesion and its newly acquired conservative slant. A. R. Smith, an oilman and President of the Young Conservatives, felt that there was a large number of young people to whom neither Liberalism nor Social Creditism were adequate alternatives.⁸ In general, the feeling was that the province would get a "one party complex" unless a strong opposition emerged.

At the 1950 convention, where these issues were discussed, there was considerable opposition to re-entering provincial politics. As Kent Power, an influential member of the Edmonton group put it, "if we announce [re-entering] now and cannot get a leader and funds, our opponents will laugh and say: 'We're telling you that you were dead and now you have proved it'."9

Despite posing serious questions about lack of suitable candidates and organizational support, the Conservatives decided to re-organize at the provincial level. Unlike the Liberals, who had overwhelmingly accepted this idea, the Conservative leaders were barely able to obtain a majority at the convention. The meeting empowered Milvain to establish a provincial organizational committee, to be assisted in his task by the Youth and other groups.

The provincial organization had a difficult time continuing to operate during the years ahead. However, by accident as much as by design, it was left almost completely on its own. The federal Conservatives were having too much difficulty with their own credibility and survival to worry about the provincial party. Thus, although there was no attempt to formally divide the two organizations, each branch of the party was encouraged to find its own sources of support, funds and organization throughout.¹⁰ There was no need seen for the two sole representatives of the party in Ottawa to check continually on the growth and development of the provincial offspring, particularly when the likelihood of the letter's

success was regarded as remote.¹¹

The decision to return to the provincial arena was welcomed by the media. As the Calgary Herald editorialized:

From the purely political viewpoint, the party's prospects in Alberta are something less than encouraging...[but] the Progressive Conservative party stands for certain principles: for the freedom of the individual and...[against] government interference; for individual enterprise as opposed to state planning.... The chief duty of all those who believe in these principles is to keep them, regardless of the vagaries of political fortunes, constantly before the voters.¹²

Milvain set about immediately to form a Constituency Association in Calgary where the party was strongest. A committee of fifteen members was appointed at their first meeting. This committee was also given the responsibility of co-ordinating any group willing to become established, and to help the presiding officers of those constituency organizations.

The decision to empower Milvain with the task of re-organizing the party was momentous, for he was a Calgarian and was determined to make Calgary the prominent centre of Conservatism in Alberta. The committee was heavily weighted on the side of Calgarians and this gave the city a most influential position in the future development of the party.¹³ As Milvain pointed out, "may it never be said again that the policies of the party were formed behind some green baize doors by the party big shots in Edmonton."¹⁴ Ironically, the implicit suggestion of the party's newly found democratic principles was belied a few years later. The Calgary group was

to become the target of the indignation of the other constituencies, which accused it of running the party dictatorially.¹⁵

The task of revamping a decaying organization was arduous. An explicit agreement by the Conservatives was reached to the effect that Edmonton and Calgary--where the party had some chance of success--would be given priority. Indeed, complaints were heard at the 1951 convention that the organization had in no way filtered through the rural areas. Even though an election was expected within a year, no candidates had been selected and no organizational efforts had been made. Milvain declared that the decision as to whether to organize was one for each individual constituency association to reach on its own. The new committee did not wish to impose organization or structures on areas which had not requested help. He also brushed aside the demand for a common platform, claiming that policies were a matter for individual constituencies to decide upon.¹⁶

Besides widespread lack of support, the major problem facing the Conservative party during its first years of operation was the scarcity of funds. Between 1951 and 1954, the party was unable to get off the ground on a provincial basis because neither the federal party, the constituencies, nor the usual contributors to federal campaigns was prepared to help finance the provincial wing. For the most part, the party had to rely on volunteers to perform even the secret-

arial tasks.¹⁷ For instance, a list of names of prospective contributors was drawn up by Milvain during 1952 and 1953, but meager sums were received in return to the call for help (\$300 and \$630 respectively in the two drives).¹⁸

Indicative of the serious shortage of funds was the party's inability to run a candidate in the High River by-election of 1954. For the first time, the Conservatives were considering putting up a candidate outside the cities; it was hailed as a turning point in the task of revival. A letter was sent to George Drew, the Conservative leader, requesting assistance from Federal headquarters.¹⁹ The request was rejected, although Drew acceded to a call for a \$500 advance for office expenses. The general unwillingness on the part of federal party sources to assist the party, seriously impeded its work of organization during the early years.

As late as 1959, during the heyday of federal Conservative strength in Alberta, Doug Morgan, provincial organizer, sadly complained to W. J. C. Kirby, provincial leader, that "the bank here [Calgary] refused to honour your last cheque, as we were overdrawn."²⁰ The fault, said Morgan, lay with the Finance Committee's inability to do its job. He indicated:

I feel very strongly that the Finance Committee should be a committee with representatives from all cities in the Province and major rural areas [The committee had during the 1950-61 period been composed

of over ninety per cent Calgary personnel].... I find that despite our pre-election letter calling for donations, too many people think that Calgary has lots of money and that they should be able to get it for the asking. A good deal of money can be raised in other areas if the Finance committee were represented in those areas."²¹

Because there was such a serious lack of funds, organization lagged behind.²² The provincial headquarters had determined to help interested constituencies become organized, as long as they took the first step to achieve that goal. This procedure, it was claimed, would keep the party democratic and the constituencies free from external interference by the executive. The inavailability of money soon became a serious problem. It was considered a waste of important resources to build up the party in areas where the party's chances of success were minimal. Consequently, no steps were taken to build a viable structure outside the cities until the late 1950s.

The party heads seemed intent on emphasizing the democratic nature of the organization and their unwillingness to impose themselves on the membership.. That the party was run undemocratically during the early years of this period, however, is shown by the nominating meetings that took place in Calgary and Edmonton in 1952 prior to the election that year. The executive in Calgary merely submitted a slate of five candidates to a meeting of "interested supporters" and asked those in attendance to ratify its choice. Some objec-

tions were raised about the procedure and the meeting resolved to allow other names to be nominated from the floor.

A student, M. Bardwell, whose nomination was easily defeated, complained of "heavy-handedness" on the part of the executive and accused the party of lack of progressivism.²³

The nominees suggested by the committee were elected unanimously. There is a great deal of evidence that they received the nominations with less than boundless enthusiasm. In support, candidates made comments such as "the present administration has always been a lucky government" or "some departments in the government are very well run," or "if the election is called in June, I will not be able to contest it for I will be in Eastern Canada on an unavoidable business trip." Indeed, one of the candidates nominated and elected did not even attend the meeting because of "a previous business engagement." None of the candidates had anything to say regarding policies. P. Brecken epitomized the feeling of his fellow candidates when he announced that "I will not go to the legislature to criticize just for the sake of criticizing."²⁴

The situation in Edmonton was no more edifying. The constituency there was born only in April 1952, a few months before the election, and was presided over by E. Geddes, a businessman. Less than a month later, a full slate of candidates representing the seven city seats was presented to a nominating meeting. As in Calgary, little objection was

raised by those in attendance and the slate was accepted un-animously. When asked about his stand on policies for the Conservative party, Percy Page--the former Independent leader and now a Conservative candidate--replied: "I won't touch on policy.... But the Conservatives should be careful public trustees. Yet they should not be too conservative."²⁵

These statements indicate the serious lack of preparation, interest and even political principle on the part of most candidates. Furthermore, the fashion in which they were nominated appeared to belie Milvain's claim to have founded an open organization. Their goal at this point was very simple: to capitalize on the pockets of discontent against Social Credit prevalent in Calgary and Edmonton. Because of the system of proportional representation in effect in those constituencies, the party expected to return at least one candidate in each.²⁶

No efforts were made to co-ordinate the campaign of the two constituencies, except for the half-hearted attempt to devise a common platform. To this end, the candidates met at Red Deer. Out of this gathering came a plank that emphasized the party's urban base. Farming and related rural problems were dealt with inadequately in one paragraph. The emphasis was on tax allowances for business and aid to development of municipalities,²⁷ both of which focused on the Conservatives' traditional links with real estate and business in general.

Evidently, the Conservative party's official entry

into the provincial political scene was less than resounding. They achieved their original goal: Bracken and Page were returned,²⁸ but the party's total vote in Alberta was less than four per cent of the total (see Table I).

After the 1952 election, the party began to contemplate expanding to the smaller cities, particularly Lethbridge, Red Deer and other small centres where some support appeared to exist. The party executive was then enlarged with new members brought in from two rural constituencies--Westaskiwin and High River--as well as from Red Deer and Lethbridge. It also elected W. J. C. Kirby, a lawyer from Red Deer, as its new President.²⁹

Kirby set a two-fold objective for his party, an objective which became the party's unofficial slogan during the next five years: consolidate and expand.³⁰ In order to attain these, it was obvious that the rather haphazard and sparse organization had to be completely revamped. However, a federal election intervened and the plans were shelved for future consideration.

Despite the reasonable good showing in Calgary, the federal election made it patently clear that the party was in dire need of organization. Resulting from this, a meeting took place to which the federal candidates and executive members of the party were invited. The decision was reached to push for the expansion of the party, through the establishment of new local organizations heading the provincial ridings.

It was hoped that the provincial organizations would work side by side with the already constituted federal constituencies. The provincial organizations would be charged with the responsibility of establishing their own youth, social activities and discussion groups quite separately from their federal counterparts.³¹

The meeting also determined the need to appoint a full-time provincial organizer to carry out the job of overseeing the constituencies and act as co-ordinator between them and the executive.

Another important decision reached was "the need for a clearer policy with particular reference to the farmer's problems." This was deemed crucial if the party was interested in attracting sections of the rural vote.³²

The executive had made some very important resolutions. It had again referred to the need to maintain a sound link with the people of the province, a feat which Conservatives had a great deal of difficulty accomplishing because of their narrow image. The 1954 convention, which followed this executive meeting, passed several resolutions asking for greater participation by young people in party affairs. To demonstrate the hollowness of this assertion and the gap between word and deed, the same convention hastened to censure a very vociferous group of young people who had attempted to criticize the two Conservative MLAs.

This determined core of the youth branch had passed a resolution at one of their own meetings. It requested that

Bracken and Page bring before the legislature a petition asking for a plebiscite on the possibility of allowing mixed drinking in public houses. They had felt that the laws governing liquor consumption were far too restrictive. The request was quickly turned down by the two MLAs, particularly Bracken. They would only agree to ask for a Royal Commission to investigate liquor laws. After they had walked out in protest from the convention,³³ the disgruntled youth group decided to approach the Socred MLAs for assistance.³⁴ As one executive member of the group put it: "The two Progressive Conservative members of the Alberta legislature should cross the floor of the House and get legally married to the Social Credit party."³⁵

The feeling was now one of great bitterness. For the next five years the youth group was to become the voice of dissent from within the party, periodically calling for the resignation of members of the executive. This dissent culminated in their revolt against Kirby in 1959, and his subsequent resignation.

The party appeared to be moving gradually ahead in 1954. In February, Kirby won a by-election for a Red Deer seat which had been left vacant by the death of D. Ure, the Socred Minister of Agriculture. His victory was widely regarded as an upset and it gave the party a boost in morale. It also enhanced Kirby's own position within the party organization. During the year and a half that elapsed between his by-election victory and his defeat in the 1955 election,

he combined the two positions of MLA and President of the party.

At a June 1954 meeting of the executive, little progress was reported by Kirby on the state of the party provincially. A provincial organizer had yet to be appointed, but Kirby admitted the impossibility of doing this because of the lack of funds. The party had to expand outside the cities; work of co-ordination was obviously necessary. Co-ordination remained, however, a fictional term when there was so little to co-ordinate.³⁶ Thus, the proposal made by Kirby to establish Zone Councils met with some scepticism.³⁷ Only three constituencies had been established by this date. Kirby, however, succeeded in convincing the executive that nothing short of the formation of these councils would enable the party to establish new constituency organizations, or to re-organize those which were lagging behind or which remained dormant.

Finally, the principle of non-interference in the affairs of the constituencies was abandoned in favour of a more aggressive campaign designed to organize province-wide. At a new executive meeting in October 1954, the plans worked out by Kirby were approved. Three Zone Councils--Northern, Central and Southern--were established.³⁸ The Southern Zone would be tried first. The councils were to be composed of all sitting MPs and MLAs within the district as well as a representative from each constituency--both federal and provincial--and the Presidents of Womens' and Youth clubs.

The President of the Association would sit at their meetings.³⁹

In order to achieve the necessary co-ordination, however, it remained imperative that branches be established.

Thus, the executive resolved to:

Undertake the organization of one constituency each month until the federal ridings within each Zone were properly organized, then put the responsibility for organization of the provincial constituency within each federal constituency.⁴⁰

Harkness, the chairman of the Southern Zone Council, immediately set out to organize the federal constituencies in his area of responsibility. He was successful in stirring up interest in all the ridings and established two new constituency associations in Medicine Hat and McLeod. However, he made no attempt to achieve a similar success with the provincial ridings.⁴¹ There was, thus, no doubt about priorities of the party: federal work would take precedence over provincial operations.⁴² It was hoped, however, that there would be a spill-over effect in the province and that provincial organizations would benefit from improvements made in the federal structure of the party.

The expansion of this work into the provincial ridings gained some impetus in 1957. Two new organizers were appointed, one for the Northern Zone and another for the Central Zone.⁴³ When Alan Castle, the Central organizer, began his task in June 1951, he claimed that only four out of a total of twenty-eight provincial constituencies were organized in any way: Calgary Glenmore, Calgary West, Calgary Bowness

and Red Deer; in the remaining twenty-four, there was little or no organization. Ten months later, he was able to report with open enthusiasm that five were now active, eight had an executive and in the remaining fifteen constituencies, the task of organization was under way under the direction of a representative.⁴⁴ By July of the same year, and bolstered by the Diefenbaker victory, the Association released a newsletter claiming that fifty-two of the sixty-five constituencies had been organized, and that eight others were actively preparing to set up an executive.⁴⁵

Following Diefenbaker's victory when he swept all seventeen seats in the province, the executive decided at a closed meeting to stage an all-out attack on the province as well. The provincial party had been operating in a less than adequate manner to translate the success of the federal party into an equivalent provincial one.⁴⁶

Other signs were hopeful. Only a year earlier, E. Watkins had become the first man to be elected in the newly created constituency of Calgary Glenmore, in which area Liberals had previously predominated. Secondly, Duff Roblin had been elected in Manitoba and everyone seemed to believe that his success had taken place on the coattails of Diefenbaker's own triumph.⁴⁷ Similar Conservative victories after long periods in opposition had taken place in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia.

The most urgent matter that the Conservatives had to settle to become an alternative to Social Credit was the sel-

ection of a leader. The party had operated without one since 1937, when Duggan had resigned to become a full-fledged Independent. There was a feeling now that constituencies were sufficiently well-organized throughout most of Alberta to warrant that important step.

The leadership convention took place on August 1958. Several candidates allowed their names to stand. They ranged from the extreme right--represented by Mayor Toschach of Drumheller, who was reputed to have links with the John Birch Society⁴⁸--to the left--with Edmonton lawyer Gifford Main as its representative. More centrist positions were held by A. Lazerte, the provincial organizer, Kirby, who had been party President for the past five years, and Watkins, the Calgary MLA. Although Kirby had been considered the clear favourite, and was backed by the executive, it took him four ballots to defeat his immediate opponent, Lazerte.⁴⁹

The convention presented the image of a lively party engaged in choosing between very able candidates. It was, nevertheless, only a fair success in another way. A platform was needed, and to enunciate one, a memorandum had been sent to all delegates--close to 900⁵⁰--alerting them to bring their ideas on governmental affairs. The objective was to pass a series of resolutions which would serve as the basis of the election platform. In all, three resolutions were passed, but except for one emphasizing the importance of gas exports, they lacked the capacity to innovate.⁵¹ An interesting resolution reflected the newly-found success of the Con-

servatives in the federal scene, after twenty-five years in the wilderness. It recommended that three additional Supreme Court judges and two district court judges be appointed for the province of Alberta. Ostensibly, this was requested in order to "bring justice nearer to the people removed from the larger cities," but it could not fail to suggest the party's elation at being in a position once again to receive patronage from the federal government.⁵²

Kirby began immediately his campaign to obtain support both from within constituency associations and from the population as a whole. As part of his campaign, he toured forty-one provincial constituencies in less than three months.⁵³

The organization itself seemed to be running smoothly. Under the over-all leadership of A. Lazerte, the co-ordination of Alberta was left in the hands of two men, John Gregor, a former miner from Edmonton, who was put in charge of the Northern areas, and A. Castle, in charge of all constituencies south of Edmonton. Their reports continually glowed with optimism.⁵⁴

It is true that signs everywhere appeared to point to the possibility of the party taking over the provincial reins in 1959. Barely a month before the election, Roblin had swept Manitoba, easily defeating the combined C. C. F., Liberal and Progressive opposition. To Kirby, "Manitoba's vote is portent of things to come in Alberta."⁵⁵

A second hopeful sign was the support that the Conservatives obtained from the mass media, which had been

previously pro-Liberal. In fact, the Conservative party for the first time, was branded as the most likely alternative to Social Credit. They were said to be better organized and to have a better policy platform.⁵⁶

Perhaps of greater significance was the fact that Manning appeared to be concentrating his attacks almost exclusively on the Conservatives during his electoral campaign, completely ignoring the Liberals.⁵⁷ Finally, of course, the Conservatives had won a decisive victory in the federal elections. Few supporters could fail to hope for a spill-over effect into provincial politics.

The provincial Conservatives had always worked under a handicap: the federal organization had consistently figured prominently; provincial elections in the 1950s had either closely followed, or preceded, federal ones. In the first case, efforts to establish an adequate campaign had been blocked by federal defeats and disillusionment; in the second case, provincial elections had been altogether neglected by the expectation of concentrating all strength on the coming federal contest. For the first time in 1959, the vicious circle appeared ready to be broken. This time the federals had achieved a perfect record electorally, and party workers appeared ready to repeat the performance. The party was working so hard that by January 1959--six months before the election--they had already put up twenty-five candidates, more than other single party.⁵⁸

If the Conservatives appeared to have reason to be

jubilant in their expectations, it is now clear that their optimism was unfounded. However, even ~~the~~ very signs which seemed to point to a Conservative victory carried with them question marks the party had failed to read adequately.

First, despite the glowing reports from the organizers, constituencies were not nearly as adequately prepared as they claimed. A great deal of work had been conducted during the 1958 federal election. By January 1959, this enthusiasm was subsiding and had slackened off considerably. If it is true that twenty-five candidates had been nominated by January, it is also true that thirty candidates were nominated after the election had been called by Manning.⁵⁹ What this meant, in effect, is that little work was carried out between January and May of that year. Even more important, however, as Watkins himself pointed out to this writer, most of the constituencies lacked good organizers. Many of the individuals who were prepared to work for the federal Conservatives had no intention of backing the Conservatives provincially.

Second, and closely related to this, Diefenbaker's victory was mistakenly connected with Roblin's victory in Manitoba. Roblin had built the whole provincial organization in a painstaking manner, unaided by the federal party; herein resided his strength. To claim that he had gained a victory on the coattails of Diefenbaker was, of course a hopeful but erroneous conclusion.⁶⁰

Third, that Manning focused his attack on the Conser-

vatives must not be construed as evidence that he was greatly concerned about a Conservative party victory. In fact, it had been part of Manning's strategy to focus on a party that had little chance of winning. In this way, he diverted attention from the real threat and robbed it of much of its energy, incentive and support. For example, during the 1940s he had continually focused on the C. C. F. as the party to defeat, as he did in 1967 on the N. D. P., when other parties were clearly more likely to receive the vote that may have eluded Social Credit.⁶¹

Several other problems plagued the Conservatives prior to the election. One of them, particularly, was well publicized and robbed the party of much support in Calgary. A faction of the Calgary-Bowness constituency association publicly criticized Kirby for interfering in the affairs of its association.⁶² In a statement, the "insurgents" submitted that "executives at the provincial level should refrain from encroachment upon the autonomous rights of the constituency association."⁶³ Kirby denied the charge, but the issue was exploited by Social Credit in Calgary.⁶⁴

Another incident occurred when the Banff-Cochrane association refused to nominate a candidate despite the pressure put on them by the provincial executive. Instead, it decided to support a Liberal-Conservative candidate, to help retain the perennial independence of that constituency.⁶⁵ Again, Kirby and the executive were accused of acting undemocratically in seeking to impose personal choices upon constituency as-

sociations.⁶⁶

Other errors were committed. Because of the belief that the Conservatives had to appear as closely linked as possible with Diefenbaker, the campaign strategists--chiefly Lazerte and Castle--decided to turn Kirby into another rural populist, which Kirby was not. As the Calgary Herald editorialized: "his [Kirby's] advisers...chose to try and present him in the mantle of J. Diefenbaker.... There were times when this bordered on the ludicrous."⁶⁷

The image projected by the Conservative leader was extremely poor. Television was widely used for the first time, and neither Kirby nor the other candidates came across powerfully. As a defeated Conservative candidate put it: "The film which I saw of Cam Kirby on T. V., should have been destroyed. It flickered and blinked so much that I am sure very few people listened to him."⁶⁸

Doug Morgan, a new provincial organizer who had been appointed two months after the election, set out to investigate the causes of the defeat throughout the province. He reported that in several constituencies, the organization had been very efficient, but the candidates were unpopular and had been unable to generate any enthusiasm. In others, there had been considerable dissension within their ranks. In yet others, the task of informing the voter about the candidates and their stands had not been properly carried out because of lack of workers. Finally, in one constituency, much of the money that had been sent for the purpose of campaigning had

been spent on liquor.⁶⁹

A final problem was the little help that the provincial Conservatives received from their federal counterparts.⁷⁰

It has been suggested that Manning had already come to the realization that the federal Socreds were a spent force.⁷¹

They had therefore purposefully declined to allow the party to carry on a vigorous campaign federally in 1958, tacitly hoping that Diefenbaker would emerge victorious. Diefenbaker had, according to this argument, sought to return the favour by discouraging Conservative MPs from campaigning in the province against Manning. The argument is logical and appears to be corroborated by subsequent facts⁷² but short of admission by the actors involved--which has never been forthcoming--it is difficult to assert its validity.

Due to a combination of all these difficulties--to which must be added Manning's continuing popularity--the Conservative party found itself ignominiously defeated in its first concerted effort since the early 1910s to become a force in Alberta. Only one candidate--Watkins--was elected. The party could find solace that its percentage of support was the highest (23.9) since 1917. This, of course, was mostly due to the fact, of course, that sixty members had run.

The Party in the Wilderness

Shortly after the election, calls were made for Kirby's resignation as leader. Foremost in this call was the Edmonton

Strathcona constituency which publicly demanded that he and all other provincial officers resign immediately. More important, they also demanded that "a new constitution should be written, one which would not put control into the hands of a few people who manipulate it in their own benefit."⁷³

Discontent at that point did not seem widespread, and a Red Deer meeting of the executive expressed confidence in his leadership.⁷⁴ As the year progressed, however, repeated calls were made for the resignation of Kirby, as well as those of the chairman of the Finance committee and of the Public Relations committee and the President.⁷⁵ These demands were made by the Student Federation of the University of Alberta, a Conservative-dominated organization.⁷⁶ Despite the fact that the executive reaffirmed its faith in Kirby's leadership, he tendered his resignation in January 1960.⁷⁷ This brought to an end the first serious attempt by the Conservatives, to play the game of politics in nearly half a century.

After Kirby's resignation, the executive met to decide what should be done. Most members felt that the old organization had not served the party well. There had been a feeling of euphoria in the ranks of the top hierarchy that was ill-founded. The reason for this was simply, they claimed, that the Zone councils and the organizers had not done their job properly; that they co-ordinated poorly and had not kept the executive informed about the real state of affairs in the constituencies.⁷⁸

It was agreed that the organization ought to be ex-

panded, so that there would be a larger number of individuals to keep track of fewer constituencies. To this end, a decision was ratified by the 1960 annual meeting to add seventeen new regional directors to the executive committee. Each one was to represent a federal constituency as well as all provincial constituencies that fell within its borders. Also, a new Organizational Committee was struck, chaired by Lazerte, to co-ordinate the efforts of all the regional directors.⁷⁹

Once more, because of the closer proximity of federal elections, the organization made the important decision of "emphasizing...for obvious reasons the Federal ridings."⁸⁰ The provincial organization was relegated to a secondary position, in which it had indeed found itself since the party's re-entry into politics.

An important consideration, according to the newly-struck Organization Committee, was the need for the regional directors to keep close contact with the MPs. As we saw, some of the candidates of the 1959 election had complained that aid from Ottawa had been conspicuous by its absence. In a letter from Morgan to P. C. headquarters in Ottawa, he complained that

Our federal public relations is not what it could be.... We never received a d... [sic] thing from your office in the way of information or propaganda. The first word we got of any visiting Cabinet minister...is when we read it in The Herald.⁸¹

The 1960 Annual meeting also decided to postpone the election of a new leader, in order to concentrate on organ-

izational work for the federal ridings.⁸² It hastily appointed E. Watkins as Acting Leader.

Watkins--a former British radio broadcaster and lawyer--was particularly concerned with the party's poor performance. He believed that part of this was to be blamed by its inability to enunciate clear principles. As chairman of the Policy and Publicity Committee, it became his task during his tenure to ensure that Conservatives would not be at a loss when asked what their beliefs consisted of. Conservatives were, indeed, unsure about the principles for which they stood. Morgan himself gives us a humorous picture of the problem. In a letter to Ottawa headquarters, he wrote the following:

We need some literature to spread around the country points, as [many Conservatives] do not know what to say when asked: why are you a P. C.? what does the P. C. stand for? what is the background of the P. C. party? To be quite honest, I don't know the answers, but I can usually make one up that satisfies them.⁸³

Watkins, then, became engaged in the task of stating clearly the party principles. He asked his committee to look into the following questions: "what conservatism really means; what its principles are; why the party has stood for so long despite setbacks...I feel we must do this for ourselves as much as for general supporters."⁸⁴

The objectives of this seemingly fresh approach was three-fold: firstly, to organize province-wide seminars to engage Conservatives in discussion of principle and policies; secondly, to produce newsletters and circulars on a regular basis to give members a sense of common effort; and thirdly, to ensure

that policy problems are put into perspective both at the federal and provincial levels. In conclusion, he wrote "we want to build a group of Conservatives who know what they are talking about and we want that group to grow by the process of sucking others in."⁸⁵

What Watkins had in mind was the possibility of getting the party involved in a process of education. This would get the party away from the task of organizing without a purpose. The purpose about which Watkins wished to talk to Albertans was not a leader, or an image or an organization; it was a philosophy. That the task forces--on agriculture, finance, resources, industry etc.--which he wished to set up never got off the ground is not surprising. An Englishman, he never quite seemed to grasp the reality of Canadian parties in moving away from steadfast and unalterable principles.⁸⁶ Despite his great eloquence, intellect and sincerity, he was never able to convince his party colleagues that his methods were useful for purposes of winning elections.

By the time the P. C.s had decided to hold a leadership convention in 1963, Diefenbaker's Conservatives were once again in a minority position in Ottawa. Nonetheless, Alberta had returned fifteen of its seventeen members to join the Conservative caucus. It must be remembered that the Conservatives were being maintained in power by the substantial help received from the Creditistes. At a meeting with Diefenbaker, Watkins claims that he was told to steer clear of any conflict with Manning in the province.⁸⁷ Although he had

originally intended to run for the leadership of the party, Watkins decided to quit the race. As he put it:

I was elected by the voters...in opposition to Social Credit. Whilst I have never felt it my duty to oppose for the sake of opposing, I have felt it my duty to criticize when I felt criticism was justified.⁸⁸

The issue was critical. The party found itself in a dilemma. If it supported the federal Conservatives' position, it would certainly endanger its own status provincially. On the other hand, if it opposed it, relations would certainly become strained between the two wings. Therein lay the dilemma of party federalism.

Only two candidates remained in the leadership race. One was Milton Harradence, a well-known Calgary Lawyer, whose playboy capers and strong personality made him a favourite. At a meeting of the Youth wing of the P. C.s, he had shown signs of tending towards the left of the party by admitting that if he came to power, he would not be afraid to nationalize oil if necessary. In his words: "if the province is sold out by the time you get into power [to oil interests] are you going to shy away because you're afraid of a word or afraid of a policy."⁸⁹

His rival at the convention, R. Toschach, mayor of Drumheller, rapped this idea by suggesting that "sometimes I think I am in the wrong party."⁹⁰ Toschach lost an opportunity to gain the nomination when he admitted belonging to the John Birch Society. Although he hastened to declare that he did not agree with its racist views, the party did not

appear ready to accept such an extremist position.

The convention that took place was one of the most bitterly fought in Alberta politics. There were behind-the-scenes moves to alleviate the impact of these two seemingly extremist viewpoints which left the middle of the road members of the party without proper representation. The executive prevailed upon Watkins to present himself before the convention and save the day. It was, however, too late for his nomination to make an impact, particularly when he had declined it a few days earlier for reasons of "conscience." Harradence won by about twenty votes, with Watkins a poor third.⁹¹

The Harradence phenomenon is still unexplained in the Conservative party. His sole contact with politics had been a two-year post as a Calgary alderman, a position for which he admitted "I didn't have the time or patience required."⁹² Furthermore, he was reputed to be toying with the idea of Alberta separatism,⁹³ and had only joined the party three months before the convention.

His strong personality had obviously been responsible for his victory. He was not, however, seriously interested in the party or prepared to work hard for victory at the polls. Significantly, relations between him and the executive were never good. He repeatedly and publicly criticized the executive's attempt to soften the impact of his frequently abrupt remarks, by flatly stating: "If I am going to be a leader...I am going to lead."⁹⁴

This mode of thinking upset considerably the balance

of power within the party. No open split occurred because of the heavy concentration of work being done to re-organize the federal constituencies. Owing to the Conservatives' minority position, a new election was expected shortly. Thus, Harradence was allowed free room to maneuver within his provincial party. He set about to organize the provincial party in a rather haphazard and half-hearted manner. His reports were vague and non-committal.⁹⁵

It is clear that Harradence did little work during his tenure of office. By May 1963, less than two weeks before the election, only two Conservatives had been nominated; what was worse, no suitable candidates could be found willing to run. Toschach, who had been put in charge of campaign management and organization, disappointingly reported to the executive that the party was in shambles.⁹⁶

Harradence's own credibility left much to be desired. Less than a year after he had announced that he would not back out of nationalizing power if necessary, he vehemently stated that "nationalization in any form as long as I am leader will not form a part of the Conservative party of Alberta."⁹⁷ Furthermore, he committed the error of attacking Manning personally, accusing him of "killing democracy."⁹⁸ He showed his own lack of concern for party fortunes by joining a flying marathon across the country less than two months before the election.

That the 1963 campaign was anti-climactic and dull was seen by the mass media decision, for the first time since

1930, not to support openly any party. As the Calgary Herald put it "no new party has captured this feeling in terms of positive coherent platform and producing appealing candidates."⁹⁹

The 1963 election was a debacle for the Conservatives as much as for the Liberals. The former failed to gain one seat. Worse still, the upward swing in popular votes witnessed in 1959 had been halted, as they were unable to poll half the votes that they had in 1959. Epitomizing the frustrated mood of both parties and their inability to make any headway against the Social Credit bulwark was a photograph which appeared in the Calgary Herald the day after the election. It showed Conservative workers "celebrating" the Social Credit victory by drinking champagne.¹⁰⁰

After the election, Harradence vowed to stay on. His position, however, had been jeopardized by his apathy and disregard for political combat. The fact that this apathy was widespread throughout appeared to give the impression of implicit support for the leader.¹⁰¹

The Conservatives were once again by 1964 actively involved in federal affairs, with the dispute taking place between Harkness and Porter--party President--over support for Diefenbaker. The former, of course, opposed his leadership, while Porter led a group of executive members who supported him. Harradence, in his usual open manner, strongly backed Harkness. The executive resented this stand and asked him to

tender his resignation. Harradence himself was growing weary of politics ("I could never last more than two years in an organization")¹⁰² and left the party in March 1964.

His departure left the Conservatives in worse condition than at any time since 1950. The party was ridden by dissension--which of course was not of his own making. It had no effective leadership, little remaining organization (in fact it could be asked if there ever was any provincial organization) and no purpose or goal. It was into this vacuum that Loughheed was to step.

Conclusion

The Conservative party in its early years after its return to provincial politics suffered from several disadvantages. In analyzing the factors responsible for its sorry performance, the organization (and policy) problems which plagued the party are critical. First and foremost, the party played a secondary role to that of the federal party on a regular basis. This inferior position stemmed simply from the belief held by party leaders and stalwarts that the provincial party had little or no chance of success in its attempts to unseat Social Credit. That it continued to operate may be explained by the desire to provide a continuity of support for the federal party, allowing the latter to ascertain its popularity between elections. Only in 1959 did the Conservatives appear to spring back to life under the impetus given by Dief-

enbaker only a year earlier. However, the organization had gone into full gear too early and subsequently slumped before the election, robbing it of any potential success it may have had.

Secondly, there is some evidence that, like the Liberals, the Conservatives were not sufficiently opposed to Social Credit in terms of policies, to fight it as an alternative. As Andrew Snaddon put it:

The provincial Conservative party has suffered a good many years from the simple fact that many of its leaders are not only satisfied with the Social Credit government; they hope to do business with it.... The last thing they want is for someone to rock the provincial boat.¹⁰³

What they had been seeking, as much as the Liberals, was a tacit understanding with Manning designed to obtain Socred support federally in exchange for a continuation of the soft touch in Alberta politics. When the Socred machine disintegrated federally in 1958, the Conservatives became satisfied with their newly found superior role federally. They proceeded to the provincial party. Little indeed was done between 1959 and 1963 in the form of provincial organization.

A third problem was the lack of funds. It appears that the people who supported the Conservatives federally were not in a position to do likewise provincially. In many cases they specified that funds go to fight federal contests only.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, the provincial section had to bear the brunt of financial straits with great regularity and this impeded large-

scale organizational efforts.

However, even during its early phase of development, the party was unlike the Liberals--whom they seemed to resemble--in two very important respects. First, except for a short and generally chaotic period, the federal party was never in power. Thus, the MPs never had the prestige and influence that their Liberal counterparts possessed. Hence, their control over the provincial party was never taken for granted. Indeed, the sheer numbers of their representatives in 1958 may have made such control impossible. No one particular figure--except perhaps Harkness--had the prestige enjoyed by a Gardiner, a McKinnor or a Prudham in the Liberal party. Moreover, the federal MPs did not appear to consider the provincial party seriously; too close an alliance with it was, if anything, regarded as harmful to their own fortunes.¹⁰⁵

Second, the chaotic conditions in which the federal party found itself during the late Diefenbaker years helped the provincial Conservatives indirectly. It was not difficult, particularly after 1962, to discern the discontent that was brewing within the party. During this period, the federal leaders were in a sufficiently distressing position and did not pay much attention to provincial matters. This left the party open to skilful manipulation by any newcomer willing to build the organization.

Third, the Conservatives could operate provincially from a more effective angle in the province than the Liberals. The latter party had been far too long associated in the minds

of the Alberta electorate with the federal party, which they had generally rejected. On the other hand, Diefenbaker had successfully erased the image of a Conservative group making decisions in Central Canada. The new image, of course could not be--as Kirby had thought--effectively transposed to the provincial field overnight. This could only be done with hard work and skilful management.

Therefore, when Lougheed was elected leader in 1965, he found a party which, although completely disorganized and inactive provincially, had constitutional autonomy to all intents and purposes as well as great potential strength. Thses he would exploit to the utmost in order to lead his party to victory only six years later.

NOTES

1. The Liberals of Alberta were hopelessly divided at that time between pro- and anti-coalition supporters. The Conservatives won a majority of representation as a result of that split and their unreserved support of the coalition at Ottawa.
2. All Conservative organizers whom this writer interviewed felt this to be the greatest obstacle they had to face in the task of rebuilding. Diefenbaker had helped change this view to a great extent. See the comments in the concluding remarks to this Chapter.
3. Spotlight, January 25, 1946.
4. Spotlight, April 11, 1947.
5. See his remarks on p.139 of this dissertation.
6. Milvain was a Calgary lawyer and Harkness was an army commander who became a politician and an M. P. in 1949. The two had considerable influence within the organization.
7. Calgary Herald, July 24, 1950.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. It would appear that this move was taken in order not to hold the federal organization responsible for the mistakes of the provincial wing.
11. In any case, the P. C.s were in opposition in Ottawa.
12. Calgary Herald, March 1, 1950.
13. Cf. this with the situation in the Liberal party, which was one of at least greater equality between the branches. There was no doubt that the Conservatives have been dominated almost totally by the Calgary wing during the past two decades.
14. Calgary Herald, September 3, 1950.
15. See below, p. 243.
16. Albertan, November 22, 1957. Cf. this with the problems which plagued the Independents because of their inability to enunciate adequate policies.

17. For example, Miss P. L. Pue became their honorary secretary until 1957, at which time she became a paid worker.
18. Executive meeting, Progressive Conservative Party Association, January 2, 1954, "Progressive Conservative Association Papers" hereafter referred to as Conservative Papers, Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary.
19. Letter to G. Drew from Kirby, September 4, 1954, ibid.
20. In a letter, dated September 10, 1959, ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. When a Calgary office opened in 1954, it was decided that, given the scarcity of funds, each constituency would be responsible for collecting its own funds.
23. Calgary Herald, April 26, 1952.
24. Ibid.
25. Edmonton Journal, May 13, 1952.
26. There were two teachers, three insurance agents, two real estate agents, two business executives, one housewife, one business engineer and one alderman among the nominees for both cities. See the Calgary Herald, April 26, 1952 and the Edmonton Journal, May 13, 1952.
27. Minutes of meeting, May 23, 1952, Conservative Papers, loc.cit.
28. Both of them, as will be seen, were to become the focus of derogatory remarks within the next two years as "Manning's most loyal supporters."
29. Calgary Herald, February 2, 1953.
30. It was later to become the party's official slogan (after Kirby's resignation).
31. A meeting of the executive, January 21, 1954, Conservative Papers, loc.cit.
32. Edmonton Journal, January 22, 1954.
33. Edmonton Journal, January 25, 1954.
34. The youth group claimed that far from being hare-brained--as by their elders--their proposal had considerable support. They had collected 8,000 signatures in three weeks sup-

porting the plebiscite. See the Calgary Herald, January 27, 1954.

35. Ibid.

36. Meeting of the executive, June 19, 1954, Conservative Papers, loc.cit.

37. Meeting of the executive, September 16-18, 1955, ibid.

38. The Northern Zone included constituencies north of Edmonton (not including the latter); the Central Zone was for constituencies between Edmonton and Calgary, including both; the remainder was part of the Southern Zone.

39. Executive meeting, October 7, 1955, Conservative Papers, loc.cit.

40. Ibid.

41. Re-organization meeting at McLeod, November 2, 1955, ibid.

42. Money had been allocated by Ottawa for this particular purpose. Interview with Doug Morgan, organizer, July 1973.

43. Alan Lazerte for the Northern Zone and Alan Castle for the Central Zone.

44. Newsletter, May 12, 1958, Conservative Papers, loc.cit.

45. Newsletter, July 5, 1958, ibid.

46. Executive meeting, October 13, 1958, ibid.

47. Note Roblin's comments about the rebuilding of his party: "A party won't win a provincial election just because it has been successful federally. It must search to build its own organization and slate excellent candidates." See his comments in the Edmonton Journal, August 15, 1958.

48. That he was a John Bircher was to be admitted by him during the 1962 campaign for the leadership.

49. Calgary Herald, August 18, 1958.

50. Memo dated May 23, 1958, Conservative Papers, loc.cit.

51. Calgary Herald, August 18, 1958.

52. Ibid.

53. Calgary Herald, May 15, 1959.
54. Reports from Lazerte and Castle, no date, Conservative Papers, loc.cit.
55. Calgary Herald, May 15, 1959.
56. Calgary Herald, June 3, 1959.
57. Calgary Herald, June 17, 1959.
58. Edmonton Journal, January 16, 1959.
59. Some of these comments were offered by E. Watkins in an interview with this writer, August 1973.
60. See footnote 47 above.
61. These comments are made, of course, from this writer's own observation after a close scrutiny of his remarks as well as the prevalent opinion during the periods when he made those comments. It may give a halo of omniscience to Manning, which is not intended here, although there is no doubt about his political perspicacity.
62. The faction claimed that Kirby and the executive had appointed the executive of the Association the year before, and the latter had imposed its own candidate with but a few days to allow everyone to prepare for the convention. See the Lethbridge Herald, January 24, 1959, where the affair received the greatest amount of publicity.
63. Ibid.
64. Interview with Watkins, loc.cit.
65. Banff-Cochrane had not returned any partisan candidate since 1935. It remained so until the 1971 election, when a Conservative was returned.
66. See below for the charge of lack of democracy, pp.
67. "We Can't Blame it All on Kirby," July 8, 1959, editorial.
68. A. L. Cheff, "Why the P. C.s Lost the Provincial Election." A commentary presented to the executive, Conservative Papers, loc.cit.
69. A letter from Morgan to Kirby, April 10, 1959, ibid.
70. Cheff "Why the P. C.s Lost the Provincial Election," ibid.

71. This point will be taken up in Chapter VII.
72. The comment was made, among others by E. Watkins, in an interview, loc.cit.
73. Calgary Herald, July 7, 1959.
74. Executive meeting, July 9, 1959, Conservative Papers, loc.cit.
75. Roy Henderson, W. Pettigrew and Roy Deyell respectively.
76. Calgary Herald, December 2, 1959.
77. Calgary Herald, January 18, 1960.
78. Executive meeting, February 20, 1960, Conservative Papers, loc.cit.
79. Ibid.
80. A letter to all regional directors, March 31, 1960, ibid.
81. A letter to W. Morrison, November 13, 1959, ibid. It is illustrative that Morgan expected help from Ottawa on issues of which the Alberta Conservatives should have been aware. It is one more example of the inferiority complex--and the tendency to shed responsibility--which had continually affected both the Conservative and Liberal parties of Alberta.
82. It is interesting that electing a leader was expected to hinder rather than help the federal Conservative cause.
83. A letter to W. Morrison, April 17, 1960, Conservative Papers, loc.cit.
84. A circular dated May 1960 (no exact date), ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. He agreed on this point himself during an interview, loc.cit.
87. It is apparent that Watkins and Diefenbaker never got along. Their brands of Conservatism were essentially different. Watkins only received a Q. C.--compared with the judgeship of the Alberta Supreme Court granted Kirby--from Diefenbaker a year prior to the 1963 debacle.
88. Calgary Herald, September 12, 1962.
89. Calgary Herald, September 28, 1962.

90. Calgary Herald, September 29, 1962.
91. Calgary Herald, October 5, 1962.
92. Calgary Herald, September 12, 1969, in an interview for the feature entitled "Personality of the Week."
93. "He became head of the Western Canada party in 1967, and was subsequently instrumental in founding the Alberta Independent Association in 1973."
94. Calgary Herald, October 9, 1962
95. Executive meeting, January 5, 1963, Conservative Papers, loc.cit. These minutes provide an example of vagueness. Comments such as "favourable reaction in constituencies where support has been weak in the past" or "the beefing up of the organization could ultimately produce good results," were made throughout.
96. Toschach to executive meeting, May 13, 1963, Conservative Papers, loc.cit.
97. Calgary Herald, May 23, 1963.
98. Albertan, May 23, 1963.
99. June 13, 1963.
100. June 18, 1963.
101. That Harradence had failed to provide leadership for the party was obvious. Why may be explained in terms not of any kind of inadequacy on his part, but of his overall lack of concern for day-to-day organization and policy formulation.
102. Calgary Herald, March 16, 1964.
103. "Old Tories Never," editorial in the Calgary Herald, December 4, 1959.
104. From an interview with Watkins, loc.cit.
105. It could be argued that the control that the federal party exercised over the provincial organization appeared to be stronger when the party was in power between 1957-63 than at any other time during the period considered here. The provincial organization was moribund and was to follow the directives from Ottawa. This was particularly evident during the 1963 election.

PART IV: THE OPPOSITION AS AN ALTERNATIVE

CHAPTER VI

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY I: BUILDING AN ORGANIZATION

1965-1971

In 1965 the situation of the Alberta opposition parties was clearly dismal. The opposition was in disarray. As had been the case since his accession to power in 1943, Manning remained the undisputed leader, and Social Credit the sole credible alternative on the Alberta political scene.

What made the opposition's role more untenable, however, was not the obvious popularity enjoyed by the Manning regime. It was its own disinterest and complacency. Parties went through the process of filing candidates for provincial elections, but the mood on their part was invariably one of foregone acceptance of defeat. There was no attempt by the opposition parties to make an effort at building an alternative because such an effort was regarded as wasted, particularly as long as Manning held on to the helm.

Lougheed Wins the Leadership

Peter Lougheed decided to enter the political arena in 1965 at a time when Conservatives were in an odd situation. Federally, they had displaced the Socreds as Alberta's major party. Provincially, however, they had failed to gain a single

seat in 1963. Nonetheless, their high federal status as well as Social Credit's own success provincially indicated the appeal that conservatism had for the average Alberta voter. As Lougheed saw it, the perfect solution was to build a constructive, vigorous, solid, conservative alternative which would step in to replace the tired Social Credit after Manning had decided to step down. It was becoming increasingly evident to him that the vehicle for this type of alternative was the Conservative party.

Lougheed possessed the motivations and skills which are said to characterize political leaders. He was the grandson of J. Lougheed, Alberta's first federal Cabinet Minister in the early years of Alberta's entry into Confederation as a province. He was also young (38), ambitious, intelligent and well-educated. His youth was no barrier. He had shown his business ability both as a lawyer and as head of a large construction and business firm--the Mannix group of companies in Calgary--as well as over his own company.

Most important of all, at this stage, Lougheed had no political enemies. Until 1964, he had stubbornly refused to become directly involved in politics. This was not because of any inherent lack of motivation; his friends recall his convictions during his early career years at the University of Alberta that he would become Prime Minister one day. He had been merely biding his time for an appropriate moment to enter the political arena.

Until this time, Lougheed had refused to even affiliate

himself with a political party. In fact, when he decided the time was ripe in 1964, the question became which party would be the best vehicle for his ambition and drive. As he was to say later to a journalist:

There is a real need for a new provincial force [in Alberta], for a new political force with responsible ideas and this can develop best within the framework and traditions of an established party.¹

Like Trudeau, Lougheed believed in partisanship only insofar as it would enable him to obtain power; like Trudeau also, he had resisted attempts to be drawn into a political party as an active participant until the appropriate time.

Lougheed's first contact with politics was through a speech that he delivered to a Rotary Club meeting in Calgary only a few months before his election as leader of the Conservatives.² The major thrust in this speech--and one that he was to voice frequently in future years--was that members of parliament ought to be allowed more freedom to vote according to their consciences.

Between the time of Harradence's resignation and the leadership convention, Lougheed received numerous requests to run. His strongest support resided in the cities, particularly Calgary. He had the backing of Harradence and the youth wings of the organization. However, even the older members of the party had become impressed by his credentials, his personality and image. Thus, Dr. J. Porter, party President, after recalling being impressed after his first meeting with Lougheed, emphasized the need to revitalize and re-

juvenate the party. As he put it: "If you haven't got young people, you haven't got any young or new ideas."³

Lougheed faced, and easily defeated, D. McKillop, a Calgary lawyer, at the leadership convention. The convention was not a portent of things to come. It was a fairly subdued and only reasonably well attended meeting, billed just like any other leadership convention that Conservatives and Liberals had had during the past decade.⁴ There was the normal hope that a new leader would be able to bring the party out of the doldrums, but expectations were low.

However, Lougheed had shown signs of determination to break with the past immediately after his election. He hastened to lay down his plans for the future of the Conservative party at the convention. His ideas were well thought out and precise and he never abandoned them through to his victory in 1971.

First, he firmly believed--and in this he was supported by the party heads--that the new leader ought to have a full-time position, and that the position ought to be paid by the party.⁵ Second, he maintained that in order to build an active and effective party, it was necessary to have an adequate structure. As a first step, Lougheed demanded the opening of a new provincial office in Edmonton, as necessary in order to keep a close watch on the happenings in the capital.⁶ Up to that time, the Conservatives had operated with a makeshift office in Calgary.

A third requirement as a part of the preliminary stages of rebuilding, was a theme that Lougheed was to exploit ef-

fectively on a numerous occasions during the years ahead.

"Everyone, [he admitted], takes for granted that Social Credit is doing well. Nobody knows, however, how well they are really performing." It was only by travelling and talking with people that the Conservatives would be able to make an assessment of the true performance of both Manning and his party.⁷ In the meantime, in order to keep a watchful eye on Social Credit, he promised to establish study groups, to deal with particular areas of government.⁸

Organization was, of course, the highest priority. When Lougheed came to power, only four active constituency organizations existed. As his target, he vowed to have active organizations throughout the province by 1967, although he declined to say how he would achieve this. He only mentioned that he would emphasize the "importance of candidates of distinction, decency and ability."⁹

Lougheed's philosophy of opposition was simple:

I don't want to develop an opposition for the sake of opposition.... There is a need for a fresh new approach to be developed. The province needs a political force which has both imagination and energy to prepare for future problems.¹⁰

In another connection, he said:

We won't just oppose. The people are fed up with that sort of approach. We won't throw mud and make charges we can't back up.¹¹

Despite these assertions, Lougheed was non-committal about his philosophy or his strategy. He expressed the opinion that "the conservative party is the natural party to develop the vitality and strength which will give the people

of Alberta a clear alternative to Social Credit."¹² On the other hand, he admitted that he wanted to do his "homework before talking about issues and solutions."¹³ In order to develop a sound strategy for the party, he vowed to consult Conservatives in Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia. His objective was to enquire into the ways in which Robarts, Roblin, and Stanfield had built or preserved their strong hold over their respective provinces.¹⁴

Lougheed believed that for a political party to remain viable and grow, it was absolutely essential that the leader keep in constant touch with his followers. To this end, not only did he request that all work be done as a united body, but also promised that he would send newsletters periodically to all members. These newsletters--unlike the usual self-congratulatory documents to which members were accustomed--would make everyone aware of the weakness as well as the strength of the party.

Moreover, he urged his workers to ensure that conventions would be "exciting affairs." This would help raise the morale of party members. It would also lead the general public to realize that the Conservatives were a united, vigorous and forward-looking party.

Finally, he emphasized hard work as the only positive way to achieve results: "let us consider [he said] that the campaign starts right now and never stops."¹⁵

That a leader would make so many resolutions and that he would urge the party membership to work hard in the attain-

ment of these goals, was perhaps not new. Such speeches are a prerequisite of leadership conventions. What made Lougheed a different kind of opposition leader in Alberta was first, the extent and nature of his promises; second, his charismatic appeal, which made them sound like a commitment; and third, the basic soundness of his proposals. As the Edmonton Journal editorialized a few weeks later:

It is entirely possible [that Lougheed will be the next Premier]. A Social Credit government won't last forever and Mr. Lougheed has impressive credentials and a vigorously forward look.¹⁶

Lougheed saw the rebuilding of a moribund party as a "great new adventure."¹⁷ A great deal of work had to be done before the Conservatives were to become the successors to Social Credit. The road to success, he felt immediately, resided in appealing to the non-committed voter. After all, Social Credit had won the 1963 election with less than 55% of the total votes cast; more important, only 56% had bothered to vote.¹⁸ He saw the apathetic as a challenge. If their refusal to go to the polls could be interpreted as a vote for the government party, it could also be construed as an indication that many of the non-voters were uncommitted and they could be swung to a strong alternative. The challenge consisted of awakening those voters to action, and this could only be done by projecting a strong, unified and vigorous party image.

All the promises and commitments which Lougheed had made in March 1965 were insufficient by themselves. Action

was needed. The leader--unlike others before him--was not long in assuring his followers that action would be indeed forthcoming.

Building the Party Philosophy

For the next two years, the Conservative leader became involved in a two-pronged attack as part of his "game plan."¹⁹ The two-fold problems of enunciating a philosophical program of action for the party and of re-building a moribund party became the challenges that he set out to meet. He met both of these with considerable enthusiasm and no less considerable success. The first task was perhaps the easiest and Lougheed gave it top priority; the second was a far more arduous enterprise and here success was somewhat more limited.

The Conservatives had been philosophically in jeopardy in Alberta. As has been pointed out in the previous chapter, there were times when provincial organizers were at a loss when faced with friends or opponents' questions regarding what differentiated the Conservative party from all other organizations.²⁰

A lone attempt had been made by E. Watkins to provide the basic guidelines for Conservative policy when he wrote his "Essay on Conservative Principles."²¹ In this intellectual essay--which was never published by the party or even accepted as its own guidelines²²--Watkins had enunciated the basic principles of Conservatism. These principles²³ were

Burkean. They blended with the classical Liberal tradition, and emphasized a deeply-felt reaction to wholesale changes and to government interference.

Few of the principles proclaimed in Watkins' "Essay" could be contested by Conservatives as not applicable to their own particular philosophies. Lougheed, however, preferred to provide the party with what he referred to as basic "Guideposts." While borrowing heavily from Conservative principles, they would leave the party free to accept new ideas and directions.

In order to collect ideas for his goal of enunciating these basic guidelines, Lougheed wet up a policy committee headed by Frank Calder, a close friend and a student of politics. The aim was to involve as many individuals as possible in the task. Lougheed maintained that "this is not going to be a policy established by a small group of people; it is going to reflect the views of all the people in the province."²⁴

Despite this disclaimer, however, the committee itself did not request submissions from constituencies or interested individuals. Its recommendations basically reflected the views of the party leader, and the "Guideposts" drafted by the committee bore the language and linguistic style of Lougheed himself. In this, as in other party enterprises, Lougheed's manner of action was clear: delegate responsibility but do not allow participation and democracy to obscure the goals of the party, goals which must be determined by the leader

and his close advisors.

While the committee was drafting its suggestions, Lougheed characteristically withheld any long-range commitments to specific policies for Alberta. Some sectors of the province were attempting to elucidate his position on critical issues, but he showed no haste in taking stands. As he put it in a reply to a critical editorial by the Medicine Hat News:

I am particularly interested in all issues facing Alberta.... The questions are, however, very complex and require a great deal of study and research. In revitalizing the Conservative party in Alberta, it is our intention to do this difficult study and research and come forward with new ideas and plans to realize the great potential of this province.²⁵

One could take exception to this remark in view of the fact that the committee's deliberations and decisions on policy-making had his imprint. Lougheed was, however, being cautious, not allowing anyone to rush him into taking stands which he could regret later.

The "Guideposts" were introduced by Lougheed himself at the 1966 convention under the heading: What Do We Stand For?²⁶ They were meant, as Lougheed announced, as "terms of reference within which policy platforms can be developed...not as platforms or legislative programs."²⁷

The guidelines provided a vision of Alberta's future and the Conservatives' place in it. In sharp contrast to Watkins' own manifesto, there was little abstract theorizing. They included the party's belief in expansion of local government power because "the most democratic form of government

is that which is closest to the people. Of some importance, was the need for the public to know what took place in cabinet meetings and to participate more fully by stopping the "comfortable drift to government by cabinet through order-in-council." At the same time, however, the Conservatives emphasized the need for stronger and more effective government. They also urged Alberta's own self-assertion in achieving a role of leadership within the confines of Canadian unity.

In order to achieve a proper perspective for the province, the party came down heavily in favour of developing long-range plans, preventing the tendency on the part of governments to react to popular demands for change. To facilitate this long-range planning, legislative priorities should be established: education should be high, as should development of natural resources. Private enterprise should be allowed the opportunity to develop Alberta's economy "but in such a way as to provide adequate returns to our citizens for the fortunate location of these resources within our boundaries."

The Conservative party favoured welfare policies, while considering options and programs which would enable fewer people to depend on it. The only direct allusion to Social Credit was one of the "Guideposts" which rejected "radical and irresponsible monetary theories" in favour of "sound financial responsibility." Finally, the Conservative party endorsed the system of free enterprise "despite its defects" as "the best economic system for the people of this province"

and in the same breath came in support of "the rights and liberty of the individual citizen....[which] should never be trampled by legislation in the guise of public benefit."²⁸

The document was not revolutionary. Within the framework acceptable to Social Crediters and other small-c conservatives, Lougheed had made clear that there was room for improvement, particularly in areas of provincial-municipal relations, social welfare, and the role of government and the cabinet. In this respect the party was merely reacting to the dissatisfaction that existed in sections of Alberta.

What was the purpose of this exercise? One of them was suggested by Lougheed himself. He indicated that his "Guideposts"

Clearly illustrate the distinction between the progressive conservatism as proposed by our party and the policies which guide the present administration [note the unwillingness on his part to add an epithet to the word policies]. There are important differences that must be understood.²⁹

Second, as Barr points out, the "Guideposts" were meant to convey to the Alberta electorate--both the uncommitted and Socred supporters--the assurance that "they had nothing to fear from the Tories, that a vote for Lougheed was a vote for a 'safe' change."³⁰

It is evident that there was a fundamental need--prior to branching out into other areas of concern--for the Conservative party to make a move in the direction of establishing itself as an alternative to Social Credit. The "Guideposts" covered this need by entrenching the party clearly on the side of conservatism. At the same time, however, it provided a

progressive and responsible image for the party. In other words, the Conservatives would be prepared to innovate in several vital areas, but they would preserve the accomplishments made by Social Credit.

It may be a critical point to re-emphasize that this dual strategy was necessary. Prior to 1966, the popular image of the Conservatives was one of near identity with the Socreds in terms of real politics if not of basic philosophy. While the document did not attempt to dispel the closely related position of the two, it claimed in implicit but certain terms that they (the Conservatives) were the conservative party; the Socreds merely were part of a reactionary movement, which under the direction of Manning, had embraced a half-baked conservatism as a means of maintaining themselves in power. Lougheed was to put it more explicitly in a press conference:

There is an erroneous belief that Social Credit is guided by conservative beliefs. Nothing could be further from the truth. But such a myth can only be destroyed by clearly illustrating the distinction between the progressive conservatism we propose and the reactionary viewpoint they represent.... I believe there is an important difference both in views and in values. Our challenge is to make this distinction understood.³¹

It is not clear what the real distinction between the two parties was, according to Lougheed; for the "Guideposts" failed to enunciate any principles which would help differentiate the Conservatives from Social Credit. It is therefore easy to agree with Barr, who claims that the Lougheed brand of conservatism was a carbon-copy of Social Credit philosophy.³² There is no doubt that in reality this was the case--or at

least very close to it. What matters, however, is that Lougheed was not content with adapting his party to Social Credit's philosophical position. He wished to leave the clear impression--and he was to repeat this during the next five years--that a) Albertans were conservative; b) that the P. C.s/were conservatives; c) that Manning had enabled the Socreds to become conservative; d) that Social Credit itself was not conservative--which, ideologically, could not be denied. In this manner, he had established the merits and credibility of his own party while rejecting an alien and reactionary force, without attacking Manning directly. More important, and related to this, the "Guideposts," and subsequent numerous statements by the leader, conveyed the image of the Conservatives as an innovative and forward-looking party in contrast with the tired, old and reactionary Social Credit. We shall return to both these points in our concluding remarks to Chapter VII.

Philosophies themselves are generally not considered important in Alberta politics; images, organizational strength and leadership are. The Conservatives had made an effort--extremely successful ~~as~~ it turned out--to project an image of conservatism coupled with innovation. However, this image, albeit fundamental, was only the pillar upon which the foundation of Conservative success rested. Critical additions were organizational strength, a solid basis of support and an appropriate strategic game plan.

Building an Organization

Alongside the development of a set of principles on which to frame policies, Lougheed's twin top priority was organizational strength. The efforts in this direction may be divided into two distinct, although basically related areas: central planning and constituency organization. Success in establishing the former was assured early, given Lougheed's close watch on developments and great organizational capabilities. On the other hand, success in the latter was much slower in coming both because of the magnitude of the task and the utter lack of organization at the time of accession to power within the party.

The first step taken by the newly elected Conservative leader consisted in conducting what he referred to as "fact-finding missions." He visited Nova Scotia in May 1965, Manitoba in June and Ontario in September of the same year. In all three provinces,³³ he met with leaders and organizers of the Conservative parties and enquired as to the possible ways of beefing up organizational power in Alberta. The three premiers provided much needed counsel on organizational questions. Fundamentally, Lougheed's aim was to ascertain the various ways in which they had built their own parties which had brought them to power. This was particularly the case with Stanfield and Roblin who had led their parties to victory after long periods in opposition.

The first suggestion which Lougheed received was that it was imperative to build a strong central organization as

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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
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the nerve center of an expanding structure. The Alberta Conservatives had no difficulty in this area, for the basic structure was already in existence. The only hurdle that Roblin and Stanfield had to overcome was the established elements within the hierarchy. These people attempted to impede their efforts at rebuilding, either by inertia and apathy or by putting obstacles in the leader's paths. These old elements, however, remained important, for example, as links with the sources of funds, and they could not be alienated.

Lougheed, then, decided to by-pass these people in decision-making. He established a parallel and informal structure which made the formal party structure superfluous except as a rubber-stamp.

That he was able to achieve this smoothly was due to two reasons: first, the established party stalwarts did not put up any resistance because they respected Lougheed's efforts to build up the party. Even more important, the party was in disarray as a result of the division between pro- and anti-Diefenbaker forces. Lougheed was able to capitalize on this dissension by keeping away from any involvement in the dispute. It was not until after 1967, when his prestige within the party soared, that he was finally in a position to eradicate these elements in favour of his own supporters.

Another issue in the central organization was leadership. Roblin in particular had made clear that the organization could not be rebuilt without a strong dose of this leadership.³⁴ The leader could delegate responsibility, but only enough

while still keeping final control over decision-making. In order to achieve this best, Lougheed surrounded himself with managerially competent but politically innocuous people who were to aid him in his task of rebuilding. Names such as Bob Dinkel, Ted Mills and Art Smith, who remained his closest advisers, particularly after 1967,³⁵ were already visible in the organization in the Fall of 1965.

The second more difficult task was the establishment of viable organizations in every provincial constituency. In March 1965, the Conservatives were fairly active in less than twenty constituencies, kept alive by a core of supporters. Some of these did not even hold annual meetings; in effect, only three constituencies, all in Calgary, could be said to be fully organized.³⁶ Under these circumstances, as Lougheed put it: "a lot of foot slugging must be done before becoming an alternative."³⁷

Lougheed began to travel throughout the province in the final months of 1965 attempting to find--or convince people to become--supporters so that constituencies could be established everywhere in the province. He set November 1965 as an original target date for this task, but it soon became apparent that this deadline would be impossible to meet.³⁸

The Conservative leader encountered two fundamental difficulties: first, there was a great deal of resistance on the part of federal MPs to the idea of having their territory usurped by the prospects of a new active organization. There is evidence, that most MPs were opposed to having their

rather secure positions shaken by the introduction of a new two-tier organization. In their view, this would act to upset the rather successful tacit understanding that they had achieved with the Socreds.³⁹

Lougheed found, then, that most federal Conservatives were reluctant to give him support. It was not until after Manning left the provincial scene that they were to rally behind Lougheed, although by this time Lougheed had successfully completed his reorganization efforts.⁴⁰ The provincial P. C.s had effected an actual--if not constitutional--separation by late 1965. This was the case both in the central office, where an informal structure had already been established by September 1965, and in the few constituencies, which had been organized by the early part of 1966. Given the reluctance on the part of both MPs and some key workers of federal constituencies to help organize provincially, Lougheed was left in a position to search for his own sources of support. In many cases, these sources were different from those of federal constituencies. This became a critical point after 1967, as we shall see below.

The second problem Lougheed faced was related to this. It surfaced soon after his efforts to establish constituency organizations met with some success. Constituencies were slow in co-operating with the central office after they had become established. For instance, as late as 1968, the Calgary office was moved to send a stern warning to some thirty constituencies. It admonished them that the association could

not continue to operate efficiently unless they would submit to its request for full-fledged co-operation. Lougheed declared that constituency autonomy was important, but that the leadership of the central executive had priority. He wrote:

The [central office]...is important in that it ensures the maintenance of an organization that can provide campaign funds and other services to candidates when elections are called.... The Association has provided membership cards at no cost to the constituencies. It is essential that these constituencies send in the money due to the Association from the sale of membership cards.⁴¹

The third problem in properly organizing these constituencies, then, was obviously financial. Funds were not available for this purpose--except in small sums--from the general fund, which still heavily subsidized the federal wing. As had been the case during the early 1960s, many Conservative supporters--like the Liberals--specified that their funds would not be utilized in provincial elections.⁴² The financial obstacle was one of the most serious that Lougheed had to overcome during the early years in power. He constantly had to convince the executive that what he called the "live cells" that had been established in the constituencies had to be kept alive.⁴³

Lougheed appeared to be losing his patience in the face of all these problems. He wrote repeatedly to Conservative supporters through his "Progress Reports."⁴⁴ These appeared every three or four months during his first two years in office. In them he reiterated that success depended on the

ability on the part of the rank-and-file to "take the bull by the horns" and get involved. However, it is a measure of his limited success in this area that the same message was repeated in January, March and June 1966.⁴⁵

By June 1966, Lougheed was able to report that basic organizations had been structured "at the constituency level in about 50% of the sixty-five ridings, compared to less than 20% a year ago."⁴⁶ The new target date for organizing throughout the province became September of that year. To meet this deadline, Lougheed set out on a blitz campaign tour of dormant communities. He was assisted in this task by Joe Clark, reputed to be one of the best organizers in the Conservative party.⁴⁷

The summer tour helped convince Lougheed that he ought to alter his strategy. The early strategy had consisted of establishing active associations everywhere in the province, and helping select attractive candidates for those constituencies. Given the relatively lukewarm response that he had received that summer, however, he decided to modify this basic goal. Rather than attempting to effect an impossible task, he resolved to concentrate on a few constituencies where the party had become fairly strong, and then implement his second line of attack: organize these constituencies well, and choose good candidates in them, with the hope that at least a few seats would become Conservative.

The organization appeared to be stumbling. By January 1967, despite Lougheed's calls for early nominations, only six candidates had been nominated.⁴⁸

It was, thus, not surprising that when the election call came in March 1967, the Conservatives did not rate as the major opposition party. Manning's campaign almost completely ignored them and zeroed in on the N. D. P.⁴⁹

From the beginning, Lougheed was clamouring for the opportunity to meet the premier face to face in a debate. Manning rejected the idea. He suggested that Conservatives support his party as they had always done.⁵⁰ This rejection was interpreted by Lougheed as evidence that Manning was afraid to face him. It is clear that Socred strategists realized the error inherent in this posture, for they subsequently prevailed on Manning to accept the challenge.

The debate took place in Edmonton on May 16, a few days before the election, and was certainly the highlight of an otherwise dull election campaign. It was televised throughout Alberta, giving Lougheed a much needed opportunity to become known to the public. Although it was generally estimated that the "Old Master" had once again won the day for Social Credit, Lougheed came out of the confrontation as the new rising star in Alberta politics.⁵¹ He was incisive, sincere, and projected an image of confidence and knowledge of the Alberta scene.

If Lougheed seemed to be holding his own in debate and in the campaign, the federal wing was not helping his cause. For instance, Dalton Camp wrote in open support of a joint effort by Social Credit and Conservatives, because, as he put it, "they have so much in common."⁵² For its part, the

Alberta wing of the federal party was only lukewarm in its support of the election effort; while no obstacles appeared to have been put in the path of the candidates, no MP became involved in any way with the Lougheed group.

Lougheed's strategy during the campaign became clear soon. First, his major avowed goal was at least to become elected in his own riding of Calgary West. This may seem an inadequate goal for a party on its way to becoming an alternative. It must not be forgotten, however, that Harper Prowse had been the last leader of an opposition party to become elected, in 1955. To this end, he went through a tiring and energetic campaign there by calling on every household of the constituency.⁵³ He concentrated on his own constituency almost completely, only briefly stopping over to help other candidates.

A second effort was made before the campaign started. Lougheed personally supervised the nomination of candidates in constituencies which he deemed crucial for the party's fortunes. In many cases, he was responsible for the very nomination of some of these candidates.⁵⁴ The leader himself had enunciated his principal criteria for an ideal candidate:

We are looking for people who have something unusual going for them. They are probably fairly young and probably have never been in politics before, but are well respected in their constituencies and are looking for a challenge.⁵⁵

About twenty-five of the forty-six candidates that the Conservatives fielded, were selected in this manner. The only well-

known figure in the running was Hugh Horner, a former MP, who gave up federal politics in order to enter the provincial arena. None of the others had had any previous political experience or had been involved in a political party actively before.⁵⁶

The organizational highlight of the election campaign came during a rally which took place in Calgary a week before election day. Over 800 Conservative supporters attended, and it was billed as the most successful opposition gathering in Alberta since the days of the Unity Movement. In the course of the rally, Lougheed advertised widely the chief thrust of his campaign effort. "The time has come [he said] for Alberta to have a chance to choose enthusiasm over complacency..., expansion over drift, freedom over red tape, Conservatives over Social Credit, tomorrow over yesterday."⁵⁷

The campaign itself was devoid of issues. The Conservatives put out a document, "Blueprint for the 1970s" that was a thorough examination of the present state of affairs in the province and of future possibilities. It had been drafted by the same committee that had been responsible for the "Guideposts," under the direction of Frank Calder.

Early in the campaign, Lougheed had vowed that his party would not indulge in mud-slinging or in tearing down the Socred general performance in previous years. His goal would be to point to new possible future paths to build on what had already been accomplished.⁵⁸ Specifically, the document called for the Government of Alberta to take over the

Alberta Telephone Company; to lower taxes on pensioners, to reduce uncontrolled expenditure; to diversify the Alberta economy; to place less reliance on oil; to decentralize government operations; to redistribute seats in the legislature and to allow free voting in the legislature. Some other measures were also propounded.⁵⁹

Nonetheless, as the Calgary Herald put it:

The central issue of the campaign is not really schools or welfare or agriculture. It is the fact that the present government has held office for three decades, that it is showing signs of age in the lack of new ideas and that its majority is too large to bode well for a healthy political atmosphere. In our view, many Albertans are concerned about the virtual one-party state which exists in this province.⁶⁰

Indeed, Lougheed's Conservatives had gained new influential friends in the course of the campaign: the provincial newspapers. All except the Albertan wrote lengthy editorials portraying the view that the Conservatives deserved at least a strong opposition. The Edmonton Journal proclaimed: "watch him: he [Lougheed] 'll be Prime Minister of Canada some day."⁶¹ The Lethbridge Herald saw that "Lougheed had demonstrated that politics can be fun."⁶² More specifically, the Medicine Hat News wrote:

Peter Lougheed is the new dynamic and promising opposition leader in this election and indeed one of the most impressive opposition leaders Alberta has seen for many years. Under Mr. Lougheed, the P. C.s have developed a platform which for the first time is more than just a pot pourri of slogans and relatively minor issues. Indeed, they have tried to present a platform which could be viewed as an alternative to that of the Manning government.⁶³

Finally, the Calgary Herald, Lougheed's staunchest supporter, appeared to echo the Conservatives' own slogans: "It is time [it wrote] for the injection of new ideas and new policies into government in Alberta. Certainly nothing less than a bold start in that direction is demanded by the electorate at this time."⁶⁴

The 1967 election set the stage for the future of the Conservative party. It fought that election from a fairly weak position: although its policy platform was comprehensive, its organization had great gaps. Too many candidates--twenty-six--had been nominated after the election was called and had little time to impress the voters. Its greatest asset was its leader. His goal was limited: create an image of credibility by electing a few members.

The results fulfilled this limited goal. Only six Conservatives had been returned, but the party's popular base had expanded greatly: out of the 64% of the population which had voted, 26% had supported the Conservatives. This was the party's highest figures since 1917. As Lougheed put it:

We are now finishing stage one of rebuilding the Progressive Conservative party; stage two will be to perform effectively in the legislature with the term we now have. I believe we have succeeded in developing a responsible alternative to the provincial government. We will start right now for the election campaign four years from now.⁶⁵

Solidifying the Organization: the Rural Problem

The 1967 election was barely over when the Conservative

party under the leadership of Lougheed was busy in an assessment of the gains made, as well as of the weak features of the organization. The party had obtained a foothold in the legislature, but a great deal of work remained to be done.

Five of the six seats won were urban seats. Horner was the sole rural representative for the party. However, this was not taken to imply that the Conservatives had finally broken their poor performance in the rural areas. Lac Ste. Anne had returned Horner because of his own personal popularity, not because of any connections with Lougheed and his Conservatives.

Other problems had presented themselves before the Conservatives: a full nineteen seats had not been contested because no candidate was found to run. Despite Lougheed's efforts to obtain the services of qualified persons to run vigorous campaigns, the party performance elsewhere had been quite inadequate.⁶⁶

The Conservatives clearly had to woo the rural voter, if their vision of a Blue Province was to become true. Lougheed, therefore, vowed to give top priority during the next two years to look into ways to increase support from rural areas. He did this at a press conference one day after the election had taken place, thereby emphasizing both the urgent need to turn to these areas, and his determination to proceed immediately with organization matters.⁶⁷

Observers were beginning to look at the Conservatives as the new party of the urban population. They had concluded

that it was possible that a two-party system would emerge in Alberta, with the urban-rural cleavage becoming the basis of party identification of Conservatives and Social Crediters respectively.⁶⁸ The Conservatives could have become complacent about such possibility; after all, it did not appear as certain in 1967 that they would become greatly popular even within the urban parameters.

Lougheed was, however, clearly in search of power. The challenge of drawing a measure of support from the rural districts had to be met. Consequently, the next four years witnessed a gigantic effort on the part of the resurgent Conservatives to make themselves the alternative not only in the cities, but elsewhere. The two-pronged strategy of the second phase of development, which commenced immediately after the 1967 election was: first, ~~to~~ build a sound, incisive and good opposition in the legislature and second, to expand the organization everywhere in Alberta. We shall return to the first task shortly.

In order to devote himself full-time to his new job as leader of the opposition, Lougheed resigned all his posts as director of several firms, which included Alberta Fidelity Trust and the Western Canada Bank as well as Mannix Development Corporation. He kept only the politically harmless role of Director of the Calgary Stampede Board. In his words, he rejected even "the remotest possibility of a conflict of interests between my public responsibilities and my own interests."⁶⁹

The new campaign to woo the Alberta voter began in September 1967, with the official launching by Lougheed of an eighteen-month blitz intended to build winning constituency organizations across the province. The major responsibility for the building task fell upon the shoulders of a Calgary man, a close associate of Lougheed and one of his intimate personal friends. E. M. (Ted) Mills was a business executive and a thirty-seven year old man without any political ambitions. He became Lougheed's executive assistant in charge of organization throughout the province.⁷⁰ The estimated target date for establishing viable organizations in all sixty-five provincial constituencies was April 1969, that is to say, eighteen months.

Mills was put in charge of a committee which provided him with the necessary tactical aid to facilitate his task. With a business background and no knowledge of politics; he set out in his double task: to establish organizations in the nineteen constituencies, where the Conservatives had absolutely no support, and to revamp the weaker ones.

Lougheed wanted to build strong organizations in all these constituencies with adherence to the following criteria:

1. At least 4% of the total constituency voters should become members.
2. Each constituency should be able to raise at least \$1000 from a variety of projects.
3. Each constituency should hold a minimum of six meetings each year, two of which should be social meetings and the rest executive meetings.
4. Each riding should try and obtain the services of the best possible candidate from the riding.
5. The means should become available to provide the best and most effective communication bet-

- when the candidate, organization and voter.
6. Each constituency ought to form a strong, viable executive committee with provision for new members to move up the organizational ladder at regular intervals.
 7. Each constituency would be encouraged to send strong delegations to the party's annual meetings.
 8. Finally, each riding should be also encouraged to submit as many briefs as possible on local issues.⁷¹

Mills' task, therefore, consisted of establishing local associations with presidents, vice-presidents and directors in each riding. He was also responsible for overseeing these newly formed associations--as well as the established ones--to ensure that the above guidelines were followed consistently.

For its part, the executive committee in charge of organization was to help Mills. For the next eighteen months, its members travelled throughout Alberta with a composite model of the "winning constituency." This was Lougheed's Calgary West model, which had been extremely successful in obtaining 65% voting support for the Conservative leader.

What distinguished this new strategy from that followed previously by Alberta opposition parties, was the extent of involvement by Lougheed and his colleagues in the re-building--or building--of the associations. They took the initiative, thereby abandoning earlier party principles, which had allowed each constituency to organize itself with or without the help of the provincial party headquarters. This strategy appeared simple enough: travel throughout the province, find well-respected and able Conservative sympathiz-

ers in local areas, persuade them to take over responsibility of their organizations and ensure that the central executive retain control of these organizations and their basic development.⁷²

In order to achieve this new order of things more efficiently and with the least possible friction, Lougheed quickly moved in two directions. First, he avoided reliance on the federal party, its workers as much as its leadership; instead, he surrounded himself with workers and leaders, whose main loyalty was to Lougheed alone.⁷³ It became party policy to move senior party officials to less active roles in the organization, replacing them with people from the ranks of the newly involved, whose primary loyalty was to their leader.

Second, a parallel development had taken place at the top level of the organization as well. The senior officials of the central executive, who had dominated the party, were moved out of those positions. The whole organization changed hands in November 1967, with the Presidency going to Roy Watson, one of Lougheed's foremost supporters and an active organizer. The "Old Guard," which had worked together with the senior MPs, and had been instrumental in slowing down the process of Conservative revival in the provincial arena, was mercilessly squeezed out.⁷⁴

Thus, in one sweep, between September and November 1967, when the party convention took place, the Conservative party of Alberta became the Lougheed party. A cursory and incomplete review of some of the associations, which Mills had helped

organize, shows that community-conscious young people, from middle class backgrounds, formed the new elite of the party.⁷⁵

Lougheed was also busy during the late part of 1967 establishing his own personal circle of workers. This small group of devoted supporters became known as "Lougheeders."⁷⁶ The group included Mills and Dinkel. The latter was a former campaign manager for Lougheed at Calgary West and now officially the campaign manager for the whole province for the coming elections. Others immediately outside this "inner circle" were Jim Seymour, Lougheed's own campaign manager for his re-election, Dave King, his assistant, Bruce Redmond and Roy Watson, influential members of the formal party organization and others.⁷⁷

If the role of this "inner circle" of personal friends and competent aides was significant in the years to follow, the same cannot be said about the rank-and-file of the party. Theirs was basically one of apparent great strength, but little substance. Lougheed repeatedly asserted in his convention addresses that the party was an open party, one of fresh ideas received mostly from its members.⁷⁸ However, Lougheed never expected the rank-and-file to produce policies or ideas for strategy in organization. For example, in the 1970 convention, Lougheed asked the opinion of the delegates on party policies. The result was, as he put it, "a handful of attractive ideas, some contradictory one, plenty of talk and no doubt some frustration."⁷⁹ Indeed, only two of the ideas that the convention

had proposed--and which had not been previously accepted by Lougheed--saw the light of day in the subsequent election. Whether that participation was favourably viewed or translated into actual policies, remained another matter.

The role of leader left no doubt in Lougheed's own mind: "I've got to carry my part of the load, but I'm calling the signals in the middle. In a political party, somebody's got to make the decisions and live with them."⁸⁰

It was thanks to this basic strategic plan that constituencies were organized throughout Alberta by the stipulated time. The problem, however, remained: basic organization was not sufficient to win elections. A handful of individuals running a constituency did not necessarily mean strong support in that constituency. In order to strengthen the position of the Conservative party, and in order to make himself and his colleagues at the legislature well-known throughout Alberta, Lougheed began the third phase of his game plan.

In the Fall of 1968, Lougheed decided to embark on regular informal meetings with his constituents. He began to frequent one of the shopping centres in his home riding on Friday nights, shaking hands and receiving suggestions from them.⁸¹ These meetings were deemed to have been so successful that other Conservative MLAs followed the practice with similar success.

The second enterprise in which Lougheed became involved, was the fact-finding tours. Between the Spring of 1968 and the Fall of 1969, Lougheed travelled through dif-

ferent parts of Alberta, particularly the rural areas, to raise the level of support for his party. In the first one of these tours--May 1968--he visited the Northern sections of Alberta; in the course of the second--November 1968--he toured other points East and North of Edmonton; the third--June 1969--saw him in twenty-two communities of East and Central Alberta; finally in September 1969, he covered Southern Alberta.

These tours served a two-fold purpose: first, "to acquaint MLAs [who accompanied him on all these tours] with specific problems of each area, and to determine the effectiveness of governmental administration." The second purpose was politically more pragmatic: to listen to the public and to demonstrate to the leaders of these communities, as he put it, that "the party is deeply interested in their problems and that it is ready to take up their problems before the legislature."⁸²

In the course of these tours, Conservatives met with mayors, town councils, chambers of commerce, farm and labour groups as well as individuals. The reaction was generally enthusiastic. As one farmer put it, "for the first time in years, opposition MLAs--let alone Government MLAs--have taken the trouble to visit our community and listen to our problems."⁸³

In some of these communities, specially well-publicized meetings took place in which Lougheed would listen to individuals with specific problems. One of the meetings appears

to have been of particular importance. It strengthened peoples' views of his responsibility, sincerity and unwillingness to make quick and cheap political gains.⁸⁴ The farmers of a district were upset at the government's lack of consideration for their plight. Their returns were dwindling and they were demanding a \$3,000 minimum income. Lougheed listened to them, but sided with the government's attitude.

The Lougheed organizers were subsequently to stress that, if any particular undertaking had made them victorious in the 1971 election, it was these fact-finding tours. They had helped show to the average Albertan their leader in a light, which was extremely favourable. The party's support in early 1968 was nearly non-existent in small towns and rural areas. Many individuals became full-fledged members of the party as a result of the tours and the opportunity to meet Lougheed.⁸⁵ The Conservative leader and his organizers were able to demonstrate not only that the Conservatives were interested in their cause--three years before the election--but also that the new vibrant leader and his policies provided a viable alternative to the Social Credit administration. Great care was taken during these tours never to involve Social Credit directly, but to "deal with people as if Social Credit did not exist."⁸⁶

Another effort made by the Conservative party to demonstrate its concern for small towns and rural areas, consisted of holding party policy conferences across the province. The apparent purpose of these conferences was to allow pop-

ular participation in the shaping of the Conservative platform for the coming election. The input from these conferences could be distinguished from that made by party conventions, in that small groups of party faithfuls were invited to attend as panelists. On the other hand, a large number of interested citizens could openly participate in the deliberations of these conferences. Moreover, particular themes were stressed in each conference.

Four of these were held during 1970: an agriculture conference in Red Deer; an education conference in Camrose; a general policy conference in Red Deer; and a meeting designed to investigate rural industrialization, in Lethbridge. Soon it became clear that the avowed purpose of the conferences was far removed from its real one: panels were conducted in suspiciously smooth fashion. Although debate appeared heated at times, their obvious purpose was to carry the Conservative leader's point of view to the delegates, thereby performing the important political function of communication.

That this view is essentially correct is shown by proceedings at one of these conferences where close to 200 delegates met.⁸⁷ Delegates from seventy of the seventy-five constituencies now in existence in the province, met to discuss general policy, and were allocated to different discussion groups. These were led by Lougheeders, whose task it was to set down clear guidelines to the meetings, while emphasizing the "input" function only insofar as it fell within those guidelines. The conference came up with some one hundred

recommendations, most of which were regurgitations of well-known Conservative stands. It must be stressed, however, that the "input myth" was exploited to a considerable degree. Lougheed himself, admitted that the critical aim of these conferences was to send the delegates "home with an understanding of what the Tory party is and [to enable them] to argue it at the grass roots level."⁸⁸

At another policy conference, discussion took place on all aspects of education. Specialists such as Dr. Walter Worth, chairman of the Committee on Educational Planning in Alberta, and B. Keeler, executive director of the A. T. A., were invited. An interesting feature that was utilized at this conference with enormous success, was the "bear-pit" session, with verbal confrontation involving guest panelists and delegates, thereby creating the feeling of massive audience participation.⁸⁹

Of particular importance for the party, was the agriculture policy conference. Farmer spokesmen were asked to bring their suggestions regarding the needs of farming communities in Alberta. Issues discussed included public works, rural industrialization, welfare and farmers' benefits. This conference, which took place at Red Deer, made much more of an impact on the party brass than the others. Outside participation, which had been minimal in the others, increased greatly. This enhanced the party's image as a serious contender for the farmers' vote.⁹⁰

The value of these conferences cannot be overemphas-

ized. Lougheed and his party obtained much publicity as the new "open party." This was to create a bandwagon effect. It enlarged the party's basis of support, and it helped increase the enthusiasm and dedication of the party faithful and new supporters.⁹¹ Furthermore, these conferences ensured the unswerving support of the faithful, by making them conscious of their strength and influence in policy-making.

Organization still required attention. As we have seen, Lougheed and Mills had decided that a basic organizational capability in constituencies was necessary. They had also provided these constituencies with guidelines which would enable them to grow and become active and stronger. During 1969 and 1970, the party held regional conferences in order to ascertain party strength, and fill gaps in organization. The conferences consisted of meetings between the leaders of constituencies and the chief central organizers. They took place in Calgary, Lethbridge, Edmonton, Vermilion, Barrhead, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Hanna and Medicine Hat. Special workshops were also established to provide prospective candidates and constituency hopefuls with fresh ideas intended to attract members and keep interest alive in the various constituencies.⁹²

One of the major aspects of this desire to strengthen constituency strength, was to ensure that candidates were nominated long before the election was called. This would give them the opportunity of becoming well-known in their communities--if they were not already--and of organizing their

campaign properly and systematically.⁹³ Lougheed had maintained that one of the chief reasons that success had evaded the Conservative party in 1967, was the fact that only twenty constituencies had nominated their candidates before the election was called. Therefore, this time he constantly produced associations to hold their nominating conventions.

Evidence of the success of this approach was that by February 1970, thirteen candidates had been nominated, thirty-two by March, forty-four by September of the same year, fifty-six by January 1971 and seventy by the time the election was called by Strom.⁹⁴

What satisfied the party heads most was that nominations were no longer unanimous, as they had been regularly in the 1950s and 1960s. Some of the nominations attracted as many as five candidates, with the expected winners sometimes losing the nomination to newcomers.⁹⁵ Moreover, several of the nominations were attended by considerable numbers of people. Figures ranged between 300 and 1,300 delegates, a fact which was publicized with obvious relish.

Besides ensuring that candidates were nominated well ahead of the deadline date, Lougheed had insisted on the importance of nominating qualified and well-established individuals within their constituencies. Although the Conservative candidates' social backgrounds were not monopolized by a particular social class, it is true that the Conservative nominees did come closer to constituting an elite group than any other party that ran in 1971.⁹⁶ Of the seventy-five nominated, four

were doctors, eleven lawyers, three engineers, nine teachers and professors, nineteen businessmen and four of other professions; fourteen were farmers and only six whose background could be regarded as blue collar. Thus, the people constituting the upper and middle status professions,⁹⁷ accounted for 68% of the total. More specifically, 24% of the nominees were of high status occupations, compared with 12% of Social Credit nominees and 5% for the N. D. P. candidates.

A computation of the candidates' ages, on the other hand, substantially corroborates the assertion that the Conservatives were indeed a party of lower middle-age groups.

A full 45% were between the ages of 35 and 45 (as compared with 20% of Social Crediters and 27% of N. D. P. candidates); only 15% were under 35 years old, and 6% over 56 (as opposed to 39% of Social Crediters--an interesting statistic).

The resulting picture of Conservative nominees, therefore, was one of a predominantly middle age group--indeed, the same age group as the leader and his closest advisers--well-educated, well-positioned in the social scale and almost totally male (only two women ran for the Conservative party).

The culmination of the pre-election fever, and the greatest measure of the success enjoyed by the Conservative organization, came in the January 1971 convention. More than 1,000 delegates and 700 observers attended--the largest convention ever held in Alberta. Prior to the meeting, Lou Hyndman, an MLA and an organizer of the convention set its objectives in the following manner:

1. To focus attention on what the party and its candidates believe and on the high calibre of the candidates.
2. To give party workers from all areas, particularly the more remote ridings, confidence in the strength of the organization and the feeling that they are part of the group.
3. To point out to the public...that the party is a credible and dynamic alternative to the "tired" S. C. government.
4. To give new party members--probably about 40% of the expected registration--a chance to look us over and to chat informally.⁹⁸

The theme of the 1970 convention had been "The Name of the Game is Winning." This had brought accusations of political opportunism from Social Credit and other opponents. In 1971 the party convention had as its theme "Breakthrough '71."

The gathering was to serve as a show window to the Alberta voter. Film makers and still photographers were everywhere to capture the party in action, and to take films for use at the coming election. Several innovations were also used, which were extremely effective in projecting the image of a party on the move.

The first one of these was the "hot seat," which saw Lougheed and the other MLAs facing the conference and replying to questions from the floor of the convention regarding their views on provincial topics. This was an unqualified success. The MLAs--as we shall see in the next section--had by now become specialists in three or four government departments, and were extremely well-informed on these topics.

Another innovation was the use of computers in the convention for the first time. A thirty-three question opinion survey was distributed to delegates and their answers

subsequently processed to assert party thinking on various issues. Lougheed summarized the results and promised that his government would take action on many of the proposals "as soon as it reached power."

In his speech, Lougheed reported on the great strides that the party had made in the past four years, particularly in regard to the broadened basis of support enjoyed by the Conservatives provincially:

Five years ago I was concerned because it was a middle class, late 30s to early 40s urban party. That has changed. Now Tory support is equally divided between urban and rural areas and it covers all age and occupation groups.⁹⁹

Conspicuous by his absence from the convention was Robert Stanfield. Although Lougheed said that Stanfield could not attend because of a previous engagement in Toronto, this pretext is at least disputable. The Calgary convention had been prepared six months in advance. More apropos perhaps, was Lougheed's assertion that "he thanked federal efforts to help" but that "Alberta Progressive Conservatives can reach the summit on their own, while maintaining an independent policy position."¹⁰⁰ This was tantamount to admitting that whereas the federal branch had not become a liability, he wanted to make clear that this party was his party, a provincial party, a party which he had built according to his specifications. For the sake of policy-making as well as general independence, it was necessary to lay to rest the myth of co-operation and unity on the part of both branches.

The provincial P. C.s had reached, as Hayden Smith, an organizer put it, "a threshold organizationally." It was strong in about two-thirds of the constituencies; its rural strength was no longer an election-engineered myth.

The Legislative Alternative

In their efforts to provide the image of an alternative government to Social Credit after the election of 1967, the Conservatives had launched a two-pronged attack. The first aspect of their game plan had focused on organizational efforts. The second consisted of their acting as a responsible opposition in the legislature. It was in this arena that Lougheed felt that the government could be most effectively criticized and attacked. By implication, after presenting to the public an image of seriousness and readiness to take over the Social Credit mantle, the Conservative party would reap the benefits.

The Conservative caucus of six met for the first time in June 1967, barely three weeks after the election. This meeting was the first Conservative caucus meeting since 1935. Lougheed at once proclaimed his plan of action for the Legislature. It consisted of allocating "portfolios" to the Conservative MLAs in areas in which they showed some interest. Peter Lougheed himself took finance, education, federal-provincial relations and the premier's office. Dave Russell (Calgary-Victoria), was put in charge of municipal affairs, public works and provincial secretary. Len Werry (Calgary-Bowness),

was to head the responsibilities of critic on welfare, Workmen's Compensation Board, Labour and Telephones. Hugh Horner, the MLA for Lac St. Anne, was to oversee Agriculture and Health. Don Getty (Edmonton-Strathcona West), was put in charge of Industry, Youth, Mines and Resources. Finally, Lou Hyndman, representing Edmonton West, became the shadow minister for the Attorney-General's department, Highways and Northern Development.¹⁰¹

Lougheed believed that the "opposition is a part of the government; opposition should oppose; in order to do this, we should be as well informed about public business as government members."¹⁰² In line with this argument, Lougheed asked Manning to provide secretarial staff and research help to oppositions as some provinces were already doing.¹⁰³ Manning was apparently considering such a course of action. In any case, he acceded to Lougheed's demands by supplying an office for Lougheed with a secretary and an assistant. He also provided three offices for the other five Conservative MLAs.

In order to do a thorough job of scrutinizing the government, Lougheed began to recruit a "task force." This consisted of Conservative supporters brought in to aid the MLAs in the shaping of Conservative policy. The recruitment of this task force was carried out throughout Alberta universities. It had a target of one hundred. The brain trust was divided into groups of five, with each group assigned a specific government department.

The main purpose of this was to allow the MLA to draw on a group's particular talents, training and research for suggestions and directions on issues before the House. Some of the top individuals were hired by Lougheed himself from outside the party, but over 8% were party members, and of these, the large majority were volunteers. Dave Russell was put in charge of co-ordinating the program.¹⁰⁴

Having achieved a basic organizational capability in the Legislature, Lougheed attempted to reach an agreement with the three Liberals and one Independent in the House, in order to put up a common front. C. Copithorne, an Independent from Banff-Cochrane, was particularly useful to the Conservatives because of his rural background and his lack of attachment to any political party. The four non-Conservatives, however, failed to be attracted by this maneuver and remained non-committal.

Lougheed did not wait long in expressing certain basic demands. We have already seen his request to have an office and staff. Upon his return from Quebec--where he had spent a month with a French Canadian family as part of his "contribution to Confederation centennial celebrations"--he urged a new look at the legislative system. In characteristic fashion, he appeared always to wish to reform the basis of the system before embarking on more mundane tasks.

In this case, he proposed several changes. First, he suggested that the Premiership should become a two-term position.¹⁰⁵ Second, he asked for a reassessment of the legis-

lative institutions by holding the legislature to the light of day. Third, he requested the introduction of live-TV into the proceedings. Fourth, he emphasized that committees had lost power to the proliferation of Royal Commissions and demanded a return to the committee system as "the most important means of legislative scrutiny." Finally, he suggested that governments should have fixed terms of office, thereby avoiding the surprise element, which he felt was detrimental to good government and particularly to good opposition.¹⁰⁶

More especially, Lougheed called for sessions of the legislature to begin in October to "properly review spending and approve estimates." He felt that MLAs could not do the job that they were elected to do under conditions of haste, which prevailed under the present structure.¹⁰⁷

The "philosophical foundations" on which Lougheed wished to build opposition strength in the legislature appeared, on the whole, far-fetched or optimistic and were derided as the "kicks of the neophyte." They were meant, however, as an assertion on his part that the opposition was serious and ready to attack and would not be catapulted into a passive role.

Lougheed also enunciated his principles of opposition. New attitudes and concepts were needed in assessing its role in parliamentary government:

We are presently involved in an adversary system, the government ignoring the opposition and the opposition trying to tear down the government. People are weary of this. They want to know what we can do, not what is wrong with other parties.¹⁰⁸

By the time the first session opened in mid-February 1968, it was clear that the Conservatives had done their homework. Between election day and the beginning of the session, they had made massive preparations. Their legislative baggage contained questions and private members' resolutions and bills covering almost every imaginable aspect of government business, but particularly concentrating on health and education.¹⁰⁹

Because they only had one seasoned legislator among them--Horner--the Conservatives opted in the first session for hammering the question period, and for allowing no piece of legislation to go unchecked and undisputed. As Lougheed put it in his guidelines for the session, the task was:

1. To make certain that all matters of public interest are exposed to public debate--in essence inquiring and scrutinizing on what is going on in the provincial administration.
2. To question the government on whether it has adequately considered alternatives in its future policies.
3. To review the estimates with such a degree of scrutiny that the tax paper can be assured that budgetary approval is made only after proper examination.¹¹⁰

Lougheed began the session with a surprise. No sooner had the Lt. Governor given his speech, and the House moved to appoint a Speaker, than Lougheed stood with a request to second the Speaker, something unheard of in provincial politics. Also, he asked that an opposition member be considered to head the Public Accounts committee.¹¹¹

Already during the second day of the session, questions began to be asked of several Cabinet ministers. When the an-

swers appeared non-committal, Lougheed protested and had to be reminded that the opposition cannot use follow-up questions in Alberta.¹¹² In all, the Conservatives asked sixty questions and made forty-eight motions during the first week of session. That, as a seasoned reporter claimed, "the rookies were overeager,"¹¹³ was not in dispute. However, some twenty of the resolutions set down before the House were passed by the government party.

The most fervent debate occurred when the House went into Committee of Supply stage, for which, as was usual in Alberta fashion, only one week had been allocated. All estimates were scrutinized fully. As a result, for the first time since 1937, the Government was forced to introduce an interim supply bill to counteract the delaying tactics of the Lougheed team.¹¹⁴ It took the legislature a full six weeks to approve the estimates. Questions, as one observer put it, were asked from "costs per patient in hospital to board feet, miles travelled, barrels of oil, number of civil servants."¹¹⁵

The session lasted for fifty-six days, and was one of the longest in Alberta history. It was heralded by the media as the first one "to witness a strengthening of the legislature's position vis-a-vis that of the government."¹¹⁶ Similarly, Lougheed was praised as the "star" of the session, despite his failure in changing the government's ways. As the Calgary Herald put it:

The Conservative leader and his group have emerged...highly knowledgeable in the field of provincial affairs within the first year of their

election. Perhaps even more important, is the fact that the Social Credit administration long accustomed to having things almost entirely its own way has been jolted into a new spirit of awakening.¹¹⁷

The Conservatives, then, had begun their legislative experiment with a vigorous role. Criticizing and prodding the government had become daily events. Their lack of experience became an asset. They had been less conscious of breaking some of the long-established procedures of the House and more prone to challenge them. Their tactic of carping criticism was to be altered in future sessions; first imperceptibly, later more as a matter of principle.

The long-awaited retirement of Manning came in the Summer of 1968. For the first time in nearly three decades, the specter of fighting Manning--or Aberhart--had been replaced by a fresh struggle for political power. His successor, Harry Strom lacked Manning's appeal, both within and outside his party, a fact that the Conservatives were to exploit.

Following Strom's accession to power, the Conservatives now resolved to become more avidly involved in building the party organization, as we have already seen. This switch of priorities had its effect on the role of the opposition in the legislature. In 1969 the Conservatives became a more subdued group in Edmonton. Dissent within the Socred legislative caucus now replaced the attacks by opposition parties. With Manning's retirement, some Socred backbenchers had reasserted their independence, and the legislative session ceased being a government-opposition battle.¹¹⁸

The objective of the 1969 session for the Conservatives became their call for parliamentary reform. Lougheed made it the centre of his reply to the Speech from the Throne. He demanded that government become more open by accepting the following rules: relaxation of party discipline; an expanding role for the MLA; the opening of legislative committee deliberations to the public; introduction of radio and TV coverage of House proceedings; and encouragement of a program to allow young Albertans to visit the legislature from all points in Alberta. An important demand was the change of the Question Period. His views on this question were expressed in the following fashion:

Instead of developing into a game where we appear to be trying to embarrass you and you appear to evade answering us...we suggest that ...when you are ready and able to answer, that you answer frankly, candidly.¹¹⁹

The opposition's strategy during this session was to concentrate on this call for "open government." At every opportunity both inside and outside the House, it derided the lack of program on the part of the government. Only five bills of substance, the opposition claimed, had been presented. It accused Strom of not wishing to listen to its demands because of fear, and compared Strom unfavourably with Manning, who was willing to listen to the opposition.¹²⁰ The subtle strategy was evidently designed to minimize the new leader's image and strength, his reliance on past performance, slavish adherence to government bureaucracy and lack of vision and program.

If the Tory performance inside the House appeared lacklustre in comparison with the first year's explosive confrontation, events outside the proceedings of the Legislature were becoming increasingly favourable to the "Lougheed team."¹²¹ First, in February 1969, a new addition to the team was provided by Bill Yurko, an Edmonton engineer, who had won conclusively in the by-election, called to fill the vacancy left by Manning's resignation. The Tories were confident that this seat was a breakthrough for two reasons: first, Lougheed's own campaign model had been used there for the first time outside his constituency with enormous success; and second, the seat gained had been the former Premier's.

A few months later, October 1969, when another seat was vacated by the death of Liberal Bill Switzer, Conservative druggist Bob Dowling scored another upset, in a contest which had been originally viewed as a Socred-N.D.P. fight. One month later, the one remaining Liberal MLA, Bill Dickie, left his party to become the Conservatives' ninth member, underscoring both Lougheed's own appeal as well as the Liberals' demise in the province. Finally, to climax the momentum of the high political fortunes of the party, Clarence Copithorne, the Independent member from Banff-Cochrane, also decided to join ranks with the Tories by extolling the "great team" and "outstanding policies of the Conservatives."¹²²

In the two earlier sessions, the Conservatives had been groping for a strategy. The first one had been a typical attention-catcher, but Lougheed and his supporters had stressed

a little too obviously perhaps their role as opposition. In 1969, the party had failed to develop any kind of strategy. 1970 was the year of the upturn, the year when the party ceased being "an opposition party" and became the "alternative government."

In his Reply to the Speech from the Throne, Lougheed once again failed to underscore the weak policies of the Socred program, except for an allusion to their lack "of farming policies." What he did, however, was to unveil his own Speech from the Throne. He said that he would revise Alberta's medicare in order to relieve people earning less than \$400 a month and senior citizens. Many other policies were also explained in detail in this speech, which completely ignored Strom's own speech a day earlier. His speech, in effect, had overtones of an election platform.¹²³

The speech left no doubt as to its purpose and intention: Lougheed was now actively developing the image of a party that was ready to take over the government. In order to accomplish this, he himself ceased asking questions during Question period, and left this task to his MLAs.

The change in strategy became particularly blatant when the Conservatives introduced twenty-one bills. None reached the statues books, but they provided sufficient embarrassment for the government, which hardly had enough legislation of its own to match this.¹²⁴ The Conservative bills had been well researched, well written and showed considerable preparation. One of them dealing with pollution, was introduced

before the government presented a similar one of its own.

The aim had been achieved. As the Calgary Herald wrote:

The Opposition legislation won't get very far because the Tories can be easily outvoted by the Socreds. But even if the Tories lose the game of one-upmanship, the public stands to gain. If the Opposition legislation is good, the government is put in the position of having to match it or suffer by comparison. Then, perhaps by producing an alternative legislative program, the Tories will even cause Albertans to realize that there is, after all these years, an alternative to government by Social Credit.¹²⁵

The exploitation of the theme of "alternative government" continued unabated during the 1971 session. However, in 1971, Lougheed, besides suggesting alternatives, heavily criticized the government. The tactics employed differed substantially from those utilized during the 1968 session. Lougheed himself, neither participated in the debate nor became involved in personal wrangles. He left that task to his colleagues, much as he had done in 1970. As Barr says of this style: "Even within the confines of his small group, he played the role of premier."¹²⁶

Secondly, the questions were addressed at the less articulate and weaker ministers of the government--Ross, Wilson--leaving the others--Clark and Colborne/particularly--untouched.

On the positive side, Lougheed once again presented his own legislative program, a ten-point document for sweeping changes in Alberta that included overhauling education and the welfare system. He made extensive use of a study that

had appeared under the auspices of the Socred administration entitled Social Futures of Alberta 1970-2005.¹²⁷ This book emphasized that massive social unrest, student alienation, high youth unemployment, and injustice to native people were taking place in Alberta and would continue in the near future unless the government acted swiftly. Lougheed made use of this book to attack Social Credit:

The present reflects 36 years of Social Credit government....This is their document and that's their forecast....Social Credit certainly has contributed to the trends forecast.¹²⁸

The 1967-71 session of the legislature was the climatic end of the revival of the opposition in the Alberta legislature. Never before had an opposition attempted to put forth an "alternative program" in Alberta. Never before had ministers had such difficulty attempting to answer questions or to plug weak areas of government legislation.

It would be difficult to disagree with the commonly held assertion that there were no great political issues in 1971.¹²⁹ The error lies in concluding that the lack of glaring issues would mean defeat for the opposition. Lougheed had sought to demonstrate by his party's performance in the legislature--as well as by his organizational efforts--that the question was not so much: what are the issues, but who can do the job better: what he called a tired, old government, which was complacent resting on its laurels; or a new fresh, youthful and energetic party which dared make dramatic changes within the existing consensus?

In a sense, Social Credit itself became the issue. That Lougheed won was the result of his great skill in discovering and exploiting his own sets of myths: that Social Credit was on its downward fall and that the Conservatives were on the rise and ready to supplant it on the provincial scene.

NOTES

1. South Side Mirror, February 11, 1965.
2. Calgary Herald, November 9, 1964.
3. Albertan, March 8, 1965.
4. Calgary Herald, March 3, 1965.
5. Calgary Herald, February 8, 1965.
6. Calgary Herald, February 10, 1965.
7. Edmonton Journal, March 3, 1965.
8. Calgary Herald, February 10, 1965.
9. Edmonton Journal, May 23, 1965.
10. Edmonton Journal, March 3, 1965.
11. Calgary Herald, March 22, 1965.
12. Calgary Herald, February 10, 1965.
13. Edmonton Journal, March 22, 1965.
14. Calgary Herald, February 3, 1965.
15. Edmonton Journal, March 22, 1965.
16. Edmonton Journal, March 23, 1965.
17. Calgary Herald, March 25, 1965.
18. Calgary Herald, March 30, 1965.
19. He played football for the Edmonton Eskimos while studying for his law degree. Allusions to football terms are very common in his speeches.
20. This has been seen in the previous Chapter.
21. Unpublished manuscript in the Liberal Papers, loc.cit.
22. Watkins himself, recalls that it was poorly received by the party because of its great abstraction. Interview, loc.cit.
23. These included: 1. Concern and respect for the indiv-

idual; 2. Free enterprise; 3. Responsibility and freedom; 4. Family life as the basis for our society; 5. Belief in security; 6. That the heart should rule the head; 7. Less government rather than more government; 8. Belief in adventure. He postulated the main Conservative principles as tradition and experience.

24. Edmonton Journal, June 17, 1965.
25. Edmonton Journal, February 17, 1965.
26. "What Do We Stand For? Guidepost of the Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta," Introduced by Loughheed at the November 25, 1967 meeting of the Association.
27. Calgary Herald, January 28, 1966.
28. "What Do We Stand For," op.cit.
29. Calgary Herald, January 29, 1966.
30. Barr, The Dynasty, p. 218.
31. Calgary Herald, January 29, 1966.
32. Barr, The Dynasty, p. 218.
33. Edmonton Journal, June 3, 1965. What follows was taken mostly from conversations held with various provincial organizers of the Conservative party.
34. T. Peterson, "Manitoba: Ethnic and Class Politics" in M. Robin ed. Canadian Provincial Politics, p. 98.
35. See below pp. 306-7.
36. Albertan, March 30, 1965.
37. Ibid.
38. Calgary Herald, May 20, 1965.
39. This point has been raised in Chapter V.
40. By the time of the 1971 convention, he refused to accept any aid from the federal party.
41. Circular, dated July 2, 1968. Information received at P. C. office in Calgary.
42. As a way of raising funds, a membership drive had been held in January 1968. The P. C.s had less than 3,000

members in 1965. It was able to affiliate more than 14,000 by November 1968, and close to 20,000 when the campaign drive ended in January 1971. See the Calgary Herald, January 3, 1968; the Albertan, March 20, 1968 and figures released by George de Rappard, Executive Director, to this writer.

43. Calgary Herald, January 29, 1966.
44. See "Progress Reports" for those months, available at the P. C. office, Calgary.
45. Ibid.
46. "Progress Report" June 1966.
47. I say impossible because there was little support for what was, after all, an unknown and untried figure.
48. Albertan, January 16, 1967.
49. Red Deer Advocate, April 19, 1967. In the past, as we saw earlier, Manning had successfully utilized the strategy of by-passing the strong parties and concentrating on the weak.
50. Ibid.
51. Red Deer Advocate, May 17, 1967.
52. Edmonton Journal, April 20, 1967.
53. Calgary Herald, March 23, 1967. The tactic employed in these meetings is interesting: a few party workers (usually five) would come to the door and announce: "Peter would surely like to meet you" and were followed by Lougheed who would shake hands and be on his way. See ibid.
54. Organizers would not remember how many constituencies were requested to nominate candidates in this manner.
55. Globe and Mail, April 18, 1967.
56. In his words, "The Premier of Alberta is not the same type of Conservative that I am... He is a reactionary." Ibid.
57. Calgary Herald, May 16, 1967.
58. Albertan, April 24, 1967.

59. See "Blueprint for the '70s" Progressive Conservative platform for 1967 election. Available in the P. C. office, Calgary.
60. Calgary Herald, May 4, 1967.
61. Edmonton Journal, May 17, 1967.
62. Lethbridge Herald, May 18, 1967.
63. Medicine Hat News, May 19, 1967.
64. Calgary Herald, May 20, 1967.
65. Albertan, May 24, 1967.
66. Calgary Herald, May 24, 1967.
67. In the past, as we saw, the party had either fallen into long periods of stupor after the elections or had then turned to build the federal wing.
68. Calgary Herald, May 24, 1967.
69. Albertan, June 26, 1967.
70. It was a measure of the respect that Lougheed commanded that a businessman and successful chemical engineer would decide to spend long periods of absence from his firm in order to increase Conservative support.
71. "Memorandum, Election '71: Tentative Plan," July 1968. For much of the following I have relied on information supplied by the Conservative office, Calgary.
72. Calgary Herald, September 30, 1967.
73. Of course, this does not alter the fact that many conservatives worked for both wings of the party with equal enthusiasm.
74. New officers were elected at the 1967 convention, the vast majority close friends or supporters of Lougheed, himself. That he had been able to stage this coup, of course, is due to his first having gained control of most constituency organizations.
75. Western Catholic Reporter, November 30, 1967. I am grateful to Mrs. Becky Kinsey of the P. C. office in Calgary for supplying this information.
76. It is difficult to say where the term "Lougheeders" or

the "Lougheed team" originated; but it was used constantly by party workers and the mass media during the next four years.

77. These names were obtained by perusing through much of the documentation at the Calgary P. C. office.
78. See his Address, available at the Calgary P. C. office.
79. Red Deer Advocate, March 16, 1970.
80. Calgary Herald, November 29, 1968.
81. South Side Mirror, October 24, 1968.
82. Calgary Herald, November 19, 1968.
83. Spirit River Bulletin, November 20, 1968.
84. Albertan, June 24, 1969.
85. Most of the organizers I interviewed agreed to this point.
86. See Lougheed's circular, "Leader's Campaign Plan" distributed to Dinkel and Mills, December 10, 1968. In the Calgary P. C. office.
87. This meeting took place at Red Deer. See Calgary Herald, March 20, 1970.
88. At this fourth meeting, the following planks were discussed: public expenditure, taxation; education; decentralization of industry; preservation of the environment; housing; welfare; health and local government. See Alberta Conservative, March 1970.
89. Alberta Conservative, September 1970.
90. Calgary Herald, January 19, 1970.
91. This type of party, said Lougheed, "is dominated by no group, serves no self-interested point of view, where neither age nor occupation nor constituency is the test of influence but where influence flows from those with fresh ideas, those with logic." See the Calgary Herald, November 22, 1969.
92. The writer was unable to obtain much information about these workshops.
93. How the election strategy was set down will be looked at in the next Chapter.

94. See the Alberta Conservative, March 1970 and the Edmonton Journal, May 20, 1970.
95. For example, Roy Watson, former party President, was defeated by Ken Paproski for the Edmonton Kingsway constituency nomination. At Edmonton Ottewell, Jack McPetridge, Alberta Teacher Association Public Relations Officer was defeated by J. Ashton, a little known lawyer.
96. From reports of the Calgary P. C. office.
97. I am grateful to Dennis R. Scown for permission to use these figures. See his "A History and Analysis of the 1971 General Election in Alberta" (unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Calgary, 1973), Chapter V.
98. Edmonton Journal, January 20, 1971.
99. Calgary Herald, January 25, 1971.
100. Albertan, January 25, 1971.
101. Edmonton Journal, June 19, 1967.
102. Calgary Herald, June 8, 1967.
103. Edmonton Journal, July 13, 1967. For up-to-date information on this, see Peter W. Clutterbuck, "Reforms in Organization and Procedure," in Donald Rowat, ed. Provincial Government and Politics (2nd. edn.; Ottawa: Department of Political Science, Carleton University, 1973), pp. 18-21.
104. The money was provided partially by the provincial executive and partly from the leader's own funds. This body tended to meet less often in subsequent sessions.
105. Edmonton Journal, July 5, 1967.
106. Calgary Herald, September 26, 1967.
107. Calgary Herald, October 2, 1967.
108. Ibid.
109. Calgary Herald, February 9, 1968.
110. Edmonton Journal, February 12, 1968.
111. Albertan, February 20, 1968.
112. Calgary Herald, February 17, 1968.
113. Fred Kennedy, "Are the Tory Rookies Over-eager?" in the

- Albertan, February 20, 1968.
114. Calgary Herald, April 16, 1968.
115. Calgary Herald, April 16, 1968.
116. Albertan, May 6, 1968.
117. Edmonton Journal, May 3, 1968.
118. Calgary Herald, February 24, 1969.
119. See his Reply to Speech from the Throne, February 1969; available at the Calgary P. C. office.
120. Calgary Herald, May 28, 1969.
121. See footnote 76 above.
122. Albertan, April 16, 1970.
123. Calgary Herald, January 28, 1970.
124. These bills dealt with, among other things, pollution, rights of hearing under provincial boards and tribunals, jurisdiction of the ombudsman, agricultural marketing, etc. See the Edmonton Journal, February 7, 1970.
125. Calgary Herald, February 16, 1970.
126. Barr, The Dynasty, p. 220.
127. The Government of Alberta, (Edmonton: Queen's Printer, 1970).
128. See Speech from the Throne, January 1970 and its Reply by Lougheed, available at the Calgary P. C. office.
129. See, for instance, Fred Kennedy, "The Tories: Bloody but Unbowed" in the Albertan, April 29, 1971.

CHAPTER VII

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY II: THE 1971 STRATEGY

The 1971 election campaign really began in 1967. The provincial party organization had to be built almost completely. This had been done in a very proficient manner between 1967 and early 1971. The first priority was to build viable constituency organizations throughout Alberta; this goal had been achieved by early 1969. Secondly, emphasis had been placed on having a full slate of candidates by late 1970; by that time, two-thirds of the candidates had been nominated. Thirdly, by late 1968, Lougheed and his organizers had begun to hammer the theme of the P. C.s as "the alternative government." This image had been best projected via the party performance in the Legislature.

In this chapter we will be concerned with the 1971 election, and the campaign itself. In particular, we shall deal with the strategy and tactics pursued by the Conservatives. These were the result of a series of preparations by the party, preparations which had begun in mid-1968 and which gathered momentum prior to the election. Lougheed believed that elections were not won by the leader, the candidates, the central organization, the constituencies or the policies alone; they were won by a solid combination of all these variables packaged in a party image. Therefore, his success depended on all of them.

The Conservative Over-All Campaign Strategy

The first campaign document that made its appearance in the Conservative camp was a tentative organizational plan written by Lougheed himself.¹ This was sent to the major advisers with whom he had surrounded himself, in July 1968. This plan outlined the party's basic strategy and dealt in cursory manner with all the problems, which the party had to face.²

In an important sense, the document provided the schematic outlines of a winning campaign rather than actual ways of attaining that victory. The crucial point which the plan raised was: was the party interested in convincing "the public that we are going to win in 1971 or merely be a stronger opposition and definitely win in 1975."³

The critical variable at this time remained whether Manning would still be Premier of the province when the 1971 election would be called. Manning had kept such an announcement a well guarded secret. As it happened, he was to resign as Socred leader only a month later. When Manning announced his retirement, the party decided to make an all-out attack on the province in 1971.

What did the Conservative strategy consist of? First, a full slate of candidates had to be nominated well in advance of election date. Second, individual campaigns had to be based on door-knocking and intense use of signs and posters. Third, the emphasis would be placed on "the new look government."

The opposition, Lougheed indicated, "must be ignored except as tired and complacent and old." The aim should be "at the heart, rather than the mind," to "the vision of our greatness as a Province," "to assure the voters that we will retain the basic resource policies of the present administration," "and to put emphasis on our legislative background and experience to offset the Liberal and N. D. P. thrust."⁴

Fourth, the sketchy notes continued, of all possible alternatives that can be sold to the public "we should emphasize the leader plus the candidates rather than the Party." The stress on the leader, the document read, ought to be on TV and on his tours ("a party on the move"), "along the Trudeau style." In public speeches, Lougheed wrote "we ought to follow the Kennedy approach of a set speech with some improvisation." Shopping centres and rallies had to be preferred to indoor activities.

Finally, Lougheed warned that there must be "strong activity from the outset. There is no such thing as peaking in a provincial election; there must be no let-up"; and, he continued, "get the jump on the other parties and keep it." This was a fundamental prerequisite "to make it obviously a two-party race."

After a long diversion into the reasons why strong local associations were critical, and how they should be set up,⁵ Lougheed stressed placing emphasis on the final legislative session. It would provide a magnificent opportunity for the Tories "to emphasize our specific new approaches."

Lougheed examined the role of individual campaign; he stressed that "door-knocking tactic...constant activity...signs...posters and the need to spend time on the uncommitted voter," were certain ways of succeeding. In his words, "go for the Independent, Liberal or non-committed, and talk like a winner from the outset."

Lougheed also dealt with the significance of TV, "as demonstrated by Trudeau" and the utilization of the leader throughout most advertising on both radio and TV. He also mentioned that public opinion surveys ought to be used several times before the election.

The Conservative leader also considered campaign tours as crucial to success. He referred to Trudeau's approach as being the one to follow in their own campaign. The objective of these tours, he said, was "to create a mood of excitement and gaiety...and to create the feeling that change is in the air."⁶

The leader's first paper was followed in general lines throughout the long "campaign" between 1969 and 1971. What others, particularly Bob Dinkel, the provincial campaign manager, did was to build and expand on the basic plan. As Lougheed himself suggested, this was a tentative plan, but a more specific plan of strategy and tactics had to be developed covering the following key questions: 1) how best to project the Leader; 2) how to ascertain the public mood; 3) how to make the voters switch to the Tories; 4) what slogan and theme to develop before the election.⁷

It may be argued that the basic outlines developed by Lougheed were not new. The Kennedy and Trudeau style had been utilized before with great success. The emphasis on the leader was not new in this modern age of images and technological advancement; neither could be seen as novelties, the Conservative party's reliance on TV and mass advertising, the door-to-door campaigning, or the use of public opinion surveys.

On the other hand, Lougheed's own success depended not so much on these important strategic or tactical features, as it did on his own sound interpretation of the Alberta scene, his belief⁸ that this was time for a change--or at least that he could successfully effect such a change--that it was necessary to establish a two-party race between the Conservatives and Social Crediters; that the basic policies embarked upon by Social Credit would be retained, while innovation would also be stressed. More important perhaps, was the fact that for the first time in Alberta since Social Credit had come to power, a party had realized that campaigns begin early and that basic guidelines and directives should be initiated as early as possible, and adhered to as far as practicable.

A. The Central Executive Apparatus

A most important strategic consideration in fighting the electoral campaign was the establishment of a central provincial organization, in which certain individuals would have specific tasks to perform. This apparatus was to be

totally different from the already existing formal party organization, which would merely ratify decisions.⁹ (See Diagram I)

Lougheed gained complete control of the organization after the 1967 convention. His executive gave him absolute freedom to search for capable administrators, managers, businessmen and other qualified individuals. Lougheed did his own selection of personalities during the Summer of 1968. By August, he had announced three appointments, which were to become the most important posts to be filled: Ted Mills was appointed as chief organizer, and was put in charge of spreading the organization's network across the province; Bob Dinkel was appointed provincial campaign director; Jim Seymour was made chairman of Lougheed's own campaign, both in his constituency and across the province. Ted Mills' role has already been dealt with in some detail.¹⁰ In what follows, we shall be concerned with Dinkel's and Seymour's own roles in the hub of the central executive organization. The result was an intricate and fascinating study of the operations of key people in political party electoral strategy.

Bob Dinkel's major task as campaign manager, consisted of co-ordinating all provincial organizations. He ensured that all orders issued by Lougheed and his "troika" filtered down to the lower echelons and were then carried out. He was, thus, a liaison officer between the leader and the organization.¹¹ Seymour's major task consisted of establishing the leader's own campaign schedule on a daily "and even hourly basis" and hence

DIAGRAM I. The Central Campaign Executive.

1. ————— represents lines of direct responsibility (hierarchical)

2. - - - - - represents lines of co-ordination

SOURCE: Memorandum from Loughheed to Jim Semour for campaign plan. Adapted by the writer.

To co-ordinate this schedule with the Calgary West--Lougheed's--constituency and campaign chairman; to arrange provincial tours; to co-ordinate with the Communication groups, particularly the leader's TV director and Press secretary in order to ensure that all public appearances included adequate time for preparation.¹²

Dinkel, then, was charged with winning "enough seats to form a government;" therefore, he was entrusted with the task of establishing what he expected from the leader to support the campaign. The chairman of the Leader's own campaign (Seymour) would plan and organize accordingly, in order to meet the required objectives.

Immediately below Dinkel were the campaign managers of all the provincial constituencies. The importance placed on the latter individuals was very great from the beginning. They were to be selected by the constituencies; however, Lougheed and, particularly, Dinkel reserved the right to object to any appointment made by the ridings. The need for such heavy-handed interference never arose.¹³

Another important line of responsibility under the campaign director was the Communications group. Its primary responsibility was to arrange province-wide advertising as well as the publicity campaign, involving brochures, signs, paid newspaper advertisements, radio and free TV time. The group was headed by a chairman (Bruce Hammond) who was assisted by a TV Director (Bob Kenny).

Finally, Dinkel was in charge also of the Finance Committee, a crucial committee in charge of raising funds

province-wide and of releasing Trust cheques. Its chairman was R. R. McDaniel.¹⁴

The lines of responsibility under Seymour were also clearly delineated by Lougheed. First, Seymour was responsible for co-ordinating with the Calgary West campaign Committee as well as the Communications Committee. Second, he was put in direct charge of the Leader's Personal Headquarters and of Provincial Tours. Regarding the headquarters, there was a person in charge of its administration, called the Chief Schedule Co-ordinator (Harry Hobbs) with an assistant (Bob Heberson) and drivers. There was also a Press Secretary (Bill Payne), in charge of maintaining a link, and good relations, with the press and media in general; a Public Appearance Director to "assure all public appearances by the Leader would be properly organized." The latter was regarded so important that Seymour himself held the post.

Provincial Tours, as we saw in the previous chapter, were deemed an essential part of the organization effort and Seymour was entrusted with the task of appointing, and working closely with, a Rural Towns Director (A. Meyer) as well as Urban Campaign Managers (D. Wood for Edmonton and J. Seymour himself for the Calgary tours).

The basic core of the campaign organization had been established by early 1969, but with the exception of the troika itself, none of the positions was filled until May 1971, four months before the election.

A few words must be said about the personnel in this

hierarchical structure. All directors and chairmen were between the ages of 30 and 45, and they were all businessmen or lawyers. All possessed a large dose of enthusiasm and an unswerving loyalty to Lougheed himself. Indeed, seven of the top positions were given to people who knew the Leader well, and who had held long relations with him in the business world.

The relations between these people were extremely cordial, and there appears to have been no dispute or struggle between them.¹⁵ One of the chief reasons for this was, of course, that they were all of a single mind, basically of the same background and loyal to Lougheed himself. Another reason, however, was also evident: their respective tasks were so clearly and precisely outlined that there was no room for dispute in this respect. The structure and their work was exceptional; the Tory apparatus left no room for doubt or hesitation.

B. The Constituencies

With the passage of the Alberta Redistribution Act of 1970, the province was divided into seventy-five constituencies, of which thirty-eight could be considered urban and thirty-seven rural.¹⁶ The party executive decided early in the campaign to separate the two types of constituencies, in terms of the advice and the orders issued to them. However, certain basic guidelines were applicable equally to both.

We have already seen in the previous chapter the emphasis placed by the executive on the proper selection of candidates and on their backgrounds. Here we shall concentrate on how the constituencies operated during the campaign, and on their link with the party executive.

In order to co-ordinate the activities of all the ridings, a closed meeting of candidates and campaign managers was held in Banff in early December 1970.¹⁷ During this weekend meeting the candidates were briefed by experts on all fields of electioneering. Talks were given on organization, campaigning, finance and relations with the media and on image in general.¹⁸ More particularly, all candidates were provided with an election pamphlet entitled "Winning the Election," which had been prepared by Bob Dinkel,¹⁹ and which contained a mine of information regarding all these matters.

The most important job of the organization, it was pointed out, was that of the campaign manager. (See Diagram II). In effect, he was deemed to be as important as, if not more than, the candidates themselves. The criteria that made a good manager were expressed by Bob Dinkel and by Bill Walsh, chairman of organization at Banff.²⁰ He had to be a person in touch with his community, its geography, its people, special interests and sectional rivalries. His task consisted of enlisting the right talents for specialized activities. He had to be interested in politics, and would have to share common political convictions with his candidate.²¹ The managers

DIAGRAM II. The Constituency Campaign Organization

1. ————— denotes direct lines of responsibility (hierarchial)
2. - - - - - denotes co-ordination lines

SOURCE: Bob Dinkel, Winning the Election, October 1968

were to ensure that the campaign had unity and a theme, and keep it on course, avoiding any deviation.

Lougheed and his colleagues rejected outright the idea of a multi-manager constituency, a type which had been frequently used by political parties in Alberta. He argued that "managers must call the shots" and not allow even the candidates' judgement to interfere with his ability to command.

Below the managers were the campaign treasurer and the finance chairman. The duties of the treasurer in the 1971 election were to handle the funds raised, pay bills and keep records, whereas the finance chairman should be free to devote his time to fund-raising. However, the campaign manager was to remain the sole authority both on drawing up the budget and on spending. An important warning that was given to all finance chairmen and to candidates, was to avoid raising revenues from any large provincially-based company. The latter would be approached by the provincial finance chairman; the role of the constituency finance committee was to appeal to individuals and small businesses within the communities.²²

The campaign manager was to be assisted in his task of organizing the electoral activity by area managers; each constituency was divided into three to seven areas depending on the size. The area managers were to be selected carefully: their job as liaison with the workers was critical.

Below the area managers and assisting him, were the zone organizers, who in turn had poll captains and canvassers

as subordinates.

Lougheed and Dinkel had decided that constituency organizations ought to resemble as much as possible the one which had been so successful in giving the former his victory in 1967. Constituencies, therefore, did not differ from one another during the 1971 campaign. This writer found in interviews with several organizers of Calgary constituencies that all of them (six of the twelve were surveyed) were identically structured. In all cases, the people who worked for the campaign were volunteers; their recruitment, instruction and deployment was the job of the campaign manager. In some constituencies, the area managers were left in charge of performing the task. All constituencies had specific instructions to involve 5% of the voting population as volunteers.

As in the central organization, nothing was left to chance in the constituencies. Each one was fully equipped with past voting statistics, maps, public opinion polls, posters, billboards, secretarial help, etc. The roles of the individuals involved were also most minutely delineated. While each constituency was given great flexibility to pursue its own organizational tactics, the supervision of their tasks was religiously observed by the campaign director and his staff.

C. The Candidates

Leadership and organization were of undoubtedly critical importance to Lougheed's campaign. Of little less significance,

was the role of the candidate. Given that the party was in opposition, and its policies had been untried, the voter depended almost totally for his decision on both the leader and his candidates.

We have already given some attention to the high calibre of the candidates that were chosen to represent the Conservative party: their general youthfulness and their representativeness from a cross-section of the population made them an impressive group.

A large part of the Banff conference, as well as the "Winning the Election" booklet, were devoted to an examination of the image that the candidates should project, and how to portray that winning image best.

As with the establishment of constituency organizations, it was clear that an effort was being made by the executive to build up candidates in the image of the Leader:

The image of the candidate is the public appreciation of his personality, philosophy, intelligence, competence and record of performance. It is what the public sees, knows and believes about the man.²³

Therefore, it was necessary that there be no fabrication or distortion made by the candidate.

In order to develop a favourable image, Dinkel suggested that public opinion surveys be conducted immediately after the selection of the candidates. The assets and liabilities of these people ought to be weighed and fully scrutinized. In order to reach an objective appraisal, it would

be necessary to listen particularly to people not closely associated with him.

The purpose of this exercise--which was attempted in some communities--was to allow the campaign manager to stress the candidate's assets and minimize his liabilities. An important consideration was to make his image "as totally different from the image of his opponent as possible. The black and white differences, not the shades of grey, must be emphasized."²⁴ Thus, Conservatives were warned to rate "youth vs. age, beginner vs. expert, town vs. city, professional vs. concerned citizen; successful lawyer [sic] vs. perennial aspirant; native of constituent vs. newcomer." There was in all of these traits both good points, which ought to be stressed, and poor ones, which could be easily ignored.

The candidates were told not to compromise as this "will definitely alienate voters." Specially, they were warned not to make promises that would "benefit one segment of the population at the expense of another." Promises were to be made only "when they realistically deal with the anticipation and expectations of the voters."²⁵

Art Smith, of Continental Public Relations, the firm that took charge of campaign advertising for the Conservatives,²⁶ was specific in his advice to candidates. He warned them never to overreact to counter personal attacks, for "if your opponent endeavours to pull you into the mud and you respond, you both may get covered with the same mud." The candidates were similarly asked never to make statements that would prove

embarrassing either to other candidates or to the Leader. They were also briefed on answers to possible questions derogatory to the party.²⁷

An important part of the campaign effort consisted of concentrating on the media's relations with the candidates. Most of the urban newspapers in Alberta supported the Conservatives. The situation in the rural areas was not similarly favourable. Candidates were told by Joe Hutton, also from Continental Public Relations, that it was essential to establish good relations with the papers. As he put it: "Don't be afraid to ask for their [reporters] help, make them feel you are seeking their professional advice," when placing advertisements or when sending out news releases.²⁸

The candidates were also advised to use words such as "enthusiasm, enterprise, fresh, drive, new, vigorous, young," constantly in their speeches. Recommendations were made by Hutton regarding how to make best use of TV. Their speeches ought to be short and to the point, utilizing powerful announcers to introduce them (even names were provided); not to read messages, to emphasize the first and final words, not to use swivel chairs, ("if you do, your audience will watch you rather than listen"); to wear contemporary clothing, but also plain and not flashy; to insist on good make-up; on good sound; on perfect posture ("sit back in the chair and move up slowly to the edge of the desk.")

It was well known that the vast majority of the Conservative candidates--over two-thirds--had had no previous

experience in political combat. These pointers helped the Alberta Conservative candidates to be better prepared to face their opponents and the public. Such a plan, as Walsh pointed out, could not fail; as he exhorted the candidates, "give some thought to where you are going to live in Edmonton when the legislature is in session because if you follow this plan-- you are going to be there."²⁹

D. The Leader

Peter Lougheed was, of course, the hub of this intricate system of relationships and roles. Everyone in the organization agreed that success or failure hinged on him. In an important sense, the whole campaign was fought on his strength as a popular leader and his appeal to the people of Alberta. As has been indicated, the party was largely de-emphasized to the extent that the name Progressive Conservative seldom appeared in campaign posters, billboards or media advertisements. On the other hand, the leader and his "team" were thoroughly emphasized; billboards for instance, showed Lougheed walking at a brisk pace, arm in arm with his original team. It clearly gave the impression--even for football fans in Alberta--of the typical forward line of a soccer team, with Lougheed in the centre, and invariably one step ahead of the rest of his colleagues. We shall return to the significance of images in our concluding remarks; for now we must enquire into how the leader fitted into the scheme of things.

Of the total days allocated to the campaign (thirty-nine), the leader stayed ten days in his own constituency. Here, he nearly repeated his 1967 performance,³⁰ when he boasted of having visited every household in the riding. Another twelve days were devoted to touring rural Alberta. Finally, of the seventeen days left, rallies, speeches, city tours, TV appearances took priority, while Sundays were used for resting and for over-all strategy planning.³¹

The rural tours were particularly important. The party knew that it would win or lose depending on the enthusiasm that it would be able to generate in the small villages and towns of Alberta. It was, therefore, decided to allocate Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays each week to tour these areas, leaving Wednesdays for Lougheed's rallies, and Monday and Tuesday for work in his own constituency.

In order to provide the most effective use of the leader's time and effort, advance men would travel by car to the communities that Lougheed was to visit, one week before, to ensure arrangements and a good turn-out to see him. Also, a man was hired to serve as stunt man, or attention getter, and he would travel from town to town one day ahead of time to make sure that the degree of enthusiasm was heightened.

Once in the towns, Lougheed stressed shopping centre gatherings and mainstreeting with local candidates. A western band from Calgary was widely used to increase the level of interest and attention in small town rallies. Because of the lack of time available, it was essential that timing

be perfect, to "ensure maximum exposure with minimum hardship to the leader."³²

The first rural campaign began two days after the election was called. Lougheed completely upstaged Strom, who did not begin his own tours until the next week. The others were held at intervals of one week, except for the last week, when Lougheed remained in Edmonton and Calgary.

The rural tours operated extremely well; there were no unforeseen problems, and the advance publicity made certain that large crowds turned out to the meetings. TV coverage repeatedly showed Lougheed walking with his characteristic brisk step, shaking hands in his also typical double handshake manner.

To summarize, then, our purpose thus far has been to deal in some detail with the intricacies of campaign organization. The aim has been two-fold: first, to bring before the reader a typical but largely unknown area of practical politics; second, to throw some light on how the Alberta Conservative "Blue and Orange" machine was constituted and operated. The crucial aspect was the swiftness with which Lougheed had gained control of the organization, and the way in which he had built an effective and enthusiastic party. In order to obtain good results, he regarded it as essential that the machine be guided in a rather hierarchial and authoritarian fashion. However, sight must not be lost of the fact that the party was also one of the most "open" parties in recent Alberta history. It has received the unswerving and total

support from its members to an extent unknown to any other party since the early days of Social Credit.

Having observed Lougheed's machine from a rather static viewpoint, problems of a more dynamic nature remain to be dealt with: the campaign itself, its issues, the role of the Tories and the Socreds in it and how the image developed by the Conservatives led them to power.

The Socred Campaign Strategy

By 1971, the Social Credit party was at the cross-roads. The party was eagerly attempting to come to terms with a clash of orientation between the "Elders" and the new youthful elements. The campaign, at least within the party itself, was greatly affected by this fact; its organization faltered--although not sufficiently to warrant a defeat on its part.

A close scrutiny of the Social Credit campaign organization showed a party whose electoral structures and organization were not essentially different from those of their Conservative rivals. Their document and pamphlets resembled those put out by the P. C.s. For example, a two-volume Social Credit Campaign Manual included very comprehensive guidelines on the most effective methods to be used for winning elections, and it read very much like "Winning the Election." However, perhaps the very difference in titles of the booklets gave recognition to the difference between the parties themselves. The Social Credit lacked enthusiasm,

spirit, the urge to work hard to achieve the desired ends.

As a student has put the problem:

The problem for some of the Social Credit candidates was not lack of information on which to base a campaign, but rather a feeling of complacency which allowed them to believe these techniques to be unnecessary for them to become elected.³³

The first tactical error that Strom obviously made, was not to announce an election as soon as he came into power in mid-1968. The party was still Manning's party, and the aura of invincibility remained clearly with them. An early opinion poll had showed them comfortably ahead of the Conservatives by ten percentage points in 1969.³⁴ Strom, however, felt it to be too risky. He planned to wait until he had achieved the task of revitalizing a sagging party, and until he had impressed the Alberta electorate through enlightened and progressive policies.

An early decision was made by the executive of the Socred party to create an aura of charisma around Strom, a trait which he lacked. An attempt to show Strom's positive side failed completely when a Calgary advertising agency was commissioned to take a half an hour film of "Strom the Man." His rather wooden image did not lend itself to an undertaking of this sort and the film was scrapped. A later film was somewhat more successful. It emphasized Strom's ability to adjust to a new world as befitted the Alberta of the 1970s.³⁵

Clearly, the party and its leader had made the momentous decision of fighting the Tories on terms all too fav-

ourable to the latter. The image of change was symbolized by Lougheed, and Strom--a self-made man, rurally-oriented and somber of character--could not possibly hope to rob Lougheed of that image.

In the Fall of 1970, a study was commissioned by the Social Crediters, designed to undertake a campaign analysis by providing an adequate strategy. Corporate Communications Ltd. (CORPCOM), an Edmonton based public relation firm, was put in charge of the study. It concluded that a task force should be appointed by Strom--thereby by-passing the party executive as well as the cabinet--for the purpose of planning the campaign. This was to be done along seven different levels of activity:³⁶ government activities; political planning; premier/candidate schedule; platform; information/analysis; province-wide media; constituency schedules. A slogan was even suggested: "Together We Build." The study was named Project '71.

A struggle ensued with the cabinet as to who should be put in charge of the activities proposed. They finally selected Robert Thompkin, a University of Alberta administrator, to run the campaign. Orvis Kennedy, the party's executive director and Manning's right hand, was no longer either young or enthusiastic about the campaign effort. As a result, the task force's own choice for advertising, a very progressive agency headed by J. Lovick, was not given the advertising account. Instead it went to two small, inexperienced agencies, J. Ford of Edmonton and G. Reid of Calgary. Their conventional

and amateurish advertising techniques proved harmful to the party.

In mid-April 1971, Owen Anderson presented to the party a public opinion survey, which proved that the party was experiencing serious difficulty. P. C.s were given 31% of the vote to 28% for Social Credit with the rest undecided.³⁷ The worst blow, however, was that voters characterized Lougheed as "decisive," "a man of the people," "a man of ideas" and "sincere," whereas Strom was seen as "a decent fellow" but "boring" and "dull" and "a poor speaker."

The Socreds were also having problems with the central issue of image strategy. It was not sufficient to stand on the record; it was also necessary to look ahead to the future. To the P. C. slogans of NOW and "Time for a Change" and "Break-through," the Socreds opposed "Let's Build Alberta Together." Their colour, a grass green, contrasted with the blue and orange of the Conservatives. Many, indeed, complained that the Socred signs could not be seen at times because of the proximity in colour with that of the lawns on which they stood. The TV image did not help Strom either. His rather gloomy and somber face offered a stark contrast to the loud music and announcers' strident introduction, which often preceded his speeches.

Despite these strategic setbacks, the party was not demoralized or moribund. When nominations closed, a full thirty-seven candidates were fresh faces, representing for the first time, ironically enough, a cross-section of the Alberta

population, both in terms of age and of occupation. Eighteen candidates were under 40 years old. Moreover, the party appeared to have revitalized itself. Although the traditional backbone element of the party, symbolized by farmers, teachers and small businessmen, was still heavily represented, candidates also included accountants, solicitors, priests, housing and land developers and sports announcers.

Interestingly, many of these candidates were only lukewarmly supportive of the party leadership. Some of them only too obviously concealed their lack of confidence in the Premier. At least one was reported to have commented privately: "My first priority is to win this election; my second is to find a new leader afterwards."³⁸

It was in this aura of indecision and dissension that Strom called the election on July 22, 1971, a few minutes after he had triumphantly ridden in a parade to celebrate Klondike Days in Edmonton.

The Campaign

The 1971 election was relatively devoid of policy issues. Despite the many campaign proposals put forward by both major parties, there was a general impression that the election would be won or lost on the issue of change itself--change of a narrow and limited variety to be sure. For example, the London Free Press editorialized:

[Albertans] do not necessarily want a

change, but need one, like you need a new cook stove after 35 years, even though the old one is still doing a great job.³⁹

For its part, the Globe and Mail wrote:

The election is expected to be dull. In a way, the P. C.s and the Socreds are like salesmen. Both are peddling the same kind of car. The victory will go to the most eloquent salesman.⁴⁰

More graphically put by David Lewis who campaigned briefly for the N. D. P.: "voting for the Social Credit or the Conservatives is like choosing between strychnine and arsenic: they are both poison."⁴¹

The campaign itself was not fought on platforms.

Of course, the Conservatives put out a formidable document, which demonstrated that they were not short on policy ideas and promises.⁴² However, the platforms themselves, were secondary: the timing was critical. The Conservatives made the totality of their platform public three days after the beginning of the campaign; by contrast, the Socreds announced theirs piece-meal. Apparently, this was done for tactical reasons. Barr writes that the platform was not released immediately because the cabinet itself was split regarding most of the proposals, and were not prepared to accept them. "Even on the eve of an election campaign, many Cabinet ministers couldn't stop thinking like department administrators instead of politicians."⁴³

The Conservative platform was all-inclusive, nearly 200 pages long. It contained five separate sections, with thirty-six subsections, and dozens of subheadings under them.

They covered most themes, from women's rights to consumer legislation, anti-pollution policies, tax reform and changes of procedure in the legislature. The "219 New Directions," as they were called by Lougheed, provided an inkling into his own liberal-conservative philosophy. Free enterprise was stressed on economic matters, but progressively liberal stands were taken in social matters such as individual rights (proposing his own Bill of Rights), mental health reform, better opportunities for native people, women, the aged (free medicare and removal of provincial income tax on pensions) and provisions for mothers, to name only a few.

In more purely economic matters, the Conservatives called for tax incentives to businesses and industries, decentralization of industry, creation of new jobs, availability of government loans to small businesses. More particularly, the Conservatives called for an end to the "isolationist attitudes" adopted by the Socreds on federal-provincial relations, and promised to "bring Alberta into the mainstream of Canadian life." On the other hand, there was also a call to Albertans "to stand together in the face of attempts to divest us from our main means of livelihood."

The Social Credit platform was even less restrained in its promises. They made substantial financial promises; as one reporter put it: "in one day Premier Strom promised the voters more than \$10 million worth of gifts."⁴⁴ These included a \$1000 cash grant towards the purchase of a first home for Albertans earning less than 15,000; a \$10 grant

for every Albertan towards the construction of recreational centres; funds for farmers to help pay crop insurance; promises to help the cities' transportation problems; a fund of \$20 million to help preserve family farms; more highways in rural areas; and increased day care facilities. However, all these proposals had come two weeks after the campaign had already started and after Strom had accused the Tories of making similar promises with the statement: "Where do they get the money?"⁴⁵

The results were very harmful to the Socreds. They were roundly criticized for their "massive give aways." The Edmonton Journal carried a story in the front page which read: "twelve months ago, Mr. Strom said we couldn't afford all this and now the money is suddenly available.... This has stretched the government's credibility."⁴⁶

Perhaps of all planks, the sudden announcement of a cash grant to new homeowners was the most harmful to the Social Credit. Those who had only recently bought a house and/or were over the borderline claimed "being cheated by a cheap election gimmick."⁴⁷

If the platforms themselves provided a contrast, the parties' success in electoral strategy was also evidently different. The Socred candidates, with a few exceptions, refused to be drawn into door-to-door campaigning, claiming that the party philosophy opposed such electioneering tactics. Similarly, Strom's own tours lacked the timing and organization that characterized Lougheed's. Several times the "tour reached

its destination to find no one there."⁴⁸

The Socreds utilized radio and the press to a larger degree than TV. The basic decision had been made by Tompkins, presumably because "nobody watches television in the summer," but more ostensibly to ensure that Strom's image would not suffer unduly.⁴⁹ Thus, whereas the Conservatives spent an estimated 75% of their total advertising fund on TV, the Socreds own expenditure was 25%.⁵⁰

One of the major blunders committed by the Social Credit in the campaign was the need felt by organizers to use Manning. The latter had already campaigned actively for the Social Credit candidate in Spirit River-Fairview, who was battling with Grant Notley, the N. D. P. leader.⁵¹ He was subsequently asked to join Socred forces and rallies in Calgary, Edmonton and Medicine Hat. Manning called Lougheed "a Madison Avenue glamour boy," "with an ultra-brite toothpaste smile and a Hollywood handshake" and "the charm of an Avon Lady."⁵² These, he said, have nothing to do with the qualities needed to govern. In a more serious vein, he proclaimed "this is not the time to sacrifice our unique position of strength to experiment with a new man no matter how nice he may look on television." He then continued to give his reasons why the Socreds should be returned:

People have the right to keep a government as long as they desire...if it doesn't perform, four years is too long. If it continues to serve the interests of the people, there is no logical argument why it shouldn't continue indefinitely.⁵³

The effort backfired for two reasons: on the one hand, it demonstrated that the party was, indeed rudderless, as it had been suggested; a party that could not exist without Manning. On the other hand, it is probably true that many undecided people opted to vote for the Conservatives as a result of their feeling that it had not been fair to bring the "Old Master" back to help the Socreds. Lougheed was clearly the underdog.

At a rally held in Edmonton, an estimated 2,700 heard Strom say that a "Tory victory is the first step in a socialist take-over in this province." He then turned to a tirade that the Conservative party was one of special interests. "Do Albertans want [he said] to change from a strong independent government to one that will be subservient to Eastern politicians and business interests?"⁵⁴

The reply to this came the next day when over 4,000 people went to the same auditorium to hear Lougheed speak about his "alternative government." He steadfastly refused to either reply to the charges or to minimize Manning's performance. The strategy of ignoring the political enemy seems to have helped Lougheed's image considerably.

A few days before the election, Statistics Canada published its monthly unemployment figures, which showed that the province's economic state was far from bright: the jobless had jumped by nearly 1% over the past month. The Socreds replied to this figure by accusing the federal govern-

ment of indecision.⁵⁵ Lougheed, on the other hand, announced that he would in the future take joint responsibility with the federal government for such economic indicators. Again, he adeptly refused to blame the Socreds directly for this situation.⁵⁶

The Socreds were now searching desperately for a way out of the less than cheerful situation in which they found themselves. The party was clearly slipping, although most candidates appeared to have been unaware of this. The top organizers, however, were dismayed by the succession of blunders (both self-inflicted as well as other-inflicted), and were looking for an issue which would help the rapidly sinking party. A week before the election, rumours swept the provincial capital that JAPEX--a subsidiary of Japan Petroleum Development Corporation--was about to announce a deal to develop the Athabasca tar sands.⁵⁷ No such a deal, however, was worked out and the Socreds were left without a potential life-saver.

It must be stressed that despite what appear to be obvious signs of Conservative strength and Socred weakness, the election results left most political observers surprised. Political scientists, election experts, journalists and the man in the street were similarly shocked when it became evident that the Conservatives had won forty-nine of the seventy-five seats, while the Socreds trailed with twenty-five, and the N. D. P. with one.⁵⁸

Even the Conservative camp was reported to have been amazed at the turn of events. Lougheed is alleged to have said

to a reporter only a few hours before election polls closed:

"Well, I don't think we made it."⁵⁹

Yet, a few hours later, they were all revelling in a Tory victory. How did this happen? Two questions remain to be dealt with: where did the Conservatives win; or rather, from where did they get support; second, and most important, how was this support achieved?⁶⁰

It must be re-emphasized that despite what appears to have been a sweeping victory for the Conservatives, the Socreds had retained enormous support. The Socreds remained the sole party in command of the Southern sections of Alberta. The election saw the Social Credit party actually augment its total support by 40,000 votes. Even in terms of actual percentage, they only dropped from 44% to 41% over the last four year period. This election, then, had not seen the normal total defeat of the incumbent party, which Alberta politics had witnessed in the past.

Close to 45% of the seats had been won by less than 15% of the votes cast.⁶¹ Twenty-three of the forty-nine seats gained by the Conservatives had been won by less than this margin, as had eleven of the Social Credit seats.

In terms of voting patterns, the election appeared to have clearly separated the medium-sized towns--Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Drumheller--from the large cities--Calgary and Edmonton. The former went overwhelmingly to Social Credit both in terms of votes and in terms of seats; the latter were clearly Conservative territories. Thus Edmonton

elected Conservatives in all its sixteen constituencies (in only two did Socreds come within 1,000 votes of the Tory candidate). Calgary retained some Socreds, although it is not certain whether this was because of the party and its leader or the candidates' strong personalities.⁶² Albert Ludwig, Art Dixon and Roy Wilson were all highly respected ministers in the previous Socred administration. Another victorious Socred, George Ho Lem was a very popular businessman in the North East end of the city.

The third fundamental characteristic of the election was the Conservatives' solid performance in Central and Northern Alberta, in which area they only lost eight of the thirty-one seats, with an average of 45% of total support. (See Table II)

The Conservative vote was, then, clearly correlated with areas of high population density, as well as those areas where the population was less rooted. Social Credit on the other hand, preserved its support in a still predominantly fundamentalist South. The increase in the Central regions' support for the Tories may be explainable by the vigorous campaigns that Conservatives fought in many of the constituencies. In fact, Lougheed had long considered Ponoka and Rocky Mountain House critical constituencies.⁶³

Conclusion

A difficult question remains to be analyzed. Why were a large number of voters persuaded to support a new party

TABLE II

Mean Percentage Voting for Social Credit and Progressive Conservative Party in Ten Regions of the Province -- 1971 Election.

Region	Mean Progressive Conservative Support	Mean Social Credit Voter Support
All Alberta	46.4%	41.1%
Metropolitan (Calgary and Edmonton)	49.5%	37.8%
Calgary	46.0%	43%
Edmonton	51.4%	33.8%
Other Urban ¹	40.1%	46.1%
Rural ²	44.2%	44.3%
Rural North ³	45.1%	37.1%
Rural Central ⁴	45.8%	44.0%
Rural South ⁵	41.6%	52.5%

NOTES:

1. Other Urban : Camrose, Drumheller, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge (2) Medicine Hat-Redcliff, Red Deer, St. Albert and Wetaskiwin-Leduc.

2. Rural are all 37 districts below

3. Rural North include the following 13 districts: Peace River, Lac La Biche, Spirit River-Fairview, Smoky River, Lesser Slave Lake, Athabasca, Bonnyville, St. Paul, Whitecourt, Barrhead, Lloydminster, Redwater-Andrew, and Edson.

4. Rural-Central include the 12 following: Stony Plain, Drayton Valley, Clover Bar, Vegreville, Vermilion-Viking, Wainwright, Sedgewick-Coronation, Stettler, Lacombe, Ponoka, Innisfail and Rocky Mountain House.

5. Rural-South include: Banff, Olds-Didsbury, Three Hills, Hanna-Oyen, Bow Valley, Little Bow, Highwood, Pincher Creek-Crowsnest, MacLeod, Cardston, Taber-Warner, and Cypress.

SOURCE: Government of Alberta. Provincial Election Returns, 1971

after thirty-six years of uninterrupted reign on the part of Social Credit? The answer must lie in the combination of factors with which we have already dealt: the leader, the team, the legislative performance, the organization, the candidates, the campaign. It is to the nebulous way in which they were all combined and transferred into the minds of the voter to which we must now turn.

If we were to agree on a common denominator responsible for all the Conservative party successes, it would have to be: their skillful exploitation of Social Credit's "myth of performance" and the ability to convince the electorate that it needed a change, not of policies, but of style, thereby creating their own myth of the need for change.

When focusing on Lougheed's search for power, we must of necessity concentrate on his effective use of image politics, his aggressive utilization of political knowledge aimed at finding himself an appropriate place in the spectrum of the Albertan political market. He subsequently adroitly identified that place as his own regardless of protestations on the part of opponents, who happened to be the occupants of that position. Finally, he would appeal to Albertans to the effect that

- a) other occupants were there not by their own will, but by historical opportunism, and the perspicacity of their leader (viz. Social Credit and Manning); b) even if they were the present-day occupants of that political position, nothing gave them the undisputed right to monopolize the market; and
- c) that they should hand the position over to its more rightful

occupants (viz. the Conservatives), who had held that position since time immemorial.

What the Conservatives were saying was that Social Credit should allow someone with a similar package to enter the market. Needless to say, the economic theory of pure competition can be taken too far, but its application to Alberta politics is extremely appealing.

It is difficult to deny--if nothing else elections since 1944 have demonstrated it--that the average Alberta voter is conservative philosophically. The only true cleavage in the province in terms of philosophy has been given traditionally by the urban-rural cleavage.⁶⁴ What Lougheed had to do as his second step to make his party successful was to concentrate in identifying himself not too strictly with the urban voter, at the same time as he filled the gap provided by the lack of support from rural areas. In reality, much of the work in this regard was done for him by Diefenbaker. It was he who first made the people of rural Alberta aware that their future could lie with the Tories.

Lougheed's task was to widen this new trend by ensuring that he was known as a Conservative, thereby creating a feeling of certainty among the voters. At the same time, however, he clearly identified himself with the province of Alberta as a whole, not with any political party. In other words, he successfully helped make the voters forget their past image of the Conservatives as a strictly urban and business class party, while de-emphasizing the role of the national party in

provincial affairs and asserting the independence of his group.

The third step was to create the "myth of performance" on the part of Social Credit. Myths are powerful in that they rely on images, or perceptions of reality. It was an extremely difficult task to utilize this "myth" while Manning was in power. Most Albertans supported him, even if, philosophically, they may have remained opposed to Social Credit. Manning and Social Credit had been so fused for so many years that it was difficult to disentangle them while he held power; to attack Social Credit was to attack Manning, and this could not be expected to succeed.

However, with the retirement of the "Old Master," the field was open for a skillful politician to explore and exploit the possibility that Manning's achievements had not been Social Credit achievements, but his own. Therefore, without Manning, the party had become another party (at least it could become another party). This is what Lougheed did through the four years between 1967 and 1971: he attacked the myth of performance of Social Credit, not of Manning. The only way to demonstrate this was by attempting to lay bare the blunders of which Social Credit without Manning was capable.

Even this was difficult, however. Social Credit had not committed many blunders, and none was of catastrophic consequence. The party was solidly conservative (except for some elements, which never gained control) and followed in the footsteps of Manning, potentially assuring itself of an un-

interrupted new period in power.

Therefore, a new myth had to be involved: the myth of the need for change. Unable to find much open room for direct attack, Lougheed devised a new technique. Social Credit had done a good job, but the party was tired and old. As that editor put it so well: Is it not time to get rid of your old stove after 36 years of usage even if it is still serving you well? The new strategy, therefore, became quite straightforward. If this writer may be forgiven the use of the economic analogy again, it would seem that the Tories had to prove to the Alberta voter that the new stove that they were offering was not only as good as the old one, but that it had many features that the old one could not possess because of its age. However, the new stove was not so complex that the buyer could not operate it.

The leader was sincere, dynamic, youthful, handsome and homegrown; the team was competent, dedicated; the candidates were respected and upstanding members of their communities; the policies were socially progressive, but economically conservative. The transition that the Alberta voter was asked to make was not a revolutionary or even a radical one; it was one that consisted of replacing an allegedly tired and old management with an efficient and young one. The Tory myth-making had worked, at least for 46% of the Alberta electorate, and the Conservatives had won power.

NOTES

1. The analysis that follows has been based for the most part on a series of documents that the writer was able to obtain from the Alberta Progressive Conservative Association office in Calgary.
2. Peter Lougheed, "Election '71: Tentative Plan," July 1968. Available at the P. C. office, Calgary.
3. Ibid., p. 10.
4. Ibid., p. 3.
5. This has already been covered in the previous chapter.
6. "Election 71" op.cit. p. 7.
7. Ibid., p. 11.
8. How he utilized this belief to best advantage will be examined in the conclusion to this chapter.
9. As we saw with regard to the Liberals, the formal members of the executive seem generally to gain in power as the leaders--or the Members of Parliament--lose their own. During the 1967-71 period, there was no doubt that Lougheed had gained total control of the Conservative organization.
10. See above, Chapter VI
11. The following is discussed in a "Memorandum" from Lougheed to Seymour, explaining in some detail the respective tasks of both Dinkel and Seymour. Available at the P. C. office, Calgary.
12. Ibid., p. 3.
13. Presentation "On Organization" to P. C. Candidates at Banff Conference, December 1970. Available at the P. C. office, Calgary.
14. Figures available at the P. C. office in Calgary estimate that the central campaign alone cost 225,000 dollars
15. Interview with George de Rappard, loc.cit.
16. For a division of rural and urban constituencies, see Government of Alberta, Electoral Boundaries Commission Report, 1971, (Edmonton: Queen's Printer, 1971), re-

produced below, Table II.

17. See the Minutes of these meetings, at the P. C. office, Calgary.
18. The following people gave talks on these problems: Bill Walsh "On Organization"; Bob Kenny "On Television Appearance"; Joe Clark "On Campaign Organization"; Art Smith "On Public Relations"; Joe Hutton "On Relations with the Media"; R. R. McDaniel "On Finance." Speeches available at the P. C. office, Calgary.
19. Bob Dinkel, "Winning the Election," available at the P. C. office, Calgary.
20. Walsh, "On Organization," loc.cit.
21. See "Winning the Election," loc.cit. p. 4, for other features.
22. Another point that was stressed was that individuals should not ask for more than \$100 contributions, and any figure beyond that sum would go to the central organization. See McDaniel, "On Finance," loc.cit.
23. "Winning the Election," loc.cit. p. 4.
24. Ibid., p. 5.
25. Ibid., p. 6.
26. Cf. with Manitoba's Roblin election victory. T. Peterson,, "Manitoba: Ethnic and Class Politics," p. 107.
27. Possible questions had been anticipated along the following lines: that the Conservatives were "Cadillac owners," that "it was a one man party," "that they had bought the election," "that it was just an urban party." It was therefore, necessary, said Clark, always to take the initiative in argument and answer questions without hesitation.
28. Joe Hutton "On Media Relations," loc.cit.
29. Bill Walsh "On Organization," loc.cit.
30. It should be argued also that the large amount that he spent in his own constituency demonstrated his fear of losing his own re-election.
31. See Peter Loughheed, "Election '71: Leader's Campaign Plan." Available at the P. C. office, Calgary.

32. Ibid., p. 3.
33. Scown, "A History and Analysis of the 1971 General Election in Alberta," p. 48.
34. Barr, The Dynasty, p. 236.
35. Ibid., p. 227.
36. Ibid., p. 228.
37. Ibid., p. 234.
38. Ibid., p. 242.
39. July 24, 1971.
40. July 24, 1971.
41. Daily-Herald and Tribune of Grande Prairie, August 23, 1971.
42. The Conservative document in 1971 had no slogan. It was entitled, simply, the Conservative Election Platform 1971.
43. Barr, The Dynasty, p. 237.
44. Guy Demarino, "Plans of Change," Medicine Hat News, August 10, 1971.
45. Albertan, July 28, 1971.
46. Edmonton Journal, August 15, 1971.
47. This appears to have been a common complaint on the part of former Social Crediters as well as non-committed voters.
48. Barr, The Dynasty, p. 243.
49. Ibid., p. 239.
50. Ibid., p. 270.
51. Once again Manning wished to give the impression that the N. D. P. was the party to beat. It is evident, however, that for the first time in his political career, he had to turn later on against the Conservatives, thereby demonstrating that the danger of the Conservative party victory had increased enormously.
52. Calgary Herald, August 26, 1971.
53. Edmonton Journal, August 26, 1971.

54. Lethbridge Herald, August 26, 1971.
55. Red Deer Advocate, August 23, 1971.
56. Calgary Herald, August 24, 1971.
57. See Barr, The Dynasty, p. 244, for details.
58. Thomas Flanagan, a political scientist at the University of Calgary, admitted to the writer that he firmly believed that the Conservatives would be soundly defeated, when he appeared as commentator on a Calgary TV station. Also, see all Alberta newspapers dated August 31, 1971.
59. Barr, The Dynasty, p. 246. There is no proof, however, that Lougheed ever made such confession.
60. The following does not pretend to be an analysis of the 1971 election results. For such an analysis, see D. Scown, "A History and Analysis of the 1971 General Election in Alberta," chiefly, Chapter IV. It is my understanding that the Political Science Department at the University of Alberta is presently undertaking an analysis of the 1971 election, which will include such variables as geography, education, sex, occupation and ethnicity. For a less ambitious undertaking, see T. Flanagan, "Electoral Cleavages in Alberta During the Social Credit Reign 1935-1971," an unpublished manuscript. The writer is grateful to Dr. Flanagan for the opportunity to see a copy of this paper.
61. The following has been gleaned from a comparison of the 1967 and 1971 election results. See Government of Alberta, Provincial Election Returns (Edmonton: Queen's Printer, 1967, 1971).
62. The same thing appears to be true outside Calgary in the elections of Gordon Taylor in Drumheller, Robert Clark in Olds and Harry Strom in Cypress Hills.
63. See Calgary Herald, August 19, 1971.
64. With the sweeping victory of the Conservative party in the 1975 Provincial election, this cleavage appears to have disappeared for the first time since 1935.

CONCLUSION

The three political parties which have been investigated in this dissertation present us with a variety of strategies--or lack of strategies--for gaining political power. They also give us examples of the various organizational forms that parties took in Alberta.

The historical approach employed in this dissertation shows that the opposition parties went through three different periods of development: two of short duration were characterized by a great deal of activity on their part and by a single-minded effort to unseat a governing party. Between 1935 and 1940, and between 1965 and 1971, two parties (or groups of parties) were led by individuals whose prime motivation appeared to be the attainment of public office in Alberta.

Bridging the gap between the two periods, was a long period, in which the Social Credit was in no danger of losing its predominance. During these years, first the Independents and then the Liberals and the Conservatives epitomized parties whose leaders' goals had become confused and who appeared relegated to perpetual opposition.

The Unity Movement

All three groups which we have studied ought to be considered political parties. As was pointed out in the first

chapter, the criteria which have helped define the term "party" vary to such an extent that, if we were to apply them all, it would be impossible to refer to these groups as political parties. Indeed, not many parties would pass the test.

It is particularly difficult to call the Unity Movement a party. First, it claimed openly that it was not a party, at least before 1943. Second, the major attribute of a party, leadership, was lacking until 1944. However, the Unity Movement had the avowed aim of taking over the reins of government and was actively involved in fighting electoral and political battles. Were we to follow the latter criterion to define a party, the Movement would qualify as such.

It is important to note the effect that its lack of self-recognition as a party had on the Unity Movement. Although its goal was clearly the attainment of power, the means that were needed to obtain it, were neglected.

Why was the Movement established? It must be stressed that it was not merely a vehicle for gaining office. The primary goal of the Movement, like that of other social movements was to put into effect some policies based on political principle. Power was the means to achieve this goal. We could go one step further and suggest that the Unity Movement did not wish to implement certain policies as much as to prevent Social Credit from going ahead with its platform. It must be assumed that if the Movement's aims could be implemented by another party, it would cease to have a reason to exist.

The fact remains that not all movements disappear merely because their original goals have ceased to have relevance. Most adapt and become political parties, thereby serving as vehicles for power. That the Unity Movement did not adapt in this manner was a result of several factors. First, it closely approximated an indirect party. During its whole existence, it was controlled by the business interests of Alberta. It was the Boards of Trade of the province that had established the Movement, with the hope of defeating the radical experiment of Social Credit. Banks, mortgage and insurance companies and big business in general, recognized the need to appeal to the electorate at large, in order to make the organization representative. Their support for it was conditional upon the continued radicalism of Social Credit and the powerlessness of the traditional parties. As soon as these conditions became modified, those groups were quick to withdraw their support from the Movement. There was no room in the Alberta political scene for duplication of political parties.

The demise of the Movement showed not only its transitory nature, but also its lack of autonomy. Because of the intimate nature of the relationship between the Movement and business, the party was unable to continue operating after the support from big business vanished.

Second, the party failed to adapt because it relied too heavily on coalition politics. By the time that this.

strategy had borne fruit, in 1943, the conditions that had made the Movement necessary, had changed radically. The party was, then, unable to develop a strategy to suit the new circumstances.

Third, the Movement suffered from an over-abundance of "amateur" politicians. The lack of previous political experience was glaring. Businessmen as most of them were, a managerial touch was visible in the way in which they organized the Movement. They never attempted to democratize the party. At the same time, not wishing to interfere in the affairs of other constituencies, they failed to forge a solid and strongly articulated organization.

An interesting observation may be made regarding the "amateur" nature of the Movement. The Independents were far more successful in dealing with the Liberals than the People's League and the Unity Council had been. We could hypothesize that, after 1940, the intra-governmental machinery had become prevalent over the extra-governmental organization. By gaining some political power, they had become a "professional" group of politicians. Not only were concessions and compromises made more readily--as befitted a "professional" group--but also the Liberals were now better prepared to deal with a group that approximated their own, at least in nature. It could be said that "professional" politicians may be able to collaborate more readily with each other, despite differing backgrounds, than they will with "amateur" politicians, regardless of their

identity of aims.

The Movement's early stress on principle was reflected in the functions that it performed. It succeeded in criticizing the government, and in communicating its stand to the public through the media of political rallies and broadcasts. It also integrated the factions of Alberta society which disliked Social Credit, thereby helping to polarize the electorate to a greater extent than any other party could have hoped to do.

It must be noted that these major functions were seldom performed through any concerted effort on the part of the Movement itself. The presence of the party, rather than any initiative on the part of the leadership, achieved this.

While we have indicated that the vertical linkage between the constituencies and the central office was inadequate, the horizontal linkage operated extremely well. In particular, rural constituencies coalesced with some regularity against their urban counterparts. However, at no time was co-operation employed to achieve a more effective organization. These links lacked formality. Rather than unifying the group, they helped exaggerate the distinction between the two sections of the party.

The organization suffered from over-decentralization. The degree of autonomy on the part of the constituencies could be explained by the lack of institutionalized leadership, as well as by the undue emphasis which the Movement placed

on collaboration with the Liberals. At the same time, the leaders of the Movement never felt that co-ordination of any type was necessary; in fact, dictating to the constituencies was seen as the negation of the idea of independent citizens voluntarily joining forces to fight Social Credit.

The Movement was fundamentally hierarchial in its own central structure. Although membership was encouraged by the Unity Council, both this organization and the People's League were highly undemocratic. The groups were composed of cliques of businessmen and other related professions, much like a cadre party. McFarland even reserved for himself the power to veto executive appointments, and tended to co-opt new members into the structure. After 1940, the Independents became more open. Conflict was not discouraged within their ranks; in fact, it became almost institutionalized to the extent that the MLAs were consistently unable to reach agreement on most issues.

The Liberal Party

The Liberals had had a long tradition of involvement in provincial politics and ought to be regarded as the most likely candidate of the three groups studied for the attribute of political party. Nevertheless, the examination carried through above demonstrates that, if considered on its own merits, and not merely on its name, the attributes may be misleading.

Helping to find a name for the group is not as

important, however, as determining how the Liberal party of Alberta will allow us to expand our horizons regarding the goals and structures of political parties. It is with the Liberals--who had the obscure distinction of being the most prominent opposition party to Social Credit for two decades--that we begin to see the effects of domination on these parties.

As we did with the Unity Movement, we may ask: what was the goal of the party? The answer, as with most political parties, seems clear enough: all its leaders paid at least lip service to the notion that they were interested in power. A perusal of our findings on the Liberals, however, suggests that even though this may have been their manifest or avowed goal, the more latent purposes must be also analyzed if we are to understand why they seldom put up a struggle against Social Credit.

Between 1945 and 1952; there is some evidence that the party was genuinely in search of political power. However, lack of organization was the major obstacle it had to face. Stambaugh and Prowse were forced to begin to organize from a position of the utmost weakness; the task of re-organization was vast, but the party leaders faced this task with acumen.

One of the advantages at this stage was the congruence of views, as well as the capacity to work together between the so called intra-governmental with the extra-governmental structures of the Liberal organization. It must be remembered, however, that it was not the leader who had selected the members

of the organization, but the organization, which had selected the leader.

Even at this early stage of development, then, the extra-governmental party had already become predominant over the intra-governmental party. It was also becoming evident that the federal wing of the party was asserting itself against the provincial organization. As a result, Prowse's own motivations began to lose perspective. We saw how he exhausted his energy in federal elections and by-elections, while not paying sufficient attention to re-organizing provincially after 1951.

With Prudham's advent to politics, the situation grew even worse. Through his influence on finance, he was able to veto any allocation of funds to the provincial wing that appeared superfluous to him. Consequently, the task of organization suffered immensely. Prowse became disenchanted with this state of affairs and lost all desire to continue searching for power.

Starting with Prowse, the Liberal party became a two-goal organization. On the one hand, some of its leaders--Hunter, Berry and Russell--were motivated by a genuine desire to reform the party and make it an office-oriented organization. Like Prowse before them, however, they became prey to the machinations of other groups. The extra-governmental party was successful in thwarting these leaders' aims. To them, patronage, not political power was the goal sought when they had become affiliated with the party. This modifies somewhat Barnes' thesis, expounded in the first chapter. To the Liberals

in this category, office in the party was not the primary goal; the spoils of office were. The difference is that whereas to the Italian Socialist leaders satisfaction of their needs was found within the party, the goals of the Alberta Liberals could only be found outside the party (i.e. in the Senate, Supreme Court etc.).

On the other hand, the relations between the federal and provincial wings of the party tend to confirm Black's assertions. First, the provincial party cannot be converted to reach federal objectives without putting tremendous stress on the party. Second, it is also true that the pattern of authority may change according to who is in power in the two levels of government: those in power will tend to prevail over those out of it. The Liberal experience refutes his assertion that the sovereignty of provincial party units is as real and extensive as that of the provinces with respect to Ottawa. This was not the case with the Liberal party, nor, as we shall see, with the Conservative party.

The consequences of this lack of autonomy can be seen in the structure of the party as well as in the functions it performed. Prowse made an effort to expand the mass-base of the party. The effort was a result of his lack of control over finance. Had it been successful, the party would have become a mass or semi-mass party.

The Liberal constituency organizations have always been proud of their autonomy with respect to the central head-

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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

quarters. Prowse, Hunter and Berry attempted to build strong vertical links, by introducing the idea of regional offices, as well as compulsory consultations between the two levels. Given the independent nature of the basic elements of the party, those efforts were resisted.

It would be difficult to characterize the constituencies as caucuses. Despite their autonomy, few of them seemed interested in helping their leaders win elections.

Although there is an over-abundance of lawyers in the party hierarchy, the Liberal party may be referred as a stratararchy. Not only were units given considerable independence, but conflict was permitted to a greater extent than in any other Albertan party. It is difficult to say whether this autonomy is intrinsic to the Liberal party, or is merely a result of its disinterest in political power.

Sub-coalitional factions were allowed to operate freely. These factions were not distinct along class lines, but along geographical lines. The Calgary and Edmonton wings tended to replace each other. Nevertheless, it would be possible in a theoretical sense to conform this evidence with Michel's analysis as much as with Eldersveld's properties as a single elite--the legal profession--had become entrenched; power was merely shared, in a consociational fashion, between two sections of the same elite group.

Finally, the performance of party functions changed from period to period. Earlier, recruitment had taken priority.

The function of aggregation was poorly performed: the various studies that were conducted were brazenly disregarded, even after they had been approved by party conventions.

The party clearly articulated the demands of a few individuals, particularly in the professions and among some ethnic groups. Although a few policies advocated by the Liberals were adopted by Social Credit, they were basically of a general nature rather than the result of demands by specific groups.

Social Credit's dominance aggravated the Liberal party's poor position in Alberta politics. The party became active at a time when Social Credit had asserted its own strength. After the 1948 and 1952 elections, the party was never given a chance to re-organize. The financial backers grew restive with the party's low fortunes and subsequently decided to earmark their donations specifically for federal elections. This made it impossible for the party to fight vigorous campaigns and resulted in Social Credit solidifying its position.

The strategy of the extra-parliamentary party was to continue to put a semblance of a struggle against Social Credit, while reaping the personal benefits of its links with Ottawa.

This left the intra-parliamentary party with little choice. Their despair at being unable to formulate an adequate strategy was shown by the fast turnover of leaders, particularly in the 1960s. A most unfortunate result of the party leaders' frustration to perform their role was Lowery's efforts to link

the provincial Liberal party with Social Credit in a formal union. This event exemplifies the tragedy of Alberta Liberalism: if the political leaders will not, or are not able to lead, a party may lose its perspective and alter its primary goal. It would be difficult to argue that the Liberals remain a party under these circumstances.

The Conservative Party

Conservative involvement in provincial politics had been traditionally sporadic and had been rewarded with little success at the polls. Two different periods are clearly visible in our narrative. The first, prior to Lougheed's entry into the political arena, was characterized by the party's inability to gain a foothold in the province.

Although the rebirth of the provincial Conservatives took place in 1952, the wing became little more than a machinery conceived to help the federal party until 1958, when its first leader was chosen. As we saw, the provincial party geared itself for federal elections, and went into a slumber after that.

The provincial party recognized its potential in the Alberta political scene when Diefenbaker was swept to power. It was only then that the party expressed a desire to change its direction and its goals, from a supporting element of the federal wing, to a more assertive role as an autonomous institution. The 1959 election was critical for the party because

it was facing an electoral contest with its first leader since the war.

We already saw in Chapter V why the party failed in its efforts. The fundamental error consisted of believing that the provincial election would be a mere extension of the previous federal contest, which had sent seventeen Alberta Conservatives to Ottawa. The party, then, did not make any effort to build its strength in provincial constituencies.

By the early 1960s, the party was ridden with factionalism around the figure of Diefenbaker. Provincial organization was placed in a secondary position.

The Conservative party structure in the early period reflected its lack of autonomy. First, it was a typical cadre party with an extremely undemocratic structure. Second, the value of membership was never stressed. The most important characteristic which differentiated it from both the Independent and Liberal parties, was the high level of centralization that linked the constituencies with the central party office. Third, some constituencies--in a fashion extremely rare among Alberta parties--complained of interference by the central office in their affairs.

It would appear that the problem in the early years did not stem from a flawed organization: the party was structured efficiently, although undemocratically. The major problem was one of image. The party had been traditionally backed almost solely by financial interests. Expansion of support was more

likely to occur after Diefenbaker's sweep of Alberta.

With the advent of Lougheed, the party changed direction quite radically. He was seriously interested in public office. His actions were designed as means to achieve that end. His first step was to dissociate his provincial organization from the federal wing. He persuaded close associates to seek party office. After the 1967 election, the control of the intra-governmental by the extra-governmental structure was assured.

Once the central structure had been reformed, Lougheed turned to the task of building the Conservative constituency strength. These organizations were never allowed to have excessive independence. In order to prevent a possible repetition of the earlier charges of interference, he ensured that most of these constituency executives would be composed of people sympathetic to his goal.

Thus, vertical linkages and strong centralization were evident. The constituency organizations were instructed by Mills regarding their tasks, both in organization and in recruiting and selecting candidates. Even the latter, as was seen in Chapter VI, were frequently hand-picked by Lougheed. The constituency organizations became branches of the central office.

Lougheed emphasized the importance of membership. The party sent regular letters to its branches, warning them of the importance of enrolling new members. Each activist

was encouraged to obtain the formal support from one hundred friends. Special letters were sent to members with some regularity, reminding them to renew their subscriptions. The party had, then, become a semi-mass political organization.

The final step in Lougheed's strategy consisted of increasing popular support. He achieved this task in two related ways: first, by formulating in detail the policies that his government would embark on, and by putting up a strong opposition in the legislature; and second, by travelling through rural Alberta, where the party's strength was non-existent, and by attempting to persuade people that his party was the sole alternative to Social Credit.

Between 1967 and 1971, the Conservative party became a good example of a party that performed well the functions generally ascribed to political parties. First, it succeeded in integrating its supporters into a very tightly-knit party, where belonging became important. Lougheed provided many opportunities for these people to participate in what appeared to be policy-making; conventions, workshops and policy sessions became lively affairs.

Second, the party began to aggregate the interests of a wide section of Alberta's population. Unlike the earlier Conservatives, the Lougheed team obtained the backing of people of all ages and occupations. Its experiences on the rural tours enhanced the prestige of the team.

As opposition, the Conservative MLAs conducted them-

selves well. In order to increase the effectiveness of their attacks, the tasks were divided among the members of the legislative contingent. At the same time, their task force formulated some policies which were later espoused by Social Credit.

What conclusions may be reached from our analysis of the Conservative party? First, it would appear that a semi-mass party is more likely to succeed electorally when one party has dominated the political arena during a lengthy period. This does not mean that a typically cadre party will become semi-mass permanently, but that at least for the purpose of winning power in a parliamentary system, a mass party may be more effective. This thesis could be used to complement, rather than replace, Pinard's. To displace a dominant party, the structure of the adversary must be made more open, more flexible, although not necessarily more democratic. Usually, this task is more difficult for an existing party than for a totally new party, what Pinard calls, "third party." As the Alberta Conservatives demonstrate, it is not impossible.

A second conclusion is that in the Canadian parliamentary system, a caucus-based party has perhaps less chance to succeed than a branch style of party. Because of the need to obtain legislative majorities, control of the over-all structure by the centre appears necessary.

Third, it has been posited that although a semblance of

intra-party democracy is indispensable, the party more likely to overthrow a dominant party must be highly centralized. Authority may be delegated, but there must be no doubt where power lies.

Fourth, the importance of autonomy has been underscored throughout. Lack of independence deprives the provincial party of an opportunity to concentrate on the tasks of building its own strength, and espouse provincial policies.

Fifth, intra-parliamentary organizations must assert their authority and take control of the party. When the parliamentary party is weak, the extra-parliamentary organization becomes more inclined to dictate to the party as a whole. This means that the organization as a whole may take on the goals of the extra-parliamentary party, which may not include political power.

Perhaps the most important conclusion that our study has allowed us to reach is that it may be impossible to generalize about political parties. It is evident that they may differ from one another depending on such things as geographical location or historical period. Party systems, federalism, a parliamentary structure, historical factors and many other variables may affect the character of political parties.

Duverger, the path-breaker in the analysis of political party organization, wrote thus in the preface to his Political Parties:

We find ourselves in a vicious circle. A general theory of parties will essentially be constructed only upon the preliminary work of many profound studies, but these studies cannot be truly profound so long as there exists no general theory of parties. For Nature answers only when questioned and we do not yet know what questions this subject demands

Case studies within certain controlled and specific parameters may allow us to break out of this circle.

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