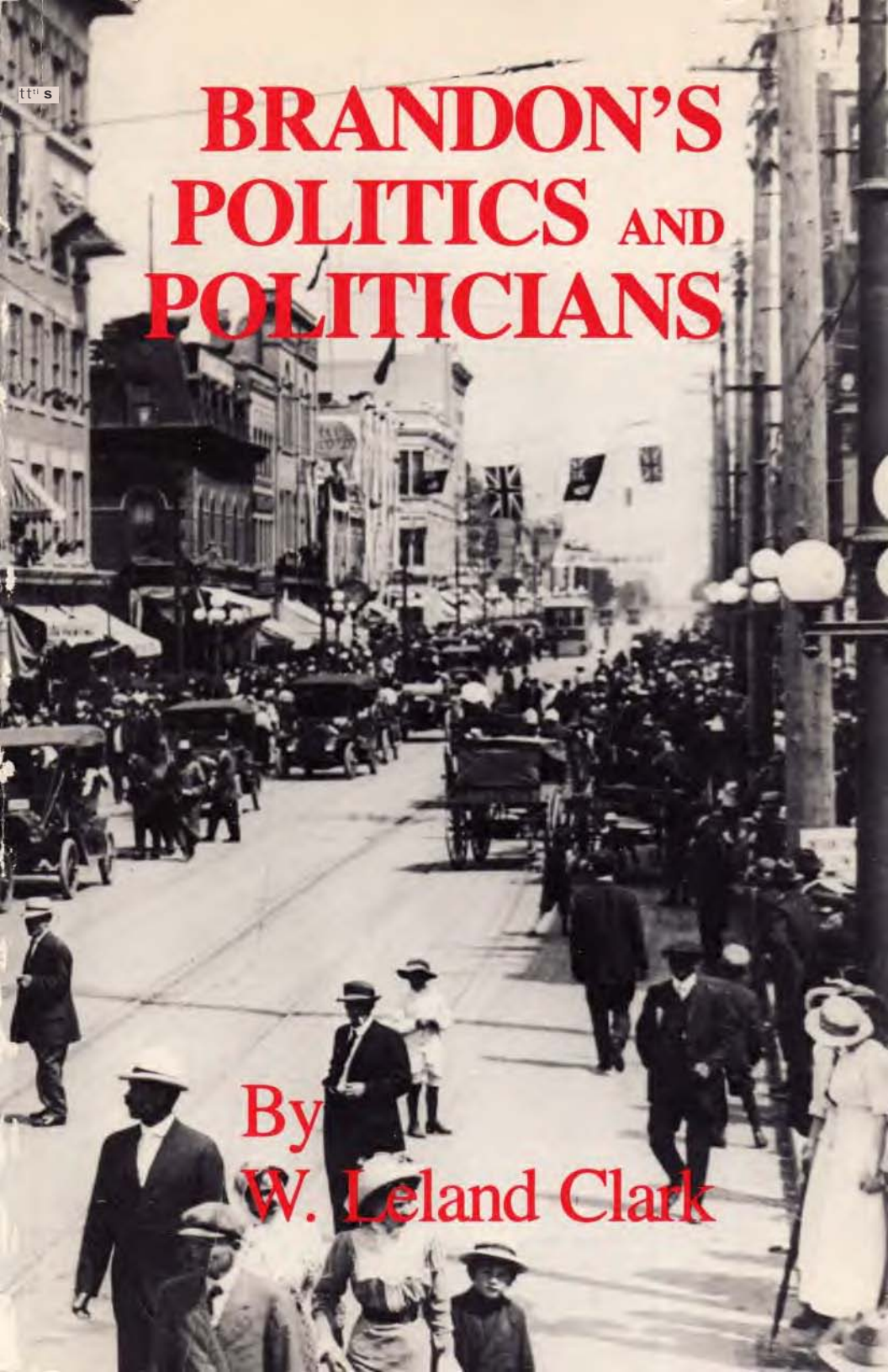


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BRANDON'S POLITICS AND POLITICIANS

By
W. Leland Clark



Brandon's Politics and Politicians

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Published by the



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Dedication

Dedicated to the memory of Dr. Charles W. Lightbody, who awakened in me an unknown fascination with the past, and to Cheryl and Janine, who constitute my link with the future.

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Foreward

My introduction to the political history of Brandon or of the West, of which it is a part, came early. My parents brought me to Manitoba on the wave of the Siftonian era of settlements. I was only two years of age at the time, so didn't become aware of it until later, but I will remember those hard seats on the colonist car of the CPR with its stove at the end. Our destination was Darlingford on the Deloraine line.

When the time came to go to College in the 1920s I had some difficulty deciding whether to head for Brandon or go to Winnipeg, but the closer proximity and easier access to the big city prevailed. There my room-mate and close friend, pursuing studies in law, was Earl Taylor, a nephew of Fawcett Taylor, Conservative leader in the Manitoba Legislature at the time. Earl was charting his future with a political career in mind. On graduation he chose Brandon as the place to establish a law practice and exercise his political interest.

In letters we discussed the problems of the Brandon-Souris area and of Canada in general. I paid him a visit in the summer of 1931, a visit that has remained less memorable for the political questions we settled than for the fact that he took me out to the golf course on the North Hill where we played the only nine holes I have ever played.

Partly because of Earl's untimely death in a car accident, I was not back in Brandon for many years, except to pass through for points farther West. But following the death of Dr. John R. C. Evans, President of the College, some of my old friends associated with the College, notably Milt Holden and Barney Thordarson, conceived the idea that I would make a passable successor. They began their "sales pitch" early in 1960, as a result of which my wife Cath and I by September found ourselves settling in Brandon for a stay of nine years.

These were interesting and enjoyable years for us both — the years of the rapid expansion of the College and its rise to the status of Brandon University. There was a difference of opinion as to whether the new name should be Brandon University or the

University of Western Manitoba, but I felt in view of the proud history of Brandon College the less the change in name the better. Besides, the University of Western Manitoba suggested regionalism, and while it is a fact the university serves the western part of the province in a special way (as other universities serve their local regions) it is a legitimate objective to be the best or only centre in the whole province for some types of study, and thus it has managed to become.

Lee Clark, the writer of this history, is one of the young men we brought to Brandon College in the 1960s. He came on the nomination of that memorable and eminent academic, Charles W. Lightbody, who we had enticed from Saskatchewan a little earlier. Lee, like his mentor, came from Saskatchewan, though one might say from within the wider Brandon area — from Fleming, not far from the interprovincial boundary.

This book will stand as a monument to many years of painstaking research done by Lee Clark. And what more appropriate memorial could there be to the hundred years of history of the city of Brandon and of the Brandon Sun.

Dr. JOHN E. ROBBINS

Retired President, Brandon University;
Former Canadian Ambassador to the Vatican
Ottawa, Ontario
September 15, 1981.

Preface

This examination of Brandon's **Politics And Politicians** constitutes a major revision of my doctoral dissertation entitled "Politics In Brandon City 1899-1949" which was completed for the University of Alberta in 1976. I am pleased to have had the opportunity, some five years later, to extend the time frame slightly and to re-interpret the politics of this community in light of my hopefully fuller understanding of the political process.

A political study of a single community is obviously dependent upon the availability of suitable sources. The political prominence of a number of Brandon's political leaders provided an unusual wealth of information on occasion but, unfortunately, a disappointing dearth awaited the researcher in other instances. This study commences in 1899, the year of the first contested election in which Clifford Sifton participated as Minister of the Interior. It concludes in 1952 for a variety of reasons. First of all, many public records are closed to the researcher for 30 years. Secondly, the results of the 1951 and 1952 by-elections established a pattern of Progressive Conservative ascendancy in this community which would prevail for many years. Finally, the very recent past is often "too close" and it becomes exceedingly difficult, for researcher and reader alike, to approach the study with a sufficient degree of objectivity.

As the research for my dissertation began approximately a decade ago, I am indebted to many individuals and institutions who have contributed to the result. To those who grant study leaves, allocate research funds and provide access to typing pools and duplication services at Brandon University; to those at the University of Alberta who awarded scholarships and assistantships; to the staffs of the Public Archives of Canada, the Public Archives of Manitoba and Queen's University Archives; and to those at the **Brandon Sun** who shared their quarters with me intermittently from 1971 to 1974; I am sincerely grateful.

The **Brandon Sun**, however, provided me with more than desk space at which to work. Their newspaper files were an invaluable source as the **Sun** alone of this community's many newspapers has published continuously since that inaugural issue on January 19, 1882. Those issues, therefore, constitute an unfolding record of the life of the Brandon community and they serve as a useful reminder of the significance of the newspaper as a historical source.

In 1881, Chas. Whitehead, a railway construction contractor, imported the first boat-load of lumber into Brandon and the "instant" city began to take shape; in 1897, he was part of a syndicate which purchased the **Sun** from Will White, its initial publisher. By 1903, J. B. Whitehead, a railroad contractor like his father Charles, secured a controlling interest in the **Sun**; eight years later, he became the sole owner. Upon J. B. Whitehead's death in 1941, his son Ernest C. Whitehead became publisher and he, in turn, was succeeded by his son, Lewis D. Whitehead. Thus, Brandon has known four generations of Whiteheads, all of whom have played a vital role in this community — either as the maker or the recorder of events. To the Whiteheads and others of their generations, Brandonites owe a debt of gratitude. To Lewis D. Whitehead and those of his management team who resolved to commemorate the **Sun's** 100th Anniversary by publishing **Politics And Politicians**, I express my sincere appreciation.

The list of those to whom I am indebted continues. To Dr. Lewis H. Thomas, who gave unsparingly of himself as my dissertation supervisor, I humbly say "thank you." To Fred McGuinness and Wayne Boyce of the **Sun**, I express my thanks for their patience and for their helpful editing. To Tom S. Mitchell, a former student, a friend and now a colleague, I am extremely grateful as his thoughtful criticisms are reflected throughout the study in a manner that only he will recognize. To Sherry Hayward who typed this manuscript in its many versions and to Montez Gowing who set the copy, I express my appreciation as their unending cooperation made my task seem less insurmountable. Finally, to my family who waited seven long years for the doctorate to be completed and who then sacrificed most of 1981 to "the book," I express the hope that they find sufficient satisfaction in the end result to warrant the neglect that they have suffered.

October, 1981

W. Leland Clark

I

The Constituency of "Brandon City"

Brandon, Manitoba. It was a rather typical market centre-railway town on the eve of the 20th century. Its streets were well graded. Its waterworks were municipally owned, a mark of progress in that new era of "gas and water socialism." It had an efficient fire department equipped with two steam fire engines. The city had two schools (i.e., the "old Central" on Tenth Street and St. Michael's Catholic), a Roman Catholic convent and the usual number of churches. This small prairie city could also point with pride to its own college and in that respect it was unique.' Brandon, with its grain elevators and grist mills, was the market centre for one of the finest agricultural regions in Manitoba: in fact, the record wheat crop of 1887 and the inability of the CPR to move that harvest to eastern markets had resulted in such a massive grain blockade (with long lines of farmers waiting impatiently with their wagon loads of wheat on Pacific Avenue) that Brandon had thereafter been known as the "Wheat City." The presence of several saw and planing mills located on the banks of the Assiniboine River indicated that the city had its own "timber" industry. Brandon was also the seat of the Western Judicial District court house and the location of a provincial jail. Furthermore, and of great significance to the economic future of this growing community, Brandon was a divisional point for the CPR and it was, in addition, the eastern terminus for the Great North West Central and the western terminus of the Northern Pacific Railway.'

Although this community of some 5,000 contained a substantial number of railway employees, mill hands and factory employees, approximately 1,000 in total, Brandon's business and professional class clearly dominated the city's early history. Those who provided civic leadership, whether it be on such prestigious bodies as the General Hospital Board, the local school board, Brandon's city council or as an elected representative to either the

Manitoba legislature or the House of Commons, were uniformly members of the same business and professional class. Furthermore, those business and professional men who fulfilled leadership roles in the community during its initial two decades were exclusively WASPs of predominantly Ontario origin. Brandon, therefore, was a new but hardly memorable prairie city which appeared, in many ways, to resemble a fragment of the Ontario which was the point of origin for so many of its inhabitants.

In the spring of 1881, General T. L. Rosser, on behalf of the CPR, had decided to establish a new "divisional point" approximately two miles west of the site of Grand Valley and on the south, rather than on the north, side of the flooding Assiniboine River.' For a few summer weeks, the site of this future city was marked only by tents. Thanks in part to the entrepreneurial efforts of Chas. Whitehead who imported the first boatload of lumber from Winnipeg (and whose family subsequently became a prominent part of this new city), the town site was soon dotted with temporary wooden structures. The arrival of the first CPR train in September, 1881 resulted in an almost immediate reduction in freight rates by 50 per cent and the disappearance (within a year) of the steam boat industry on the Assiniboine River. This new divisional centre for the CPR also simultaneously developed as the principal market centre for the southwestern Manitoban wheat economy, until local rural grain elevators were constructed later in the decade. In 1882, Brandon was incorporated as a city having never undergone the customary transition from village to town to city. By 1885 - the year of Riel's second rebellion' — Brandon, with a population of 2,348, was a thriving community.

Throughout the 1880s and much of the 1890s, Brandon was perceived to be primarily "a wholesale dependence resting upon the trade of the surrounding country." The numerous drugstores, department stores (of which there were four), liveries, transfer and fuel companies, clothing stores, jewellers, insurance agencies, book stores, creameries, hardwares, contracting firms, real estate dealers, "loan" companies and the 10 hotels were an integral part of any market centre. However, the number of businesses, such as A. E. McKenzie's Seed Co. (which was founded in 1897), E. L. Christie's Book Store,' Adams Shoe Co.,' and Wilson, Rankin and Co.,' which did business throughout all of Western Canada indicate



Brandon's Rosser Avenue, 1882



Western Canada Pictorial Index, University of Winnipeg
Brandon in the 1880s: the market centre for western Manitoba

that Brandon, by 1900, had already progressed from a traditional small market centre into a diversified sub-metropolitan community.

In the meantime, important new physical improvements were occurring within the city: the Brandon Electric Light Co., which had been in operation since 1888, opened its new Tenth Street plant (with a 300 per cent increase in capacity) in 1890; the Dominion Experimental Farm which had been founded in 1888 by Professor S. A. Bedford, its first superintendent, had become a city "showpiece"; the new General Hospital had been occupied in 1892 after the initial quarters had proved to be inadequate; while, far from least, Henry L. Patmore (later Alderman Patmore), who had purchased the nursery in 1889 which would make the family name famous throughout Western Canada, launched the tree planting campaign which would later enable Brandon boosters to claim that their community "is undoubtedly the most beautiful city in the Canadian Northwest."

In addition to serving as an important market centre (and a wholesale distribution depot), Brandon provided physical evidence of an incipient manufacturing economy when a flour mill" and John Hanbury's lumber mill," commenced operation in 1881. Within a decade, the community contained numerous manufacturing establishments (with a capital investment of \$378,505) which employed 267 "hands," paid \$136,400 per annum in wages, and produced \$733,800 worth of goods." The 1890s witnessed a decline in manufacturing productivity, however, as the value of manufactured produce diminished to \$541,327 while total wages paid was reduced to \$92,959. The number of manufacturing establishments also declined from 39 to 12. However, the total capital investment was increased from \$378,505 to \$595,662 and the number of persons employed rose slightly to 287.¹ While the number of manufacturing firms had decreased, those that remained in operation were obviously larger and their list of products was surprisingly lengthy: lumber and building materials; office and hotel fixtures; men's and women's clothing; agricultural implements (not identified) and wagons; gasoline engines; steam boilers; monuments and headstones; flour and oatmeal; millinery; fire engines; tents, awnings and mattresses; windmills; iron mouldings; upholstered work; signs; ale, beer and soft drinks; books and



Western Canada Pictorial Index, University of Winnipeg
Brandon was the "leading horse trading centre in the West"



Constructing a sewer line on Rosser Avenue

stationery; tinwork; boots and shoes; medicines; clay, sand and lime bricks; cement blocks; harness; sewer pipes; breads and even cigars."

The fact that Brandon had become the "leading horse trading centre in the West further attests to the city's economic predominance in the western region. While several firms were engaged in this business, Trotter and Trotter estimated that they alone had imported horses valued in excess of \$1 million into the Brandon district.

In the opinion of the *Western Sun*, however, the key to Brandon's future development depended upon her ability to develop as a transportation centre: "Unless steps are taken to render the enormous undeveloped resources of the north tributary to our city, it is doomed to remain a country town." Fortunately for Brandon, the CPR, the city's largest employer, was on the verge of considerable expansion's and the old Northern Pacific railway, which connected Brandon with Winnipeg via Wawanesa, was soon (in 1901) to become part of a rapidly expanding Canadian Northern system. Brandon appeared to have an exciting economic future.

At the moment, however, there were disturbing signs of economic weakness that first would have to be overcome. While the city's population had escalated sharply from 3,778 in 1891 to 5,620 in 1901 (a 48.76 per cent increase), due to a new wave of European immigrants, the last years of that decade had been disappointing as the number of eligible voters had actually declined from 1,996 in 1898 to 1,789 in 1900." Of a more serious vein, the Imperial Bank had initiated legal proceedings against the city in late 1898 when Brandon had failed to fulfill its obligations. By mid-1899, bondholders were reportedly filing suit against the city for non-payment of interest." While Mayor Ezekiel Evans maintained that unexpected civic expenditures, such as essential bridge and city hall repairs accounted for the city's deficit, critics contended that property assessments and local taxation rates were excessively high." As a result, local taxation revenues had declined sharply as many property owners had abandoned their holdings." Whatever the reason, Brandon was in a serious deficit situation at that very moment when her long-term future looked so bright.

While the city's economy was experiencing what its leaders hoped would be a number of temporary difficulties in the late

19th century, the nature of the community's residents remained relatively constant in terms of their characteristics. According to the 1901 census returns, 33.56 per cent of Brandon residents were of English origin; 23.29 per cent were of Irish origin; and 26.01 per cent were of Scottish descent for a total of 82.86 per cent. The number of Brandonites of European origin were miniscule in comparison: 3.95 per cent were of German origin; 2.70 per cent were of Scandinavian descent; 1.26 per cent were of Russian origin; while only 1.10 per cent were of French origin. There were, in addition, four negroes, 13 Chinese or Japanese, 11 Indians and one "half-breed" residing in Brandon.

It should, however, be noted that the majority of these residents had been born in Canada. Although exact figures for the city are unavailable, 78.19 per cent of those who resided within the federal constituency of Brandon had been born in Canada: in fact, 42 per cent were Ontario born while a large 32.01 per cent were native Manitoban. The foreign born population, however, was somewhat on the increase. Only 2.60 per cent of Brandon residents in 1885 were "foreign born" while 5.11 per cent of the Brandon federal constituency were thus designated in 1901. The American component, however, was quite constant: 1.96 per cent of Brandon residents in 1885-86 had been born in the U.S.A. while 1.95 per cent of the residents of the Brandon federal constituency in 1901 were American born.

As only 7.69 per cent were Roman Catholic, the vast majority of Brandonites were obviously Protestant. Of that group, the Presbyterians were the most numerous (with 28.63 per cent); the Methodists were second (with 22.6 per cent); the Anglicans were a near third (with 21.49 per cent); while the Baptists constituted a weak fourth (with 8.47 per cent").

Brandon's local government consisted in the 1890s of a mayor (elected annually by the voters at large) and eight aldermen who each represented one of the city's four wards for a two-year term." While each ward originally had been represented by three aldermen, that number had been reduced to two representatives per ward in 1886. Brandon's current mayor and council, as had been the case since Brandon's inception as a city in 1882, were prominent members of the city's business and professional class. For example, T. Mayne Daly, who was elected Brandon's first mayor in 1882 and

again in 1884, was also the city's first lawyer; James A. Smart, mayor for 1885-86, was in the hardware business; A. C. Fraser, mayor in 1882-89 (and subsequently in 1901-2) owned a large dry goods store; Andrew Kelly, mayor for 1890-01, was president of Adams Bros. & Harness Co., Ezekiel Evans, mayor for 1897-98, was a "private" banker; while John McDiarmid, who was elected mayor in 1892, 1893, 1899 and again in 1900, was a medical doctor. While the fact that these men were prominent and successful members of Brandon's business and professional class confirms that they were individuals of considerable competence and that they, in all likelihood, possessed important leadership skills, they remained, nevertheless, members of an economic class which had a strong vested interest in the economic development of their community. One suspects, therefore, that their enthusiasm for political involvement could not be explained in terms of altruism alone.

Members of Brandon's business and professional class were equally prominent in provincial and federal politics. Although civic leaders invariably denied the presence of "politics" at the municipal level, a remarkable number of Brandon mayors later became partisan candidates for election to the Manitoba legislature and to the House of Commons.²⁸ The reasons which explained the pronounced interest of the members of that class in municipal politics would likewise account for their pre-eminence at the so-called higher political levels. The fact that the nine square miles which comprised the City of Brandon also constituted essentially the provincial constituency of Brandon City or Brandon, as it was more frequently known," led to an inevitable inter-relationship between municipal and provincial politics. Although the Brandon federal constituency was substantially larger both in geographic terms and population," city residents traditionally constituted approximately 40 per cent of the federal constituency's electorate. Consequently, a prominent member of the Brandon community undoubtedly enjoyed some political advantage over residents of other small communities in any bid for federal elective office.

Brandon, therefore, in 1899 was a typical Western Canadian market centre-distribution depot whose economic future would depend primarily upon the continued growth of its agricultural hinterland and its railway system. Should this CPR "divisional point" become even more significant as a railway town, the volume

of trade, the numbers employed and business opportunities in general would be equally enhanced. As a result, the nature of the constituency of Brandon City could well be altered substantially by such growth, and especially if any degree of working class consciousness should emerge. Brandon, on the eve of the 20th century, was a small community of 5,000 which had been, to this point, politically dominated by those who had initially achieved economic and social prominence within this fledgeling prairie city. The future held promises of growth; that growth, would in turn, necessitate change. The significance of those changes for the politics and the politicians of Brandon was yet to be determined.

FOOTNOTES

1. The history of Brandon College is an interesting example of the significance of the railway to the growth of Western Canada. Prairie College and its successor McKee's Academy had been originally established in Rapid City on the assumption that the CPR was to follow a more north-westerly route. The decision in favour of the southern route meant the demise of Rapid City, the growth of Brandon and the subsequent relocation of McKee's Academy to this rapidly growing city. In 1899, the Baptist Convention of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories decided to establish a Baptist College in Brandon and McKee's Academy was absorbed by the new institution. C. G. Stone and F. Joan Garnett, **Brandon College: A History, 1899-1967 (Brandon 1969), 5-15.**
2. **Henderson's Manitoba and Northwest Territories Directory, 1897.**
3. Pierre Berton, **The Last Spike** (Toronto 1971), 23-32.
4. Pioneer accounts later referred to the "Indian scare" of 1885 and fearful Brandonites looked to their own defences by organizing a Home Guard under the command of Mayor James Smart. **Brandon Daily Sun, July 24, 1905.**
5. Ibid., November 1, 1912.

6. E. L. Christie bought the business in 1885 and he subsequently "furnished" most of the schools on the prairies. In addition, E. L. Christie later became president of the Brandon Electric Light Co. Ibid.
7. Travellers for the Adams Shoe Co. represented the Brandon firm in the North-West Territories. The Western Sun, December 30, 1897.
8. The Wilson, Rankin and Co. department store even published a fall catalogue for distribution throughout "the Territories." Ibid.
9. Brandon Daily Sun, July 20, 1907.
10. Ibid., November 1, 1912.
11. That flour mill's capacity had been expanded in 1885 to 250 barrels per day. Ibid.
12. John Hanbury's "timber" empire grew quickly to become Brandon's largest locally-owned industry and his Brandon operation employed, at the turn of the century, from 100 to 300 men the year round. Ibid., July 24, 1905. As a result Hanbury was second only to the CPR as the community's largest employer. He, himself, noted during the 1903 mayoralty election that he paid \$150-\$300 a day in wages. Ibid., January 31, 1903.
13. Census of Canada, 1890-1, vol. 1.
14. Census of Canada, 1911, vol. 3.
15. Brandon Daily Sun, July 20, 1907.
16. Ibid.
17. The Western Sun, December 30, 1897.
18. By 1907, Brandon would be publicized as a railway centre and the CPR would, at that stage, have 600 persons on the company payroll. The CPR itself had 12 passenger and 15 freight trains a day passing through Brandon. Brandon Daily Sun, July 20, 1907.
19. Independence, August 23, 1900. The recovery would commence in 1902 with 1,820 voters listed. By 1903, there were 1,984 voters enfranchised. Brandon Daily Sun, September 20, 1905.
20. Independence, July 6, 1899.
21. Tax rates, which had fluctuated widely in the 1890s, rose sharply at the end of the decade: 1890-18 mills; 1891-19.5 mills; 1892-22.4 mills; 1893-23.4 mills; 1894-18 mills; 1895

- 15.5 mills; 1896-17.9 mills; 1897-20 mills; 1893-25 mills plus a 1/2 mill extra for water rates. The Independent, November 24, 1898.
22. One Brandon newspaper stated that "property assessed for \$6,500 is to be sold for \$1,500 cash" and that there were now numerous "cellar holes on Sixth Street and Pacific where houses and hotels formerly stood." Ibid. Later, this same newspaper reported that there were 1,232 lots available in the city's tax sale and that 739 of those lots sold for \$5,026. Ibid., May 31, 1900.
 23. Census of Canada, 1901, vol. 1.
 24. Census of Manitoba 1885-86.
 25. Census of Canada, 1901. Several other denominations were represented in Brandon by less than 100 members. The Ligherans, with 94 adherents (or 1.67 per cent), were the largest of these several groups.
 26. See appendix one.
 27. The fifth ward was added in 1905.
 28. T. Mayne Daly was first elected MP for Selkirk in 1887 and subsequently served as Minister of the Interior from 1891 to 1896. James A. Smart, who was only 27 years old when he became mayor, was elected as MPP for North Brandon in 1886; he later was appointed Deputy Minister of the Interior. Charles Adams, who was elected mayor at age 30, was elected MPP for Brandon City in 1896, the same year in which A. C. Fraser, mayor from 1888-89, was elected MPP for North Brandon. It is interesting to note that all of these men, with the exception of T. Mayne Daly, were Liberals.
 29. Except for 1866 when the city and surrounding area was divided into West Brandon and East Brandon, the provincial constituency consisted of township 10, range 19 west — of which the City of Brandon comprised one-quarter of the area but virtually all of the population.
 30. The City of Brandon was located within the Selkirk federal constituency until redistribution in 1892. At that time, the Brandon federal constituency was established and it remained in existence until 1952. When the constituency was established in 1892, it consisted of a substantial number of rural municipi-

palities in southwestern Manitoba. With the RMs of Elton, Cornwallis, Oakland and Morton constituting an eastern boundary, the constituency extended southward to the American border and westward to what would later prove to be the Saskatchewan boundary. In 1903, the Brandon constituency was reduced substantially in size to include those portions of townships seven to 12 which lay between Manitoba's western boundary and the 17th range to the east. As of 1924, the eastern boundary of the constituency was amended so as to include only that area lying between ranges 18 and 29. In 1947, the eastern boundary was again altered when it was extended eastward to include ranges 15 to 29 inclusive. As a result, the Brandon federal constituency included (from 1903 until its disappearance in 1952) such communities as Rivers, Virden, Souris, Hartney, Reston, Elkhorn and, on occasion, Wawanesa.

II

The Art of "Practical Politics" as Practised in Pre-war Brandon

The politician's task, in simple terms, is to achieve and retain power. As Canada was a so-called democratic society, the politician had to operate within the framework of the law; he had, specifically, to win election to the legislative body of his choice. He had to earn or "buy" the support of the majority (or a plurality if there were three or more candidates) of those electors who went to the polls. The would-be successful politician had, therefore, to learn and to practise the art of politics more thoroughly and more skillfully than his opponents. Clifford Sifton, the most powerful and the most significant of those many politicians who have represented the Brandon constituency, once provided an acquaintance with a very succinct explanation of his own electoral success:

In a campaign the object of a party is to get the public mind saturated with its own views and ideas . . . The theory that you want the elector to read both sides and trust to him to decide that you are right is not practical politics . . . Any success that I had in the west was due to the fact that under all the attacks, I never apologized, . . . fired a Tory whenever I wanted to and have never explained or apologized.'

Brandon's most eminent MP was not, however, the sole practitioner of the art of "practical politics." Others understood the system as well and some, such as the Conservative Robert Rogers, practised it as effectively, although some modern age observers would say as despicably. What, then, was the art of "practical politics" and why — if most politicians played according to the same set of "rules" — did some succeed while most did not?

To respond first to the latter part of the above question, the representative of what can be described as the government party enjoyed numerous political advantages under normal circum-

stances. One of the principal reasons why the members of the government enjoyed such a substantial political advantage was the general economic prosperity which characterized the pre-war years until 1913. Although Brandon's population had in 1896 declined slightly from earlier totals to 4,471, it began to expand thereafter; to 5,620 in 1901, to 10,408 in 1906, and to 13,839 in 1911. Consequently, there was an over-all population gain of 209.5 per cent during Sifton's 1896-1911 parliamentary term. Although the city's municipal government had faced and continued to encounter substantial financial problems due to the boom-bust cycle of the earlier period, the increased demand for agricultural and consumer goods produced a 30 per cent increase in local manufacturing productivity from \$541,327 in 1901 to \$2,007,996 in 1906." By 1902 a new twine factory and a flour mill had been established; in 1903, the new Empire Brewery, employing 35 people, was opened; while the Singer Manufacturing Company, during that same year, announced their decision to establish a distribution centre in Brandon for its famous sewing machines which would be identical in size to the facilities currently existing in Winnipeg. There was, of course, a related boom in the construction industry: for example, there were reportedly 250 buildings erected in 1904 alone. The growth of Brandon as a railway centre was of even greater economic and political significance. In 1903, the CPR began to expand its facilities in the city at a projected cost of \$250,000; by 1905, the new CPR roundhouse was completed; and by the end of the Siftonian era, the CPR was employing 800 men regularly with an additional 3400 "extras" being engaged during the summer. The Canadian Northern, meanwhile, had commenced the construction of its new combined downtown station-hotel, the Prince Edward, at a cost of \$500,000. As Brandon was also the hub of an extensive branch line system, there were a total of 27 trunk and branch lines connected to this market-distribution centre and some 246 passenger trains, plus 489 freight trains, entered and departed each week by 1912.' As these statistics suggest, the Sifton years were essentially growth years in population and in economic terms and voters who were basically content with their personal lot in life were inclined to reelect a government which presumably provided those satisfying conditions.



4.

Sir Clifford Sifton

Monilobca Archives

A member of the government party and especially, as in the example of Clifford Sifton, an important cabinet minister also enjoyed many additional political advantages over his opposition. The government could reward its followers with government jobs and contracts as well as punish its opponents. However, Clifford Sifton, who until 1905, controlled the distribution of federal patronage in the west for the Laurier Liberals. was well aware that this was, on many occasions, a mixed blessing. There were, predictably, far more applicants for the well-paying rewards than there were jobs and contracts available and, consequently, several disappointed enemies could be made for every political friend who was appeased. As an example from the so-called lower levels of politics. Brandon's ex-mayor, J. W. Fleming, complained that his bid for provincial election had been substantially hampered by the fact that Brandon city council of which he was the head had rejected a particular tender due to the inferior goods being offered. The unsuccessful applicant, as a result, had opposed him in the 1907 campaign.' On the other hand, that same J. W. Fleming, having been favoured with a government contract to supply the Department of the Militia with horses, had embarrassed and perhaps politically endangered Sifton by forwarding several carloads of unsatisfactory stock.'

Local Liberals naturally expected that all Tory office-holders would be immediately replaced by Liberals after Laurier's victory in 1896 and some became extremely agitated when this did not occur. The fact that a Conservative blacksmith was still receiving some of the Experimental Farm business caused "a lot of (Brandon) Liberals" to declare that they would vote against Sifton in the next election. While Sifton never agreed with his more rabid supporters in their contention that all Tories should automatically be dismissed, he did concur in specific instances as in the 1901 dismissal of Brandon postmaster Joseph Kavanagh for allegedly "offensive partisanship." Sifton discovered — to his supporters' dismay — that such dismissals were not always easily secured should the position or contract in question fall within another minister's jurisdiction. The administrative staff at the Brandon Experimental Farm, which had been appointed by John A. Macdonald's Conservative government at the time of its establishment in 1887, were compelled, for economy reasons, to reduce their staff. Enraged Brandon Liberals, however, reported "strong Grits" rather



**MANITOBA
HOMESTEADS
AND
OTHER LANDS
OPEN FOR SETTLEMENT.**



IN THE DISTRICTS

OF **vAiaalm,**

- GRISWOLD**
- OAK LAKE**
- ROUTLEDGE**
- HARGRAVE**
- ELKHORN**
- DELEAU**
- FINDLAY**

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BOARD OF TRADE

Manitoba Archives

than Tories were being dismissed. While the supervisor in question, one Thornton, was eventually removed, local Liberals found that Superintendent S. A. Bedford had ensured that the replacement was even "a worse Tory than Mr. Thornton." Bedford, the principal culprit in the minds of most Brandon Liberals, moreover, could not be "persuaded" to resign until 1906. While Sifton had virtually full political control over his own department, his influence with other departments, in this case Agriculture, was less than one would have expected.

Political patronage was generally accepted as a stabilizing element in the political process in this pre-war era; political corruption was not. Sifton's Tory critics, who very carefully scrutinized his administration of the Yukon during its infamous gold rush days, were quick to accuse him of political favouritism and, on occasion, corruption if circumstances warranted it. In 1899, during the course of the Manitoba provincial election campaign, Sir Charles Tupper, the national Conservative leader, accused Sifton of having permitted his former partner, Brandon lawyer A. E. Philp, to import liquor illegally into the Yukon. Although those charges resulted in slander suits and counter-charges, Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, Sir Charles' son, made similar accusations at a joint meeting with Sifton during the course of the 1900 federal election. In addition, the younger Tupper, before a capacity crowd of 3,000 in the Brandon arena, charged Brandon's MP with having used his political influence to further the interests of some of his relatives, "an accusation which may have been largely unfounded in that Sifton consistently refused many entreaties made on behalf of T. H. Burrows for the very reason that that Manitoba politician was his father-in-law. That many of Sifton's Brandon associates were appointed to public office during his ministry and that they did, on occasion, return to assist him at campaign time, however, could not be denied. James A. Smart, ex-Liberal MPP and Deputy Minister of the Interior as of 1897; J. D. McGregor, license commissioner in the Yukon; J. B. Whitehead, "the successful contractor of the marsh drainage"; and a "Mr. Edgar from California" were some of "Sifton's men," as the Independence labelled them, who returned to assist in the 1900 campaign.

In addition to collecting on his political "I.O.U.'s," Sifton enjoyed the advantage of being able to secure suitable employment

BRANDON

WHEAT CITY OF THE DOMINION

The CITY OF BRANDON is ad natal in the centre of a rich agricultural country, and has such a favorable position in the growing r itoVucquit OF MANITOBA that her future is mltured. Fier situation, on the south bank of the Assiniboine river, fifty feet above the level of the Water, affords perfect drainage. All hough the city is bat

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it has a population upwards of 4,000, and has made great progress during these years. The erection of a new city hall and unirket to cost 155,100 is now begun, and preparations are being made for the erection of a hospital costing 314,000. Two ward almshouses have been built during the past year at the cost of \$15,000, and the School Board purpose erecting, during the coming year, a

ciOlGirr, lit SCI-1001,
to cost \$30,000, in order to provide for the ever increasing population. The Provincial Government have just completed a handsome brick building, PA a training mime' for boys, costing \$30,000., also a 14AATJED1111 TITLES C)171E'ICIO

ceding \$12,000. The Dominion Government have this season expended \$40,000 in a Porist Office maid Dorsaiiii013. Mese: Lan Offlosass and \$30,000 on

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Three prominent banking institutions are erecting magnificent buildings of stone and brick, showing the confidence our monied institutions have in the future of our country. The leading merchants have built large and expensive buildings three end four stories high. The City Council have engineers engaged preparing plans for a system of

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which are to be undertaken forthwith. The Assiniboine river brings from the forests of the north millions of to a which are here manufactured into lumber and shipped to all parts of the Province and Territories, the slabs going a great way to provide the city with firewood, which is sold at \$2 per cord. Excellent clay is obtained for the manufacture of

'2% 71-11're BRICKS

a couple of miles from the city, of which there are large quantities being manufactured and delivered to 'mildew at fr. 50 per thousand. Foundation stones are easily obtained, and all other building material can be procured at reasonable prices, timber being from \$1.1 to 320 pit M.

f, iklif. 11:1-720 1)10P. 01:11ITS OF COAT, /

are 10...ited within 10(1 miles or the city to the Southwest, and at present Loth the C. P. it., and the N.P. & M. railways are constructing branches to these points, which will give 55 RIAritint supply of coal at a low rate, 2145555OWN#5 511651t/ 111010 011.14 fact. rti cheap fuel, cheap living for employes, and an abundant supply of raw material for many lines of manufacturing, their enterprises should be carried on in Brandon to successfully grow corn and lumber with the world, especially in articles of home consumption. fa this connection we would draw their attention to the excellent

RAILWAY FACILITIES

at this point, by the C. P. R. main line east and west, its 'Souris braw' to the Southwest; the Great Northwest Central to the North, connecting with the M. & N. Wet Rapid City; and the Northern Pacific and Manitoba to the Southeast, bringing the whole Province within easy reach of Brandon.

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would find it to their advantage to tonic here, INS there in urn point ill the Province so favorably situated for their business. The city is lighted by electricity and has a most efficient fire department. Brandon district is unsurpassed from an agricultural point of view, in the soil is of excellent quality and easily worked; the water clear and pure and easily obtained—good wheat is procured at a depth of twenty feet. There is more land under cultivation in this district than in any other part of the Province, and were wheat this year marketed at Brandon in past years than at any other point in the Dominion. Land has increased in value rapidly, and irrigated farms in some cases are worth US per acre. Good land can yet be obtained within easy reach of the city at \$0 11.1111.193 per acre. Instances are given this year where the first crop has paid all expenses and paid for the land. The roads are excellent and the climate in meat healthy. Our Eastern hunters should consider well the advantages of ending in a district so well supplied with invaluable advantages, including schools, churches, railway facilities, convenient market, excellent water not inhabited by progressive and intelligent farmers.

For any utter illation regarding Biondork City or district ndirma,

J. O. I. C. 1\$1212, City Clerk, Eircaraciori, Nicatiitobm.

Who will be glad to reply to any and all enquiries.

M.-OM.

Manitoba Archives

A Sifton — era advertisement

for key workers between elections so that they would be available for campaign purposes whenever necessary. J. Obed Smith, Sifton's principal constituency organizer, was appointed Immigration Commissioner after the 1900 federal election while two lesser organizers were placed in charge of the census enumeration in Sifton's own district. Some care, however, had to be taken to ensure that such interim employment was appropriate; for example, it was recommended that one Perry, another Sifton organizer, should not accept employment with "the Liquor organization" in 1902 as the Liberal party obviously did not want to be directly associated with such interests." On the other hand, it is somewhat reassuring to note that Sifton refused to recommend F. C. Potts for a position in the Mounted Police, as he did not believe that the Brandon area organizer was suitably qualified."

As an influential government minister, Sifton had an excellent opportunity to do something concrete for his constituency; he would, however, be judged by that same criteria. Certainly Brandon Conservatives frequently contrasted their party's contributions to Brandon — a new Post Office, the Experimental Farm, and the Industrial School — with Sifton's which they alleged consisted solely of the closing of the local immigration sheds." Although the pro-Liberal Sun protested that the region's general economic prosperity was more important than Conservative "monuments," Sifton himself was well aware of the political necessity to provide for his riding on the eve of the 1904 federal election. As a result, Sifton insisted that the 12th Manitoba Dragoons hold their 1904 summer training camp, which would produce an estimated \$3,000 in expenditures, in Brandon, rather than in Minnedosa." As the earlier decision to close the old immigration sheds had caused considerable political embarrassment, Sifton concluded that new facilities were necessary." Brandon's council had also petitioned for a local drill hall and armoury and Sifton, on the eve of the election, agreed: "I am very anxious to get the work started for obvious reasons."" Governments could move quickly when the circumstances warranted it.

Practitioners of the art of "practical politics" began to prepare for elections well in advance of polling day. A great deal of attention was devoted during the pre-election period to the prepara-

tion of lists of potential supporters and doubtfuls.^{1°} By the autumn of 1903 and well in advance of the 1904 election, Sifton had engaged three full-time organizers to work in his constituency alone: the majority of the communities were visited and key Liberals consulted, poll committees were established, the **Free Press Weekly** was mailed free of charge to the doubtfuls, and an absentee voters list was compiled. Qualified but temporarily absent supporters might constitute the difference between success and defeat in a close contest such as that which occurred in Brandon during the 1899 provincial election when the local Liberal member, Charles Adams, was defeated apparently as a result of his neglect of the absentee vote.[°] Certainly Sifton, the master politician, would never make such a foolish error. His instructions to organizers on this subject were extremely terse: "Enclosed is a list of non-resident voters. Transportation arrangements are now complete. You will be able to get anything you want including special trains. Voters can be brought from any point of Canada. Get to Work."[°]

Special attention was also paid to specific "communities" of electors. F. C. Potts, an officer of the Orange Lodge in Brandon,



Western Canadian Pictorial Index, University of
Winnipeg

was hired specifically at one stage "to work among our yellow bellied friends,"¹ as a prominent Winnipeg Liberal described Orangemen. A Department of Immigration official, a public servant, was directed to dedicate himself "to the Galician business,"² to the 50 Galician voters who resided in Brandon." Although there were only 40 Icelandic voters in the constituency," pro-Sifton speakers of Icelandic descent were brought from Winnipeg and an Icelandic youth was added to the post office staff to prevent local Conservatives, who were capitalizing upon the fact that the local postal clerk was unable to distinguish between Icelandic names, from collecting "all the (Liberal) literature and letters intended for our friends."³ The detailed attention which was paid to the ethnic vote was also evident in the concern expressed by Liberal organizers as to the future of a \$125 loan which a prominent Brandon Liberal (who was now leaving the city) had made to the Icelandic community to assist with the construction of their hall. Sifton was warned that any attempt to re-call that loan might "seriously affect the votes of some 16 of these people" and that the Tories "will jump at the chance of taking up the loan." As a result, Sifton took over the loan himself through the office of his Brandon business agent, H. L. Adolph.

As the art of "practical politics" required the presentation of one's viewpoint as directly and frequently as possible, friendly newspapers were vitally important, especially in that pre-election period when "the best work" could be done. For that reason, political parties used whatever means they had to secure and to retain such newspaper support. The judicious distribution of government printing contracts and of government paid advertising kept many small newspapers "in line" but this alone might be insufficient to guarantee a larger newspaper's support. Certainly outright control, as in the case of Sifton's purchase of the Manitoba Free Press, was more desirable even though the results could still be disappointing. Sifton frequently urged A. J. Magurn, the editor of the Free Press, to campaign more strenuously on the Liberal party's behalf. After noting that R. L. Richardson's **Tribune** was constantly attacking the Liberal tariff policy, the Minister of the Interior stated flatly: "You have to get down into the same place where the other people are and fight or they will cut your ground away from under your feet." Although one of Brandon's dailies,

the Sun, was Liberal (which it remained until its conversion to the Conservative cause in 1912 after J. B. Whitehead obtained sole control by buying out editor Phillip Purcell) local partisans were not always satisfied with the results: "The Brandon Sun should also be taken in hand as everyone is disgusted with it under its present management."³² Outright ownership of a newspaper, nevertheless, did ensure that unsatisfactory editors could eventually be dismissed as in Sifton's 1901 decision to replace the disappointing Magurn with J. W. Dafoe. In other instances, as in the example of the pro-Conservative Brandon Times, an experienced itinerant "political" editor would be imported for the duration of the campaign."

It was also extremely important that the political parties devote particular attention to the "special interest" press as many voters could not or did not read the English language newspapers. The Liberals, therefore, distributed free copies of *La Patrie* to French-speaking voters in Manitoba during the 1900 campaign. Sifton, on the eve of the 1903 provincial election, agreed to purchase *Der Nordwestern*, a German language newspaper, for some \$15,000³³ and to consider the establishment of a Galician newspaper, both of which were ostensibly to be owned by "dummy" organizations.³⁴ He would therefore be in the advantageous position of being able to influence those newspapers without their readership becoming aware of any political connection.

Although all parties (money permitting) had the opportunity to secure their own newspapers, that party which constituted the provincial government enjoyed the substantial advantage of preparing the voters lists. Although J.W. Dafoe, the editor of the *Free Press* and Sifton's constant political advisor, repeatedly urged the federal government to reclaim its previously held responsibility for such lists, Laurier explained that the federal Liberals when they were in opposition had promised to accept provincially-established lists and they could not now abandon that policy, irrespective of any political advantage to be derived." The preparation of the voters list, therefore, was governed by the Manitoba Elections Act which was amended in 1901 to require personal registration, the production by all non-British subjects of a Certificate of Naturalization, and an educational test for all naturalized foreigners who had been in Canada for less than seven years.

The requirement for personal registration was particularly significant. Many voters would not travel to relatively distant points in order to register unless someone paid their travel costs. The Liberals, should they wish to challenge those placed on the lists by the Roblin government, would also be required to pay the required witnesses both travel costs and a witness fee. As a result, Manitoba Liberals estimated that several hundred of their Manitoba supporters were not registered in 1903." Sifton contended, as well, that the required production of a Certificate of Naturalization was directed "against the Liberal party because three-quarters of the foreign voters (who often had lost this document) are Liberals." Although the educational test, which was directed primarily at the Galicians, resulted in an estimated 1,000 to 1,500 pro-Liberal Manitobans being deleted from the lists throughout the province," only 12 to 15 Galicians were disfranchised by this test in Brandon itself.³⁸

There remained one final dimension to the question of voters lists and the effort to be exerted in their preparation. Dafoe, who as noted earlier was an advocate of a federally-prepared list, advised that Manitoba Liberals should not, for very pragmatic reasons, participate in the preparation of a provincially-established voters list as "the Galicians . . . should not be registered first in a list prepared by local (Conservative) government officials. If this is done you will find that a large proportion of them will be hopelessly confused as to whom they are indebted to for the privilege of the franchise.'" Better that the Galicians should not vote than that they should feel politically indebted to the wrong party.

The political parties, during the Sifton era, utilized every legal political trick available in their struggle to gain an advantage in this world of "practical politics." Whether or not there was extensive vote-buying is more difficult to determine. Although the complaints of such vote-buying were many," the evidence presented in support was often rather circumstantial as in the reported presence in Brandon of uncommon Bank of Ottawa bills which were allegedly distributed by "mysterious strangers" who frequented the Conservative committee rooms during the 1910 provincial election.' Payment for political support could, of course, take other forms as well. During the 1899 provincial election in Brandon, there was,

Sifton reported, "whiskey and beer on tap in the (Conservative) committee rooms, and McInnis (the Conservative candidate) had treated publicly and otherwise rendered himself liable to disqualification." During the 1900 federal election, the Tories allegedly promised free groceries to supporters at a Icelandic meeting" while the Liberals reportedly distributed free beer to residents of the "flats." Although both parties undoubtedly bought votes, the process itself had become less reliable due to the introduction of the secret ballot. In the world of corrupt politics, could the party organizer trust those who offered to sell their vote? One technique employed in 1907, according to newspaper accounts, required that the party worker provide the voter with a pre-marked ballot before he entered the polling station. After having cast the pre-marked ballot, the voter would submit the unmarked ballot which he had received at the polling station to the party worker who would, in turn, pay him for his vote."

The question of the political significance of such corrupt practices is difficult to resolve. J. W. Dafoe, however, was convinced that the re-election of Roblin's Conservative government in 1903 was due to political debauchery, the like of which had never been exceeded before: "We did not get 10 per cent of the floating and loose vote. The enemy (the Conservatives) bought up the 'hired men' and there is a host of them in the country now; the breeds; and everyone who was out for the stuff."

As the government party had the obvious advantage in this style of politics due to the number of jobs which they could offer and the vast amounts of money which they had to distribute as result of business "kick-backs," the opposition party was at a tremendous disadvantage. Although they could challenge the election results in the courts, election protests were launched primarily as an insurance measure in the anticipation that the other party would do likewise. Both parties, therefore, collected the relevant evidence as in 1904 when the federal Liberals planned to challenge Conservative victories in the North-West Territories in anticipation that their opponents would contest Liberal successes in Manitoba." Although both parties would usually agree to withdraw their respective protests, an interesting variation of the "saw-off" arose in 1909 when Manitoba Conservatives offered to appoint H. A. Robson, a prominent Liberal, as a judge on the condition that the Liberals

drop their election protests in the provincial constituencies of Gilbert Plains and Virden." Unlike some provincial Liberals, Sifton was opposed: "Making a bargain in relation to Election Petitions as part of an arrangement for the appointment of a judge strikes me as being peculiarly offensive and objectionable.""" There were, even in the Sifton era, some self-inflicted moral standards in Manitoba politics.

It would appear that the art of "practical politics" required virtually constant dedication to the task of building the party machine, the vehicle which the politicians would utilize in their bid to secure and to retain power. To fuel that machine, practical politicians paid careful attention to many details; to matters of patronage; to the management of friendly newspapers which would, in turn, "educate" the electorate; to the preparation of favourable voters lists; to the collection of political information by whatever means were necessary as demonstrated by Conservative attempts to bribe Sifton's organizers into playing the role of double-agent;" to party-sponsored billiard tournaments, club rooms, and baseball teams;' and, at least in the instance of the obviously more culturally sophisticated Conservatives, to party-organized piano and violin recitals by locally-renowned Brandon College professors. Finally, the art of "practical politics" included, where all else had failed, the buying of votes during the Sifton era. Such party activity required the expenditure of vast amounts of both time and money and, as a result, Brandon's MP advised at least one potential candidate not to enter politics: "I do not think it would be wise for you to do so. I know better than most people what it means to be in politics, speaking financially.' Whereas the so-called democracy implied a system of political equality, the task of managing that democracy — i.e., the practising of the art of "practical politics" — was, in the pre-war era, exclusively a "rich man's game."

FOOTNOTES

1. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, mf. C-421, 1.b.25,548-50, Sifton to J. S. Willson, February 7, 1901.

2. **Brandon Daily Sun**, July 20, 1907.
3. While these statistics were reported in 1912, one can assume that the figures for 1911 would have been comparable. *Ibid.*, November 1, 1912.
4. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 179, 145496-97, J. W. Fleming to Sifton, April 25, 1907.
5. As a result, Fleming's appeal for the renewal of that contract fell upon deaf ears! *Ibid.*, vol. 248, 102, Sifton to B. Trotter, May 29, 1902.
6. *Ibid.*, vol. 232, 381, Sifton to Hon. Sydney Fisher, May 9, 1899.
7. **Independence**, February 21, 1901.
8. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 99, 77889, A. C. Fraser to Sifton, January 5, 1901.
9. Exactly what transpired at that particular Tupper meeting is not clear. A. E. Philp subsequently initiated a slander suit against Tupper for statements allegedly made by the federal Conservative leader. On the other hand, Tupper denied making such charges and the **Brandon Times**, a pro-Conservative newspaper, made no mention of such comments. The pro-Liberal **Sun** charged, however, that the **Times** was seeking to protect the Conservative leader. **Brandon Daily Sun**, December 12, 1899.
10. The accusation, specifically, was that Wm. Ogilvie, who was a relative of Mrs. Sifton's, held several important positions including that of Gold Commissioner. Sifton denied that Ogilvie, who had been a Department of Interior employee for some 20 years before Sifton became the Minister, had received any special consideration. *Ibid.*, October 15, 1900.
11. **Independence**, September 27, 1900.
12. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 126, 100429, R. E. A. Leech to A. P. Collier, February 28, 1902.
13. *Ibid.*, vol. 252, 444, Sifton to Kenneth Campbell, August 4, 1903.
14. *Ibid.*, vol. 170, 138038, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, February 10, 1904.
15. *Ibid.*, vol. 257, 264, Sifton to Hon. Sir F. W. Borden, March 31, 1904.

16. Sifton's organizer had persuaded local petitioners to delay their request for a new facility so that the Laurier government could act without appearing to do so under pressure. *Ibid.*, vol. 170, 138099, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, April 13, 1904.
17. *Ibid.*, vol. 261, 128, Sifton to Hon. Sir D. H. McMillan, September 24, 1904.
18. Some 2,500 doubtfuls received free subscriptions to the *Free Press* during the 1900 election campaign.
19. "A lot of outside voters were not brought in, being deliberately left away to work for other candidates who were supposed to need them most." PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 235, 376, Sifton to D. C. Fraser, December 22, 1899.
20. *Ibid.*, 249, Sifton to J. O. Smith, November 30, 1899.
21. *Ibid.*, vol. 152, 122116-17, C. A. Young to Sifton, November 7, 1903.
22. *Ibid.*, vol. 252, 777, Sifton to J. B. Harkin, August 21, 1903.
23. *Ibid.*, vol. 150, 120363, J. O. Smith to Sifton, November 23, 1903.
24. *Ibid.*, vol. 99, 77709, J. W. Fleming to Sifton, September 24, 1901.
25. *Ibid.*, vol. 89, 69480, J. Obed Smith to (Sifton?), October 2, 1900.
26. *Ibid.*, vol. 99, 77709, J. W. Fleming to Sifton, September 24, 1901.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*, vol. 78, 59197, W. W. Cory to A. P. Collier, March 30, 1900.
29. *Ibid.*, vol. 231, 354-55, Sifton to A. J. Magurn, March 14, 1899.
30. *Ibid.*, vol. 78, 59197, W. W. Cory to A. P. Collier, March 30, 1900.
31. *Brandon Daily Sun*, November 30, 1899.
32. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 251, 203, Sifton to J. W. Sifton, March 12, 1903.
33. Although a few shares were to be sold to two or three Galicians, the bulk of the shares would be registered in the name of some "friendly" person who, in turn, was to sign "a transfer in blank and a declaration of trust in blank and give them to

- my Father (J. W. Sifton) so that they can be locked up and kept securely." Ibid., vol. 252, 684-85, Sifton to E. H. Macklin, August 20, 1903.
34. PAC, W. Laurier Papers, vol. 286, 77876, Laurier to Dafoe, October 21, 1903.
 35. Ibid., vol. 286, 77873, Dafoe to Laurier, October 16, 1903.
 36. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 251, 249, Sifton to Chas. Fitzpatrick, March 14, 1903.
 37. PAC, W. Laurier Papers, vol. 386, 77873-75, Dafoe to Laurier, October 16, 1903.
 38. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 149, 118858, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, November 28, 1903.
 39. Ibid., vol. 157, 127183, Dafoe to Sifton, April 9, 1904.
 40. Although political organizers remained essentially silent on this topic, a Liberal worker did complain to Sifton about the continued presence of an "unfriendly" teacher at an Indian School as "it is quite useless sending anyone there as long as Wilson is on the spot." Ibid., vol. 89, 69492, J. O. Smith to Sifton, October 18, 1900. In other words, the presence of this unfriendly observer was interfering with the vote-buying process?
 41. Manitoba Free Press, July 7, 1910.
 42. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 157, 286, Sifton to A. D. Cameron, December 14, 1899.
 43. **Brandon Daily Sun**, October 23, 1900.
 44. **Independence**, November 1, 1900.
 45. **Winnipeg Daily Tribune**, March 5, 1907.
 46. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 140, 11898, Dafoe to Sifton, August 3, 1903.
 47. Ibid., vol. 261, 997, Sifton to H. M. Howell, December 7, 1904.
 48. These protests were part of the aftermath of the 1907 provincial election. Ibid., vol. 188, 151195, Dafoe to Sifton, September 30, 1909.
 49. Ibid. 151197, Dafoe to Sifton, October 4, 1909.
 50. E. Blake Robertson reported in January, 1904, that he had been offered "enough out of it to start up in some business" (ibid., vol. 170, 138009, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, January

11, 1904), if he, Robertson, would provide the Conservatives with useful information. R. E. A. Leech may also have been approached in a similar manner as it was rumoured, in mid 1904, that he had "sold out" to the Tories. Ibid., vol. 170, 138150, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, June 8, 1904.

51. Both the Liberals and the Conservatives had ball teams on several occasions. Thus, even the "sports page" was not free of politics as suggested by one headline which read "Liberals Look Like Champions." Brandon Daily Sun, August 2, 1904.
52. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 248, 129, Sifton to George Walton, May 30, 1902.



Those who Played the "Game" and Won in Pre-War Brandon

Election results appear to many to resemble the weekend sports scores. To the disinterested or the skeptical, the results seem meaningless and inconsequential. To the addicted, to the partisan, elections are a world unto themselves, a world which excites the participants, rewards the successful and, regrettably, consumes, on occasion, the unwary. Who then were the politicians who sought the support of the Brandon electorate in the pre-war era and why did they do so? On what issues did they stand or fall? What were the results and why did some succeed when others did not? And, to respond to the disinterested and to the skeptic, did the "game" of politics really matter?

The politicians who fought for power in pre-war Brandon were remarkably similar in nature. They were of common British origin; they were members of the city's business and professional community who undoubtedly had a vested interest in its growth and development; they were active in the community's activities and organizations; and they were invariably prominent in their Protestant churches, even though there was frequently little or no visible manifestation of their Christian faith in their political endeavours.

Brandon's politicians, furthermore, were of two standard varieties, Liberal or Conservative, although a Liberal who claimed to be the workingman's friend or a Conservative who equally claimed to be the workingman's friend might emerge, on occasion, after 1900. Brandon's politicians also were remarkably similar in that they did not devote a great deal of time to explaining why they were whatever they were. Clifford Sifton, nevertheless, was vividly aware that he (as had been his father) was a Liberal even though he did not define his liberalism very clearly. Hugh John Macdonald,

Sifton's opponent in 1900, was equally aware that he (as had been his famous father) was a Conservative even though he, too, failed to discuss his philosophical position in any depth. One is struck, therefore, by the fact that Brandon's politicians, with rare exceptions, followed in the philosophical footsteps of their fathers who followed in turn. . . . ?

The fact that Brandon's politicians in the pre-war era were drawn from the same economic and social elite did not lessen the importance which they attached to their political struggles. As in some instances of sibling rivalry, the competing "teams" could fight for power as ferociously as ever did enemy states. Irrespective of how Brandon Liberals had come to be Liberals or why Brandon Conservatives were Conservatives, they played the political game for keeps — until, in a later era, someone or something would challenge their combined domination of the political process. At that time, they would prove quite capable of forgetting partisan differences in the face of a real enemy.

Of the politicians who were active in Brandon politics during the pre-war era, Clifford Sifton was both the most successful and the most significant. He was also representative of the economic and social elite which clearly dominated Manitoba's second city in that period. Clifford Sifton's family had moved to Manitoba from Ontario in 1865 and J. W. Sifton, Clifford's father, was soon prominently involved in railway construction, farming and provincial politics. In fact, he served briefly as Speaker of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly in 1879. In 1881, the elder Sifton commenced a large farming operation in the Brandon district and he subsequently was elected the area's first provincial representative after Manitoba's boundaries were extended westward.

When young Clifford Sifton moved to the newly-incorporated city of Brandon in 1882 to commence the practice of law with his brother Arthur (who would later become Premier of Alberta), he enjoyed the obvious advantage of belonging to one of the new community's most socially prominent families. As a result, Sifton easily and quietly assumed a leadership role in the Methodist Church, in the temperance movement, in sports such as lacrosse and polo, and in his father's political activities. Just as sons enter their fathers' businesses, the 27-year-old Sifton successfully stood as a Liberal candidate in the provincial constituency of North



Brandon's industry



Senator, Mrs. Kirchhoffer, Earl Gray and Lady Gray with secretary (on ground) at Kirchhoffer Grounds, Brandon 1900.

Manitoba Archives

Brandon against W. A. Macdonald, a young Conservative lawyer of comparable political promise.' Clifford Sifton, virtually by accident of birth, had emerged as a successful politician.

Although the Liberal party won that 1888 election with considerable ease, their caucus became severely divided over the merits of a number of competing railway proposals. Those who were disappointed by the government's decision in favour of the Northern Pacific assumed that they could gain the support of Clifford Sifton in their attempt to reverse that decision, if necessary by dumping both Premier Thomas Greenway and Attorney-General Joseph Martin, the Northern Pacific's principal advocates. The new member for Brandon North surprised and angered many of his colleagues by emerging as an active and effective defender of Premier Greenway's position. As a result, Sifton made a number of significant enemies within his own Liberal party, including for a time the **Manitoba Free Press**. Nevertheless, when the factious Joseph Martin resigned in 1891, North Brandon's 31-year-old member was a natural successor to the post of attorney-general.'

D'Alton McCarthy, an Ontario Conservative whom many had assumed would one day succeed John A. Macdonald, had abandoned his party in 1889 to become the principal spokesman for the anti French-Canadian Equal Rights Association. In that capacity, he had addressed the infamous Portage la Prairie meeting at which the campaign to abolish Manitoba's tax-supported, dual-school system was essentially launched. McCarthy, and Clifford Sifton, as Manitoba's new attorney-general, became allies both on behalf of Manitoba in the Schools Question and in politics. In fact, Sifton directed McCarthy's campaign as an Independent in the Brandon constituency during the 1896 federal election, a contest in which local Liberals significantly were not represented. When McCarthy — who, for "insurance" reasons, had contested two constituencies — chose to represent North Simcoe, Sifton was invited both to fill the Brandon vacancy and to enter Laurier's cabinet.' Sifton, however, insisted that the Schools Question must first be resolved to the satisfaction of Brandon area Liberals. After those conditions had been met, the 35-year-old Brandon lawyer entered the Laurier government as Minister of the Interior on November 18, 1896.'

Brandon, as a result, was represented by Liberals both



Hugh John Macdonald was Manitoba premier in 1899.

Manitoba Archives



George Robson Coldwell, Conservative MLA for Brandon was first elected in 1907.

Manitoba Archives

federally and provincially for the next three years and Clifford Sifton and Charles Adams worked "hand in hand." The December, 1899 Manitoba election, therefore, constituted a test almost as much for the federal Liberal party as it did for the Greenway Liberals of whom Clifford Sifton had been a prominent member until late 1896.

Brandon Liberals began the 1899 provincial campaign on politically secure ground. The 42-year-old Liberal incumbent, Chas. Adams, had been an active and prominent member of the Brandon community since his arrival in 1882. This Ontario-born politician, who had established a well-known saddlery and harness shop, had quickly emerged as a community leader, serving as alderman, mayor (in 1887) and member of the Manitoba legislature as of 1892. Although it was currently rumoured that he was intending to move to Toronto,⁸ the incumbent Adams, as a government member, enjoyed a considerable initial advantage. The voters list had been prepared under the auspices of the Greenway government and Liberal organizers were satisfied that the work had been thoroughly done.⁹ The local Conservatives, moreover, were reportedly divided as their candidate and former mayor, Ezekiel Evans, withdrew on the eve of the contest. As Dr. S. W. McInnis, a local dentist, was selected to replace him only two weeks before the polling date, Liberal organizers were understandably confident on the eve of the election: "We consider the three Brandons (i.e., North Brandon, Brandon City and South Brandon) safe."

There were, however, potential difficulties and some Liberals feared that public dissatisfaction with the federal Liberal government and with Sifton himself could be politically damaging to the provincial Liberals. J. Obed Smith, a provincial Liberal organizer, requested that Sifton come west and hold public meetings in order to deal with pressing federal issues prior to the upcoming provincial election as "people criticise Federal (issues) more than local, and will not dissassociate (sic) them." Certainly the fact that Sifton, as Minister of Interior, had been responsible for the immigration of East Europeans — the "peasants in sheep-skin's clothing" — was politically dangerous for several reasons. The local Icelandic community was reportedly disturbed by the prospect of immigrant Doukhobors "coming and remaining here doing work much cheaper." The concern that the entire character

of Manitoba would be altered by a wave of foreigners was of even greater political significance, especially in Brandon itself where these fears were deliberately instilled by W. G. King and his newspaper, *The Independent*. King had previously been both a Sifton supporter and an employee of the Immigration Department. Upon leaving this latter employment for undetermined reasons, King established a violently bigoted daily newspaper whose journalistic irresponsibility knew virtually no limits. As an example, he suggested that the "Doukhoborskis," to use his term, arrived with relatively few children due to the fact that they "like other Russian sects . . . limit their progeny by killing off the superfluous ones." While it is believed that King deliberately attacked Sifton in this vitriolic manner in the vain hope that he would be "bought off" (his asking price of \$25,000 proved to be exorbitant), the end result was that the Liberals, provincial as well as federal, were regularly accused of favouring (for Machiavellian reasons) those "pampered paupers," "foreign scum" and "barbarians" who, as allegedly docile voters, would endanger the democratic process in their willingness to sell their vote."

Several observers, including the *Sun*, were of the opinion that the Liberals unexpectedly lost the constituency of Brandon City in 1899 by the extremely narrow margin of 569 to 561 due to the mechanics of politics rather than as a result of the issues. Sifton had complained, prior to the election, of the political inactivity of his former colleagues." Furthermore, as he explained, "A lot of outside (i.e., absentee) voters were not brought in, being deliberately left away to work for other candidates who were supposed to need them most. Then some other Liberals who are jealous of Adams were willing to knife him out of the way." Whether or not Sifton's former law partner, A. E. Philp, was "jealous of Adams" is not known: he did, however, suggest that the Liberals could easily win a by-election with a different candidate should McInnis's victory be contravened by the courts."

It must not be forgotten, however, that Adams was a member of a party which was thrown from office in 1899. The Conservatives, led by the politically attractive Hugh John Macdonald, had carried 23 seats to Greenway's 15. According to W. L. Morton, the Liberals had been defeated for several reasons: Greenway's allegedly extravagant financial policies, a railway policy

which had disappointed many in its failure to provide more trackage at lower rates, the dissatisfaction of the Orange Lodge with the 1897 Laurier-Greenway Schools Question compromise, a "Canada first" reaction to the Laurier government's seemingly pro-East European immigration policy, and the loss of the organizational skills of both Clifford Sifton and Joseph Martin to federal politics." However, irrespective of the combination of causes, Brandon electors by a wafer-thin margin had voted in step with the province. As a result, they continued to be represented on the ministerialist side of the house, albeit by a Conservative.

Although those newspapers who forecast Sifton's political demise as a result of the Liberal defeats in the provincial constituencies of Brandon City and Brandon North were to be disappointed, the evidence indicates that Sifton, even though he was a powerful cabinet minister, was in political difficulty on the eve of the 1900 federal election. The task of outlining the problem fell to Sifton's former law partner, A. E. Philp, and his privately-expressed litany of woe was remarkably exhaustive and exceedingly illuminating as it provides the reader with a comprehensive list of political factors which could affect an incumbent's political career. Commencing with the sobering opinion that Sifton "could not be re-elected tomorrow," Philp aired the criticisms: that the Minister visited Brandon too infrequently and that the two provincial members Fraser and Adams had isolated him from local Liberals; that these two politicians had alienated the general membership and, by doing so, had cost the Liberal party their two seats; that the party needed the support of a good local paper (other than the Sun) of which "we need not be ashamed;" that "some imported agricultural implement preferably binders or coal oil" should be admitted to Canada free of tariffs; that Sifton "should counteract the effect of Dukobour (sic) immigration" by actively soliciting English immigrants; and that patronage should be dispersed only after consultation with local members and that "it should not be given to those who have openly knifed us when the opportunity came!"

Sifton, nevertheless, was still regarded as a most formidable politician whose influence extended throughout much of English Canada. He was, therefore, a prime political target for the Conservatives who were anxious to contain him in his home riding, even if they should fail to defeat him. They decided, there-

fore, to seek out a name candidate to oppose Sifton. While many Liberal observers had anticipated Hugh John Macdonald's re-entry into federal politics where he had served briefly as Sir Charles Tupper's Minister of Interior, the Conservatives' dramatic announcement that John A.'s only surviving son would surrender the premiership of Manitoba for a nomination in the most difficult constituency in the province was, in the words of one seasoned observer, the "political sensation of the times.'

The need for additional and cheaper transportation was of major concern to the rapidly developing Brandon area in 1900. The federal Liberals were well aware that the CPR and its near-monopoly was still extremely unpopular with Manitobans and any party or individual that was closely associated with the company could suffer politically. When ex-Premier Greenway belatedly admitted in early 1900 that his Liberal government had subsidized certain CPR branch lines (such as that from Brandon to Waskada) to the extent of \$1,750 per mile, local Liberals were despondent: "Owing to the late Ry (sic) deals of Mr. Greenway, the fight has been completely knocked out of our friends.""° When the popular Northern Pacific cancelled its tentative plans for expansion into northwestern Manitoba, ostensibly due to the federal government's pro-CPR policies, W. W. Cory, Sifton's local organizer, became further discouraged." Fortunately for the Liberals, Manitoba's Conservative government was encountering comparable difficulties with its railway policy. The Conservatives, during the 1899 provincial election, had advocated the public ownership of railways: they subsequently considered subsidizing a privately owned Brandon-to-Birtle extension which, in the words of a Liberal organizer, "have improved our prospects very materially.""

Issues such as tariffs and prohibition were only of minor importance in this campaign. Hugh John Macdonald obviously hoped to capitalize upon the failure of the Laurier Liberals to introduce the substantially lower tariff that they had promised during their years in opposition by personally advocating the free entry into Canada of all agricultural implements. While this proposal undoubtedly embarrassed some Liberal "Free traders," its significance was lessened substantially when high-tariff Ontario Tories protested that Manitoba's ex-premier did not speak for his party.



Street railway construction, Oct. 1911.

The prohibition issue was also somewhat confused. Hugh John Macdonald's government had moved quickly after 1899 to fulfill their election pledge to abolish the sale of liquor by local commercial outlets and Brandon Liberals feared that many of the city's sizable Methodist community (i.e., 22.6 per cent of Brandon's population) would support the Conservative candidate as a result. Sifton supporters, consequently, stressed the fact that the Macdonald Act — bold though it may have been — had not yet been implemented, allegedly as a result of doubts respecting its constitutionality.²³ They, in addition, quietly capitalized upon the fact that the local liquor industry was irrevocably opposed to any and all temperance advocates."

Irrespective of the complaints of a few months before, both Sifton and the government of which he was a minister were easily re-elected in 1900. Why had Sifton won both the rural sector and Brandon itself, where he won all the polls, when two of his provincial counterparts, just a few months before, had been defeated? Whereas the disappointed Independence explained Sifton's survival in terms of the fickleness of temperance advocates, Sir Charles Tupper's error in attacking Sifton publicly on the strength of what proved to be a forged telegram, and the Liberals' corrupt campaign tactics," the fact remains that Brandon voters had re-elected an incumbent who both understood the art of "practical politics" and practised it diligently. Sifton, when attacked, had never explained nor apologized. "The policy of the Government has been bold and progressive and I kept right on hammering that in, while the fellows . . . who spent their whole time defending, were whipped both in the West and in Ontario." Sifton's knowledge of "practical politics," his status as a minister, his membership on what would prove to be the "winning team," and his control of local patronage made him a rather awesome and powerful opponent.

To a pioneer society in which transportation was one of the community's most urgent needs, railways and politics were almost interchangeable. The Manitoba government's lease of Northern Pacific's trackage in 1901 for 99 years which it, in turn, sub-let to Mackenzie and Mann's Canadian Northern with the stipulation that rates were to be regulated was of monumental significance, both economically and politically. The popularity of



Rosser Avenue, 1911

Manitoba Archives.

that agreement was such that even Sifton was reluctant to oppose it." The difficulties which the Canadian Northern encountered in attempting to move the bumper crops of 1901 and 1902 and a serious fuel shortage which developed in Brandon late in 1902 due to snowblocked railway lines, however, led to much public dissatisfaction. J. W. Dafoe, who would prove to be one of the most astute political observers ever to reside in Manitoba, believed that the R. P. Roblin (i.e., Hugh John Macdonald's successor) government was vulnerable as a result." The economy of Manitoba — the "Wheat City" included — was dependent upon the ability of the transportation industry to move grain to market, and the Conservatives, as the Sun enjoyed reminding its readers, had not yet fully resolved those problems in spite of the massive amounts of public monies expended on behalf of the privately-owned Canadian Northern.

Although Manitoba Liberals were hopeful that they could benefit as a result of the Conservatives' railway policy, they were very conscious of their own difficulties, which included the lacklustre leadership of the aging Greenway. Despite Sifton's preoccupation in 1902-03 with the Alaska boundary dispute," he advised his provincial counterparts to commence their election preparations immediately and independently of the party's provincial leader. "There is no use in looking around and waiting for Greenway to move because he won't move a step — he will do absolutely nothing."

Although Sifton did provide his former colleagues with frequent political advice, he was reluctant to become openly involved in the upcoming provincial election as he feared, it would, "mix-up issues" (that is introduce federal issues into the provincial campaign) and, furthermore, his public participation would "stiffen up (those) Conservatives who are weak on the Roblin government."³ In any event, a serious cabinet crisis in Ottawa forced Sifton to decline the last moment entreaties for assistance.

Well aware of the political strength of the *government* party in 1903 due to the province's general economic growth, Brandon Liberals attempted to isolate the incumbent McInnis from his party by lampooning his proposal for a rain making machine, allegedly his only contribution to the legislative debates. They also stressed the fact that he had not been appointed (as a Brandon



Manitoba Archives

Patients from the Mental Hospital walk to new housing in the Winter Fair Building following the fire of 1910.

MLA should automatically be) to the all-important cabinet whereas A. C. Fraser, the Liberal member for North Brandon from 1896 until his defeat in 1899 and Brandon's mayor in 1901-02," would obviously be! In addition to complaining that Brandon had never received its fair share of "goodies" from the Roblin government, Brandon Liberals accurately prophesized that the promised Agricultural College would never materialize. Finally, Fraser's supporters attempted to divide Brandon Conservatives by asserting that the "better class of Conservatives" were transferring their support to the Liberal nominee due to their embarrassment with the reprehensible nature of the Roblin-Rogers political machine."

The Conservatives, in response, utilized their ministerial prerogative to announce that a railway branch line would be constructed between Brandon and Neepawa and to hint that the Agricultural College would be located in the "Wheat City." Finally and predictably, they claimed credit for Brandon's politically important economic "boom."

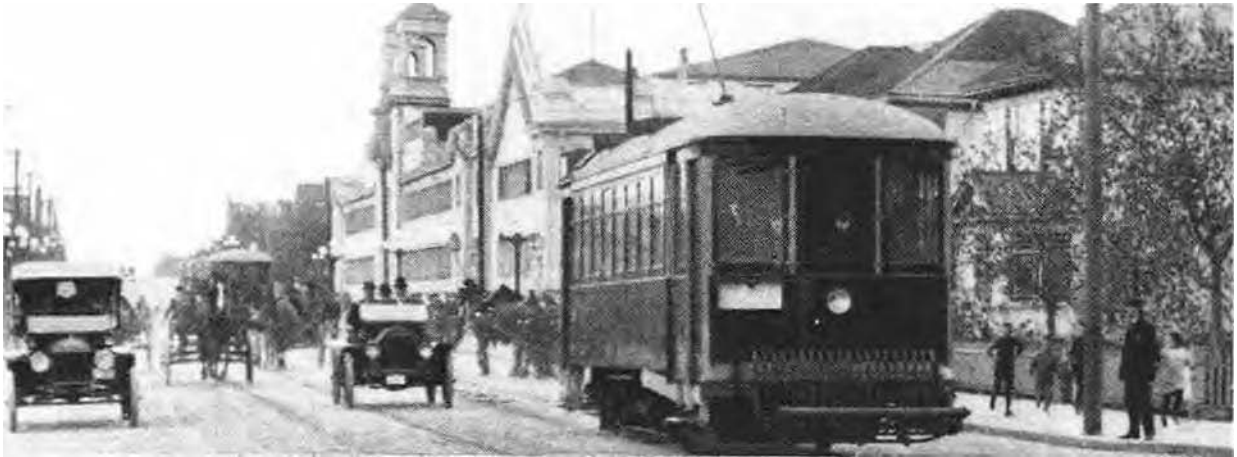
The 1903 election results were a classic example of the politics of the pre-war era. The most evident explanation for the Conservative victories both in Brandon (by a vote of 765-723) and throughout the province (with 31 seats out of 40) in 1903 was the improved provincial economy as the government party traditionally is successful during "growth years." Secondly, both A. C. Fraser, the defeated Liberal candidate, and J. W. Dafoe charged that the Roblin-Rogers machine had bought the "floating and loose vote."³⁴ In addition, Fraser contended that he had lost (Methodist?) votes due to the prohibition question.³⁵ The fact that McInnis's success did not seem to equal that of his party may well have been due to his personal weakness as a candidate, as Brandon Liberals were undoubtedly correct in so labelling him. Had he been otherwise, the Brandon MLA would have been appointed to the cabinet in 1899 (rather than in 1907).

For a variety of reasons, political parties in opposition tend to become factious and Brandon Liberals were so affected in 1903-04. As a rather complicated but believable example of the manner in which a community's economic and political elite could divide within itself, A. C. Fraser — who, as the defeated candidate, had considerable influence on matters of patronage — actively opposed the proposed appointment of Harry Clark to a minor



The Great Northern Railway Station, 1913

Manitoba Archives



Brandon's street cars, 1913

Manitoba Archives

federal position as Clark had failed to support him (i.e. Fraser) during his unsuccessful 1903 campaign. This political dispute was even further complicated by the allegation that Clark's negative attitude was the result of Fraser's refusal to extend credit, at his department store, to Harry Clark's brother-in-law."

In fact, Brandon Liberals were apparently divided into two factions — the Frasers and the Clements — who were reportedly at odds due to a business transaction in which the Frasers had sold some land to a Syndicate of which the Clements were an integral part. Subsequently, the Syndicate had lost \$20,000 of which the Clements's share was \$6,000. As the Clements believed that A. C. Fraser had personally and deliberately caused their financial losses, conflict and bitterness prevailed. As a result of this internal party conflict (which certainly was not philosophical in nature), Sifton was advised not to go driving with Fraser, as he had often done in the past. "If you must go take Dr. Harcourt he is outside the factions named." While the Clifford Sifton who never "explained" nor "apologized" was unlikely to accept such constrictions, the existence of such divisive factions was indicative of the sometimes destructive power struggles in which politicians engaged. Such factiousness could be very damaging to a member like Sifton in the event of a closely fought contest.

Brandon Conservatives, meanwhile, were encountering their own difficulties as they searched for a candidate of sufficient political appeal that he would, at least, keep Sifton "tied up" in the constituency should the powerful Minister of Interior prove to be unbeatable. Although local Liberals feared that Premier Roblin, one of the rumoured possibilities, would have been a formidable opponent due to his "ability to handle properly the shady side of a campaign," the other possible candidates paled in comparison with Sifton. Hugh John Macdonald had been previously rejected by Brandon voters; Dr. S. W. McInnis was an unimpressive provincial member; while Alderman John Hanbury — despite being the city's lumber baron and second largest employer — had, as a defeated mayoralty candidate, rather insignificant political credentials.

The fact that the Conservatives did not have a suitable candidate available encouraged R. L. Richardson, the editor of the **Winnipeg Daily Tribune** and one of Sifton's many political enemies, to stand as an Independent candidate in the Brandon consti-

tuency. Although he was nominated at a so-called Convention of Independents, farm leaders were quick to assert that Richardson was not a true representative of the fledgling farmers' movement and that Virden's J. W. Scallion, an ex-president of the Grain Growers and the man who called that nominating convention, retained no current executive connection of any kind with the farmer organization."

Although Richardson did not — as the Tories hoped — keep Sifton confined "at home," the Minister of the Interior did feel compelled, as noted earlier, to make a number of election eve announcements of new government construction projects for Brandon. Furthermore, Sifton — in a post-election communication — referred in a vague but intriguing manner to the "extremely warm contest in Brandon (which had) . . . a great many elements of serious uncertainty. The Conservative organization has not succeeded in coming to any conclusion as to how it (i.e., Sifton's victory) happened." While one can only speculate as to the nature of that "warm contest," it is evident that the voters of the Brandon federal constituency, by re-electing Sifton with a slightly larger margin, were in step with the national electorate which returned the Laurier government to power in 1904 with a small increase in members." Brandon electors had joined the majority of Manitobans in voting ministerialist in both the 1903 and 1904 elections (even though that had meant electing a Conservative provincially and a Liberal federally) just as they had in 1899 and 1900.

Although one might well have expected that the two elections of 1903 and 1904 would be followed by a period of relative inactivity, the sudden eruption of the 1905 Schools Question and Sifton's subsequent resignation from the Laurier ministry dramatically disrupted the winter's tranquillity. When provision had been made for the administration of a separate North-West Territories in 1875, a dual tax-supported school system had been established. This system had been so substantially altered, however, that separate schools were regulated in such a stringent manner by the early 1900s that only minimal differences from the public schools existed.

While Sifton would have preferred that the new provinces (i.e., Alberta and Saskatchewan) be permitted to devise their own school systems, he agreed with the compromise proposal which would legislate the existing separate school system into law. After

an apparent agreement had been secured, Sifton, the principal spokesman for Western Canada, had departed to the United States in search of medical relief for his hearing impairment. During his absence, the proposed legislation respecting separate schools was altered in such a way that Sifton returned immediately to Ottawa in February, 1905, and a major political crisis ensued.

Sifton's basic concern was that the proposal, which had been drafted by the Roman Catholic Minister of Justice, the Honourable Charles Fitzpatrick, was suspiciously vague and, as such, unacceptable: "I do not myself with all my experience in construing and arguing clauses of this kind profess to know what it means and the fact that it was drawn by Fitzpatrick does not add anything to my confidence." Unfortunately, Laurier was not to be dissuaded; instead, the Prime Minister even hinted that he, too, would resign, should the Minister of Interior insist on doing so. Furthermore, J. W. Dafoe feared that Sifton's decision to surrender the prestige of his cabinet post — and the control over patronage in the west which was a by-product of that position — would directly benefit the opposition: it would "put new life into the Tories and will encourage them to shove the (election) protests." Although several additional factors — i.e., Sifton was weary of his duties as Minister of the Interior; he had been denied the Justice portfolio; and there were more rumours of "corruption" and of "an affair" — may have contributed to his decision, Clifford Sifton, by resigning on February 27, 1905, voluntarily surrendered much of the power which had enabled him to practise the art of "practical politics" so successfully.⁹⁵

The 1907 provincial election constituted the first possible test of the political significance of Sifton's resignation from the Laurier ministry and his subsequent pro-longed absences from the Brandon constituency." However, it may well be that the results of that particular contest were not very indicative of Sifton's political influence or lack of it in that Professor M. Donnelly has concluded that the Manitoba Liberal party "never had a chance in the spring election of 1907." Brandon Liberals selected J. W. Fleming, the city's mayor in recent years, to oppose the Conservative McInnis who was seeking his third term. As the province and Brandon itself had been expanding dramatically during the Roblin era, local Liberals decided — as in 1903 — to concentrate on the allegation

that the city had not received its fair share of the "goodies" and that the present member was personally too weak to promote the community's cause. The decision of the Roblin government to locate the much-sought Agricultural College in Tuxedo where both Roblin and Robert Rogers reportedly owned property; the allegation that only a vigilant Mayor Fleming (and an outraged Brandon Sun) had prevented the pro-Winnipeg Roblin government from closing the city's normal school in 1906*; and the "disgraceful" service of the snow-blocked Canadian Northern, the resultant and alarming fuel shortage which had prompted Mayor Fleming to beg the Prime Minister in early 1907 to prevent "further suffering" were stressed. The fact that McInnis had never been invited to join the cabinet during his eight-year term was constantly emphasized." Edward Brown, the Liberals' new provincial leader, pointedly told a Brandon audience that their city deserved representation in the cabinet while the pro-Liberal Sun repeatedly described J. W. Fleming as "a man of cabinet rank." It was, according to the Liberals, a campaign to determine which man could provide the most in "concrete" terms for his city.

Local Conservatives responded in a variety of ways. First of all, McInnis emphasized the monies that the Roblin government had already expended in Brandon: at the provincial asylum, at the provincial jail and at the Land Titles Office. In addition, the Hon. Robert Rogers announced, during the campaign, that the government would build two new bridges over the Assiniboine. Local Conservatives also attacked J. W. Fleming's record as a municipal politician thereupon placing the challenger upon the defensive. He was blamed for "wrecking the credit of the city more than any other alderman who ever sat on council." McInnis supporters also attempted to blame provincial Liberal candidates for the failings of the Laurier government. The failure of the Laurier government to resolve the long-smouldering Manitoba boundary issue was particularly worrisome to Edward Brown, the provincial Liberal leader: "We have probably more to fear from this question (the boundary issue) than from any other." The voters, he feared, could not (or would not) distinguish between federal and provincial Liberals.

What the 1907 provincial election results, which saw McInnis win re-election with a slightly increased percentage of the vote, confirms initially is that Brandonites, under normal circumstances,

voted in step with the province or the nation during the pre-war era. The fact that an allegedly weak provincial Conservative candidate won a majority of the Brandon polls in 1907 even though the Liberal candidate had swept every urban poll in the 1904 federal election suggests, as well, that political allegiance was not readily transferable from one level to another. This election was one of several instances, furthermore, in which successful municipal politicians failed in their bid to win election to a higher political level. J. W. Fleming, for example, had polled 75 per cent of the mayoralty vote in late 1905; yet he would be defeated by an unimpressive backbencher in the 1907 provincial election. What was particularly interesting, however, was Fleming's conclusion that his municipal record had been a considerable disadvantage:

"Chas. Whillier of Somerville and Co. would not vote for me because I as a provisional director of the Transfer R. R. advocated it being put near some of his property. J. C. Smith because I as Mayor insisted that his son Hunter should carry out his contract for cement with the City, and because the Council gave a contract to Brown and Mitchell . . ., when his son Hunter had tendered on what our Engineer had said was inferior goods at a lower price."^s

Fleming, in addition, blamed his defeat on the divisive factional disputes within the Liberal party: he had been actively opposed by the "Clement gang because I am living and apparently in their way."^s The hardly impartial Sun, on the other hand, concluded that the Roblin government had bought the election with fraudulent methods and "thousands and thousands of dollars."^s

The belated mid-1907 appointment of Brandon's S. W. McInnis as Provincial Secretary and, subsequently, as Manitoba's first Minister of Education' ironically was followed almost immediately by his death in November of that same year. The selection of his successor, who would likewise be appointed to the cabinet, was made by Premier Roblin himself after he had interviewed the two hopefuls — Aldermen G. R. Coldwell and B. D. Wallace — in Winnipeg. After Coldwell, a 49-year-old member of Brandon's professional community, had been appointed Provincial Secretary and Minister of Education, the local Conservative Association, as a formality, endorsed him as their choice for the necessary by-election.

George Coldwell had been born in Durham County, Canada West, in 1858. After graduating from the University of Toronto, Coldwell moved to Brandon in 1884 in order to practise law. A devout Anglican, Coldwell was elected alderman in 1888 and he served prominently thereafter for 20 years, during which time he was opposed in only two elections. Coldwell — who would posthumously be described as "the most outstanding figure in the life of this city" — was elected by acclamation in late November 1907. For the next seven and one-half years, Brandon would be ably represented in the Roblin ministry.

The 1908 federal election contest in the Brandon constituency was significantly different from those of 1900 and 1904. Clifford Sifton was no longer a powerful cabinet minister: in fact, due to his differences with Laurier on Manitoba's financial subsidy and the boundary issue, Sifton had doubted initially whether he would stand again and, if so, whether it would be "as a straight supporter of the Government." As a result, Sifton did not devote as much attention as usual to the all-important pre-election preparations. He hired only one man, R. E. McCaw of Griswold, to assist with the registration of voters whereas he had had three men so engaged well in advance of the 1904 election. Furthermore, there were complaints in 1908 that the "local (Liberal) organization was ignored in the making of the lists" and, as a result, local Liberals "did not turn out very well." Sifton, in 1908, was not functioning as the efficient "practical" politician that he was.

The fact that Sifton no longer resided in the Brandon constituency might have been more politically significant had the Conservatives not nominated their third consecutive "parachute" candidate in as many elections. Although T. Mayne Daly had the combined distinction of being Brandon's first mayor, the area's ex-MP and a former cabinet minister, the 56-year-old Conservative nominee nevertheless, was, a Winnipeg Police Magistrate in 1908.⁶ The distinction of being the only local candidate therefore belonged to Alderman B. D. Wallace, who stood as an Independent Conservative. According to local rumour, Wallace had been promised his party's federal nomination in lieu of being selected to succeed the late S. W. McInnis in 1907. If so, he would have been under-

standably embittered by his party's decision to nominate the import, T. M. Daly. Wallace's nomination meant that the Conservative vote would be split and Sifton could be the only beneficiary of that division."

The fact that the Manitoba boundary issue remained unresolved provided the provincial Conservatives with an excuse to enter this federal fray and the Roblin ministry was, as a result, an unusually prominent part of the 1908 campaign. For example, two provincial ministers — the Hon. George Coldwell and the Hon. J. H. Agnew — were the principal speakers at the Conservative nominating meeting in Brandon where they attempted to make the supposedly unifying boundary question into the campaign's predominant issue. Their involvement, however, enabled the Sifton forces to capitalize on whatever anti-Roblin sentiment existed in the constituency. Thus, the local electors were reminded, as they had been in the 1907 provincial election, that the Conservatives "had robbed Brandon of the provincial agricultural college"⁶⁴ and that the Daly-Rogers crowd personified "everything for Winnipeg."⁶⁵

Despite the phenomenal economic growth of the Laurier years which the Liberals gleefully contrasted with the "hard years Canada experienced during the Conservatives' reign prior to 1896,"⁶⁶ Manitoba Liberals lost five of the seven constituencies which they had previously held." Certainly many observers had warned Sifton that his resignation from the cabinet would leave Manitoba Liberals leaderless and disorganized. Despite his promise that the Grand Trunk Pacific would build a branch-line into Brandon upon the completion of the main line, one suspects that Sifton himself, who retained one of the two remaining Liberal constituencies by the very narrow margin of 3,565 to Daly's 3,496, suffered both from his diminished political status and from his uncharacteristic failure to organize carefully in advance of the election. Nevertheless, Sifton had survived, due primarily to the rupture which had occurred within Conservative ranks. Had T. M. Daly polled the additional 101 votes which B. D. Wallace had received as an Independent Conservative, he, rather than Clifford Sifton, would have been the victor.

The Manitoba Grain Growers had grown rapidly since its inaugural meeting in Virden in 1903. While individual members of the association had displayed an interest in politics as in the

example of the Convention of Independents which had nominated R. L. Richardson in Brandon in 1904, the association itself had confined its political activities to that of being a very successful pressure group. Having persuaded the Roblin Conservatives to establish the nation's first government-owned telephone system in 1906, the Grain Growers proceeded to launch an extensive campaign advocating establishment of a provincially-owned rural elevator system and a nationally-owned terminal elevator system. In 1909, the Liberals, who had nominated an active member of the Grain Growers as their candidate, won a by-election in the Birtle constituency in which the rural elevator system was the principal issue. The Roblin government responded by quickly implementing a government-owned system and by calling a provincial election, two years before the "due" date.

That the Roblin government would be re-elected in the 1910 election was, in Professor M. Donnelly's opinion, "a foregone conclusion." Certainly the Liberals were in considerable difficulty. They had just selected a new and untried leader in T. C. Norris; their recently appointed provincial organizer (one Perry) had resigned recently due to "lack of cooperation"; the troublesome boundary issue remained unresolved, for which their federal counterparts would be blamed; and the factiousness of Brandon Liberals, in the opinion of former leader Edward Brown, remained a divisive and debilitating factor." The fact that there was little evidence of extensive party support for Liberal nominee S. H. McKay supports the hypothesis that he was, essentially, a "sacrificial lamb" who, as a relative newcomer, was at least in the meritorious position of being unattached to either of the Liberal factions.

One of the interesting features of the 1910 campaign was the Liberal awareness of the political significance of the emerging labour movement as demonstrated by the renewal of their earlier charges that the Roblin government had assisted the CPR in its strike-breaking activities." Ironically, Brandon Liberals were unable to capitalize upon that issue. Ed Fulcher, a Trades and Labour Council member whom Sifton had appointed Brandon correspondent for the **Labour Gazette** on the eve of the **1908 federal election**, **had been seriously injured on a federal construction project.** The one thousand dollars compensation which he had been paid by the

contracting company, however, was widely regarded as being inadequate. In the opinion of J. W. Fleming, the 1907 Liberal candidate: "This incident will simply close the ranks of labor party here to anything that looks like a Liberal" . . . "It will mean at least 100 votes in this city to us. If this affair is not corrected at once, a Liberal candidate might just as well stay at home and save his time."" While the results of this dispute cannot be determined, its principal significance is that a prominent local politician had identified a sizable labour vote in 1910 which could swing away from the provincial Liberals due to the federal Liberal government's failure to satisfy a local grievance. Such were the complexities of local politics.

As noted earlier, the political parties in the pre-radio era depended heavily upon their own widely-read newspapers to transmit a favourable image to the community. In the competitive era prior to 1913 (the year in which the **Sun** secured a virtual monopoly when the **Times** ceased to publish while subsequent ventures, such as the pro-Liberal News of 1914, were of brief duration), newspapers were often outrageously opinionated and partisan in their editorials, in their reporting and, especially, in the size and bias of their headlines. As each party traditionally had its own journalistic "voice," both points of view — irrespective of the lack of objectivity — were available. In 1910, however, the **Brandon Times** deserted the Conservative party due, it would appear, to a dispute between Alderman B. D. Wallace, a **Times** director and the rebel Independent Conservative candidate of 1908, and the party hierarchy of which the Hon. George Coldwell was a prominent member. Although the Conservatives were thus opposed by both the **Sun** and the **Times**, Manitoba's Minister of Education, despite the Liberals' determined (and rather desperate) attacks on his record as an alderman," was easily re-elected. In fact, Coldwell's victory over McKay by a vote of 1,402 to 1,150 was the largest majority recorded to that date. The re-election of the Roblin government had been anticipated, and Brandon Liberals essentially "wrote off" this constituency.

Periodically in history certain years emerge as landmarks and 1911 was such a year. While Clifford Sifton had reportedly warned his local association that he would not stand again, no one expected the Sifton era to conclude in the dramatic manner in

which it did. Prime Minister Laurier, after his famous 1910 Western Canadian tour, had suddenly re-discovered his party's historic interest in free or freer trade and specifically in a reciprocal trade agreement with the United States. While Brandon Liberals were delighted with Laurier's promise of long-awaited lower tariffs, many were shocked and angered by the decision of their long-serving Liberal member, Clifford Sifton, to oppose (for reasons of economic nationalism) this expression of traditional economic liberalism. Their dismay at Sifton's attitude was compounded by his decision to join the Conservatives in a determined campaign to defeat both the reciprocity measure and the Laurier government of which he had so recently been a part." Shocked or not, the Brandon Liberal Association unanimously resolved "that we" . . . "express our confidence in Sir Wilfrid Laurier that we heartily endorse the reciprocity agreement and assure him the views expressed by our representative the Hon. Clifford Sifton do not represent the sentiments of his constituents."

Three Brandon area Liberals sought the opportunity to succeed the retiring Sifton. Both A. E. Hill, a 52-year-old Griswold merchant, and J. W. Fleming, Brandon's current mayor, were what could be described as traditional Liberals. Virden area farmer J. W. Scallion, who had served as the Grain Growers first president and who had later organized the Convention of Independents which had nominated R. L. Richardson in 1904, however, was primarily a representative of the fledgeling farmers movement. Although Scallion led on the first ballot, the traditional Liberals coalesced on the second ballot and elected A. E. Hill by a narrow margin. Had Scallion received a scant five more votes on that first ballot," the Grain Growers would have succeeded in capturing the local federal Liberal organization in 1911, a full decade before the so-called birth of the farmers movement in 1921.

For the fourth federal election in succession, Brandon area Conservatives selected a non-resident to be their candidate. J. A. M. Aikins, whose father had been both a cabinet minister in John A. Macdonald's first government and, later, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, was a respected member of the Winnipeg legal community. The fact that Aikins hailed from Winnipeg and that he had served as solicitor for the CPR — having thus committed the two most cardinal sins — meant that Aikins commenced this 1911

campaign carrying two "albatrosses" upon his back. As an example of how Aikins's status as a CPR solicitor could be politically damaging, the Sun republished the details of a tragic railway accident which had occurred many years before. The bereaved families had subsequently sued the CPR for \$50,000, a sum which the Sun contended would have been paid had it not been for CPR counsel Aikins: "Men of Brandon! When you mark the ballot" . . . "remember the Widow Ramsden and the Widow Webster and the part that was played against them by J. A. M. Aikins, of Winnipeg."^s

The predominant issue in the 1911 campaign, nevertheless, was the proposed reciprocal trade agreement with the U. S.A. Although most Brandon voters, it was assumed, were inclined to support a freer trade arrangement, local Liberals were well aware that the existing railway system had been constructed to facilitate an east-west trade pattern and reciprocity with the U.S.A. would clearly diminish the volume of such trade. At least one Liberal spokesman, J. W. Fleming, attempted to allay the fears of Brandon's sizable railway community by suggesting that "with the Hudson's Bay railway the pact would result in drawing the wheat from the United States through Canada on the way to the old country." Th In view of the fact that the oft-discussed Hudson's Bay railway remained essentially a political promise, one suspects that such reassurances were not particularly convincing. The Conservatives — but not with much initial confidence — attacked the reciprocity proposal on the grounds that protective tariffs were a vital part of John A.'s National Policy which, in turn, had produced the nation's current prosperity. Brandon voters were also warned that close economic ties with the giant to the south would seriously endanger Canada's nationality and its future as a politically independent nation.

Although Conservative organizers were pleasantly surprised by the public response to Robert Borden's warnings that Canadian farmers would benefit less from reciprocity than they anticipated,⁷ there is a considerable amount of evidence which indicates that it was Clifford Sifton's well-publicized opposition to the freer trade proposal which was most significant in the Brandon constituency. One local Liberal who was reportedly typical of "several hundred" stated "candidly that there must be something back

of all this and that you (Sifton) had studied it and he therefore proposed to vote with you.⁷⁸ A prominent local Conservative, Alderman George Coleman, concurred: "For my own part, whether on the platform or in canvassing, your (i.e. Sifton's) opinion was one of my strongest arguments because it was the opinion of one who was not running as a candidate himself in the Election and had had the courage to break with his Party on this great question."

J. A. M. Aikins, despite the political disadvantage of being both an outsider and a CPR solicitor, won handily in 1911 with 4,436 votes to A. E. Hill's 3,570. Irrespective of the fact that Borden's Conservatives were winning a total of 134 seats throughout the country (and, hence, the election), observers, including Sifton himself, attributed the local results largely to Laurier's former Minister of the Interior," even though he had officially retired from office by that time.

The nature of politics had changed significantly during the Sifton era as widespread newspaper advertising, personal canvassing and "get out the vote" campaigns became increasingly necessary as the city grew in population. Sifton himself had also played a markedly different role as the era had unfolded. Whereas this federal politician had played a very significant role (both openly and as a confidant) in provincial politics during his early ministerial years in Ottawa, Sifton began to withdraw from public participation in provincial politics as of 1902-03 and even as an advisor after 1905. It is interesting to note that the local Conservative majorities increased in direct proportion to Sifton's gradual withdrawal. Sifton, nevertheless, continued to dominate federal politics in Brandon even in that 1911 election in which he was not a candidate. Despite the obvious significance of this one individual, one is struck by the political pattern which had emerged — that of Brandon voters electing the candidate of what proved to be the government party. Although the political parties frequently attempted to persuade local residents of the "goodies" to be won by being on the winning side and particularly of being represented in the all-important cabinet, the proof that voters were motivated by the prospects of material reward — rather than attracted by philosophical tenets — is regrettably unavailable.

It also appears that the electors in most instances were voting for the party rather than for the candidate as an individual.

As a result, the apparently weak McInnis would be successful on several occasions even though Premier Roblin did not deem him to be "cabinet material" until very late in his career. With the obvious exception of the 1911 federal election when the faith of some Brandon voters in Clifford Sifton's leadership was such that they followed his lead in switching political allegiances, Brandon electors made their commitment to the "team" rather than to "individual" players. The choice of the candidate, therefore, may not have been as significant in this pre-war era as it would subsequently become.

Whether the results of these electoral contests were as significant as the partisans contended is difficult to determine. What is evident is that the results were extremely important to the "players" themselves and to their principal associates. "To the victor go the spoils." The winners did achieve a degree of power, the power to reward their supporters and, in turn, to command their loyalty. As jobs and contracts were part of the reward system, the election results were of vital economic importance to those who depended on them. The "game" of politics was, therefore, a very serious proposition in the pre-war era. It was much, much more than the social activity which it would become for some in more recent times. Whether the results were of vital importance to the community as a whole is doubtful. Both the Liberals and the Conservatives were drawn from the same segment of the community; they represented the same business and professional class within the Brandon community; and they agreed on the basic principles of growth and development. The business and professional class would be effectively represented and protected regardless of which "team" won. The other members of the Brandon community could, of course, exercise their democratic rights — i.e., to choose between the Liberal representative of the business and professional class or the Conservative representative of the business and professional class. Consequently, some had begun to suspect — by the end of the pre-war era — that they might well have "to get their own team".

FOOTNOTES

1. W. A. Macdonald had been "earmarked" as a future leader of Manitoba Conservatives. J. W. Dafoe, **Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times** (Toronto 1931), 4.
2. As a result, the Martin "forces" in the Manitoba Liberal party were, thereafter, bitterly opposed to C. Sifton and the fact that Sifton, not Martin, was chosen to be Minister of Interior in 1896 only added to the internal party conflict that existed. This was the view of a **Toronto Globe** editorial which was reprinted in the local pro-Liberal newspaper. **Brandon Daily Sun** July 14, 1900.
3. There is no evidence, however, that McCarthy had served as a "stand-in" for Sifton. David J. Hall, "The Political Career of Clifford Sifton, 1896-1905" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Toronto, 1973), 92.
4. Sifton was subsequently elected as MP for Brandon on December 4, 1896 by acclamation.
5. His eligibility was challenged on the grounds that he no longer resided in Manitoba. Adams refuted that charge by explaining that only his family had moved to Toronto. After his defeat in that 1899 provincial election, Adams did follow them to Ontario. **Winnipeg Daily Tribune**, December 16, 1899.
6. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 74, 55976, C. A. Young to Sifton, May 16, 1899.
7. Ibid., Vol. 72, 53703, J. O. Smith to Sifton, November 21, 1899.
8. Ibid., 53599, J. O. Smith to Sifton, July 21, 1899.
9. Ibid., vol. 55, 38397, Chas. Adams to Sifton, May 4, 1899. The **Independence** (which was earlier entitled **The Independent**) reported that "Doukobohors and Galicians hire readily for \$30" as farm labourers, a wage that was approximately five dollars below the average. **Independence**, July 25, 1901.
10. Sifton supporters explained that King had been fired by Sifton and, hence, his bitter opposition was to be explained in those terms. King, for his part, protested that he had been dismissed due to his opposition to the "Galician invasion" and to the fact that he had proven, with supporting statistics, "the danger of admitting such people in masses." Ibid., September 13, 1900.

11. *The Independent*, February 2, 1899.
12. Sifton contended that King had returned "to Brandon for the purpose of blackmailing our party into buying him off, but he will be a much older man that (sic) he is now before I get round to his views." PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 231, 5112, Sifton to G. D. Wilson, March 21, 1899. King, subsequently, implied that the Liberals had initiated an attempt to purchase the newspaper or its editor by offering him \$100 per month "provided that the paper in the future supported the Hon. Mr. Sifton." *Independence*, September 13, 1900. While both sides rather self-righteously asserted their innocence, one suspects that D. J. Hall's thesis — i.e., that Sifton considered King's asking price of \$25,000 to be exorbitant — is well founded. Hall, "The Political Career of Clifford Sifton, 1896-1905," 531.
13. *Independence*, November 20, 1899.
14. "Busy as I have been, I venture to say that I have spoken at more meetings (in Manitoba) in the last two years than all of your ministers put together." PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 233, 703, Sifton to J. O. Smith, August 1, 1899.
15. *Ibid.*, vol. 35, 376, Sifton to D. C. Fraser, December 22, 1899.
16. *Ibid.*, vol. 69, 51348, A. E. Philp to Sifton, December 13, 1899. Dr. McDiarmid, the current mayor of Brandon, was Philp's choice.
17. W. L. Morton, *Manitoba: A History* (Toronto 1957), 278-81.
18. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 87, 66937-39, A. E. Philp to Sifton, January 7, 1900.
19. PAC, J. S. Willison Papers, folder 48, 3938, J. D. Cameron to J. S. Willison, September 11, 1900. While the Conservative nominee was obviously Sifton's principal opponent, Brandon's MP would be severely threatened by a third candidate should that individual split the Liberal vote. There was, in fact, a rumour that R. L. Richardson, the owner of the *Tribune* (and an old enemy of Sifton's), was master-minding the candidacies of several Independents or Independent Liberals who would deliberately play the role of spoilers. When it appeared that one Josh Calloway might run as an Independent in Brandon, J. Obed Smith, who received his instructions directly from the Minister, reported: "Magurn . . . is sending a man after Josh;

- and so as soon as he shows his colours will do as your cipher desires." PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 89, 69424, J. O. Smith to Sifton, August 6, 1900. Regretfully, this all too cryptic cipher message failed to indicate what plan Sifton had devised. Nevertheless, Calloway did not emerge as a candidate in Brandon in 1900!
20. Ibid., vol. 78, 59143, W. W. Cory to Sifton, January 28, 1900.
 21. "Up to a week or so ago, I think we were gaining ground in the constituency among the independents and disaffected Liberals, but since the passing of the CPR charter (i.e., to permit the construction of a line which would parallel Northern Pacific track) I am afraid we have lost any ground gained and perhaps went behind a little." Ibid., 59214-15 W. W. Cory to Sifton, April 10, 1900.
 22. Ibid., 59282, W. W. Cory to Sifton, July 2, 1900.
 23. "Show them (the temperance supporters) how Hugh John got frightened and left the field when prohibition wanted enforcing." Ibid., vol. 89, 69470, Ira Stratton to J. O. Smith, September 8, 1900.
 24. Chas. Adams, the ex-member for Brandon, was well aware of the political advantage to be gained among the hotel men of Ontario if Macdonald's temperance legislation was well publicized. Ibid., vol. 75, 56243, Chas. Adams to Sifton, August 7, 1900.
 25. Independence, November 15, 1900.
 26. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, mf. C-421, 1.b.25, 548-50, Sifton to J. S. Willison, February 7, 1901.
 27. "I put up through any influence I had at my disposal as strong a fight as I could while the (Manitoba) legislature was dealing with the subject. I was simply appalled and amazed by the lack of popular support . . . Roblin's cry in an election would be Provincial Rights and that the Government here was standing in with the CPR. On the whole, I don't feel that I ought to come out against it." Ibid., mf. C-423, 1.b.28, 7-9, Sifton to Frank Fowler, April 8, 1901.
 28. "The blockade along the CNR (Canadian Northern) is very bad at points and this is telling heavily against Roblin & Co: as in former years these points were well served by CPR empties which are obtainable this year in only limited quantities." Ibid., vol. 120, 95836, Dafoe to Sifton, October 28, 1902.

29. Hall notes that Sifton's increased involvement in the Alaska boundary dispute meant that there was considerably less time available to devote to party organization in Manitoba. Hall, "The Political Career of Clifford Sifton, 1896-1905," 760.
30. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 249, 512, Sifton to J. C. Cameron, December 4, 1902.
31. Ibid. 606-7, Sifton to C. A. Young, December 8, 1902.
32. A. C. Fraser had been born in Ontario in 1845; had moved to Brandon in 1881; and had opened his department store in 1883.
- 33. Brandon Daily Sun**, July 10, 1903.
34. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 140, 11898, Dafoe to Sifton, August 3, 1903.
35. Ibid., vol. 141, 113138, A. C. Fraser to Sifton, August 10, 1903.
36. Ibid., vol. 160, 128760, A. C. Fraser to Sifton, September 14, 1904.
37. Ibid., vol. 169, 137018, A. E. Philp to Sifton, August 2, 1904.
38. Ibid., vol. 149, 11858, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, November 28, 1903.
- 39. Brandon Daily Sun**, October 13, 1904.
40. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 261, 695, Sifton to A. M. Peterson, November 23, 1904.
41. The Liberals, in 1904, won seven of Manitoba's ten constituencies, an improvement upon 1900 when they had triumphed in only four of seven. They also increased their total number in the House of Commons from 133 to 138 while the Conservatives declined from 80 to 75 members. Beck, **Pendulum of Power**, (Scarborough 1968), 96, 106.
42. "There are two points that seems to me to be a difficulty in the present draft. First, it does not seem to me at all clear that the central authority will have the power to regulate the separate school, prescribe text books and qualifications of teachers . . . Another and serious difficulty is as to the last clause which provides for the sharing up of the proceeds of the public school lands. This question was never discussed before." PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 263, 209-12, Sifton to Dafoe, February 25, 1905.

43. *Ibid.*, vol. 177, 143653-54, Dafoe to Sifton, February 26, 1905. One study suggests that Sifton's resignation on this issue did encourage the Conservatives to oppose the federal government's school policy more vigorously. Manoly R. Lupul, **The Roman Catholic Church and the North-west School Question: a Study in Church-State Relations in Western Canada, 1875-1905** (Toronto 1974), 182.
44. Hall, "The Political Career of Clifford Sifton, 1896-1905," 878.
45. While Laurier rather anxiously sought Sifton's re-entry into the cabinet prior to the 1908 federal election, these negotiations failed when the Prime Minister adamantly refused to restructure the cabinet as Sifton desired: "Even the slight change of replacing the most aged members seems to be abandoned for the present." PAC, J. S. Willison Papers, folder 286, 27483-88, Sifton to J. S. Willison, August 27, 1907.
46. Sifton had become virtually a non-resident representative in that he had chosen not to re-establish his former residence in Brandon. His visits, furthermore, became more infrequent in the future.
47. M. Donnelly, **Dafoe of the Free Press** (Toronto 1968), 55.
48. The crisis arose when a number of citizens discovered that the annual Normal School calendar did not include any opening date for the Brandon facility. Despite the protestations of the premier that this "crisis" was simply a matter of clerical error, Liberals contended that there was a "plot" to compel Brandon students to enroll in Manitou's Normal School. Unfortunately, the Manitou Normal School, which had been constructed in the Hon. Robert Rogers's own constituency, had failed to draw a significant number of students and the **Sun** suggested that Rogers was trying to rectify that embarrassing situation by closing the Brandon School. **Brandon Daily Sun**, August 14, 1906.
49. PAC, W. Laurier Papers, vol. 438, 116908, J. W. Fleming to Laurier, December 18, 1906. Laurier did request both William Mackenzie of the Canadian Northern (*ibid.*, 116911, Laurier to W. Mackenzie, December 19, 1906) and Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, the president of the CPR (*ibid.*, 116910, Laurier to Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, December 19, 1906), to allow him to

- assure Brandon's mayor (and Laurier's fellow Liberal) that the "Wheat City's" needs would be met immediately.
- 50. Brandon Daily Sun**, February 18, 1907.
51. Fleming, himself, unabashedly claimed that "I have secured as a private citizen more for Brandon than my opponent has in his official capacity." *Ibid.*, February 27, 1907.
- 52. Winnipeg Daily Tribune**, March 6, 1907.
53. PAC, W. Laurier Papers, vol. 439, 117141, Edward Brown to Laurier, December 26, 1906.
54. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 179, 145496-97, J. W. Fleming to Sifton, April 25, 1907.
55. *Ibid.*
- 56. Brandon Daily Sun**, March 8, 1907.
57. The Department of Education had been the responsibility of the Attorney-General until 1907.
- 58. Brandon Daily Sun**, January 24, 1924.
59. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 181, 146382-83, Sifton to J. C. Rattray, December 24, 1907.
60. *Ibid.*, vol. 185, 148944, J. D. McGregor to Sifton, July 22, 1908.
61. Daly, who had been born in Ontario in 1852, had emigrated to Manitoba in 1881. After having been elected mayor of Brandon in 1882 and again in 1884, Daly had been elected to the House of Commons for Selkirk in 1887. **Canadian Parliamentary Companion**, 1891. Following his term as Minister of Interior from 1891 to 1896, Daly practised law in British Columbia until his appointment as Police Magistrate in Winnipeg.
62. However, there is no evidence to substantiate the **Tribune's** intriguing allegation that the Sifton forces had actually engineered the Wallace candidacy. Wallace threatened to sue the **Tribune** unless the latter retracted the statement.
- 63. Brandon Daily Sun**, October 20, 1908.
- 64. Ibid.**, October 15, 1908.
65. *Ibid.*, September 17, 1908.
66. The national results were less damaging as the Liberals fell from 138 to 135 seats. Due to an increase in the number of constituencies, the Conservatives' total was increased from 75 to 85. Beck, **Pendulum of Power**, 106, 119.

67. Donnelly, Dafoe of the Free Press, 61.
68. PAC, W. Laurier Papers, vol. 634, 172091, Edward Brown to Laurier, June 14, 1910.
69. The Conservatives, McKay charged, had helped the CPR break its 1908 strike and the party had received \$150,000 in return. Manitoba Free Press, July 8, 1910.
70. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 194, 154741-42, J. W. Fleming to Sifton, May 21, 1910.
71. For example, Coldwell was accused of "over-staffing" the waterworks department and of favouring the CPR by the provision of water at an unrealistically low price. As a result, Brandon had been compelled to construct an unnecessarily large (and expensive) filtration plant.
72. Politicians did not expect party members necessarily to agree on all matters of policy but they did demand that any expression of disagreement should be made privately. A public division of opinion would unnecessarily assist the "enemy." As Sifton was bluntly told, "The Conservative party are not entitled to any such assistance from you." PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 197, 156953, J. H. Ingram to Sifton, March 8, 1911.
73. Ibid., vol. 196, 156299, R. Forke and S. A. Coxe to Sifton, March 9, 1911. Robert Forke was an active member of the Grain Growers and he would become, in 1921, the Progressive MP for Brandon.
74. Scallion polled 95 votes on the first ballot, A. E. Hill was second with 85, while Mayor Fleming was a distant third with 14. Brandon Daily Sun, August 12, 1911.
75. Ibid., September 19, 1911.
76. Ibid., September 13, 1911.
77. "So many people wanted to get into the hall we had to change it to an outdoor meeting. The farmers here are quite ready to hear the other side of the reciprocity question and when it is explained to them it does not seem hard to make them adopt our view of it." PAC, R. Borden Papers, vol. 131, 69474-75, Geo. Perley to J. S. Carstairs, June 2, 1911.
78. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 196, 156258, Joseph B. Chambers to Sifton, September 22, 1911.
79. Ibid., 156283, G. B. Coleman to Sifton, September 23, 1911.

80. Whereas Coleman described Sifton's "splendid stand on this matter (as) one of the main factors in the defeat of the pact" (*ibid.*), Joseph Chamber's praise was more encompassing: "Your influence was the chief contributing cause of Mr. Aikins' large majority here yesterday. There is no other possible explanation." *Ibid.*, 156258, Joseph B. Chambers to Sifton, September 22, 1911. Sifton, himself, was more modest when he concluded that "a good many of my friends adopted my view and supported the Conservative candidate." *Ibid.*, 156285, Sifton to G. B. Coleman, September 26, 1911.

IV

1914 - 1918: The Uneasy Calm That Preceded The Storm

Although no one in 1914 could foresee the awful magnitude of the slaughter which lay ahead, the outbreak of the Great War marked the end of an era, the era of the pioneer, of steady growth and of development. For thousands of Canadians, the war meant the temporary abandonment of life-time goals, as jobs and homesteads were left behind; for others who remained in Canada, it was a time of greater economic reward as the value of labour, whether on the farms or in the factories, soared. For most, the war years were troubled years as Canadian soldiers fought in the nation's first "real" war and as the opinion-makers debated the bitterly divisive question of the extent to which the Great War was truly Canada's war. Pleas for unity and thinly-veiled allegations of treason filled the air. Those who were dissatisfied by their economic condition, as in the examples of the farmers and labour, would encounter substantial difficulties in expressing their discontent in a political atmosphere that demanded conformity of opinion and action. Although the war was being fought in the name of democracy, there was but little tolerance of those who failed to express the majority view.

Brandon's future had looked exceedingly bright at the end of the Sifton era. 1911 had been, in the words of Mayor J. W. Fleming, the "greatest year in Brandon's history."¹ The Canadian Northern's new station and hotel, the Prince Edward, an almost completed new CPR station, the new \$500,000 hospital for the insane, the fire station and the Clement block were all under construction if not yet completed. Largely as a result of the city's newly-discovered optimism, Brandon ratepayers in 1912 reversed their decision of the previous year by voting 716 to 44 in favour of

a municipally-owned street railway system in the obvious, but what proved to be unrealistic, expectation that the city would reap the profits. Spurred on by the street railway proposal, eastern financial interests speculating on Brandon's anticipated growth pushed the price of adjoining farmland to \$400 an acre in 1912.²

By 1913, however, circumstances had been altered substantially. As a result of what many deemed to be the highest taxes in Western Canada' tax arrears were escalating and, consequently, civic revenues were declining. Furthermore and to the disappointment of many, Brandon's newly-inaugurated street railway system was losing money at a projected rate of \$1,000 per car per year. While the 300 civic employees who had their wages reduced in mid-1913 were among the first to suffer, the impact soon became widespread. Brandon, as a distribution centre and as a market town, was heavily dependent upon its rural hinterland and that area, due to the decline in immigration and the advanced degree of development which had already occurred, no longer exhibited the same heavy thirst for consumer goods that it once had. Although both the CPR and the Roblin government attempted to alleviate a growing unemployment problem in 1914-15 by commencing construction work in advance of the scheduled date,* the local economy had clearly soured by the outbreak of war.

The 1914 Manitoba election occurred on what proved to be the very *eve* of the Great War. However, neither the international crisis which was unfolding nor the 1913 recession appear to have been politically significant. The 1914 election, instead, was primarily a clash between a political and economic elite who had developed the party machine and practised the "art of practical politics" in order to preserve their power and middle class reformers who themselves aspired to political power. The reformers hoped to smash the machine by lessening its hold over segments of the electorate. The reform of the civil service (so that positions would be awarded solely on merit) would destroy much of the patronage and, hence, the machine's control over government employees. The introduction of compulsory education would lead to the assimilation and the enlightening of the children of those non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants on whom the machine had depended in the past. "Banning the bar" would both "civilize" the behaviour of those foreigners and working-class members who frequented the bars and



James Albert Manning Aikens

Manitoba Archives

it would, in addition, nullify the political significance of those who operated the bars. That reform would likewise lessen the influence of those in power who controlled the economic destiny of the saloon operators by the making and the enforcement of liquor laws. The enactment of direct legislation (i.e., the initiative, referendum and recall) would strengthen the political influence of the middle class who could afford to engage in such political activities and it would proportionately lessen the legislative control of the machine. Finally, the introduction of women's suffrage was seen by many to be a prerequisite to all of the above as it appeared as if it would be necessary to enfranchise a new element in society in order to break the stranglehold which the machine currently held.

Although the Roblin government had been extremely (and even recklessly) responsive to certain pressure groups such as the Grain Growers and their advocacy of government-owned elevators, they stubbornly refused the requests of the above-mentioned reformers who were threatening to destroy their very power base. Recognizing an important political opportunity, Manitoba Liberals (now led by T. C. Norris, the MLA for Lansdowne) virtually adopted the reform platform as their own. Most reformers, such as Nellie McClung, joined the Liberals as a result, believing that policies such as "ban the bar" — imperfect though they appeared — were superior to those of the Conservatives.

The 1914 election in Brandon constituted the first appearance in provincial politics of Liberal politician, Stephen (S. E.) Clement who was challenging the Honourable George Coldwell, Brandon's cabinet minister since his initial by-election victory in 1907. The 46-year-old Clement, however, was as much a part of the political and economic elite as the man whom he hoped to displace. His father had been elected the first provincial member for Shoal Lake and Russell and, subsequently, had been appointed the first sheriff of the Western Judicial District. As a result, the Clement family were amongst the first to locate in the newly-established Brandon in 1882. Having been called to the bar in 1895, S. E. Clement began to practice with his brother Robert in a firm that still exists today. As a young lawyer, S. E. Clement was active in community and business affairs: he was a prominent member of First Methodist Church; he was a strong supporter of the temperance movement; he (as had his father) served on the prestigious



Dr. H. P. Whidden, President of Brandon College 1913-1923

Brandon General Hospital Board; he and his two brothers constructed the Clement block, a downtown landmark; and he, furthermore, had methodically climbed the political ladder in what some would regard as the ideal fashion.' Having served six years on the school board, he had successfully stood for election to city council. After a two year aldermanic term, S. E. Clement had been elected mayor of Brandon in both 1907 and 1908.

Brandon Conservatives, for their part, developed a basic two-part strategy in 1914: first, to stress the record of the Honourable George Coldwell and the government, particularly in respect to what had been done for Brandon; and, secondly, to belittle the various reform proposals wherever possible, in the hope that the entire Liberal-reform alliance would be discredited as a result. For example, Coldwell, at a Trades and Labour Council meeting, lauded the Roblin government's pro-labour legislation such as the Workmen's Compensation Act, a Scaffolding Act, and the Fair Wages Act. The Roblin government, or so Coldwell claimed, had spent some \$1,605,000 in Brandon since his election in 1907: "during the past four years, Brandon had got more from the

provincial government than during the whole 26 years before that." And the Conservatives promised more of the same: a new Land Titles Office, a Telephone Building, a Model School and a new Normal School. They were openly appealing to the voters to share in "the goodies" of politics by voting for the government candidate.

The amount of time that Coldwell devoted to attacking the several reform proposals suggests that the Conservatives were truly worried by the Liberal-reform alliance. Brandon Conservatives, who advocated that each community should resolve the question of prohibition for itself in a local option vote, loudly criticized the residents of Winnipeg who provided most of the provincial leadership for the "ban the bar" movement. Why, asked Brandonite Co'dwell, did these "political parsons" (such as Dr. C. W. Gordon who is better known as the novelist Ralph Connor) come to Brandon which was "as clean and moral a city as could be found." "Why did they not stay at home and clean up their own affairs?" Such criticisms could be particularly effective in a community such as Brandon which was jealously protective of its own decision-making powers. The Conservatives also stood to benefit politically from the fact that many urban residents were strongly opposed to prohibition as demonstrated by the fact that Brandon electors — and particularly the so-called working class sector of ward one — solidly defeated a local option measure later in 1914.

Although Manitoba Liberals had allied with the women's suffrage movement (which was, to a considerable extent, a by-product of the temperance movement), Roblin's Conservatives remained serenely unimpressed. Coldwell's attitude, for example, was that "women's suffrage was not at present needed and when the time was ripe the Roblin government would deal with it in a fair and straight forward manner." B Premier Roblin, however, foolishly and unequivocally opposed this proposal which was, in his opinion, a threat to the "sanctity of the home." Speaking in Brandon, the Conservative leader philosophized on the role of women in society as he applauded his mother, for whom he had a "sacred memory," and his wife "who had been his loving companion and helpmate for 35 years." The thought that such women should ever become a part of the unsavoury world of politics was more than he could bear: therefore, he dismissed the very notion!

Irrespective of the so-called resolution of the Manitoba Schools Question in 1897, many Manitobans feared that the Roman Catholic minority was determined to recover some of the privileges which they had lost. In fact, it was frequently rumoured, during the Roblin years, that the Premier had secretly promised Archbishop Langevin that state-supported separate schools would be re-introduced at some point in the future. Although the 1912 Coldwell Amendments, named in honour of Brandon's Minister of Education who introduced them, were reportedly designed to clarify the meaning of the terms "school" and "school room," Roblin's critics feared that these amendments were cleverly contrived to assist separate schools in some furtive manner. When Joseph Bernier entered the Roblin cabinet shortly after the passage of the Coldwell Amendments to become the first Roman Catholic member of a Conservative ministry since 1899, the fears of a Roblin-Langevin plot were enhanced. Such fears could send Orange Lodge members scurrying back to the Liberal party that they had ardently supported until the concession-granting Laurier-Greenway Compromise of 1897. The Manitoba Free Press, furthermore, had initiated an extensive investigation of the Manitoba schools system in 1912. Sparked by these well publicized journalistic enquiries, Protestant Anglo-Saxon Manitobans became deeply concerned about the nature and quality of education in local schools. Many "foreign" children — who were rapidly increasing in number¹⁰ — were reportedly receiving little or no education while those who did remained incompetent in English. Roblin's school system was not producing the single, unified community that most WASPs desired.

The Conservatives, and particularly "Brandon's" Minister of Education, cited the government's record by way of response: a special school for Ruthenian teachers had been established in Brandon; and the number of school inspectors had been increased from nine, in 1899, to 41, in 1914. The Coldwell Amendments did not, they argued, alter the 1897 agreement. The most ingenious response to Liberal accusations, however, was that adopted at a Conservative meeting in the Polish Hall. While the speakers debated the issue of the quality of education, someone reportedly went outside to collect a group of children who were playing nearby. To the delight of the now (as of 1912) pro-Conservative Sun, all of the children selected in this "random sample" were able to speak

English adequately." Surely that was convincing proof of the effectiveness of the current school system.

While the 1914 election in Brandon may have focused on issues to a rather unusual degree, the mechanics of the political process were still of the utmost importance. Although there remained an exceedingly curious cultural quality to Brandon politics as Young Conservative meetings featured such items as "songs by Mr. E. A. McGuinness, recitations by Mrs. W. J. Rawson and comic selections by Mr. Harry Costello," the more important work was being done by paid canvassers who were active on behalf of both candidates. The Conservatives, however, were reportedly divided by the fact that some of their canvassers were paid three dollars a day while others received only two.¹ It is also interesting to note that local canvassers for both parties were reportedly buying votes, as during the Sifton era. The Conservatives were rumoured to be promising jobs to members of the "foreign community" while the Liberals, irrespective of their professed interest in reform, were accused of employing the wares of "a well known wholesale liquor dealer from Kamsack, Saskatchewan."

The Liberals also accused Coldwell of engaging in the time-honoured practise of issuing "roorbacks" — i.e., carefully calculated election eve pronouncements to which the opposition could not reply due to lack of time. In this instance, the member for Brandon publicized a telegram (which Liberals claimed was forged) in which W. T. Edgecombe, Grand Master of the Orange Lodge, endorsed both the Coldwell Amendments and the Roblin government." The attitude of the Grand Master would undoubtedly be significant to many Lodge members and this telegram (genuine or otherwise) would re-assure some Orangemen who had been influenced by earlier reports of Edgecombe's abandonment of his long-time Conservative connection!"

What is most interesting about the Hon. G. R. Coldwell's victory (admittedly with a reduced majority) in 1914 is that he outperformed the Roblin government whose majority was sharply reduced to four seats,¹ before the three deferred elections in the north were held. Although the Liberals attributed Coldwell's victory to the number of government employees who were "forced" to work for the Conservative candidate and to the corrupt political practices which had been employed," it must be remembered that

Brandon had been represented on the government side of the house by a cabinet minister since 1907 and, according to all accounts, the city had benefitted as a result. Were these "political goodies" more attractive in 1914 than the proposals for reform, particularly when the "ban the bar" proposal was unpopular with many in this urban community? This vote would indicate so.

The World War, which followed so closely upon the 1914 provincial election, introduced a totally new dimension to the lives of Manitobans. The significance of what proved to be a four-year-long struggle would be immeasurable to a large degree but the outbreak of hostilities did have an evident and immediate impact on the Brandon community. Although the war zone was far removed, Brandonites were nevertheless afraid of even a single unidentified airplane flying low over the city in the early morning!" While only a most vivid imagination could have associated that solitary aircraft with the enemy, many loyal British subjects could easily visualize "an enemy within" in the few hundred "Austrian Poles" who were, according to Austrian-Hungarian law, expected to return to fight on behalf of their homeland. Many of these immigrants, who, until recently, had been valued neighbours, were incarcerated in the alien internment camp established by the federal government in the Winter Fair Building. Curiously, most of these "dangerous foreigners," who had been incarcerated during a period of high unemployment, were released in 1916 to provide much-needed assistance to local farmers in the harvesting of that year's crop.

The outbreak of war immediately spurred temperance advocates to renew their efforts. A nation at war could not afford any loss in production due to the excessive consumption of alcohol. Furthermore, there was a strong possibility that Brandon would soon become a military training depot and the thought of hundreds, if not thousands, of innocent farm boys succumbing to the lure of local liquor interests was frightening. This was especially so in light of Brandon's notorious reputation — in that even the police chief was implicated in 1912 — as "the toughest little city from coast to coast." Nevertheless, a majority of Brandon electors defeated a "local option" measure which would have prohibited the sale of all intoxicating liquors within the city." The outbreak of war had re-motivated the temperance advocates; it however, had not instantly nullified the opposition.

Brandonites were confronted with the harsh reality of the war in early 1915, when the first local casualties were reported.²³ At almost precisely the same moment, a "political bombshell" struck all of Manitoba as the unveiling of the infamous Parliamentary Buildings scandal with its evidence of over-expenditures of public monies and massive "kickbacks" being paid by the contractors to the Conservative party quickly led to the Roblin ministry's resignation. Although it had been earlier rumoured that Roblin's personal health might necessitate his own retirement, a rumour to which Roblin himself gave some credence,²⁴ the general public was unprepared for the resignation of the entire administration. The political picture was suddenly reversed. Although newly-installed Premier T. C. Norris did reportedly offer J. D. McGregor, a well known Brandon cattleman (and a close friend of Clifford Sifton), the post of Minister of Agriculture, the future Lieutenant-Governor but as yet private citizen declined.²⁵ As a result, Brandon was not to be represented in the Norris cabinet irrespective of the fact that many Brandonites traditionally contended that Manitoba's second city deserved such representation as a matter of natural political right.

Manitoba Conservatives, meanwhile, commenced the nearly insurmountable task of rebuilding their party in such a manner that they could present a new, untarnished image in contrast to their now scandal-ridden predecessors. The choice of J. A. M. Aikins — Brandon's federal Conservative member since 1911 — as their new leader was due, at least in part, to the fact that he could claim little previous connection with the Roblin ministry. He had, the public was informed, campaigned on behalf of only a few select candidates during the 1914 provincial election and he had not endorsed all of the previous governments' policies. Although Aikins's personal qualifications — the pro-Conservative *Sun* frequently described him as one of Canada's most competent "jurists"²⁶ — and his family's political record" were well-publicized, the greatest emphasis was placed upon the fact that Aikins and his new colleagues were "Independent Conservatives" and that their policies constituted "the people's platform."²⁸

Although all the issues which had been part of the 1914 election — i.e., "ban the bar," women's suffrage, direct legislation and compulsory education — were "part and parcel" of the 1915

election, the scandal clearly predominated over all else. The Conservatives tried in vain to divert the public's attention to other less damaging issues. For example, Aikins's professional connection with the CPR was emphasized in a political appeal to Brandon's railway community; he was described as undoubtedly the best MP the city had ever had; while the establishment of the interned enemy aliens camp and the quartering of two thousand horses in Brandon were cited as evidence of his personal political influence and of the beneficial policies of his party. The Conservatives even desperately attempted to revive the "naval issue" by reminding the voters that Aikins had supported the proposal whereby Canada would provide the cash to pay for three dreadnoughts to assist Great Britain. According to the Sun, those three super dreadnoughts, (which Wilfrid Laurier and T. C. Norris had opposed) "would have sufficed to storm the Dardanelles."²⁹

Despite the fact that Aikins's personal qualifications seemingly out-weighed those of S. E. Clement, whose single achievement, according to Conservative critics, was the construction of the Clement Block," the Liberal candidate "swamped" the provincial leader of the so-called Independent Conservatives 1,914 to 1,213. Although the Sun bitterly assailed the temperance people for their failure to support Aikins and his promise of absolute prohibition, and while it lamented the fact that Aikins, as leader, had been forced to neglect his own constituency during the campaign, the Liberal victory throughout the province was so decisive (42 Liberals to five Conservatives) that there could only be one explanation for the result. While the Conservatives in 1914 had weathered successfully both the impact of the 1913 recession and the combined assault of the Liberal-reform alliance, Aikins and his Independent Conservatives in 1915 had been punished for the sins of the Roblin government which had preceded them.

The birth of a new government was normally marked by its own political aftermath and the Liberal victory in 1915 was no exception. Manitoba Liberals had been out of office for 16 years and it was time (irrespective of their commitment to reform) to reward the politically deserving in the traditional manner. Brandon merchant and long-serving Liberal politician, A. C. Fraser, was named police magistrate in place of W. H. Bates, a recent Conservative appointee. J. W. Fleming, the unsuccessful Liberal stan-

dard bearer in 1907 and the man who had lost the nomination to S. E. Clement in 1915, was appointed Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. Two lesser known Brandon Liberals were even named to replace two dismissed Conservatives at the local jail, a decision which caused the Sun to observe sarcastically that "the prisoners are now safely under the care of good Liberal turnkeys."³¹ In total, 77 justices of the peace, eight police magistrates and five police constables had been reportedly dismissed by the new Liberal government as of September 1915. The fact that this information does not appear to have generated much public interest indicates that such firings and hirings were still regarded as a normal part of the political process in spite of those who would reform the civil service.

The reformers did receive some reward for their part in the Liberal victory. Although the T. C. Norris ministry cleverly required the women's suffrage movement to demonstrate evidence of general female support for their proposal which pre-occupied the organizers for several months as they canvassed the province for the required signatures,³² Manitoba suffragettes achieved the distinction of becoming the first to be enfranchised provincially in late January 1916. While the circumstances of the war had provided women with an opportunity to play a new and equal economic role, Manitoba Liberals had supported the proposal for women's suffrage during the 1914 election and their accession to power in 1915 presumably made that reform inevitable. The war may have facilitated the passage of that reform: it did not cause it.

Within Brandon itself, a local landmark was established in December, 1915 when the first woman was elected to municipal office. Although the local Council of Women had failed in an earlier attempt to have a woman appointed to the police force when civic authorities had concluded that the caretaker's wife could search those few women who ran afoul of the law (i.e., some 50 in 1914),³³ their decision to enter politics had been more fruitful. Having ascertained that female ratepayers were eligible for election to the school board, Mrs. A. R. Irwin, the wife of a Brandon insurance agent, was elected by acclamation, as were all civic candidates in that war-time election. There is no evidence to indicate, however, that Mrs. Irwin's election was necessarily a by-product of that war. The possibility of nominating a woman to contest the school board elections had been considered by the

Trades and Labour Council as early as 1913:" the fact that Mrs. Irwin's victory occurred in 1915 suggests that war-time conditions had acted as a catalyst rather than as a cause. Nevertheless, both the women and the politics of this community had entered into a new era, admittedly in a rather anti-climatic fashion.

A second wartime, but province-wide, temperance vote was conducted in March, 1916, and the results in Brandon were substantially different from that late 1914 "local option" measure which had been defeated by some 300 votes. Admittedly, the 1916 campaign was more professionally conducted than previously: the temperance forces had committee rooms, a campaign manager and a "get out the vote" election day organization. In addition, both J. A. M. Aikins, the provincial Conservative leader, and S. E. Clement, Brandon's Liberal MLA, publicly supported the proposal. There was also an important difference in the nature of the proposal itself. Whereas the unsuccessful 1914 proposal had sought to prohibit the sale of virtually all alcoholic beverages, the more moderate 1916 measure proposed the abolition of the much maligned hotel bars which were frequented — according to prevailing opinion — primarily by "foreigners" and other "less desirables." Those who could afford to import liquor in quantity from other provinces could continue to do so. The 1916 proposal was, therefore, a class measure to a considerable degree as the primarily east end and north side opposition suggests. Other studies have demonstrated that the war itself contributed significantly to the province-wide support (by a two to one margin) for this temperance proposal as Manitobans had become convinced that they could no longer tolerate such inefficient uses of grain nor afford the diminished productivity of an impaired work force.' One can only assume that this was equally true in Brandon where the majority (1,547 to 1,210) in favour of the proposal⁶ was almost the exact reversal of the 1914 vote.

The Liberals were quite hopeful in 1916 about their future prospects in the Brandon federal constituency. The local Conservatives had lost the advantage of incumbency due to Aikins's earlier decision to resign as Brandon's MP in order to enter provincial politics. J. A. Calder, Saskatchewan's Minister of Railways and the Liberal organizer in Western Canada, was particularly optimistic: "The impression I carried away from Brandon . . . is that the Conservative organization in that part of Manitoba is

practically shot to pieces, and that there should be little doubt about the election of the Liberal candidate. Unless something very unusual happens it seems to me that there should be very little doubt about our carrying at least 10 or 11 of the 15 seats probably more." " "Something very unusual" did, however, happen to the Liberals in 1917: in fact, several things did. However, it was a combination of Borden's decision to introduce military conscription and the passage of the Wartime Elections Act which totally disrupted the western political scene.

Segments of the Brandon community had begun agitating for both conscription and the disfranchisement of enemy aliens in early 1916. Although the Brandon Citizens Recruiting League was primarily concerned with the need for the federal government to assume all recruitment costs as such expenses currently exceeded the financial capacity of militia officers who traditionally had borne them," they — as well as the Sun — had repeatedly endorsed the growing public demand for conscription." Proposals to disfranchise enemy aliens had been made even more frequently. The Sun had editorially applauded the 1916 decision of the Australian government to disfranchise German-born Australians and to require all electors to undergo a literacy test, a measure clearly designed to restrict the foreign vote. The Brandon branch of the Great War Veterans' Association had urged the prime minister to disfranchise "all residents of alien enemy nationality during the period of the war and . . . residents of Greek nationality should also be precluded the use of franchise for the period of the war."^o The officers and membership of the Brandon County Orange Lodge argued that it was "very unfair to the better element of our citizens that the small number remaining should be faced at the poll by a solid phalanx of voters of enemy alien birth, who . . . are all of them secretly and many of them openly enemy sympathizers." Controversial though they may have been, it is evident that the Borden government's decision to implement conscription and to enact the Wartime Elections Act was popular with many, many Brandonites.

The federal Liberal party was severely divided by Laurier's refusal to join the coalition government due to its conscription policy. Pro-conscription western Liberals were particularly torn between their perceived need for an increased manpower supply and their loyalty to the Liberal party. The tide turned in

favour of coalescing with the Conservatives soon after the passage of the infamous 1917 Wartime Elections Act which disfranchised those Canadian voters of enemy alien origin who had been naturalized since 1902, the bulk of whom traditionally had voted Liberal in appreciation of the Laurier government's role in facilitating their emigration to Canada. The loss of those Liberal votes combined with the enfranchisement of the obviously pro-conscription, pro-Conservative female relatives of men overseas placed, and especially in the west, western Liberals in a virtually impossible political position.

Liberal prospects, in 1917, were even further threatened by a combination of a developing agrarian movement and a new working-class consciousness. The Grain Growers had been economically and politically significant since their inception in 1903 and the political parties had repeatedly solicited their support with a variety of strategies. Although J. A. Calder, the party's western organizer, had advised Brandon Liberals to seek out a prominent local Grain Grower to become their candidate, the farmers had scuttled that plan by deciding to hold their own nominating convention in August, 1917. In fact, the Grain Growers convention was held in conjunction with the newly-formed Labour Representation League, an organization of politically concerned workers, union and non-union alike, whose original objective had been to ensure labour representation in the forthcoming mayoralty and aldermanic elections. When the Grain Growers and Labour met in this joint convention, four names were placed in nomination. Although labour support for the Rev. A. E. Smith, the popular minister of First Methodist Church since 1913, was constant; the larger farmer vote subsequently united to elect Roderick McKenzie, a Brandon area farmer and the first secretary of the Manitoba Grain Growers, on the fourth ballot.

The increasingly-active Council of Women also indirectly hurt the Liberal cause in 1917 when they organized a massive "Win the War" rally which was addressed by such non-political figures as Chief Justice Mathers and Captain Best of the YMCA Military Department. As these allegedly non-partisan rallies (as other communities followed Brandon's lead) constituted a call for "unity" until the "job of winning the war" was completed, the Conservatives who were currently in power were the political beneficiaries. Their Liberal critics could only be the victims.

The majority of Brandon area Liberals, as a result, joined with local Conservatives in support of a Unionist or "Win the War" candidate. After a series of meetings, both sides agreed to hold a joint nominating convention at which pro-conscription Liberals and Conservatives would be equally represented. In spite of the bold talk about unity, local Liberals and Conservatives caucused separately and they proceeded to support their own choices. Despite the fact that the 180 voting delegates (of whom only five or six were women") who met together on October 23 cast 14 separate ballots during an eight and one half hour meeting, they could reach no decision." The Conservative delegates supported Sir Augustus Nanton, a Winnipeg businessman, throughout while Liberal voters eventually coalesced around United Grain Growers president (and also a Winnipeg resident), T. A. Crerar, after less prominent Brandonites such as Mayor H. Cater, Rev. A. E. Smith (who was making his second bid for a nomination) and J. D. McGregor had dropped by the wayside. As no candidate had received the prescribed 75 per cent of the total vote, the organizers finally adjourned the convention. Despite the wartime crisis, traditional partisan considerations had prevailed.

One of the unique features of this wartime election in Brandon was the role eventually played by the Great War Veterans' Association. Although they had previously refused to endorse Roderick McKenzie, the joint Labour-Grain Growers candidate, on the grounds that his principal supporters were anti-conscriptionist," and despite their decision not to participate in the initial "Win the War" convention as they had been instructed to select three Liberal and three Conservative delegates, they — in the aftermath of the October 23 debacle — emerged as an important component of the body politic. When the name of Dr. H. P. Whidden, the president of Brandon College, was mentioned as a possible compromise candidate, the veterans immediately endorsed that proposal and they subsequently persuaded Mayor Cater (and the neighbouring municipal leaders) to organize a second but genuine non-partisan nominating convention. Fully one-half of all the delegates elected to this second nominating convention proved to be veterans, many of whom were members of the Great War Veterans' Association.'

The November 16 "Win the War" nominating convention

was essentially a contest between Dr. H. P. Whidden and Grain Grower Roderick McKenzie who, despite the fact that he had been nominated a few months before as a joint Grain Grower-Labour candidate, had decided to seek the Unionist nomination. After the other less consequential nominees had fallen by the political way-side, Brandon College's president gained the nod on the third ballot. Although the political "left" was clearly disappointed by these political developments in that neither labour nor the farmers were now to be directly represented, plans to nominate E. J. L. Bisson, a college student and an anti-conscriptionist, were abandoned when H. S. Paterson, a Winnipeg grain dealer and a Laurier Liberal, was parachuted into the contest. A non-partisan Brandonite would be opposed by a relatively weak non-resident.

Despite the fact that Whidden's lead over the anti-conscriptionist Paterson seemed (and proved to be) insurmountable, Unionist supporters left nothing to chance. The participation of Manitoba Premier T. C. Norris, his entire Liberal cabinet" and the Hon. Arthur Meighen, the recently-appointed Minister of the Interior, proves that the party professionals did not leave this campaign to the "amateurish" municipal leaders who comprised Whidden's official election committee." The appeal by the Whidden forces to the newly-enfranchised women (who had been somewhat better represented at the second nominating meeting") was exceedingly blunt and direct. On the eve of the election, female electors were told, in a front page advertisement, that this election was "the Day of Your Trial" and that "History" would judge Canadian women by their response: "To Your Glory, To Your Shame, Which shall it be? Treason or victory." Although anti-Unionist Liberals claimed that there were other election issues such as "the Canadian Northern Railway, the Food Controller, the Big Interests, Reciprocity, the Ross Rifle and other things,"^o the Sun concluded: "We have not time to settle them just now. The only thing that matters now is winning-the-war. Vote for Dr. Whidden and you vote right." Whether Brandon voters voted "right" is a matter of judgment, but it is certainly evident that the local electors agreed that "winning the war" was all important as Dr. Whidden, with 9,340 civilian votes to 1,237 and 2,125 military votes to 92, won the most one-sided victory ever recorded in the history of the constituency.

The fact that labour even considered the possibility of nominating their own candidate in 1917 was indicative of a new class consciousness which was emerging in Brandon in the latter months of the war. Labour unrest culminated in several strikes in 1917-18 and, in one instance, local postal employees stubbornly remained on strike after their nation-wide strike had ended. The fact that Brandon businessmen immediately urged Ottawa to hire replacement staff and, if necessary, to use the military to maintain service suggests that the seeds for future class conflict were well planted by 1918. This was also suggested by the agitated manner in which Brandon aldermen responded to a proposal by Alderman J. A. G. Grantham, a real estate agent and one of Brandon's best known "Socialists," to protect all ratepayers from the loss of their property due to non-payment of taxes. Although military personnel had been so protected since 1914, Grantham's proposal was immediately rejected as a Bolsheviki ideal. The dark clouds of class conflict were clearly visible on the horizon.

The 1914-18 era had proved to be a long four-year interval in which politics — with some exceptions — had essentially "marked time." Admittedly the scandal-ridden Conservatives had been thrown from office in 1915 and the T. C. Norris Liberals, with their reformer allies, had come to power. As a result, several changes had been introduced. Women were enfranchised; the hotel bars had been closed; an Initiative and Referendum Act was approved; and entry into the civil service would hereafter be based largely on merit as determined by competitive examination. Politics, nevertheless, remained much the same. S. E. Clement, Brandon's new MLA (as of 1915), personified the city's business and professional community as accurately as had G. R. Coldwell, if not more so. Brandon males had been compelled to share the political arena with Brandon's females but they clearly did so on their own carefully regulated terms.

Although those who wished only to reform the political system (i.e., in part by securing a greater place for themselves within it) had some reason to feel satisfied with the developments of the war years, labour and the farmers had discovered that their economic and political lot in life had not improved. In fact, they were, in several ways, the economic victims of the war years. They, nevertheless, had bided their time until the crisis in Europe was

nearing its end. Certainly their political challenge in Brandon in 1917 had proven to be impotent as they had fallen victim to the patriotic onslaught of the "Win the War" movement. Although the farmer-labour alliance had, for the moment, retreated, it was evident that they, like dark clouds on the horizon, would begin to build up again. It was clearly the lull before the storm.

FOOTNOTES

1. Brandon Daily Sun, January 16, 1912.
2. Brandon Weekly Sun, February 13, 1913.
3. Ibid., November 27, 1913.
4. The CPR in October 1914 hired all the available married unemployed at \$1.50 per day to work on "blasting" (Brandon Daily Sun, October 10, 1914) while the Roblin government attempted to create jobs in early 1915 by authorizing some sewer construction at the provincial mental asylum ahead of schedule. Ibid., January 9, 1915.
5. Winnipeg Tribune, June 24, 1930 as contained in PAM, Manitoba Biographies, B10, 230.
6. Brandon Daily Sun, June 20, 1914.
7. Ibid., April 4, 1914. Ironically, Coldwell seems to have forgotten that it was his Conservative party which had imported candidates from Winnipeg to stand in Brandon in each of the 1900, 1904, 1908 and 1911 federal elections.
8. Ibid., June 25, 1914.
9. Ibid., June 26, 1914.
10. The "foreign born" percentage of Brandonites had reached 14.01 per cent of the total population by 1911. Census of Canada, 1911, vol. 2.
11. Brandon Daily Sun, July 6, 1914.
12. Ibid., June 4, 1914.
13. Manitoba Free Press, July 4, 1914.
14. Ibid., July 8, 1914.

15. **Brandon Daily Sun**, July 2, 1914. This, however, is the only reference to the Saskatchewan Liberal machine's involvement in the Brandon riding. As the Scott forces were allegedly very active in that campaign, they must have concentrated on other constituencies.
16. **Manitoba Free Press**, July 14, 1914.
17. *Ibid.*, July 1, 1914.
18. Roblin blamed his losses on the fears of the Orange Lodge. **Winnipeg Tribune**, July 11, 1914.
19. This was the conclusion of the recently established pro-Liberal **Brandon News**. *Ibid.*, July 17, 1914.
20. PAC, Robert Borden Papers, vol. 191, 106322, J. A. M. Aikins to Borden, November 12, 1914.
21. For example, it was alleged that the Police Chief, W. H. Boyd, "had kept a prostitute in the (his) office all night and sent her away on the next morning's train." **Brandon Daily Sun**, September 5, 1912.
22. The measure was defeated 1,377 to 1,042. *Ibid.*, December 16, 1914.
23. The Hon. George Coldwell's son was among the first of Brandon men to be listed as killed in action: fortunately, the report proved to be erroneous and young Coldwell was found to be a prisoner of war. *Ibid.*, May 8, 1915.
24. PAM, Colin H. Campbell Papers, Roblin to Colin H. Campbell, November 10, 1913.
25. **Brandon Daily Sun**, March 15, 1935. It is interesting to note that Norris showed no apparent interest in considering S. E. Clement (who might have felt that he had earned a reward by standing unsuccessfully for the party in 1914) for the cabinet.
26. *Ibid.*, July 16, 1915.
27. Aikins's father served in Macdonald's cabinet from 1869 to 1872; as Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba from 1882 to 1888; and, subsequently, as a member of the Canadian Senate until his death. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*, July 20, 1915.
29. *Ibid.*, August 4, 1915.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*, November 29, 1915.

32. A series of province-wide meetings were held in order to secure the prescribed total i.e., 15 per cent of the current electorate.
- 33. Brandon Daily Sun**, October 7, 1915.
- 34. Brandon Weekly Sun**, December 4, 1913.
35. J. H. Thompson, **The Harvests of War** (Toronto, 1978), 98-106.
- 36. Brandon Daily Sun**, March 14, 1916.
37. PAC, Wilfrid Laurier Papers, vol. 703, 193726, J. A. Calder to Laurier, November 24, 1916.
38. The cost of recruiting the first units had been only two dollars per man but this figure had risen considerably as officers had to travel to more distant points to find the necessary volunteers. **Brandon Daily Sun**, April 24, 1916.
39. A. E. Hill, a local renegade Liberal, was one of the few Brandonites who publicly opposed the pro-conscriptionists and even he was prepared to accept the conscription of manpower if wealth were conscripted as well. *Ibid.*, April 4, 1916.
40. The Great War Veterans contended that the Greek government's "stab in the back policy" was as dangerous as that of the enemy nations. PAC, Robert Borden Papers, vol. 66, 33506, W. G. Oakey, Secretary of Great War Veterans, Brandon Branch to Borden, April 24, 1917.
41. *Ibid.*, vol. 219, 123160, W. H. Maker and Alex Pue to (?), July 26, 1917.
42. Although the Borden government had blatantly gerrymandered the electoral lists by enfranchising only those women who would likely endorse conscription (in that they had male relatives who had served or were serving overseas), the local Conservative association curiously extended only token invitations to such women to engage in party politics. For example, women were specifically — and with much publicity — urged to attend a local Conservative association meeting only to witness the election of an all male delegation to the party's provincial council. Although the Brandon association admittedly did make amends by electing their first female vice-president, by naming 25 women to the local executive council and by stage-managing meetings at which women moved all of the resolutions, the suffragettes must have been disappointed by the women's limited political role in 1917.

43. **Brandon Daily Sun**, October 23, 1917.
44. Ibid., November 7, 1917.
45. Ibid., November 13, 1917.
46. PAC, Robert Borden Papers, vol. 228, 127541, Hugh John Macdonald to Borden, December 18, 1917. Laurier's visit to Manitoba and to Brandon must have been very painful under the circumstances.
47. Those same mayors and reeves who had planned the second nominating convention were designated as Whidden's campaign committee.
48. The **Sun** reported that women had "good" representation, but no numbers were provided. **Brandon Daily Sun**, November 13, 1917.
49. Ibid., December 6, 1917.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., November 22, 1918.

V

The Old Order Changeth, Yielding Place to New

The so-called "old line" political parties dominated Manitoba politics, Brandon included, until the post-war era. Then, within a period of three years, the political scene in Brandon was dramatically altered, first at the provincial level with the election of a Dominion Labour Party (DLP) candidate and, a few months later, at the federal level when the farmers, or the Progressives as they were officially known, swept the constituency. The first few months of the post-war era were also marked by an uncharacteristic amount of labour unrest as a number of widely-based strikes swept the city. Although the four long years of death and destruction had ended in late 1918, the armistice had seemingly unleashed a new type of economic and political "warfare" in much of the Western World, Brandon included. Whether the emergence of class or occupational politics — which were a portent of political utopia to some and of the long-feared revolution to others — would prove to be enduring remained yet to be determined.

The potential for a strong working-class movement existed in Brandon's sizable railway community and the roots of working-class consciousness extended well back into the pre-war era as self-styled "workingman's" candidates had appeared in municipal politics as early as 1901. Within two years of that date, workingmen reportedly constituted the largest single segment of the Brandon electorate. The pro-Liberal Sun, furthermore, accredited the 1903 mayoralty victory of J. W. Fleming, a prominent Liberal and a self-proclaimed "workingman's" candidate, to the fact that he had carefully cultivated that element of the community.'

The Liberals, of course, were anxious that any emerging labour community should unite with them in what the Liberals contended was their "common cause." Many labourites, however, saw their future in terms of a separate identity and there was some indication of movement in that direction, by 1907, as six local unions participated in the city's first Labour Day Parade. Working-class consciousness was enhanced substantially when Brandon railway employees struck the mighty CPR in 1908. Perhaps as a result, the local Trades and Labour Council seriously considered the possibility of nominating their own aldermanic candidates in 1911 and again in 1913, but many working-class members were ineligible to stand due to the deliberately restrictive property qualifications for municipal office.¹ The 1914 aldermanic candidacy, however, of George S. Morris, one of Brandon's few prominent socialists, and "the first candidate from the (working-class) ranks,"² resulted in only 82 votes in ward five, the city's south end. Self-designation as a workingman's candidate obviously did not generate working class electoral support.

The latter days of the war and the initial months of the post-war era were marked by deteriorating economic conditions, numerous strikes and a more pronounced, but not necessarily more rewarding, political role for labour in Brandon. Although the establishment of the Labour Representation League in 1917 constituted a landmark as Brandon's labour community had entered directly into local politics for the first time, all three pro-labour aldermanic candidates were nevertheless defeated that year. Despite the pronounced labour unrest of 1918, Alderman J. A. G. Grantham was the only one of four pro-labour candidates to succeed in that year's aldermanic elections.³ Grantham, who had been elected initially in 1916, was a well-known real estate agent whom the **Sun** described as one of Brandon's "strongest Socialists."⁴ Listed among the casualties was Robert Crawford, a CPR engineer and a former Conservative, who had been identified as an "official", Labour candidate,⁵ the first such in Brandon's history. That historic designation, however, had obviously gone unappreciated by ward two electors.

The unrest which had surfaced in 1918 reached an unprecedented climax during the first six months of 1919 when Brandon was convulsed in a series of widespread strikes as workers

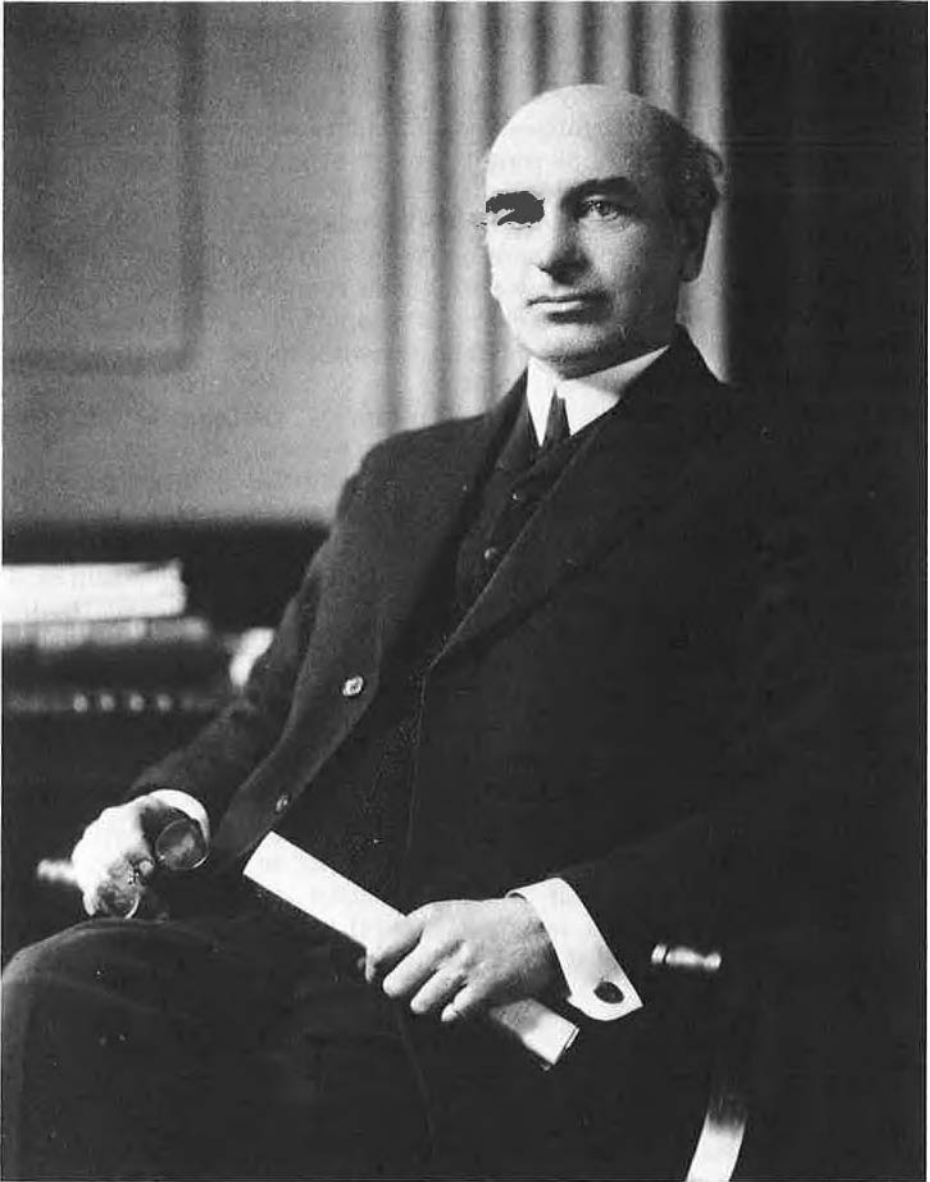


The Spofford brothers, Harry, left, Alvie, right, 1909

sought higher wages commensurate with the sharply increased cost of living, plus union recognition. The first major strike, that of the civic employees who were supported by one hundred teamsters in late April, was immensely successful. The Civic Employee's Union was recognized; two dismissed union leaders were re-instated;' and a Board of Arbitration, as sought by the union, was established to resolve the issue of salaries.

Brandon's first general strike, which began shortly thereafter when local teamsters went out in sympathy with the Winnipeg General Strike, was not, however, to be resolved so easily. While local public opinion had generally supported the striking civic employees in April, 1919, the public response to the May 15 general strike was dramatically different as the Law and Order League, a citizens' body comparable to Winnipeg's Committee of One Thousand, was quickly formed for the purpose of ensuring the continued operation of the city's public utilities and "to assist if necessary in the preservation of law and order.' As this sympathy strike was relatively peaceful, the exceedingly uneventful role of the volunteer Law and Order League was limited to shovelling coal for long hours at the city's pumping station! Nevertheless, Brandon's city council, strongly encouraged by the local business community, adopted a series of punitive measures with respect to its own recently recognized Civic Employees Union. Their recently awarded pay increase was cancelled while some strikers, who had not returned upon command to their civic positions, were replaced. Those that did return discovered that they had lost their seniority. While some firemen and coal-handlers at the pumping station did consequently strike — again — on June 27 to protest the city's refusal to re-reinstate all strikers without penalty, the over-all response to this second so-called general strike was sporadic and short-lived even though it remained officially in progress until July 1.

Although labour had been severely disappointed by the results of the two so-called general strikes, they made a determined effort in the 1919 municipal elections. While railway employee F. E. Carey won in ward three, both of the so-called official Trades and Labour Council candidates, Walter Stone and Charles Durrant, were defeated. Moreover, the fact that Durrant lost to Alderman George Coleman, a lawyer and a well known Conservative, in the



Albert Edward Smith, MLA, Brandon, 1921

Manitoba Archives

same east end ward which had re-elected Alderman Grantham, the " Socialist," the previous autumn confirms that the era of labour solidarity or of a bloc voting had not yet arrived.

Why then was the Rev. A. E. Smith able to secure election to the Manitoba legislature as a DLP candidate in 1920 and, thus, become Brandon's first labour MLA? Smith, who had been born to poverty-stricken, working-class parents in Ontario in 1871 and who, at age 13, had worked in a Hamilton machine shop, began a career as a Methodist probationer at MacGregor, Manitoba, in 1890. Later as an ordained minister, he served in several prairie ministries: Prince Albert, N.W.T.; MacDougall Memorial Methodist Church in Winnipeg, where he gained his first political experience by campaigning for A. W. Puttee; Portage la Prairie, where he campaigned for temperance; Nelson, B.C., where his public support of a Socialist candidate caused difficulties with his local church board; and, finally, Brandon as of 1913.

Despite the fact that Smith believed his personal religious philosophy was "quite unorthodox" during those years,^{t°} this 41-year-old minister was warmly received in Brandon. In fact, his First Methodist congregation successfully petitioned the Manitoba Methodist Conference to permit him to remain beyond the normal four-year term. As a result of his popularity and his support of Canada's war effort, Smith was one of several nominees at the "Win the War" nominating convention in 1917 and he subsequently played a significant role in Dr. H. P. Whidden's election campaign. The Methodist minister, nevertheless, remained determined that a new social order should be created in post-war Canada. In fact, he was an integral part of an attempt by the social gospel wing of the Methodist Church, led by the Rev. Salem Bland, to persuade the 1918 Methodist Conference to support a reconstruction policy which was "further to the left than that of any party of consequence before the emergence of the CCF in 1933."

By 1918, Rev. A. E. Smith and many other Methodist reformers were conceding that their new social order could not be achieved within the framework of a capitalistic society and the popular Methodist minister joined the local Labour party immediately upon his return from the Hamilton conference. That decision must have particularly displeased Stephen E. Clement, Brandon's Liberal and a prominent member of Rev. Smith's congregation.



Dr. J. H. Edmison, MLA, Brandon, 1923

Manitoba Archives

While Smith's interest in socialism disturbed many of his parishioners, it was his public participation in the 1919 strikes which directly led to his dismissal. Smith, who was the Ministerial Association representative to the Brandon Trades and Labour Council, spoke at several strike meetings, both in Brandon and Winnipeg; he helped prepare strike bulletins; and he led street parades. He was, in his own words, "in the thick of the battle." As a result, Smith's local church board attempted to ban him from "their" pulpit. Although that motion was rejected on technical grounds, Smith was pressured into choosing between First Methodist and the strikers. After resigning from the Methodist ministry, Smith established a People's Church in Brandon whose membership was open to all Brandonites who were prepared to work towards a "better day for human society."

The DLP had attempted in 1919 to establish a common front with the growing farmers' movement in the Brandon area. A committee representing the Trades and Labour Council, the DLP membership in both Brandon and Souris, and the Brandon branch of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association had attempted to formulate a joint educational and political program. According to what appears to have been a Royal North West Mounted Police intelligence report, the Rev. Mr. Salter, a former assistant to Rev. A. E. Smith, was the key intermediary in this attempt "to arrive at a platform agreeable to both.' Although Smith was elected as a director of the Brandon branch of the United Farmers of Manitoba, local farmers protested so vehemently against this "introduction of politics" into the UFM that Smith felt compelled to resign. The eventual decision of this very urban branch of the UFM to bypass the 1920 provincial election, in favour of the upcoming federal election, nullified any hope for a joint farmer-labour candidate for Brandon in 1920. A. E. Smith would represent the DLP alone in 1920.'

A vital factor in that 1920 provincial election in Brandon was the number of candidates who would enter the contest. The incumbent was Stephen E. Clement, the Liberal MLA who had been elected five years before. His parliamentary record, however, was quite unremarkable and many Brandonites had been disappointed by the fact that he had not been invited to join that vital inner circle, the cabinet, as they believed that Manitoba's second city

automatically warranted such representation. Brigadier-General James Kirkcaldy — a former alderman, ex-Chief of Police, ex-City Assessor, Brandon's most celebrated war hero and, currently, an Independent nominee — offered to stand aside in favour of any local Liberal of cabinet stature, if Clement would do the same. Clement, understandably declined and a three-way contest resulted. This, as many Liberals and Conservatives feared, was the ideal opportunity for a Labour party candidate.

Brigadier-General Kirkcaldy, whose advertisements portrayed him in uniform, stressed throughout the campaign that he was an Independent; that he would vote in the legislature "as his judgment dictated"; and that he would, when warranted, support the T. C. Norris ministry. While Kirkcaldy obviously hoped to capitalize upon the non-partisan sentiment which was an integral part of the rapidly developing Progressive movement, he and the supportive Sun devoted much of the campaign to attacking A. E. Smith's "revolutionary" nature.

The Sun, which editorially conceded labour's right to direct representation in the Manitoba legislature, argued that A. E. Smith was not, however, a "bona fide" labour candidate. "Forces of destruction" or "Reds," masquerading in the name of labour, had allegedly seized control of the nominating convention. They had, as a result "foisted" A. E. Smith onto the local Labour party. Although A. E. Smith ignored the insinuation that he was "Red" and despite his angry denials that he had, in any manner, fostered the possibility of a revolution during the 1919 strikes, one suspects that most electors would be more influenced by the accusations than they would the denials. That is part of the political process.

One of the unusual features of the 1920 provincial election was the participation of a substantial number of clergymen. Rev. Lowry of Knox, for example, preached an election-eve sermon which proved to be a patriotic eulogy of the British flag and a warning about "a godless tyranny masquerading under the name of freedom."b The most sensational announcement, however, was that of the Rev. James Savage, a friend of labour's in the past, who claimed he had been forced to resign his position at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church as a result of his refusal to endorse the DLP candidate" whose religious teachings, he believed, were "anti-Christian and pagan!"



Manitoba Archives

Robert Forke, MP and Minister of Immigration and Colonization, 1927

While there were lesser issues in 1920 such as the need for more development of natural resources, the perennial complaint of excessively high taxation, and the lack of assistance available to returned soldiers, the primary issue was A. E. Smith himself and the crucial question was whether or not a three-way contest might enable him to "slip down the middle." A. E. Smith did, in fact, win with only a plurality of the votes as he polled 2,007 of the 4,655 ballots cast. The Liberal incumbent Clement (with 1,403 votes) and the Independent Kirkcaldy (with 1,245 votes) had divided the majority between them.'

Whether Smith's victory indicated that labour had grown significantly as a political movement was a question that would partly be resolved by the 1920 civic elections. Those 2,000 voters who had supported A. E. Smith would presumably vote for labour candidates later that same year if their support of Smith actually constituted a vote for labour. Although the DLP endorsed three aldermanic candidates in 1920, veteran Alderman Grantham, in his east end ward, alone emerged triumphant. Neither A. Zylicz, a storekeeper from "the Flats" and the city's first non-WASP candidate, nor J. H. Skene — who lost to R. Crawford, a railway employee whom the DLP refused to endorse — were serious challengers. It would appear as if there was relatively little Labour party support that was transferable from one level of politics to another.

Labour, therefore, could claim only one major victory in the 1920 municipal election and that was the abolition of the ward system. Two pro-labour aldermen, Grantham and Carey, had initiated a campaign which culminated in a 512 to 321 vote in favour of abolition. The arguments in favour of abolition were that the inequality of plural voting would be abolished; there would be a larger field from which to secure able candidates; and that voters would hopefully take a greater interest in municipal politics when they had a chance to elect the entire council. Labourites assumed, as well, that they would be more successful than they were at that moment when they had a good chance in only one or two wards. Ironically, labour — 51 years later — would advocate the restoration of that same ward system.

The origin of the farmers movement, or the Progressives as they were subsequently called, could be traced to that 1911

federal election in which the Conservatives, largely aided by Clifford Sifton, had succeeded in smashing both the Laurier government and western agrarian hopes for freer trade with the United States. Discouraged by the realization that the Liberals and Conservatives, when measured by their actions in office, were depressingly similar to each other, Western Canadian farmers had begun to consider the advisability of creating their own party. Persuaded from doing so during the course of the war, but not dissuaded of the necessity of doing so, they had set aside their political ambitions until the war's end.

Dissatisfied with the Unionists continuing commitment to high-tariff policies, T. A. Crerar, a former Manitoba Liberal and ex-United Grain Growers official, had led a handful of dissident MPs in abandoning the Unionists in favour of the "cross benches in 1919." Within months, T. A. Crerar had been accepted as the spokesman for the farmers. The Progressive movement had been born at that very moment when thousands of Unionist Liberals were debating their own political future. Uncomfortable with and unconvinced by their Conservative partners, wooed by William Lyon Mackenzie King, Laurier's anti-conscriptionist successor, but not yet won, western Liberals made their decision. In the words of a former Liberal candidate in the Brandon riding, "They see nothing but the farmers in the next Federal election."

Although the so-called Knott faction — i.e., those anti-conscriptionist Manitoba Liberals who had polled 10.4 per cent of the vote in the Brandon riding in 1917 — committed themselves to fighting the farmers at every step, the majority of Brandon area Liberals were willing to support the Progressives, provided that Robert Forke was their candidate." Forke, a 61-year-old Pipestone area farmer, had been active in the Manitoba Grain Growers since its inception; he had been a part of the old Patrons of Industry; he had served the RM of Pipestone as reeve for 20 years; and, significantly, he had been a well-known Liberal. As T. A. Crerar playfully explained, Forke was the "candidate who could never be excelled in that constituency — a native of Scotland, a Liberal and a fine outstanding man of integrity such as you would naturally associate with that combination."

Although the DLP had searched widely for a candidate, no one — including Beatrice Brigden who at least had the distinction

of being the first Brandon woman proposed for election to any office other than school board — had consented to run. The Knott faction consequently nominated F. C. Cox, a Brandon printer and the president of the Brandon Trades and Labour Council, in the hope that he would poll the labour vote, a hope that would remain largely unfulfilled.

Faced with the task of choosing a successor for the retiring Dr. H. P. Whidden, the Conservatives significantly selected a well-known Virden area farmer to be their candidate. C. E. Ivens, who had adopted the title of Colonel to distinguish himself from another with a similar surname, had emigrated to the Virden district in 1883 from England. Two decades later, he had helped J. W. Scallion organize that history-making first branch of the Manitoba Grain Growers. He, like Robert Forke, had served as a reeve (of Wallace Municipality) and he also was a past president of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities.

Although the Conservatives had deliberately nominated a farmer who would, under normal circumstances, have appealed to the suddenly all-important rural voter, a combination of drought, hail, grasshoppers and wet harvest conditions had produced in 1921 what veteran politician John T. Haig described as "a terrible state and of course they (the farmers) blame their lack of prosperity on the Government." These depressed agricultural conditions, the Conservatives' high tariff policy, and the "its time for a change" syndrome had together created an almost impossible political situation for the Tories. Many western MPs, as a result, had opposed an autumn 1921 election, fearing that the Conservatives and Liberals combined would win only four seats "between the lakes and the Mountains."²

The Conservatives, in actuality, failed to carry a single constituency on the prairies as the farmers swept the rural constituencies while Labour and Liberal candidates divided a handful of urban constituencies between them. In the Brandon constituency, Robert Forke swept to victory as he won Brandon itself as well as the rural polls with a total vote of 9,596 to Ivens' 4,067. F. C. Cox, whom the Liberal party refused to endorse, "was never a contender as he polled only 404 votes.

Although Brandon area electors, by voting for Robert Forke, had for the second time in two years broken their well-

established pattern of voting "ministerialist," they had remained in step with their fellow Manitobans in that the Progressives won 12 of the province's 15 constituencies. Furthermore, as future events would demonstrate, those same Manitoba Progressives, unlike their Alberta colleagues, would eventually coalesce with Mackenzie King's government. Brandon area electors had not strayed very far from home.

As noted earlier, A. E. Smith's election as a Labour MLA in 1920 had had no evident impact on that year's municipal elections, except in respect to the number of DLP candidates. This proved to be equally true in 1921 when the DLP nominated three aldermanic and four school board candidates, in addition to endorsing incumbent school board candidate George Fitton, Alderman B. J. Hales and aldermanic hopeful Fred Young. Although this was labour's most extensive effort to date, the results were disappointing as the DLP candidates badly trailed the field.

The 1922 provincial election was, in reality, a continuum of the 1920 election in that the latter had resulted only in an unstable Liberal minority government. The central issue in the Brandon constituency was whether A. E. Smith, the DLP incumbent, would again face a divided opposition. As both Brandon Liberals and Conservatives were losing ground in 1922," they were able to ignore their traditional partisan differences in order to unite together against a "common enemy." As a result, a joint nominating committee placed the names of W. I. Smale, Mayor H. Cater and Dr. J. H. Edmison before 168 voting delegates. As in 1917, this joint Liberal-Conservative nominating convention decided that a popular member of Brandon's business and professional class such as Dr J. H. Edmison could most effectively unite the two political camps." Edmison, the son of an Ontario Presbyterian minister, had practiced medicine in Dunrea for many years before moving to Brandon in 1908. By the time of his nomination in 1922, the 49-year-old physician had reportedly achieved an extraordinary popularity. He was, in the words of a contemporary politician, "the salt of the earth — the grandest chap God ever put breath in," a man who was "almost worshipped for his medical services.""

There were several rather distinct features to Edmison's campaign in 1922. First of all, his supporters claimed that Edmison,

as an Independent, could work effectively with any government that might be formed after the next provincial election. This was particularly significant when one remembers that Brandonites, by electing Smith in 1920, had placed their constituency on the opposition side of the legislature for the first time since 1886 and that new business, according to the Sun, had been frightened away by the labourite's "radical" nature. "Brandon cannot any longer afford to let itself be advertised as a possible seat for turbulence . . . or as the hunting ground of ultra radical leaders." Secondly, Edmison, in the wake of the city's financial crisis and the so-called "teachers strike," decried "lavish post-war expenditures," stressed the need for "sane, safe, responsible government" and warned that some Brandonites, such as A. E. Smith, "would . . . , borrow all you can and spend recklessly."

Brandon, as Edmison's audience was well aware, had suffered a severe financial crisis earlier that year when the city's bank announced that they would advance only 85 per cent of the total 1922 tax levy, as a result of extensive tax arrears in 1921. Civic authorities, in turn, had been forced to reduce the city budget by some \$173,000. A few civic employees were dismissed; mayor and council agreed to forego their annual stipends; and all civic salaries were reduced by 12½ per cent as of March 1, 1922. In addition, the local school board, which was responsible for its own budget, cut teachers' salaries by 25 per cent as of April 1 for the balance of that school year.

When Brandon teachers refused to accept that decision, the school board dismissed all teachers as of April 30, 1922. Although Smith's role in this labour dispute was quite limited, it would appear that he was identified publicly with the "strikers." This association would be politically significant for two reasons. First of all, the "teachers' strike" was a failure in that new teachers were hired to replace those who refused to re-apply for their former positions at the reduced salaries. Wise politicians normally avoid associating with unsuccessful causes as that is not good image building. Secondly, and of greater importance, the teachers were clearly unpopular with many electors as they were challenging the program of reduced taxation and civic economy and, if successful, they would endanger the city's financial stability. Thus, the DLP incumbent was associated with the frightening spectre of wasteful spending, bankruptcy and debt repudiation.

Edmison's supporters also attempted to separate the incumbent from his political base by charging that he was not truly representative of Brandon's labour community: "he was instead a "Red," the nomenclature by which they categorized many labourites.^o C. P. Kamienski, a north end resident, publicly related his own Russian experiences and his dire warnings about the horrors of Bolshevism were blatantly designed to frighten would-be Smith supporters. Even Premier T. C. Norris attacked the Brandon MLA in surprisingly alarmist terms: "Mr. Smith is a Socialist of the extreme kind; he is opposed to the present system of constitutional government and therefore cannot be considered a good citizen of Manitoba." This was Brandon's first real experience with a fear campaign.

While A. E. Smith had realized his maximum potential in 1920 in that he polled only an additional 53 votes in 1922, the fusionists succeeded in vastly improving upon the previous Liberal-Conservative vote. The fact that Dr. Edmison was able to outpoll the combined Clement-Kirkcaldy 1920 total of 2,648 by 633 votes demonstrates the popularity of Edmison as a candidate, the effectiveness of the Fusionist "fear" campaign and the efficiency of their "get out the vote" organization. A. E. Smith's initial victory in 1920, which had been facilitated by a divided and half-hearted opposition, had so united and motivated the general populace that the anti-Smith vote in 1922 greatly exceeded his own strength. In victory, he had sown the seeds of his own defeat.

The political pattern of the 1922 provincial election was repeated in that year's municipal election, and with similar results. When the DLP endorsed a full slate of aldermanic candidates including veteran Alderman Grantham, a Citizens' Committee, motivated presumably by the successful example of the Fusionists, was organized in response. This group endorsed four of the incumbent aldermen (excluding Grantham) plus George Epton, who had lost by a small margin the previous year. In addition, the Citizens' Committee endorsed Mayor Harry Cater in his bid for re-election. The reasons prescribed for the Citizens' Committee endorsement, in all cases, were the experience of the candidates and their advocacy of civic economy.

1922 proved to be a disastrous year for labour as even pro-labour Alderman Grantham, was defeated in this first city-wide

election, despite the fact that he polled some 1,400 votes. Their MLA had been defeated, their slate of aldermanic candidates had been annihilated, their opposition to the city manager form of civic administration had proven to be inconsequential," and, by successfully promoting the abolition of the ward system, they had doomed even their own Alderman Grantham to defeat. Those euphoric days which had followed the successful Civic Employees Union strike in April, 1919 and the wild celebrations which had accompanied A. E. Smith's history-making election in 1920 seemed so distant now. The old order had yielded — but, oh, for such a brief moment.

The city's financial crisis, which had followed in the wake of a soaring tax rate (from 25 mills in 1918 to an unprecedented 40 mills in 1921), had resulted in a pre-occupation with the need for reduced taxation and civic economy. A. E. Smith had been, in part, a political victim of this pre-occupation and, in fact, the political process as a whole suffered. In both 1923 and 1924, the incumbent aldermen were re-elected with only a minimum of interest being expressed, both in terms of the number of candidates and in electoral response." The community's obsession with the need for economic retrenchment had both defeated and discouraged labour candidates to the extent that they abandoned the political field until the second half of the decade.

In contrast to labour's declining political fortunes, the farmers movement remained the predominant political force within Manitoba for the next few years and Robert Forke, the MP for Brandon was an extraordinarily significant political figure as a result. Forke, who had declined an invitation to head the newly-formed farmers government in the province," had succeeded T. A. Crerar as national leader of the Progressives late in 1922.⁴ As a result, Brandon was represented in the House of Commons by a national party leader for the first time in its history.

The success of Forke and the farmer-Progressives, however, created a political dilemma for both the Liberals and the Conservatives. How could they dispose of this threat to their political future? The possibilities were several. While Prime Minister Mackenzie King was extremely anxious to cooperate or coalesce with the Progressives, the Manitoba Liberal executive, as a result of their 1922 provincial election defeat by the farmers, were

determined to fight the Progressives at every opportunity. They proposed, therefore, to nominate former premier Norris to oppose Robert Forke in Brandon." Although the Conservatives were most inclined to challenge the Progressives in electoral battle, they were prepared to abandon Brandon if a Norris-Forke confrontation would generate a number of three-party contests in which the Conservatives could win by "slipping up the middle." However, due apparently to Mackenzie King's personal intervention," Brandon Liberals did not oppose Robert Forke in 1925 and three-way fights were largely avoided.

As the Liberals had declined to oppose Forke, the Conservatives nominated a 61-year-old candidate who was, in many ways, his political opposite. **D. W.** Beaubier had emigrated to the Souris area from Perth County, Ontario, in 1882. After having farmed and worked as a CPR trainman, Beaubier had moved to the city where he became well known for his war record overseas" and as a popular hotelman. Unlike 1921 when they had selected a rural resident and a farm leader, the Conservatives had deliberately selected a Brandon resident in order to poll the city vote. That Brandon vote, however, constituted slightly less than 40 per cent of the total constituency electorate.

In reality, this political drama in which town and country met in battle was staged twice within 11 months in that the results of the 1925 general election were so politically inconclusive that a second election was necessary. In that 1926 election, however, the "understanding" that had previously existed between Forke and local Liberals was formalized as Brandon's incumbent MP was nominated separately but officially by both the Progressives and the Liberals." The open and frequent participation of prominent Liberals such as T. C. Norris, Premier Charles Dunning of Saskatchewan, and James Gardiner, Saskatchewan's Minister of Agriculture, in Forke's 1926 campaign further attested to the extent of the political merger. Finally and symbolically, the "new order" yielded to "the old" when Robert Forke lamely declined T. A. Crerar's offer to campaign on his behalf on the grounds that there were no suitable locations available at which the former Progressive leader could speak. Although Robert Forke maintained the facade of being a Progressive, the farmers were clearly returning home to the Liberal fold by 1926. Mackenzie King's strategy was succeeding.

Brandon Conservatives in both 1925 and 1926 won the battle and lost the war as the Conservative nominee swept the city polls in each instance only to discover that Robert Forke had carried the rural sector and, hence, the election." Why did Brandon residents vote for Beaubier rather than for Forke in these two elections? First of all, the Conservative nominee, unlike his opponent, was a Brandon resident who was supported by the openly partisan **Brandon Daily Sun**. Although politicians could never quantify the political value of friendly newspapers, they agreed on their desirability. For example, T. A. Crerar explained that the Conservatives' political difficulties in Manitoba were largely due to the lack of support of a large daily newspaper." The former Progressive leader furthermore accredited Liberal and Liberal-Progressive successes in Manitoba in 1926 to the return to the fold of the **Manitoba Free Press**.' Manitoba's former premier Rodmond P. Roblin also attributed Conservative failures in that same 1926 election to newspapers: "Public meetings are not as popular as they were 25 years ago, too many automobile and pleasure seekers these days and only leaders can get an audience. They (the voters) take their politics from the newspapers. . . . It is a waste of money and effort to run conservative candidates without a newspaper in Manitoba."" If newspaper support was as crucial as Roblin and Crerar contended, the political bias of the **Sun** may help explain why Brandon electors voted Conservative, especially in 1926 when much of English Canada was reverting to Liberalism. Brandon Conservatives thus enjoyed a double advantage in these two contests — the advantage of a popular, local candidate and the political support of what was now the city's only daily newspaper.

Although Brandon's ethnic voters totalled only several hundred (i.e., an estimated 900 in 1943), a bloc vote of that proportion could be crucial in a closely fought contest. The Conservatives devoted considerable attention to what they obviously considered was a "swing" vote in 1925 as Joe Jaworski, Carl Korsky, Fred Barousky and Mike Holowicz were added to Beaubier's election committee. Andrew Bojarski, speaking publicly on Beaubier's behalf, even accused Forke of duplicity in that his pro-labour speeches made while campaigning on "the Flats" were allegedly contradicted by statements made elsewhere in the riding." This appeal for the ethnic vote apparently succeeded as T. A. Crerar

later observed that the "Ruthenian or Galician vote in a great many districts went almost solidly Tory."

The question of Brandon's self-interest was also stressed as the Sun repeatedly warned that third-party members such as Forke could do nothing for the riding. This same newspaper, nevertheless, simultaneously damned the local member for the fact that a much-desired Mounted Police barracks had not been constructed in the city." Although the "third-party" argument was hardly relevant during the 1926 campaign when Forke had been nominated officially by both the Progressives and the Liberals, the Sun persisted by accusing Forke of being "so involved in intrigues and quarreling . . . at Ottawa that he has never been able to consider . . . the interests of Brandon."⁵⁵

The state of a party's organization can, in a close contest, spell the difference between victory and defeat and the Brandon Conservatives had undergone a substantial, and probably significant, change in local leadership. A new and enthusiastic generation of party activists including H. A. McNeill, C. C. Mitchell, R. L. McQuarrie, E. C. Whitehead, F. R. Longworth and J. M. Donaldson had organized a Young Conservative Club in March, 1926, which maintained an exceedingly active political and social program throughout the summer. The weekly dances which the Young Conservatives held were a rather curious revival of pre-war partisan social activity. They were, in addition, significant evidence of a substantial and energetic party organization which would become politically relevant once the campaigning began.

Finally, and in specific reference to the 1925 results, it must be remembered that the majority of Brandon city electors who voted Conservative were very much in step with English speaking Canada as Arthur Meighen's party made a remarkable political recovery, except in Quebec. In fact, the Conservatives, in 1925, won more seats than the Mackenzie King Liberals. Unhappily for them, their success was belatedly and inadequately rewarded as Meighen's 1926 government survived for only a few days.

Why then did the Conservatives, having won the city, not succeed in carrying the constituency? Although Arthur Meighen complained that Beaubier would have been elected in 1925 had not the Liberals falsely accused the Conservatives of planning to amalgamate the two railway companies," the crucial factor in both

elections was the decision of Brandon Liberals not to oppose Robert Forke. Had the Liberals opposed Forke, Dave Beaubier would have won the seat and the informal Liberal-Progressive alliance which maintained Mackenzie King in office, despite his substantial loss in seats in 1925, would have been destroyed. Arthur Meighen himself was also partly responsible for the failures of his party in the 1926 election. Meighen insisted that the customs scandal which had brought down the Mackenzie King government in late June, 1926 was the principal, if not the only, issue. The evidence suggests, however, that the voters grew weary of the scandal after a period of time and that they were more concerned with self-interest issues, such as who had done what for whom and how recently? While Mackenzie King would be deliberately vague when discussing such lesser (as Meighen perceived them) topics which permitted King's audience to interpret his statements according to their wishes, Arthur Meighen was honestly, if not foolishly, forthright. Meighen did promise to complete the long awaited Hudson Bay Railway and to provide the necessary port improvements but (and that was the rub!) only if the total costs were not to exceed a specific sum. While Dave Beaubier did not mind his leader's "rather weak stand" on the Hudson Bay Railway, a proposal with which he did not agree, the Conservative candidate specifically blamed his 1926 defeat on Meighen's adamant opposition to another favourite western issue, the Crow's Nest Pass Rates Agreement."

The 1926 federal election marked the end of an era, the era of the Progressives, the era of the farmers revolt. Robert Forke, the national leader of the Progressives, had been re-elected in 1926 as a Liberal-Progressive and, a week later, he was appointed Minister of Immigration in Mackenzie King's Liberal administration. Three years later, the one-time rebel would be appointed to the Senate. The farmers had returned to the fold. The "old order," having of necessity "yieldeth" a little, had, in the end, devoured the new. Oh, Senate! Where is thy sting?

Although 1926 marked the disappearance of the predominant segment of the farmers movement from federal politics, labour rather curiously began to demonstrate signs of political rejuvenation in that very year. As an example, two unofficial labour candidates stood unsuccessfully for the school board elec-

tions in 1926** and three Independent Labour Party (ILP) aldermanic candidates were nominated and elected in 1927.

Why, after several years of political activity, did labour now renew its interest in direct political involvement and why was it successful? There are several possible explanations. The city's population, including presumably the size of the working class, had recovered in recent years, from a 1918 low of 14,012 to a 1926 total of 16,800. The number of trade union locals was expanding in direct correlation with gradually improving economic conditions so that there were 25 trade unions represented in Brandon by 1926. A 1926 amendment which permitted Brandon municipal electors to vote for up to five aldermanic candidates, however, probably contributed the most to labour's success at the aldermanic levels. Unless there was a full slate of five labour candidates, pro-labour voters, in the past, had been compelled to vote for, and thus help elect, rival candidates. As a result of the 1926 amendment, labourites could plump for the candidates of their choice as in the 1927 aldermanic elections when ILP aldermanic candidate Harry Spafford, a CNR locomotive engineer, placed second with 2,178 votes while fellow ILP aldermanic candidate, H. Roy Davis, a railway conductor, was a remarkably close third with 2,126 votes. Labour was also able to capitalize upon a number of by-elections in the 1927-28 era which had effect of enhancing the political significance of labour's core vote due to the fact that there was normally less interest in such by-elections. As an example, William Hill, a CNR engineer and the first of the ILP candidates to be elected to council, was successful in a February, 1927 aldermanic by-election even though he polled only 1,681 votes, a total which roughly corresponded to labour's core vote in the immediate post-war era.

1927 proved to be a landmark in labour's political history as the ILP by year's end had captured three aldermanic seats. The re-emergence of labour as a political force at the municipal level may have contributed to the defeat that same year of Alderman George Dinsdale, one of Brandon's more prominent politicians. Dinsdale, an ex-mayor and a future MLA, had traditionally made an open appeal for labour's support. The prominent Salvation Army officer, however, trailed badly in the aldermanic field of seven and one suspects that his reduced support may have been due to the appearance of more genuine labourites and to plumping.

The success of the ILP municipally in 1927 led directly to the formation of the Young Citizens' League that same year. While the latter body professed to be representative of all sectors of the Brandon community, its leadership consisted essentially of active Conservatives such as H. A. McNeill, John Allen and C. C. Mitchell. Although the Young Citizens' League contended that its primary purpose was to commemorate Canada's 60th anniversary, to promote Brandon and to encourage a greater interest in civic affairs, it did nominate F. R. Longworth, a young businessman and the president of the Young Conservatives, to oppose William Bain, a local postal clerk and the ILP nominee, when another aldermanic by-election occurred in July, 1928. As only one-third of the eligible voters went to the polls, labour's core strength was sufficient to elect Bain by a vote of 1,137 to 998. The ILP, as of mid-1928, held four aldermanic positions on city council. Control of that council lay within labour's grasp.

Obviously encouraged by the result of the February, 1927 by-election, the ILP nominated the victor, Alderman William Hill, to represent them in the 1927 provincial election. The ILP alderman's candidacy, and that Mayor Harry Cater, who was a self-designated Bracken supporter, would test presumably whether or not political support was transferable from one political level to another.

Dr. J. H. Edmison, the third nominee, based his campaign for re-election upon his record as an Independent who had supported the Bracken government in most instances. The popular medical practitioner also claimed that he had voted more frequently with Labour MLA's than he had with either the Liberals or the Conservatives. By emphasizing those occasions in which he had supported the government, he hoped to emasculate Harry Cater's pro-Bracken candidacy. By demonstrating his historic affinity with other Labour MLAs and by orchestrating a series of accusations to the effect that the ILP nominee was "Winnipeg dominated," Edmison clearly hoped to undermine William Hill's campaign. While the incumbent readily admitted that he was not a gifted speaker,^o he argued that Brandon, nevertheless, had benefitted directly as a result of his efforts. Paid holidays for the mental hospital staff and the construction of a new \$30,000 fair building would hopefully be valued more highly by his constituents than polished oratory.

It would appear as if Dr. J. H. Edmison understood his constituents well as he won easily in 1927 with 3,526 votes, even demonstrating surprising strength in the city's traditionally pro-labour east end. The late 1920s were good years economically and a combination of relative prosperity and Dr. Edmison's reputed popularity, evidently contributed to his 7.5 per cent gain in support. Despite the fact that William Hill had recently won an aldermanic by-election; that he was joined in his campaign by two well-known Winnipeg labourites, William Ivens, MLA and J. S. Woodsworth, MP; and that his pro-labour platform was exceedingly pertinent" the ILP alderman placed a very distant second. Certainly, Hill, with 1,288 votes, and Cater, with 489, were at a disadvantage in that they as municipal politicians had drawn their support from similar segments of the community." Furthermore, Hill may also have suffered from the fact that he was publicly regarded as being more "Red" than most labour candidates.⁶ Irrespective of the causes, William Hill and Harry Cater, whose combined total was 13.7 per cent less than A. E. Smith's in 1922, had demonstrated, by their failure, that political support was not readily transferable from one political level to another.

Subsequent developments indicated, in retrospect, that the ILP had, in actuality, reached its municipal political peak in 1927-28. For example, Alderman Hill was defeated in a 1928 aldermanic re-election bid by F. R. Longworth, a Young Citizen's League candidate and a prominent Brandon Conservative. Although ILP Aldermen Spafford and Davis were re-elected in 1929, William Hill again lost, both in a by-election and in the annual autumn contest. It must be noted, however, that Hill's political setbacks were obviously personal in part as his electoral support was consistently less than other ILP candidates such as Spafford, Davis and Bain."

An interesting feature of the political "roadblock" which the Young Citizens' League constructed to halt labour's advance was the nomination of philosophically conservative railwaymen to oppose ILP candidates. For example, B. L. Patterson, a CPR ticket agent who was supported by the League, led the field in the 1928 aldermanic elections while A. B. (Sandy) Patterson, a CPR *engineer*, was recruited to oppose William Hill in the September, 1929 aldermanic by-election. Patterson's victory in that 1929 contest

meant that railway men, including the ILP members, constituted one-half of the membership of Brandon's city council as the decade ended. Although labour did not now speak with a single voice, it remained an extremely substantial force within Brandon's municipal politics.

The emergence of both labour and the farmers as organized political forces had severely threatened the political hegemony of the traditional parties in the post-war era. Initially, both movements had done exceedingly well as the DLP captured the Brandon provincial seat in 1920 and the Progressives had easily won the federal constituency in 1921. Ironically, the political achievements of the DLP and its successor, the ILP, had frightened their opponents into an effective coalition: in the Fusionists who nominated Dr. J. H. Edmison in 1922 (and again in 1927), and in the Young Citizens' League which was organized in 1927. The response of the traditional parties to the farmers candidate was markedly different as the Conservatives concentrated on capturing the city vote by nominating a well-known Brandon resident while the Liberals, despite some differences of opinion, patiently attempted to woo Robert Forke back into the political fold. This courtship reached its culmination in the elevation of Brandon's MP to the Senate late in 1929, so that the seat could be opened for another one-time Progressive leader, T. A. Crerar. Although Crerar wisely maintained the facade of being nominated separately by both the Progressives and the Liberals, it was clearly evident that the farmers "revolt" in the Brandon constituency had ended several years before. "The old order" had been confronted dramatically by both labour and the farmers in the early 1920s but the supremacy of the traditional parties had been fully restored, except in the area of municipal politics, by that decade's end.

FOOTNOTES

1. Brandon Daily Sun. December 17, 1902.
2. Ibid., November 17, 1911.
3. Ibid., December 10, 1914.

4. Labour, however, had scored another noteworthy victory, albeit of a different nature, earlier that year as east end voters had decisively rejected a proposal which would have exempted a \$170,000 addition to A. E. McKenzie's seed plant from municipal taxation for 20 years. Despite the fact that ward one stood alone in opposition to what had become a rather standard exemption, they succeeded in denying the proposal the required 60 per cent "yes" vote. *Ibid.*, May 28, 1918.
5. *Ibid.*, November 22, 1918.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Civic authorities had dismissed the president-elect and the secretary-elect of the would-be union for "economic" reasons!
8. **Brandon Daily Sun**, May 27, 1919.
9. A late November decision of council to restore the seniority of all civic employees who had voluntarily returned to work (*ibid.*, November 25, 1919) was obviously designed to divide labour on the eve of the elections.
10. A. E. Smith, **All My Life** (Toronto 1949), 42.
11. Richard Allen, **The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-28** (Toronto 1971), 74.
12. Smith, **All My Life**, 48.
13. The Rev. Mr. Salter was reported to have stated that labour was willing to accept the Grain Growers' platform "provided that they will give them sufficient guarantee that they will carry out in full their plank of proportional representation." PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 2, file 13, 001020, ? to Meighen, December 23, 1919.
14. The first ballot results were as follows: A. E. Smith, 23; W. Hill, 17; R. T. Smith, 14; H. Bartholomew, 14; W. Webb, 9; A. E. Skeene, 7; H. Cater, 5; Alderman F. E. Carey, 4; Alderman J. A. G. Grantham, 3; and R. Crawford, 1. **Brandon Daily Sun**, April 28, 1920. Smith, who was in Calgary organizing another People's Church at the time of the nomination, wired his acceptance, after his second ballot victory, even though he assumed that a labour candidate could not win that Brandon constituency. Smith, **All My Life**, 63.
15. The Conservatives frequently complained that Clement's only contribution in his five years was the Dower Act and even that

piece of legislation had required amendment within a year to ensure its effectiveness.

16. Brandon Daily Sun, May 8, 1920.
17. Ibid., June 21, 1920.
18. Ibid., June 28, 1920.
19. Manitoba Free Press, June 26, 1920.
20. Brandon Daily Sun, June 26, 1920.
21. Ibid., July 6, 1920. Several observers noted there were fewer female voters registered for the 1920 provincial election than there had been for the 1917 federal election. Winnipeg Evening Tribune, June 28, 1920. Undoubtedly, the emotionalism of the conscription issue in 1917 had encouraged a massive registration at that time.
22. The proposals themselves were not particularly startling. Labour candidates proposed a free public library, supervised playgrounds, abolition of the ward system, proportional representation, an eight hour day, and the municipal ownership of the light and power system. Brandon Daily Sun, November 17, 1920.
23. "Most of them had already subscribed to the Farmers Election Fund. . . . (The farmers' movement) is on a different basis than the old Patrons of Industry, and its commercial success in the Grain business provides it with the necessary cash to finance its paper the 'Guide'. . . I . . . understand that about \$6,000.00 was collected in the Brandon riding." PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 62, 53239-40, A. E. Hill to A. Haydon, January 17, 1921.
24. Brandon area Liberals, it was rumoured, would enter the contest directly if Forke were not the Progressive nominee. Brandon Daily Sun, October 6, 1921.
25. Forke's previous association with the Patrons of Industry may well have been the only "black mark" associated with his candidature. He reportedly had disappointed many farmers when he, after losing the Patrons of Industry nomination in 1908, had failed to support the successful nominee. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 188, 151155, Dafoe to Sifton, January 17, 1909.

26. PAC, A. K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, Crerar to A. K. Cameron, October 6, 1921.
27. PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 23, file 61, 013252, John T. Haig to Meighen, December 7, 1921.
28. PAC, A. K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, A. K. Cameron to Crerar, September 12, 1921.
29. Mackenzie King did not even send the customary "thank you" letter. PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 62 53258-59, A. E. Hill to King, December 8, 1921.
30. "It is hard to know who our friends are now . . . many who were with us last December are now working either for Grit or UFM." PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 101, file 103, 058015, Chas. E. Ivens to W. A. Boys, June 20, 1922.
31. W. I. Smale, the manager of the Provincial Fair and Exhibition Association, withdrew in favour of Dr. J. H. Edmison. Although Cater subsequently announced his intention to stand as an Independent, he withdrew on the eve of the election. Manitoba Free Press, July 10, 1922.
32. Interview with J. H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973.
- 33. Brandon Daily Sun**, May 31, 1922.
34. Ibid., June 7, 1922.
35. For example, R. T. Smith, the man who had placed second to A. E. Smith at the nominating convention, publicly declared that the MLA did not truly represent him. Ibid., June 14, 1922.
36. Although A. E. Smith was not yet an avowed Communist, he was reportedly regarded by many as being "Red." Interview with J. H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973.
- 37. Brandon Daily Sun**, June 22, 1922.
38. Brandon electors endorsed a proposal for a city manager form of government in 1922 by a relatively close vote of 1,753 to 1,559. The argument in favour of the proposal was that this system would produce a more business-like (and economic) form of civic administration. Although the community was divided on the issue, the conservative business community was the major proponent and the least enthusiasm was demonstrated in the city's north and east ends, the working-class sector. The decision to establish such a system seems to be further evidence of conservative strength in 1922.

39. In 1923, one William Bridgen did join the incumbent aldermen in filing nomination papers but this well-intentioned citizen subsequently withdrew in the face of a public protest against this "unnecessary" and "costly" election. **Brandon Daily Sun**, November 26, 1923. In 1924, seven aldermanic candidates did stand: however, the 28 per cent of the electorate who went to the polls re-elected the incumbents without much hesitation. *Ibid.*, December 1, 1924.
40. **Winnipeg Evening Tribune**, July 20, 1922.
41. While many observers would subsequently express their reservations about Forke's capabilities, Clifford Sifton applauded his selection: "I have the greatest respect for his character and his capacity. I have no doubt that he is the ablest man in the party." PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 209, 163251, Sifton to Dafoe, November 13, 1922.
42. PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 115, 98104, F. C. Hamilton to King, January 31, 1925.
43. T. A. Crerar estimated that the Conservatives would win 12 to 15 seats in Manitoba if there were three-cornered fights throughout the province. PAC, A. K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, Crerar to A. K. Cameron, August 11, 1925. There were, however, only five three-way contests in 1925 and the Conservatives did win four of them. The Progressives won the fifth. J. M. Beck, **Pendulum of Power** (Scarborough 1968), 183.
44. "I am wondering if it would not be well for you personally to see Mr. Forke and let him know of the pressure which was brought upon you to oppose him personally, and the extent to which we both exerted our influence to avoid such a step." PAC, M. King Papers, J1 series, 103245, King to T. C. Norris, November 23, 1925.
45. He attained the rank of Colonel. **Brandon Daily Sun**, July 29, 1926.
46. Forke's open association with the Liberals did predictably exact a price: "Some of the Conservative Progressives are going back to the fold — my giving support to the King Gov't. (sic) provides a convenient excuse." QUA, T. A. Crerar Papers, ser. HI, box 107, R. Forke to Crerar, August 11, 1926.

47. Ibid., box 120, R. Forke to Crerar, August 29, 1926.
48. In 1925, Forke polled 54.2 per cent of the vote to win 6,411 to 5,428. In 1926, he polled 53.8 per cent of the vote to win 8,267 to 7,101.
49. PAC, A. K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, Crerar to A. K. Cameron, September 26, 1925.
50. Ibid., vol. 34, Crerar to A. K. Cameron, September 15, 1926.
51. PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 144, E104(2), 087993-94, R. P. Roblin to Meighen, September 16, 1926.
52. Brandon Daily Sun, October 28, 1925.
53. PAC, A. K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, Crerar to A. K. Cameron, October 31, 1925.
54. It had been suggested that the barracks would provide a local cash flow of \$120,000. Brandon Daily Sun, October 6, 1924.
55. Ibid., September 13, 1926.
56. Ibid., August 12, 1926.
57. PAC, R. B. Bennett Papers, vol. 491, 306623, D. Beaubier to Bennett, November 24, 1934.
58. William Henry Marlott, who had previously been defeated as an aldermanic candidate, was a CPR shopman. Robert John Bullard was a CPR blacksmith. Brandon Daily Sun, November 16, 1926.
59. Mayor Cater's critics denied, however, that he was a "real" member of the Bracken team. Ibid., June 25, 1927.
60. " 'I don't waste any of your money down there making speeches,' said Dr. Edmison. He had regretted when he first went down to the legislature that he couldn't speak better, but after sitting in for a while, came to the conclusion that more speakers talked themselves 'out' of propositions, than 'in' to them." Ibid., May 13, 1927.
61. Hill's appeal was aimed directly at the city's working-class vote as he advocated collective bargaining, workmen's compensation, the right to picket, one day's rest in seven, the public ownership of all utilities, and public control over natural resources. Ibid., June 10, 1927.

62. Brandon voters cast a preferential ballot for the first time in 1927 but the fact that Dr. Edmison received a majority of the first preferences meant that second preferences were not examined. Therefore, how many Cater supporters preferred Hill as a second choice (or vice-versa) cannot be determined.
63. Interview with J. H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973.
64. That personal factors were obviously of great significance was also evident in the failure of a third ILP nominee, Russell Mummery, to poll a vote comparable to the other ILP candidates in 1928.

VI

Harry Cater: Brandon's Most Successful — But As Yet Unrecognized Municipal Politician

Many of Brandon's municipal politicians and several of the community's leading families have been honoured by those who name the city's streets, schools and parks. In this manner, the names of Clement, Magnacca, Fotheringham, Patmore, Reid and Curran have been perpetuated **within the Wheat City. That such individuals should be so recognized seems immensely fitting; that the political accomplishments of Harry William Cater, the man who served the community as mayor for an unprecedented 18 long years and who established a Dominion-wide record by doing so,' remain uncommemorated and virtually unknown (except to his contemporaries) is unpardonable.** Two very related questions immediately arise. Why was this **man** so extra-ordinarily successful and why **did** that success not lead, in turn, to the community recognition that one would normally expect?

Born in Whittington, Norfolk, England on December 4, 1869, young Harry Cater — having received only three years of formal education — emigrated to St. Thomas, Ontario, at age 18. In 1889, Cater moved to Brandon where, within four years, he began the **well-known pump manufacturing business in which he remained** active until his death. In 1907, Harry Cater married Miss E. J. Heal, a union which subsequently produced two sons and three daughters. While his family was obviously an important part of his life (as evidenced by the fact that the hours spent at home were strictly "family time"), Cater's private and political worlds were apparently kept quite distinct.`

Cater's early community involvement was probably not atypical of his fellow businessmen. He was a prominent member of the Congregational Church; his diary entries record that Sunday was reserved for church attendance (twice, perhaps three times a day) where he frequently, as lay minister, delivered the sermon. Later, he was active both in the Red Cross and the Returned Soldiers Association. In addition, his name was frequently associated with the local Liberal party, at least until the war years when his political affiliation became obscured. Finally, he, like many of his fellow businessmen, displayed an interest in municipal politics.

Harry Cater, however, differed from many other members of Brandon's business and professional class who displayed an equally active interest in their community's political life. Cater, who had only four to five employees, was a relatively small businessman. His economic livelihood, moreover, was not dependent upon the city's growth and development as the market for his firm's pumps extended throughout the prairies. It is evident both in the nature of the community organizations to which he belonged and in his personal diaries that Harry Cater was not part of Brandon's commercial and social elite and that fact may help explain both his political attitudes and the subsequent reaction of that elite to him.

Although Cater's political record was unexceptional by most standards in 1913, the year in which he first stood for the mayoralty,³ he was unique in that he assumed the role of self-appointed voice of the working man. For example, he strongly criticized the decision of Brandon council to reduce the wages of 300 city-employed labourers arguing that the burden of the 1913 recession was being disproportionately placed upon the shoulders of the working man. Cater, furthermore, advocated a "fair wage" clause in civic contracts and a five-and-one-half day work week.⁴ The predominant issue in this 1913 mayoralty election, however, was the fact that the local tax rate had doubled during the past year and, as a result, Brandon had the highest property tax rate of any municipality in Western Canada.⁵ Brandon voters had to choose between Cater, a small businessman and the opponent of reduced civic wages, and Alderman J. H. Hughes, a big businessman (who employed 100 men) and an advocate of reduced taxation. Cater predictably trailed badly in the central business sector and, thus, lost the election.⁶



Harry Cater

Manitoba Archives

Despite the fact that he had incurred his third defeat in five attempts, Harry Cater never questioned his commitment to public life. Cater, who stood again in 1914 against Alderman John A. McDonald, a local merchant and the chairman of the finance committee, capitalized upon the fact that taxes had been raised (rather than reduced) and that other alleged financial misdeeds had occurred. The mayor and council had authorized an "expertly" conducted civic survey, "a huge and costly joke" which only Alderman Cater had originally opposed. Several hundred electors had been disfranchised due to a costly "mix-up" in the voters' list and, finally, there was a growing disenchantment with the recently inaugurated street railway system which continued to incur a deficit. The Brandon Sun which had opposed Cater, the "working class" candidate, in 1913 now applauded the ex-alderman as a diligent worker with "sound business reasoning." Although Cater indignantly denied that he was "a Rosser Avenue candidate," the former voice of the working man pragmatically promised to give business "its fair share." The fact that Harry Cater increased his vote by 46.5 per cent and, by doing so, won a decisive victory^o demonstrates clearly that he had been accepted, for the moment, by the all-important business community.

Cater's first four years in the mayoralty office coincided with the war years which contributed significantly to his political success. When Cater warned that a policy of civic economy and retrenchment would be necessary "while the war lasted," it was difficult, if not impossible, for the patriotic to oppose him. One suspects that Mayor Cater's 1915 re-election (and that of the aldermanic candidates) by acclamation was a result, at least in part, of the war and a perceived need for unity even though the Sun applauded the acclamations on the grounds that the mayor and aldermen had provided good government.

This wartime harmony, however, was disrupted in 1916 by two controversial and divisive proposals; that the city relieve the local YMCA of its heavy debt load and that Daylight Savings Time should be established. In both cases, the issues somewhat divided the city along class lines although Mayor Cater's own stand was inconsistent if measured in those terms. The YMCA proposal was supported by the Sun and the city's most prominent businessmen but Cater and the working class opposed this scheme which, in the



Western Canada Pictorial Index, University of Winnipeg

Brandon's **City Market, Tenth St. near Victoria Ave., 1913.**

words of the mayor, was designed "to save A. E. Mackenzie and a few of his (business) friends." On the other hand, 80 per cent of the labouring class allegedly supported Daylight Savings Time while local businessmen and the mayor did not, which led a spokesman of the working class to denounce Cater as "one of the greatest friends of corporation in the city (although) he had been elected by the votes of the working men." The emergence of a new war-related issue in the latter stages of the 1916 mayoralty election campaign, however, conveniently distracted the electors' attention from such divisive topics. At an east-end meeting, mayoralty hopeful Alderman Dr. J. F. Fisher was asked to indicate how much money he had donated to the Patriotic Fund" and the Returned Soldiers Fund? Although Fisher angrily charged that the mayor had planted someone to ask this "contemptible" question in a deplorable attempt "to exploit the war in the present election," the alderman's heated assertion that his family had sacrificed as much as any other was probably inadequate as Mayor Cater won a very one-sided victory."

Without doubt, the conscription crisis, the formation of the Unionist government and the wartime election were the principal political concerns of most Canadians in 1917. This was equally true for Mayor Cater who became heavily involved in federal politics at the local level. As a mayor in his third term, he was inevitably considered to be a possible candidate for higher office.' That Cater polled only six of the 168 votes cast on the first ballot at the local Unionist nominating convention suggests, however, that he was only a token candidate. As that meeting failed to reach agreement, Harry Cater, as mayor of the predominant community within the federal constituency of Brandon, subsequently convened a meeting of all the mayors and reeves within the constituency to plan a subsequent "win the war" nominating convention. It was that second convention which selected Dr. H. P. Whidden of Brandon College to be the Unionist candidate.

Mayor Cater had played a well publicized role in this important, and largely unifying, wartime election which significantly coincided with the annual 1917 municipal elections. It is not surprising, therefore, that many Brandon electors concurred with Cater's assertion that municipal election contests were undesirable' that year due to the "wartime crisis." As a result, Brandon's Mayor Cater was re-acclaimed in 1917, just as he had been in 1915.

There would be no such acclamation for Cater in the last year of the war as conditions changed dramatically. Labour unrest became more pronounced as Brandon letter carriers went on strike briefly in mid-year, despite the wishes of their national executive. A local proposal to ban the sale of land for tax arrears in 1918 was angrily rejected as a "Bolshevicki ideal." Relations between aldermen and the mayor deteriorated to such an extent that the **Sun** concluded that "the Mayor's attitude towards civic business is the chief hinderance under which the city struggles." In contrast to the preceding war-induced political lull, the 1918 mayoralty election was fought with an uncharacteristic ferocity.' The fact that A. R. McDiarmid, a member of an established family, a major businessman and the current president of the Board of Trade,' was elected primarily by the business vote" suggests that Mayor Cater and his penchant for civic economy was no longer tolerable to Brandon's business and professional class in the important post-war re-development era."



Manitoba Archives

George Dinsdale

Those who had hoped that the 49-year-old ex-mayor would retire after this defeat were severely disappointed as he stood once again in 1919 against George Dinsdale, a younger copy, in many ways, of Harry Cater. This "political boy-wonder," as the Sun described him, had been born in Yorkshire, England, in 1887. Leaving school at age 13, Dinsdale had worked as herdsman until emigrating to Ontario in 1904 where he found employment as a farm labourer. A few months later, he migrated to Western Canada; to Elbow, Saskatchewan; to Carberry; and, finally, to Brandon. After having studied telegraphy at night school while he worked as a carpenter, Dinsdale, at approximately 20 years of age, started his own local cartage firm. Simultaneously, the young businessman became an exceedingly active Salvation Army lay worker, a commitment which contributed substantially to the Sun's image of Dinsdale as one "whose life from youth up has been an open book."

This mayoralty election was conducted amidst the aftermath of the intensive labour unrest which had characterized the first six months of 1919. While both mayoralty candidates made a determined appeal for labour support, The Confederate, which was published by the Brandon Trades and Labour Council in conjunction with the Dominion Labour Party, attacked Dinsdale as a "well disposed" man who had unwittingly become the "subservient agent" of the "moneyed" class." The Sun, without question, favoured Dinsdale over Cater in 1919 as the latter's "cheese-paring tendencies" were regarded as being unsuitable leadership characteristics for the anticipated post-war expansion and development era. Although Cater polled the identifiable labour vote, Dinsdale won the pro-development business vote. While neither candidate belonged to Brandon's commercial elite, Dinsdale was, for the moment, the most acceptable to that body and he, as a result, had triumphed."

By 1921, changes in economic conditions and political attitudes had paved the way for Harry Cater's successful come-back bid: in fact, his victory in that mayoralty election launched what proved to be the second stage (i.e., an uninterrupted decade as mayor) in the saga of Brandon's most successful municipal politician. It was during these 10 years that Mayor Cater established himself as a political institution, the man who was seemingly



Alderman Fred Young eventually beat Harry Cater for the mayor's chair.

unbeatable. Wherein lay the explanation for this decade of unequalled success: in his policies, in his personal characteristics, in his political skills, in the nature of the community which he governed, in the prosperity of the era, or in a combination thereof?

Certainly Cater's repeated emphasis of the need for civic economy and reduced taxation was politically popular during what had proved to be a post-war recession. Taxes had risen sharply during Dinsdale's two-year term^o and the growth in the city's bank over-draft (due to the declining percentage of tax collections) had become a matter of considerable civic concern. The fact that Cater did substantially better in the pro-business central sector of the city than he had in 1919 suggests that "development" had proved to be too costly. In the words of J. H. Donnelly, a subsequent opponent, much of Cater's political appeal could be explained by the presence in the city of many "retired farmers (who favoured) keeping down taxes, there was your railroad men (who favoured) keeping down taxes, and I suspect there was a few damned tight businessmen on Rosser Avenue that did the same thing and he (Cater) wasn't beatable really."³¹

Mayor Cater immediately set the tone for this new administration by declining his \$1,200 salary due to the financial crisis. Some civic positions were abolished while other departments suffered cutbacks in personnel; a general 12½ per cent reduction in civic salaries was implemented; a proposal to return the street cars to the barns was considered; and the current school board budget was slashed by a total of \$42,000. Although the latter economy led to a 25 per cent reduction in teachers' salaries and the 1922 "teachers' strike," Harry Cater succeeded in remaining politically above the fray: in fact, he assumed the role of arbitrator between the teachers and the school board." When the 1922 municipal elections occurred, Mayor Cater — now enjoying the endorsation of both the **Brandon Sun** and a pro-business Citizens Committee" — swept all the city's polls, except the city's north-end ethnic area which George Dinsdale captured.

Another principal characteristic of Cater's mayoralty, and one which contributed to his success, was his pronounced tendency to portray himself as the tribune of the people. One Harry Chalmers, having been in a recurring dispute over the amount of taxes levied against his farm property which was located within city

boundaries, sought to have his property transferred to the neighbouring RM of Cornwallis. The facts were indeed confusing (as the dispute extended back in time to 1905) but Mayor Cater became so convinced of the merits of Chalmers's appeal that he appeared before a committee of the provincial legislature in opposition to the city's official delegation consisting of local aldermen and the city manager.³⁴ The results of that dispute were not as significant as the heroic image which emerged of Mayor Cater standing alone on behalf of the lowly individual and subsequently his widow against "the local establishment."

Much of Cater's political strength was due to his unusually strong convictions. In the words of one member of his family: "If he had made up his mind that anything was right he never moved, you just couldn't argue with him."³⁵ While there were numerous instances in which the mayor peremptorily declared unwelcome council motions out of order or ruthlessly exercised his power of veto, the contentious and lingering dispute between the mayor and the Salvation Army best illustrates the significance of his determination to maintain his position to the last possible moment. In 1918 council had agreed to pay \$100 per month to the Salvation Army to act as the city's relief agent. In 1926 the city solicitor had questioned whether council had the legal authority to make financial grants to such civic organizations. Although the aldermen were unanimous in their desire to continue this arrangement on an interim basis pending receipt of the definitive opinion of the relevant provincial authorities, Mayor Cater employed every tactic available to him to prevent the further payment of such funds to this organization with which political rival George Dinsdale was so heavily involved. On one occasion, after his veto had been unanimously over-ruled, he withdrew to the spectators' gallery from where he frequently interrupted proceedings.³⁶ In other instances, turbulent meetings were abruptly adjourned. When the city solicitor's legal opinion was not in the mayor's favour, Cater attempted in vain to secure that gentleman's dismissal. Although the mayor did ultimately authorize such payments in anticipation of a court ruling requiring him to do so,³⁷ Cater, with the occasional support of one or two aldermen, had successfully thwarted council on this issue for over a year.

Mayor Cater demonstrated a comparable sense of conviction (or stubbornness depending on one's opinion) in his relationship with City Manager A. W. Ellson Fawkes. Within a relatively short period of Fawke's appointment in early 1924, the mayor and city manager had become engaged in a struggle for power and recognition." The differences were numerous. Mayor Cater, who had been appointed to the Manitoba Power Commission in mid-1924, was a determined advocate of the provincially-owned system and a constant critic of the American-owned Canada Gas and Electric Company which had been servicing the Brandon community. This latter company had offered to buy and operate the city-owned but deficit-ridden street railway system (provided that the company's power contract with the city was renewed). Mayor Cater, however, vehemently criticized the company's assessment of the street railway's salvage value, an assessment which the city manager believed to be generous."

The proffered rival bids (to provide Brandon with power) and the ensuing debate were of such a complex nature that it is difficult in retrospect to determine conclusively which arrangement would have been most advantageous to the community. That the city was deeply divided — i.e., the mayor and labour versus the Sun and many of the city's leading businessmen — is clearly evident. At the request of council, City Manager Fawkes publicly expressed his preference for the local company's proposal and, by doing so, widened the gap between himself and the mayor. As the city manager was, on occasion, extremely indiscrete in his remarks, as when he publicly referred to the mayor's "puny knowledge", the conflict could not be easily resolved. While the mayor's frequent threats to abolish the very position of city manager went unfulfilled, Cater ultimately triumphed in late 1928 when Fawkes resigned to accept a position as city commissioner in Moose Jaw. Harry Cater had again demonstrated the political significance of his unwavering determination to persevere.

The strength which Cater enjoyed as a result of such perseverance was reinforced by the powers of office. As mayor he enjoyed the tactical advantage of being able to postpone or prolong decisions if it were to his advantage. When City Manager Fawkes resigned, several aldermen urged that the position be immediately advertised. Cater — with the assistance of the Independent Labour

Party aldermen — succeeded in delaying that decision until the city manager's job description was again debated and a plebiscite held to re-determine whether the public still supported this management system. Although it was agreed that this plebiscite be scheduled for March, 1929, the poll was postponed until the legislature approved certain amendments which would facilitate a debenture vote being conducted at the same time. A further delay resulted when the mayor suggested that the divisive question of the most appropriate stand pipe for the city water works system should also be presented to the electors." When it was subsequently agreed to postpone the stand pipe issue until the regular fall election, the mayor proposed that the as yet unresolved "power question" be placed on the ballot. The need, however, for more information on the Power Commission's latest proposal necessitated a postponement of the previously announced August 2 date. Then, to the consternation of his critics, Mayor Cater concluded, in late 1929, that the decision on the re-appointment of a city manager was solely council's responsibility and, hence, there should be no plebiscite after all. When council re-endorsed the city manager system by a 6-3 vote, Mayor Cater vetoed that decision on the grounds that the proposed expenditure could no longer be justified. Although council nullified Mayor Cater's veto, an ILP organized petition bearing the names of 940 Brandonites who were in opposition to the city manager system was presented to a suddenly hesitant council. There then arose a new and time-occupying question of whether the city could legally conduct plebiscites, an issue which required a referral to the legislature. When it was determined that ratepayers alone were entitled to vote on plebiscites which could lead to the expenditure of funds, plans were made for an autumn 1930 plebiscite, a proposal which Mayor Cater attempted, this time in vain, to postpone at the last moment on the grounds that the voters were going to be confused by the five questions on the ballot. Some two years after Fawkes' resignation and at a moment of growing economic crisis, the city manager proposal was finally brought before the electorate in late 1930 and rejected." Perhaps Mayor Cater's delaying tactics had been unnecessarily extended but they had clearly been successful.

Despite the fact that Mayor Cater was frequently in conflict with various community interest groups during this decade, he

was clearly and carefully in step with public opinion on most of those occasions." While he had strenuously opposed the American-owned Canada Gas and Electric Company's power proposal and, consequently, those businessmen, aldermen and the Sun who had supported it, the subsequent vote of local ratepayers verified that Mayor Cater in promoting what he described as "cheap power" was expressing the majority view." Even in the instance of the city manager system of administration, Mayor Cater's increasingly constant criticism of that administrative structure was eventually affirmed by the electorate, for whatever reason, in late 1930. While his unbending and unequivocal public positions may have infuriated many of the city's leading citizens, Brandon's veteran mayor was clearly in accord with the masses — if not the elite — and that was a safe place for a politician to be in the increasingly democratic post-war era.

The initial months of the Depression curiously had little impact upon Harry Cater's political career. Although the Sun was frequently critical of the city's financial over-drafts (as Cater preferred to increase the city's debt rather than raise local taxes) and in spite of the newspaper's allegation that the mayor was a "dictator," there was little public response. When Alderman F. R. Longworth, Cater's 1930 mayoralty opponent, loudly proclaimed that the mayor's recalcitrant refusal to pay in full the newly-established municipal commissioner's levy was costing the city dearly, as the Bracken government was reducing its relief payments to Brandon proportionally, "many voters remained unconvinced." In spite of the emerging Depression, city ratepayers voted to continue operating the deficit-plagued street railway system" and they quietly acquiesced to the decision to re-establish annual salaries for council members, a practice which had been abandoned in 1922." In fact, the 1930 mayoralty election in which Mayor Cater easily defeated Alderman Longworth suggests that nothing had yet changed in Brandon. The voters obviously had accepted Cater's assertion that Brandon remained "financially strong."^o

What, then, happened in 1931 to end Mayor Cater's unprecedented 10-year record of successful mayoralty elections? The Depression had certainly become more serious as demonstrated by a 12-month increase of 871 per cent in the number of local families on relief." Mayor Cater's campaign against the municipal corn-

missioner's levy had ended in failure when Brandon had lost its case before the Manitoba Court of Appeal and the mayor's prestige had undoubtedly suffered as a result. The city's over-all financial position had also become much more precarious. The 1930 deficit of \$384,770 had proven to be much larger than anticipated, due to an excessively optimistic estimation of tax revenues.' When Brandon sought authorization to refund a portion of its long-term debt which was due in 1931, provincial officials strongly recommended the cancellation of the street railway service. Although Mayor Cater now supported this proposal (as the ratepayers subsequently did as well"), he could no longer claim, as he had just a few months before, that Brandon was "financially sound."

The unprecedented interest in municipal politics which was evident in 1931 — both in the fact that some 600 people attended the organizational meeting of the anti-Cater Brandon Progress Association and in the unprecedented number of ballots cast — was presumably a direct response to these changed conditions. As a result, Ed Fotheringham, an ex-alderman and a prominent businessman, easily defeated Brandon's veteran mayor by a vote of 4,003 to 2,358.

Harry Cater's uninterrupted decade in the mayor's chair had finally ended. He had, it would appear, been defeated by the Depression. Why, then, was he surprisingly re-elected just two years later? As Cater's own vote had declined (from his 1930 total) by only 5.3 per cent, his core support obviously remained essentially intact. When the anti-Cater forces nominated the considerably weaker Alderman F. H. Young in 1933 in lieu of Mayor Fotheringham who had decided to retire, Harry Cater re-emerged as the predominant political force by default. The controversial dispute with the Bracken government over the municipal commissioners levy which had stimulated much of the anti-Cater sentiment in 1931 had faded into the past." The fact that the Depression continued unabated lessened, to some degree, the likelihood that Cater's fiscal policies were primarily responsible. Therefore, for a variety of reasons, Harry Cater was returned to office in 1933 in a vote that was so reminiscent of the 1928 mayoralty contest with the same Fred Young that a student of elections, should he simply compare

the results, might never suspect that Brandonites were in the midst of the Depression."

The middle years of the 1930s spelled political doom for several prominent Canadian office-holders. Brandon's Mayor Cater was surprisingly able to escape the wrath of the voters in 1935, on the very eve of the city's financial collapse, for several reasons. The discontent of the many unfortunate relief recipients was primarily directed at that unfortunate alderman who headed the city's relief committee. In 1934, veteran Alderman James Giddings, the ill-fated chairman of the moment, finished last in a field of seven, while Alderman J. Glen Grant, who would have the dubious honour of replacing Giddings and thus becoming responsible for the distribution of relief assistance, would be similarly punished in 1936." Mayor Cater, who had already secured a reduction of one mill in the tax rate, recommended rather severe civic staff cut-backs and a reduction in staff salaries on the eve of the 1935 election, a proposal which was politically attractive to struggling taxpayers in that financially-troubled year. One suspects, however, that many voters viewed the 1935 election as being largely irrelevant due to the likelihood that a provincially-appointed financial administrator would soon assume all the responsibilities of local government." Under these circumstances, the question of whether Cater or the somewhat hapless ex-Alderman Giddings was elected was of little consequence, except to the extremely committed. Consequently, 2,417 fewer voters went to the polls in 1935 and the veteran mayor was the beneficiary."

The city's financial crisis reached a climax in early 1936. As the Bracken government chose to appoint a financial supervisor rather than a financial administrator, mayor and council continued in office, but with limited spending powers. Despite the fact that the most stringent fiscal policies were enforced, the city was compelled to forego the annual sinking fund payment and to default on the interest payable to its creditors in 1937."

The 1937 mayoralty campaign marked the end of the Harry Cater era. This man, who had occupied the mayor's chair for all but two of the last 16 years, was inevitably held politically accountable for Brandon's financial collapse. The Cater of old would have directly and effectively counter-attacked, nevertheless, when the Sun asserted that his economic policies, rather than the

Depression, had caused the city's financial crisis. Instead, this 68-year-old municipal politician, who had been uncharacteristically absent from the office due to illness during 1937,⁶⁰ launched a well-publicized but futile attack on local Communists who were allegedly seeking control of Brandon's local government." Such obvious scare tactics were not convincing. Sadly, many of the faithful had even become doubters, as demonstrated by the fact that Cater's support in 1937 declined sharply to 1,300 votes. Ironically, Mayor Cater was defeated by the same Alderman Fred Young whose challenges he had so easily turned aside in 1928 and 1933.⁶²

Harry Cater had suffered defeat on numerous other occasions but he, ever persevering, had repeatedly stood again — until he had been rewarded by success. In keeping with his character, Cater twice more stood for office, as an aldermanic candidate in 1938" and as a mayoralty candidate in 1939.⁶⁴ The defeat of 1937, however, proved to be enduring: it could not be overcome by perseverance alone.

Harry Cater: the personification of the successful municipal politician? Certainly Cater's unprecedented number of years in office suggests that he had discovered the formula for political success. As an active community member and as a successful businessman, Cater personified the typical municipal politician in the pre-war era. While his emphasis on civic economy and retrenchment was misguided in the minds of those who visualized the city's future in terms of growth and development, his preoccupation with low taxation was applauded by those many Brandonites — such as the retired farmers, small businessmen and wage earners — who did not foresee themselves as the beneficiaries of costly tax-supported "progress." When Harry Cater championed the cause of the working man or the "little guy" as in the Chalmers case, many electors were able to identify with his struggles against the allegedly self-serving interests, whether such interests were big business, the professional community or the Sun. Although Cater frequently abused his powers of office when he acted in a dogmatic and often dictatorial manner, he succeeded in portraying those who opposed him as members of that same "selfish" elite. It was Harry Cater's political perseverance, however, which distinguished him so clearly from his contemporaries and contributed substantially to his unequalled success: he had wearied neither of success nor of failure.

Brandon's veteran mayor was eventually conquered by two forces with which he could not contend — the city's financial collapse and the passage of time. Ironically, the memory of this most extraordinary municipal politician now grows dim as that elite which he combatted so successfully has secured its own revenge by simply ignoring his remarkable, but admittedly controversial, career. Commemorated or not, the unparalleled success of this extraordinary politician can not be denied in that he, for 18 years, personified the political wishes of a majority of those Brandon electors who went to the polls. To deny Harry Cater his due reward is to deny the validity of the political process.

FOOTNOTES

1. **Winnipeg Free Press**, April 3, 1945.
2. Interview with Mrs. Ruth Tester, June 14, 1978. Mrs. Tester is Harry Cater's oldest daughter.
3. Cater lost his initial aldermanic contest in 1902 but a subsequent by-election victory (over James Giddings) in 1908 provided him in essence with a three-year term as all candidates were re-elected by acclamation the following year. However, Cater was forced by a new residence requirement to vacate his ward five seat in 1911 and, subsequently, he was defeated in ward two. Ward five consisted of that portion of the city south of Victoria Avenue. Ward two constituted the area lying between 6th and 9th streets and north of Victoria Avenue. This ward, while lightly populated (with 684 electors), did, in conjunction with ward three, "take in the entire business area of the city, and therefore the heaviest taxpayers." **Brandon Daily Sun**, November 19, 1912.
4. Alderman J. H. Hughes, his opponent, did not feel that this proposal was yet practical. **Brandon Weekly Sun**, November 27, 1913.
5. *Ibid.*, November 27, 1913.

6. Cater narrowly won both ward one, the so-called working class area east of 6th street and north of Victoria, and ward five, where the city's travellers mostly resided (Brandon Daily Sun, December 18, 1912). He, however, lost the three wards in the central area of the city quite decisively. Ibid., December 25, 1913. Due to plural voting which remained in effect until the abolition of the ward system in 1922, those who owned property in only one ward were at a distinctive disadvantage.
7. Ibid., December 8, 1914.
8. A new electoral list had been prepared at considerable expense under Alderman McDonald's direction. However, the list was subsequently declared to be invalid due to a failure to publish it sufficiently in advance of polling day. As a result, a previous (and out-dated) list was of necessity used. Ibid., December 8, 1914.
9. Ibid., December 5, 1914.
10. Cater polled 1,590 votes to Alderman McDonald's 860. Ibid., December 16, 1914.
11. Ibid., December 11, 1915.
12. Cater, in turn, was accused of attempting "to set class against class." Ibid., February 22, 1916.
13. Ibid., December 12, 1916.
14. The Patriotic Fund was established in 1914 to support voluntarily those families who were in need as a result of their breadwinners having enlisted.
15. Brandon Daily Sun, December 19, 1916.
16. Cater polled 1,131 votes to Alderman Fisher's 481. Ibid., December 20, 1916.
17. Cater, who failed to secure nomination as a Dominion Labour Party candidate in 1920, did seek election to the Manitoba legislature both in 1927 (as a self-designated Brackenite) and in 1932 (as an Independent) and — according to rumour — he considered standing for labour in the 1921 federal election (ibid., October 21, 1921) and in opposition to T. A. Crerar in the 1930 federal by-election in Brandon as an "unofficial Conservative." QUA, T. A. Crerar Papers, Ser. II, Box 81, T. A. Crerar to T. Wayling, January 9, 1930.

18. Cater and two veteran aldermen were elected by acclamation — J. B. Curran in ward two and Murdoch McKenzie in ward three. **Brandon Daily Sun**, December 1, 1917.
19. *Ibid.*, September 17, 1918.
20. *Ibid.*, April 16, 1918.
21. The **Sun published** a page one "notice" in which one "Khater" (a play on the word Kaiser?) proclaimed for himself "all rights and privileges of homestead and pre-emption, including squatter rights to the position of Mayor of the City of Brandon." *Ibid.*, November 22, 1918.
22. A. R. "Reg" McDiarmid was a partner with John Clark in a major manufacturing and lumber business while Dr. John McDiarmid, his father, had been mayor of Brandon for five years, 1892-94 and 1899-1900.
23. Ward one (i.e., the railway vote) opted for Cater by 205 votes to 78. Wards two and three — traditionally viewed as the businessmen's sector — voted (in total) for McDiarmid by 540 votes to 285. **Brandon Daily Sun**, November 30, 1918.
24. One unusual feature of the 1918 municipal election was the fact that it occurred in the midst of the infamous Spanish flu epidemic. Meetings had been banned and those under quarantine were denied their vote. *Ibid.*, November 28, 1918. Therefore, the fact that McDiarmid had a strong "get out the vote" organization while Cater reportedly had none may have been quite consequential. *Ibid.*, November 28, 1918.
25. *Ibid.*, October 29, 1919
26. *Ibid.*
27. **The Confederate**, November 27, 1919.
28. **Brandon Daily Sun**, November 22, 1919.
29. Cater won the ward one poll by a vote of 245 to 106, whereas he lost ward two by 272 to 179 and ward three by 254 to 136. Wards four and five were divided equally. *Ibid.*, November 29, 1919.
30. The tax rate in 1918 — the last year of Cater's mayoralty — was 25 mills; it had increased to 30 mills in 1919; to 35 mills in 1920; and to 40 mills in 1921. *Ibid.*, March 22, 1949.

31. Interview with J. H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973. J. H. Donnelly as an alderman in the late 1920s was in virtually constant conflict with Mayor Cater.
32. *Brandon Daily Sun*, May 19, 1922.
33. Cater had promised, during the campaign, that "if I am elected mayor . . . your taxes will not go up." *Ibid.*, November 22, 1922.
34. *Ibid.*, March 24, 1926. Mayor Cater, who had completed only three years of formal education, was a dedicated and knowledgeable student of municipal law.
35. Interview with Mrs. Ruth Tester, June 14, 1978.
36. The Sun which described this action as that of a "peevish boy" was hereafter a constant critic. **Brandon Daily Sun**, October 27, 1926.
37. *Ibid.*, December 22, 1927.
38. The Sun, for example, attributed the city's improved financial position at year end in 1924 to the city manager system of administration. *Ibid.*, December 20, 1924.
39. The Canada Gas and Electric Company had offered \$50,000 whereas Cater contended that the system, which had cost \$440,000, was worth \$185,000. *Ibid.*, February 12, 1925. After several months debate, the local power company withdrew its offer **and** many subsequently blamed Mayor Cater for the fact that the street railway system thus remained as a civic liability. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, February 12, 1925.
41. *Ibid.*, May 22, 1929.
42. The ratepayers voted 1,341 to 799 against this system of administration. *Ibid.*, October 29, 1930.
43. The only public issue in which Cater was on the losing side during this decade was a 1928 temperance referendum. However, while he committed himself wholeheartedly to this campaign, he maintained a significantly low profile and, as a result, he stood to lose less as a result.
44. The Canada Gas and Electric Company's proposal was overwhelmingly defeated 861 to 128. **Brandon Daily Sun**, August 12, 1925.

45. The overdraft for 1923 (i.e., before the city manager system was instituted) was \$308,000 but it had been reduced substantially thereafter. However, the overdraft for 1929 of \$293,000 was again an increase over the 1928 total of \$260,000 (i.e., the last year of the city manager system). *Ibid.*, September 17, 1930.
46. The province had doubled this charge upon the municipalities in an apparent effort to "pass on" the increased costs of old age pensions. Cater argued that the constitutionality of this decision should be determined by the provincial government prior to the collection of the levy. *Ibid.*, June 29, 1929.
47. Perhaps many believed — as Mayor Cater contended — that immigration was the chief cause of current unemployment. *Ibid.*, July 15, 1930.
48. The margin in favour of continuation was quite decisive (i.e., 1,319 to 794), in spite of an estimated loss of \$51,000 for 1930. *Ibid.*, September 24, 1930.
49. Mayor Cater would receive \$1,200 per annum, the aldermen \$300 each. *Ibid.*, July 22, 1930.
50. *Ibid.*, October 27, 1930.
51. In August 1931, there were 272 families on relief in Brandon whereas only 28 families had been so supported in August, 1930. *Ibid.*, September 5, 1931.
52. *Ibid.*, January 31, 1931.
53. Ratepayers by a vote of 1,421 to 791 decided to put the street cars "in the barns." *Ibid.*, June 3, 1931. However, this decision was subsequently reversed by council.
54. The city had quietly agreed to pay the levy soon after Mayor Fotheringham had acceded to office. *Ibid.*, February 13, 1932.
55. In 1933 Cater polled 55.6 per cent of the vote as he defeated Young 3,124 to 2,491 (*ibid.*, November 29, 1933) whereas he had won in 1928 with 57.3 per cent of the total vote. *Ibid.*, November 28, 1928.
56. Alderman Grant also placed last in a field of seven, trailing even Giddings who had attempted in vain to recover his aldermanic post. *Ibid.*, November 20, 1936.

57. The Hon. E. A. McPherson, the provincial treasurer, remained hopeful that council could cope with its growing financial crisis although tax revenues were markedly lower while relief costs continued to accelerate. *Ibid.*, August 13, 1935.
58. Cater polled 2,369 votes to Giddings's 829. *Ibid.*, November 27, 1935.
59. *Ibid.*, February 27, 1937.
60. *Ibid.*, November 2, 1937.
61. School board candidate S. Forkin was an avowed Communist but fellow candidate D. L. Johnson was not.
62. Young, with 2,095 votes, polled 50.4 per cent of the total. Cater, with 1,300 votes, was second while Alderman Dr. P. C. Hughes, with 765 votes, was third. *Brandon Daily Sun*, December 1, 1937.
63. Cater placed seventh with 1,290 votes as an aldermanic candidate (which was 10 less than his mayoralty vote in 1937). *Ibid.*, November 30, 1938.
64. The incumbent Mayor Young easily won re-election with 3,145 votes while his principal challenger James Kirkcaldy polled 1,373 votes. Harry Cater was a weak third with 645 votes. *Ibid.*, November 29, 1939.

VII

The Surprising Impact of the Depression Upon Provincial and Federal Politics in Brandon

The Depression, for many, is the account of dust storms, drought, soup kitchens, hobo jungles, 38 cents-a-bushel wheat, and two-cents-a-pound beef. The Depression was the era of Social Credit led by the legendary William Aberhart and of the newly-formed CCF which later came to power in Saskatchewan. The Depression also constituted the death-knell for two federal governments, Mackenzie King's in 1930 and R. B. Bennett's in 1935. Curiously, the Depression's impact on provincial politics in Manitoba was both less dramatic and less evident as Premier John Bracken managed to survive by forming a series of coalitions. The impact of the Depression upon politics in Brandon was even more surprising as it was the parties on the right which were most successful. Although the newly-born CCF were clearly a product (in part) of the Depression, their lack of growth during the 1930s was surprising while their precursor, the Independent Labour Party, actually lost political ground.

The Depression era began with an abnormal amount of political activity as both a by-election and a general election were conducted in the Brandon constituency in 1930, although only the latter was contested. Prime Minister Mackenzie King had deliberately "opened" the Brandon constituency by appointing the Hon. Robert Forke to the Senate so that T. A. Crerar, the former leader of the Progressive party, could re-enter politics as a Liberal cabinet minister. Crerar, who was perhaps the most thoughtful, fair-minded and astute politician of that era, had been born in Perth County, Ontario in 1876. His family had moved west to relocate near Russell in 1881. Having been engaged **first** as a

teacher and then as a farmer, the 32-year-old Crerar was appointed president and manager of the newly-formed Grain Growers Grain Company in 1906. When that company merged with its Alberta counterpart, T. A. Crerar was elected president of the resultant United Grain Growers (UGG), a position which he retained until he was recruited by Prime Minister Robert Borden to become Minister of Agriculture in the Unionist cabinet in 1917. Disappointed by the Unionists' failure to reduce substantially their protective tariff policy upon the war's completion, Crerar had led a small handful of dissident MPs to the "cross-benches" and, eventually, into the Progressive party. For reasons that remain somewhat obscure, Crerar had resigned his position as national leader of the Progressives in late 1922 (to be replaced by Robert Forke) in order to return to private life. Crerar returned to politics as a Liberal cabinet minister in late 1929 under very tenuous circumstances. The Mackenzie King government was encountering disturbing economic difficulties for which T. A. Crerar would inevitably be held accountable. He, as a non-resident of the Brandon constituency, would experience even additional difficulties. Whether the other parties decided to concede the subsequent mid-February by-election to Crerar due to the unfavourable winter weather or whether they were saving their political "ammunition" until the general election is not certain.' In any event, that general election came quickly.

As in 1921, three candidates contested the Brandon riding in July, 1930. In addition to the so-called old-line parties, labour made its initial venture into the federal arena by nominating the first woman to seek election to the House of Commons from this constituency. Beatrice Bridgen, the ILP nominee, had been educated in southwestern Manitoba and at Brandon College prior to becoming an itinerant Methodist lecturer. Distressed by the failure of her church to respond to economic and social needs, she had become an activist in both A. E. Smith's Peoples Church and the local labour party. Although no one expected that Bridgen could win this election, both Crerar and the local Conservatives believed that a labour candidate would hurt the Conservative cause in that she would divide the protest vote. In fact, the Conservatives suspected that local Liberals had engineered Miss Bridgen's candidacy for that very reason.'



Thomas Alexander Crerar, 1945.

Manitoba Archives

There were, nevertheless, several factors which provided Brandon Conservatives with an initial advantage in 1930. The national Conservative party was well prepared for this campaign, primarily as a result of the vast sums of R. B. Bennett's personal wealth which had been expended for organizational purposes.' Manitoba Conservatives were encouraged (and motivated) by the Conservative victory in neighbouring Saskatchewan in 1929.' T. A. Crerar had also made many enemies during his extensive career and he brought that political baggage with him into this contest. Many farmers were critical of Crerar's record of rather lukewarm support for the Wheat Pool, for his previous opposition to the Canadian Wheat Board, and for his role in the 15-year-old Home Bank failure.' Crerar, furthermore, was well aware of the fact that his status as a parachute candidate was politically damaging in Brandon where several Tory imports had failed in the past. In fact, he doubted whether any outsider would carry the Brandon constituency in a general election.'

Although the Hon. T. A. Crerar was a prestigious (and potentially powerful) cabinet minister, he, as a government member, was also politically accountable for the Depression. The fact that several hundred local railwaymen (who normally comprised nearly nine per cent of the city's labour force') were unemployed in 1930 (due to the 1929 crop failures') would surely hurt a Minister of Railways and Canals who was opposed by a labour candidate. Depressed grain prices and the importation of duty-free New Zealand butter were also vital issues in the rural portions of the constituency' for which only the Liberal candidate could be blamed.

Although Dave Beaubier swept the city polls in 1930 (as he had in both 1925 and 1926), the key to his electoral success were the substantial gains which he made in the more populous rural sector. As a result, Beaubier decisively carried the Brandon constituency with 8,512 votes to Crerar's 6,452. Beatrice Brigden, with 1,331 votes, trailed the field.'" Although Beaubier subsequently attributed his victory solely to the political leadership skills of his leader (admittedly in a letter to that same individual)", that was a diplomatic, but inaccurate, analysis of the results. Beaubier had carried the city on two previous occasions (prior to R. B. Bennett's election as the national Conservative leader) only to lose to the



David and Mrs. Beaubier

incumbent Forke. That Forke's "retirement" would be significant had been forecast by a Manitoba doctor-politician who had travelled extensively throughout the province in 1929 sampling public opinion for the Liberal party: "We must have Mr. Forke to run in Brandon or we will most certainly lose that seat." The fact that Forke's successor was an outsider who prophetically forecast his own defeat was obviously significant as well." Finally, the stock market crash, rising unemployment, depressed grain prices, the importation of New Zealand butter and the continued alienation of the Ukrainian vote combined, in Crerar's opinion," to cause the Liberal government's defeat in general and presumably Crerar's in particular.

Brandon was experiencing severe economic problems by 1932. The numbers on relief had been rising dramatically," the city's bank over-drafts were growing at an alarming rate' while the community could only "stumble along" attempting to resolve such perpetual problems as the deficit-ridden municipally-owned street railway.' In comparison with other Canadian cities, however, Brandon was in a relatively advantageous position. While 20 per cent of Greater Winnipeg and Regina were on relief, only 10 per cent of Brandon required such assistance" in that election year. Local Imperial Oil sales, another economic barometer, had increased since the previous year" and crop conditions looked relatively good," a vital economic factor in an agricultural market centre like Brandon.

Manitoba politics had entered into a new phase in 1931, on the eve of the 1932 provincial election, when the Liberal party had agreed officially to enter into a coalition with the Progressives on the assumption that a strong, non-partisan government would be able to cope more effectively with the Depression!" "Straight" liberals who opposed the coalition and who were headed by J. E. McMurray and Fred Hamilton, however, hoped to field several candidates, including one in Brandon." Manitoba Conservatives, despite the wishes of Prime Minister R. B. Bennett,' had likewise refused Bracken's invitation to join the coalition.

Buoyed up by the results of the 1930 federal election, Brandon Conservatives believed that a provincial victory lay within their grasp and, hence, they had begun preparing for the next provincial election immediately upon the completion of the federal



J. E. Matthews won federally for the Liberals in 1938.



Judge S. E. Clement, MLA 1915-20

Manitoba Archives

election.²⁴ Poll meetings were even conducted to select delegates to attend the local nominating convention. The fact that four men stood for that nomination was surely a good omen for the local Tories. While George Dinsdale, the prominent businessman-community worker, had the most extensive experience in that he had served six years as alderman and two years as mayor," Brandon's best-known Salvation Armyist won the nomination only on the second ballot. He became, therefore, the first Brandonite to stand for election to the Manitoba legislature as a Conservative since 1915.

As the Conservatives were in power federally and the Liberals were members of the provincial coalitionist government, the Independent Labour Party was the only party which could not, in any way, be held accountable for the Depression. As many believed that the Depression was a tragic manifestation of the failure of the capitalist economic system, those such as labour who represented an alternative would likely be the beneficiaries of the economic crisis. The usually perceptive T. A. Crerar believed "that the Labour people where they run candidates will very considerably increase their vote . . . and I should not be surprised if they had six or seven members (as contrasted to three) when the election is over. "²⁵

Harry Spafford, who secured the ILP nomination over ex-aldermen Roy Davis and William Hill, had placed a strong fourth in the recent aldermanic elections with a sizable 2,616 votes. Having initially been elected to council in 1928 (a position which he would retain for 18 years), the 42-year-old CNR locomotive engineer was an active sportsman who was reported to have "a wide following, not only in Labour circles, but among the voting youths of the constituency." " The fact that Spafford would consistently outpoll his fellow ILP nominees throughout his extensive municipal career attests to his personal popularity and supports the suggestion that he was perceived to be considerably less radical than other ILP members.²⁶

David E. Clement, the coalitionist Liberal, was a former alderman, a former mayoralty candidate, and a member of one of Brandon's oldest and most distinguished families. A younger brother to Judge S. E. Clement (Brandon's Liberal MLA from 1915-20), David Clement, a graduate pharmacist, had established Clement Pharmacies in 1901 and, soon thereafter, he and his



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Beatrice Bridgen the Independent Labor Party candidate in the federal¹⁹³⁰ election of 1930.

brother began the construction of the Clement Block, one of the city's "cornerstones" for decades to come. D. E. Clement was also active, as was typical of Brandon's politicians, in numerous community organizations such as the Board of Trade, the church (i.e., First Methodist, now First United), the Provincial Exhibition Board, the Good Roads Association, the Shooting Club, and the Golf and Country Club.

Clement did not enjoy the united support of his party, however, due to the division between the coalitionists and the "straight" faction. Although some 150 people had attended a meeting to organize a "straight" or anti-coalitionist Liberal campaign in early 1932, no such candidate had appeared." As a result, some of those present, such as George Harris who chaired that particular meeting, encouraged Brandon's veteran mayor, Harry Cater, to make his second bid for provincial office which he subsequently did as an Independent Liberal."

The 1932 election results in Brandon were a curious anomaly in that the Conservatives gained Brandon (as it previously was represented by the Fusionist Edmison) in spite of the fact that their party suffered substantial losses elsewhere in the province. But why had Brandon voters elected an opposition member during a Depression era election, an era in which the city could hardly afford to be out of favour with the government? First, there was a strong anti-government vote (presumably as a result of the Depression) in 1932 as measured by the 4,221 first ballots cast for the two anti-coalitionists (i.e., Dinsdale and Spafford) and as contrasted with the 2,316 votes accorded the two pro-government Liberals (i.e., Clement and Cater)." Dinsdale (as a member of the largest anti-coalition party in the legislature) was most likely to benefit from this anti-government sentiment. Secondly, Dave Beau-bier had carried every Brandon poll just two years before and that he, unlike other Manitoba Conservative MPs, had campaigned actively and, in Prime Minister Bennett's opinion, effectively" on Dinsdale's behalf. Thirdly, the Conservatives, according to a local organizer, had, with the "invaluable assistance of the local paper, . . . convinced the electors that their interests would be taken care of better by a Conservative government." Had the **Sun** been so persuasive that some of its readers had concluded that the Conservatives would form the next government and that Brandonites should, therefore, vote "ministerialist"? Roy Watson, for one, believed so.



The Leech family

Cecil Leech, 1935 federal candidate represented a new Reconstructionist party.

Although local economic indicators had been described as hopeful on the eve of the 1932 provincial election, conditions deteriorated soon thereafter. While there was some seasonal fluctuation, relief assistance statistics, both in terms of the percentage on relief (i.e., 16 per cent)" and cost," continued to rise unabated. The combination of rising relief costs and declining tax revenues (due to the inability of taxpayers to meet their commitments") created such an immense cash shortage that the city, by 1935, was forced to consider the possibilities of bankruptcy, repudiation of its debts and the surrendering of financial control to the provincial government.

For the second consecutive election, the unusually large number of four candidates were nominated in Brandon in 1935. Dave Beaubier, the Conservative incumbent and the well-known proprietor of the Cecil Hotel, was entering his fourth election (having carried the city polls on each previous occasion). Although Beaubier had remained an undistinguished backbencher in Ottawa, Conservative leader R. J. Manion described him at the time of his death as a man of "great personal charm and quiet ability." J. E. Matthews, Liberal nominee and Beaubier's principal opponent, was an exceedingly popular retired insurance salesman. The third Brandon candidate was Cecil Leech, the young 28-year-old owner of a local printing firm. Leech had been nominated by the newly-formed Reconstruction party after James Turner, a prominent Carroll district farmer and the president of the Provincial Exhibition Board, had declined to stand." The fourth and only non-urban candidate was Justice area farmer, Harry Wood, who won the right to be the first-ever CCF nominee in this constituency. The fact that the farmer Wood had been selected over long-time ILP Alderman Harry Spafford suggests that Brandon area CCF, like their Saskatchewan counterparts, perceived the farm community to be their most likely area of potential support.

Local Conservatives were well aware of the dangers which lay ahead as they approached this Depression-era election. In fact, the local association had taken the unusual step of complaining directly to the Prime Minister in early 1934 about the party's inactivity." The national party was desperately short of both money and organizational activity (and there was, of course, a direct correlation between the two).⁴⁰ There was also evidence of an unusual degree of party conflict and at several different levels.



Rhoda Power Tenant, Brandon's first alderwoman, 1935.

Virden area Conservatives had organized at least one meeting in 1934 to which Beaubier, their own member, was deliberately not invited." The choice of Brandonite H. A. McNeill to succeed H. C. Hodgson as provincial Conservative president had badly divided the membership on the grounds that McNeil was not a resident of Winnipeg; that he was too closely associated with R. B. Bennett;" and that he was Roman Catholic, which reportedly disturbed many Orange Lodge members." The fact that there was a "Manitoba" vacancy in the Senate was also potentially divisive as both Dave Beaubier and fellow Brandonite H. A. McNeill were claimants." It was the Depression itself, nevertheless, which constituted the gravest threat to all Conservative candidates in 1935 as the nation would, in all likelihood, direct its frustration and its anger at the R. B. Bennett government. Beaubier reported, however, that local conditions were not as bad as elsewhere. While rust was destroying much of the west's wheat crop in 1935, the local hay crop was "excellent," oats and barley "fair." Consequently the area was "better off than a year ago we are fairly strong as diversified farming and feed has equal importance with wheat.""

As Colonel Dave Beaubier was not elevated to the Senate in 1935, the local Conservative association enjoyed the advantage of having an experienced campaigner and the incumbent as their candidate. Although he had never achieved any degree of national political distinction, Beaubier had served his constituents diligently throughout his term and his efforts had been complimented by the extensive and favourable reporting of the pro-Conservative Sun.

Local Liberals had predicted, early in 1935, that "the federal election in this constituency will be won or lost in the city of Brandon"" and that assessment proved to be quite accurate. Brandon had belonged to Beaubier in each of the three previous federal elections in which the local hotel keeper had been opposed by a non-Brandonite. The Liberals, by nominating J. E. Matthews, had chosen to fight the incumbent MP on his home territory on the accurate assumption that they would still retain the more heavily populated rural sector.

In those all important city polls, Beaubier outpolled his Liberal opponent by some 500 votes and, by doing so, secured his own re-election by the very narrow margin of 207 votes. There were several possible explanations as to why Beaubier was the only Manitoba Conservative to escape the 1935 debacle. Beaubier's pre-

vious successes in Brandon itself and the prestige that he enjoyed as the incumbent were obviously advantageous to him. He still enjoyed the support of the pro-Conservative Sun, an advantage of immeasurable significance. Beaubier's "get out the vote" organization may also have been a factor as 77 per cent of the Brandon vote (where Beaubier was strongest) was polled while only 73 per cent of the more numerous rural voters (who were most likely to vote Matthews) went to the polls. Dave Beaubier was also exceedingly fortunate that a substantial segment of the protest vote went CCF in 1935. Had the considerable support which Beaubier lost to the CCF candidate (whose vote exceeded that of his 1930 ILP counterpart by a whopping 155 per cent) gone instead to the Liberals, J. E. Matthews would have been the victor. Had Cecil Leech polled the Reconstruction party's Manitoba average of 5.9 per cent" (i.e., a total of 996 as contrasted with his 556 votes) and had two-thirds of those 996 votes been at the expense of the Conservative candidate," Dave Beaubier would have been listed among the casualties rather than the victors on election night. While the Depression, it would appear, had cost Beaubier some 2,000 votes (i.e., his 1935 vote of 6,575 contrasted with his 1930 total of 8,512), he was one of that corporal's guard of 40 Conservatives who narrowly escaped defeat in 1935.

Curiously but understandably, the 1936 provincial election in Brandon was significantly different in format from that of the recent federal election in that the campaign focused almost exclusively on the self-centred issue of which of three candidates could do the most for the city. Two of the three candidates were veteran politicians. Both George Dinsdale, the Conservative incumbent, and Harry Spafford, the CCF nominee, were entering into their second provincial election, Spafford having stood in 1932 as an ILP nominee. Dr. H. O. McDiarmid, the Liberal-Progressive nominee and the only novice in this provincial election, was not, however, inexperienced in civic affairs. A Brandon resident since 1909, one of the founding fathers of Kiwanis, a former alderman and mayoralty candidate, Dr. H. O. McDiarmid was a highly respected eye, ear and throat specialist. In fact, this past-president of the Manitoba Medical Association was a most typical representative of the business and professional class which so clearly dominated Brandon politics throughout its history.

While George Dinsdale, the Conservative incumbent, used the proverbial slogan "It's time for a change" in order to capitalize upon local discontent with the Bracken government's exceedingly unpopular two per cent wage tax," the Liberal-Progressive government candidate argued that "It's time for change in Brandon." The city had been represented on the wrong side (i.e., the opposition side) for too long and Brandon had suffered as a result. McDiarmid's election would, therefore, benefit the electors tangibly," an appeal in which Premier Bracken indirectly concurred." McDiarmid declared, moreover, that he alone of the three candidates could persuade Premier Bracken to repeal the controversial wage tax.

Harry Spafford, the CCF nominee, displayed an atypical interest in the outside world when he warned of the danger of war that hung over Western Europe and when he explained how such a war could be prevented by the abolition of the profit system. Although the CNR employee's campaign was also locally oriented in that the veteran alderman stressed his record of civic service and as he strongly opposed council's request for the appointment of an administrator, "the first steps towards a dictatorship in Brandon," Spafford's appeal to the self-interest of Brandon voters was less evident than that of his two opponents. And it was, as a result, less politically effective.

Having triumphed in 1932 in spite of substantial Conservative losses elsewhere in the province, the incumbent Dinsdale was expected to win re-election in 1936, especially in light of his party's strengthened position. That the Depression hurt the Bracken government was evident in the losses which it incurred (i.e., 16 seats) and in the Conservative gains (i.e., an additional six constituencies). In Brandon, Dinsdale, as expected, easily won re-election after the second choices on the transferable ballot had been counted. While Dinsdale (with 2,647 "first" choices on the first count) had gained 3.7 per cent in terms of his share of the total vote, McDiarmid (with 2,042 "first" count choices) had failed to equal the combined total of D. E. Clement and H. Cater in 1932. McDiarmid — like his colleagues elsewhere in the province who were suffering, in W. L. Morton's words, a "stinging defeat" — had suffered politically from the much-hated wage tax increase. But why did Harry Spafford poll only 1,300 votes in 1936 as a CCF candidate when he had polled 1,574 votes in 1932 as an ILP

nominee, especially when most observers believed the CCF to be the beneficiaries of the Depression?

Bearing in mind that a reduction in total votes cast in 1936 could account for only one-half of the loss, there appear to be three possible explanations for the reduced CCF vote. The fact that 66.9 per cent of those "first" choice Spafford voters (who indicated second choices on their transferable ballot) preferred Dinsdale to McDiarmid strongly suggests that both Spafford and Dinsdale were perceived as protest candidates. Some former Spafford supporters, therefore, may well have deserted Spafford for Dinsdale so as to express their protest more effectively. That Spafford badly trailed McDiarmid, the government candidate, in the city's three north-end polls may have been due, as Dinsdale subsequently charged, to the fact that the McDiarmid forces "bought" north-end votes with promises of government jobs at Shilo." There remains the slight possibility that some of Spafford's former supporters were frightened by the question of a common front with the local Communist party, although this issue did not receive a considerable amount of publicity."

Local economic conditions had improved substantially by the time of the 1938 federal by-election which followed upon the death of Colonel Dave Beaubier. The numbers on relief had been declining slowly but perceptibly since 1936, as had the costs of that relief. To be precise, there were 20.2 per cent fewer people on relief in July, 1938, than there were in July, 1935. Although the city's own financial structure had virtually collapsed in 1937 when Brandon had been unable to meet the interest and capital debts totalling \$190,424.04 which were payable that year, that financial crisis was not a federal political concern.

The Conservatives encountered nothing but difficulties in the 1938 by-election contest, commencing with the difficult task of finding a suitable successor for Dave Beaubier, their standard-bearer in the last four federal elections. As their new leader, Dr. R. J. Manion, declined to stand for any non-Ontario constituency and as George Dinsdale, the local Conservative MLA, was ineligible due to the federal mail contract which his firm held," the mantle eventually fell somewhat by default to George Beaubier, the late member's 34-year-old son. The party also encountered organizational and financial problems. Suggesting that they might be able

to raise \$500 locally, Brandon Conservatives had unsuccessfully sought an additional \$4,740 from the federal party as a minimum "to carry on."⁵⁹ They were, as a result, disappointed and depressed as the campaign began.

When you consider a constituency 36 miles by 72 miles long, containing 23,000 voters, and when you consider that the two men who knew the organization best — D. W. Beaubier and W. E. Taylor (a Brandon lawyer with political promise who was killed in an automobile accident) — had just passed away, and when you consider that we only had four weeks in which to organize, hold meetings . . . , frame advertising, and to do this with one organizer, from one committee room, you can well understand that it was almost an impossible task."

While Brandon Conservatives were pessimistic, the CCF were exceedingly hopeful on the eve of this contest. By-elections provide smaller parties with an excellent opportunity in that they can concentrate their meagre resources on the single constituency. The CCF's provincial organizer was confident that the party could win the seat due to the particularly depressed coarse grain prices which "have the farmers on their ear." Although the Manitoba CCF and the ILP were reportedly at odds due to the latter's desire to nominate separate candidates," two ILP aldermen, Harry Spafford and W. R. Webb, supported Justice area farmer Harry Wood in his bid for the CCF nomination so one assumes that that issue had been resolved locally.

One of the principal factors (as the results of subsequent federal elections suggest) in this 1938 by-election contest was James Ewen Matthews himself. J. E. Matthews, who had been born in Prince Edward Island in 1869, had moved to Brandon in 1911 where he became an exceedingly well-known insurance salesman. Active for several years in community organizations and in party ranks, the president of the Brandon federal Liberal association had come within 207 votes of winning the seat in 1935. The retired insurance salesman reportedly had devoted the next three years to "actively campaigning within Brandon City";" he, thus, enjoyed a distinct personal advantage in 1938. Furthermore, Matthew's personality was obviously a substantial political asset. Those who recall "J. E." inevitably do so with respect, admiration and genuine fondness. Matthews is described as a man who "knew everyone,"

would "help anyone," and, significantly, as a man who "had a good word for everyone he knew." J. E. Matthews obviously liked the people with whom he had resided for 27 years and they predictably reciprocated in kind.

The 69-year-old Matthews launched his parliamentary career in 1938 by defeating George Beaubier 6,580 to 5,600. Wood, the CCF candidate, trailed the field with a respectable 3,577 votes. Although the Conservative vote "held up" rurally where their promise of 20 cents more per bushel for wheat was a factor, Brandon itself, for the first time since the Sifton era, voted Liberal by a margin of 3,058 to 2,391 in 1938.

The losers, as one would expect, offered several explanations or excuses. They had experienced severe difficulties in attempting to refute the Liberal argument (which would be most effective in a by-election) that "it is better to elect a Government representative." Without the campaign funds which they had requested, the Conservatives could not compete with the Liberals, especially in the city's north end: "The north side of the City was very bad for us and we knew that it would be, because you have to have money in order to secure votes there. It is populated by Ukrainians and Poles." The unsuccessful George Beaubier explained the loss of his father's seat in somewhat similar terms: "Evidently their (sic) was too much money and too many jobs against us since the results indicate that the foreign and railway vote in the city of Brandon determined the defeat."⁶⁶

The explanation that J. E. Matthews's victory was solely attributable to Liberal money and jobs is unconvincing, especially in light of the fact that the CCF, who had neither money nor jobs to offer, also made marginal gains in electoral support. George Beaubier later conceded that it was only the less significant CNR vote (i.e., one-third of the railway vote) which was irrevocably "anti-Manion." There were also reports of internal division within the Conservative party as the "city" Conservatives were reportedly taking little or no interest in the campaign (as a result of the contested nomination?). The underlying explanation for the Conservative defeat in 1938, however, was the void which had been created by Dave Beaubier's death and by the fact that his son was not his father's political equal. George Beaubier was also at a disadvantage as he was opposition candidate facing an exceedingly

well-known and well-liked government candidate, who was engaged in his second campaign.

Although the Depression did not seem to affect the 1938 by-election results significantly, the newly-elected Liberal member was greatly disturbed by rumours of an autumn 1939 general election.

Should something happen (to) the western crop it would mean a psychology, perhaps difficult to analyze, but one that would express itself definitely CCF or Social Credit . . . Collectors are on every doorstep in the fall of the year . . . Here also unemployment is still quite bad."

Was the impact of the Depression to be feared more in a general election than in a by-election? Whether Matthews's fears were well-founded or not is impossible to determine as the outbreak of hostilities in September, 1939 meant that the anticipated "Depression era" election was postponed until early 1940 when it occurred instead as "the wartime election."

The outbreak of war in 1939 marked the end of the Depression era although the economic recovery would be neither immediate nor uniform. The Depression clearly had had an impact upon politics in Brandon, although not necessarily to the extent nor in the manner which one might anticipate. Although six (including Mrs. Rhoda Tennant, the wife of a CPR employee and Brandon's first alderwoman as of 1935) of the 10-member city council were railway people," neither the ILP nor the CCF had benefitted significantly as a result of the Depression. The ILP had peaked in pre-Depression 1928 when they had elected their fourth alderman and their membership on council had alternated subsequently between two or three. Significantly, none of the CCF candidates, provincial or federal, proved able to exceed the 1,574 "first choice" votes that Harry Spafford, as an ILP nominee, had polled in 1932. As Beatrice Brigden sadly observed in mid-1939, "the work (i.e., of the CCF) has gone very stale.'" One must conclude, therefore, that the Depression did not contribute substantially to the growth of the political "left" in Brandon. In fact, the reverse may be true, as the unemployed may have been encouraged to vote "ministerialist," to vote for jobs rather than for political principles.

While the 1930s has been appropriately entitled the Depression era, other and more traditional political factors remained

significant. The success of candidates such as Alderman Harry Spafford who consistently out-polled other ILP aldermanic candidates; Conservative MP David W. Beaubier, who won the city — but not always the constituency — on four successive occasions including his "miraculous" survival in 1935; and Conservative MLA George Dinsdale who outperformed his party by an obvious margin in 1932 and whose party prophetically feared that his Brandon seat would be lost upon his retirement attested to the significance of personal appeal in Brandon politics. The support of the pro-Conservative *Sun* undoubtedly contributed to Dinsdale's 1932 victory and to Dave Beaubier's survival in 1935 but the so-called power of the press was incapable of electing George Beaubier in the 1938 by-election. It must also be noted in conclusion that incumbents in Brandon are rarely defeated at the provincial and federal level, even during a Depression. Must the losers, therefore, wait impatiently for retirement or death to take its toll? The 1930s example would suggest so.

FOOTNOTES

1. The suggestion that the Conservatives had purposely allowed Crerar to win the February by-election by acclamation as he "was open to attack from so many angles that it would be a shame to waste it in a by-election" (PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 200, 171471-72, Wm. Iverach to Norman Lambert, June 18, 1934) is intriguing.
2. Queen's University Archives (QUA), T. A. Crerar Papers, ser. II, box 86, Crerar to A. K. Cameron, June 23, 1930.
3. The Tories were generally better organized and better financed throughout the country as a result of a portion of R. B. Bennett's personal wealth being used to assist the party. Manitoba's share, for the first ten months of 1929, was \$2,333.32. PAC, R. B. Bennett Papers, vol. 31, 175 22, 17543.
4. A Liberal observer contended that the victory for the Tories in Saskatchewan (where they now constituted the major party in a coalition ministry) had greatly boosted the morale of the Manitoba party. QUA, T. A. Crerar Papers, ser. III, box 119, Dr. E. D. R. Bissett to King, August 22, 1929.

5. Crerar and other UGG officials had allegedly been personally compensated for the shares in the Home bank which they had sold some 15 years before. It would appear, however, that the embittered assessment of the Liberal who complained that "Crerar is very much more of a liability than an asset to the party" (PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 200, 171471-72, Wm. Iverach to Norman Lambert, June 18, 1934) was an exaggerated response.
6. PAC, A. K. Cameron Papers, vol. 34, Crerar to A. K. Cameron, November 23, 1929.
7. **Census of Canada, 1931**, volume 7.
8. Whereas the railways had hired an "extra" 430 men locally by May, 1929, the companies had engaged only 18 men at a corresponding time in 1930. QUA, T. A. Crerar Papers, ser. II, box 86 Crerar to R. H. Cobb, June 5, 1930.
9. Ibid., box 87, Crerar to A. K. Cameron, July 5, 1930. Certainly local Conservative spokesmen, such as N. Whitby Kerr, capitalized on farmer discontent with the Liberal decision to permit the importation of duty-free New Zealand butter. **Brandon Daily Sun**, July 19, 1930.
10. The **Sun** subsequently concluded that Brigden's candidacy had hurt Crerar more than Beaubier. Ibid., July 29, 1930.
11. "You won the election, not me." PAC, R. B. Bennett Papers, vol. 491, 306623, D. W. Beaubier to Bennett, November 24, 1934.
12. QUA, T. A. Crerar Papers, ser. III, box 119, Dr. E. D. R. Bissett to King, August 22, 1929.
13. PAC, A. K. Cameron Papers, vol. 34, Crerar to A. K. Cameron, November 23, 1929.
14. PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 172, 147150, Crerar to A. Haydon, September 6, 1930.
15. In August, 1931, there were 272 families on relief in Brandon whereas only 28 families had been so supported in August, 1930. **Brandon Daily Sun**, September 5, 1931.
16. "The overdraft for 1923 (i.e., before the implementation of the city manager administrative system) was \$308,000 but it had been reduced substantially thereafter. However, the overdraft for 1929 of \$293,000 was again an increase over the 1928 total

- of \$260,000 (i.e., the last year of the city manager system). Ibid., September 17, 1930.
17. Ratepayers by a vote of 1,421 to 791 had decided to put the street cars "in the barns." Ibid., June 3, 1931. However, this decision was subsequently reversed by council.
 18. M. Horn, "The Great Depression: Past and Present", **Journal of Canadian Studies**, Vol. XI, February, 1976, 42.
 19. PAC, R. B. Bennett Papers, vol. 491, 307022, D. W. Beaubier to Bennett, June 6, 1932.
 20. "In the Brandon Federal Constituency, where on the whole the farmers are fairly prosperous, the question of farm products did not enter into the question, because the district is well settled and many have been through worse and much harder times during the past 50 years than they are encouraging at the present moment." Ibid., 307023, D. W. Beaubier to A. W. Merriam, June 20, 1932.
 21. PAC, M. King Papers, vol. 190, 161951, King to Crerar, January 16, 1932. However, T. A. Crerar, Brandon's ex-MP, did not join that government as King had urged.
 22. Ibid., 161954, Crerar to King, March 8, 1932.
 23. PAC, A. K. Cameron Papers, vol. 34, Crerar to A. K. Cameron, January 18, 1932.
 24. The Conservatives won 11 of Manitoba's 17 seats in 1930 including Brandon where David Beaubier won all of the city polls.
 25. Two of the four nominees, C. C. Mitchell and Fred Young, were currently members of city council. W. E. E. Taylor, who was eliminated after the first ballot, had no experience in municipal politics. However, Dinsdale had been badly defeated as an aldermanic candidate when he had placed last in a field of seven in 1927. His municipal record, therefore, was somewhat tarnished.
 26. QUA, T. A. Crerar Papers, ser. III, box 121, Crerar to King, June 6, 1932.
 27. **Winnipeg Evening Tribune**, June 15, 1932.
 28. Jack Donnelly, a local businessman and a former alderman, believed that Spafford was less radical than other ILP members. Interview with J. H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973.

29. Brandon Daily Sun, May 26, 1932.
30. As the count of the transferable ballots would later indicate, Cater and D. E. Clement, the Liberal-Progressive nominee, clearly represented two separate political forces in that most of Cater's second votes (i.e., 250) were allocated to Spafford, the ILP candidate — rather than to Clement (i.e., 132) or Dinsdale (i.e., 111). Ibid., June 18, 1932.
31. Dinsdale, with 2,647, had a commanding lead on the "first ballot"; Spafford, with 1,574, was second; Clement, with 1,423, was third; Cater, with 893 votes, was last and, thus, eliminated. Ibid., June 18, 1932. Cater's "second choices" were then divided — i.e., to Spafford-250; to Clement-132; and to Dinsdale-111. On the third "ballot," Spafford received 319 of Clement's "second choices" and 49 of Cater's "third choices." However, Dinsdale — who polled only 223 "second choice Clement votes" and 40 "third choice Cater votes" — still won by a total of 3,021 to 2,192. Ibid.
32. "Where you and Beaubier and others took hold the result was amazingly satisfactory." PAC, R. B. Bennett Papers, vol. 565, 350256, Bennett to B. M. Stitt, MP, July 2, 1932.
33. Ibid., vol. 491, 306853-54, Roy Watson to R. K. Finlayson, February 15, 1933.
34. 2,677 Brandonites were receiving relief in June, 1935, an increase of 224 from the previous year's total. **Brandon Daily Sun, July 16, 1935.**
35. The city's relief bill was nearing the \$200,000 mark by the end of 1935. Ibid., December 14 1935.
36. Tax collections in mid-1935 were \$101,000 less than the corresponding total for 1934. Ibid., September 17, 1935.
37. Ibid., January 4, 1939.
38. Ibid., September 21, 1935.
39. PAC, R. B. Bennett Papers, vol. 491, 306878, E. E. Logan to Bennett, May 8, 1934..
40. "I need hardly say to you that I am frequently greatly depressed with the political situation for, instead of our Party organizing as it should, our friends merely write to me asking what I am going to do about it. . . . I realize that there will be no organization in Manitoba unless someone heads the effort." Ibid. Bennett to W. B. K. McRury, January 31, 1934.

41. Ibid., 306625, Bennett to D. W. Beaubier, November 29, 1934.
42. Ibid., 306683-84, R. R. Pattison to Rod Finlayson, October 11, 1934.
43. Ibid., 306700, John T. Haig to Rod Finlayson, October 23, 1934.
44. Ibid., 427805, H. A. McNeill to Bennett, July 7, 1935.
45. 307055, D. W. Beaubier to Bennett, August 7, 1935.
46. **Brandon Daily Sun**, January 8, 1935.
47. Ibid., 135330, J. L. Bowman to Bennett, October 23, 1935; Ibid., 135220, R. R. Pattison to Rod Finlayson, October 18, 1935.
48. J. M. Beck, **Pendulum of Power** (Scarborough, 1968), p. 221.
49. The Conservative candidate in Portage believed that two-thirds of the Reconstructionist vote in his constituency was ex-Conservative. PAC, R. B. Bennett Papers, vol. 206, 135281, W. H. Burn to Bennett, October 24, 1935.
50. W. L. Morton contends that the 100 per cent increase in the provincial income tax (which was imposed on all wages and salaries exceeding \$480 per annum for single persons) was a principal issue throughout the province. Morton, **Manitoba A History**, 426-27.
51. One of McDiarmid's advertisements read as follows: "Vote for Your City and Help Yourself. Support the Government, then see that they support Brandon." **Brandon Daily Sun**, July 25, 1935.
52. Although Premier Bracken would not publicly promise Dr. McDiarmid a cabinet post, he did concur that it was not in Brandon's best interests "to be without government representation." Ibid., July 14, 1936.
53. Ibid., July 11, 1936.
54. Morton, **Manitoba A History**, 427.
55. It is interesting to note, however, that 62.4 per cent of the Spafford supporters refused to indicate any second choice whatsoever — those 811 voters constituted, one would surmise, what could be called "hard core" CCF. **Brandon Daily Sun**, July 28, 1936.
56. Ibid., March 5, 1937.
57. While Spafford believed the issue of an "united front" would have to be resolved by the local CCF executive, he personally

- "saw no difficulty in working with the communist party." Winnipeg Evening Tribune, July 11, 1936.
58. Progressive Conservative (PC) Association, file M-B-1, J. M. Robb to W. H. Barker, October 8, 1938.
 59. Ibid., G. Beaubier to J. M. Robb, October 15, 1938.
 60. They did organize 25 public meetings; provide one 15 minute radio broadcast; and "everything we (i.e., Brandon Conservatives) could on Election Day." Ibid., file M-M-4, W. H. Barker to J. M. Robb, November 21, 1938.
 61. PAC, CCF Records, Vol. 62, H. J. Peddie to M. J. Coldwell, September 5, 1938.
 - 62. Brandon Daily Sun**, February 7, 1938. Further evidence of conflict is suggested by the complaint of Beatrice Bridgen, the party's provincial secretary, that "the CCF has not had one cent of support from the old Labour movement here." PAC, CCF Records, vol. 61, Beatrice Bridgen to D. Lewis, May 28, 1938. However, two ILP aldermen — Spafford and Webb — attended the local CCF nominating convention and they, upon being nominated, declined in Wood's favour. **Brandon Daily Sun**, September 26, 1938.
 63. PC Association, file M-M-4, E. Willis to J. M. Robb, November 21, 1938.
 64. Ibid., W. H. Barker to J. M. Robb, November 21, 1938.
 65. Ibid.
 66. Ibid., G. Beaubier to J. M. Robb, November 15, 1938.
 67. "I have never heard any CPR men complain about Dr. Manion but, of course there are plenty that do among the CNR people." Ibid., G. Beaubier to J. M. Robb, November 21, 1938.
 68. PAC, M. King Papers, J1 series, vol. 248, 212069, Crerar to Howard Henry, November 12, 1938. That there were some such internal difficulties was also suggested by the provincial leader, Errick Willis, who noted that the provincial party had offered the services of their new Ukrainian organizer to the Brandon organization "but to date they have not thought it advisable to accept this offer." PC Association, file M-M-4, E. Willis to J. M. Robb, November 5, 1938.
 69. George Beaubier had been opposed by Mayor Fred Young, Alderman James Kirkcaldy, J. W. M. Thompson, an Elkhorn

- lawyer, and Wes Pentland, a Justice area farmer.
70. PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 274, 232569-70, J. E. Matthews to King, June 22, 1939.
 71. While DBS in 1937 listed 3,038 employment positions in Brandon, only 413 were related to the railway industry. Thus, 60 per cent of the aldermen were drawn from 13.3 per cent of the labour force. However, it should be noted that the railway employees did constitute the largest single employee group and they, as a group, were the third highest paid. These two reasons might help explain their exceedingly high political profile. Brandon Daily Sun, September 27, 1937.
 72. PAC, CCF Records, vol. 61, Beatrice Bridgen to David Lewis, June 3, 1939.

VIII

1939 - 1945: From Depression Unto "Revolution"

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 marked the end of the Depression. In contrast to the 1930s, the war years were a time of relatively full employment: only 2.23 per cent of Brandon's labour force remained unemployed by June 2, 1941.¹ The post-war depression which many had predicted moreover, did not materialize even though the percentage of unemployed rose to 4.85 per cent by May 31, 1946.² Although the outbreak of World War II led to an immediate temporary political truce, the 1939-45 era was marked by two federal elections, two provincial elections and a highly significant provincial by-election in November, 1943. While the relatively large number of war-time elections was, in itself, extraordinary, the most notable political development of the World War II era was the meteoric rise (and fall) of the CCF, a political party which was largely a product of the Depression (and which, significantly, predicted another).

Brandon Liberals were in a very advantageous position as Canada entered into the "surprise" March, 1940 election. Their nominee, J. E. Matthews, currently held the seat: he was the only candidate who was a resident of Brandon itself, a city of some 17,000³ which alone comprised 40 per cent of the constituency's population; and he, as a government member, would benefit from the inevitable Liberal claim that "this is not time to temporize with our united war effort. Let us go forward united."

Although CCF officials placed the Brandon constituency in their "hopeful" list,' the CCF had been notably inactive in Brandon in recent months and the party was philosophically ill-suited for the responsibilities of wartime government. Harry Wood, the Justice area farmer who was making his third bid for election, consequently had little chance of success in Brandon in this 1940 federal election.

Mackenzie King's unexpected decision to go to the people caught Brandon Conservatives unprepared. Convinced initially that only the popular George Dinsdale could recapture the constituency from J. E. Matthews,' Conservative organizers had arranged for Dinsdale's federal mail contract to be transferred to a son' and they had persuaded Errick Willis, the Manitoba Conservative leader, to permit Brandon's MLA to run federally.' Dinsdale, however, was forced to withdraw in early 1940 due to ill health. An Elkhorn area lawyer-farmer, J. W. Thompson, was belatedly nominated as his replacement.' Although the 31-year-old Thompson was not a resident of Brandon, the constituency's largest community, the Conservative's provincial organizer remained confident: "The Brandon Boys are very enthusiastic and Brandon will be a sure winner.'" This optimism, however, proved to be ill-founded.

Although the Conservatives maintained that there was an urgent need for an all-party National Government to direct the national war effort, the other parties announced that they would refuse to participate in such a coalition. As a result, the so-called National Government issue withered and died. The Conservatives (or the National Government candidates as they persisted on describing themselves) were similarly frustrated in their attempts to criticize the inadequacies of the government's re-armament policies as there had been, by election time, no wartime test of Canada's military preparedness (or lack of it). The timing of the election, therefore, worked to the advantage of all Liberal candidates, Matthews included. Although the Conservatives complained that wheat prices had again declined while implement costs had been allowed to rise, that the government's administration of war contracts was unbusinesslike, and that the government had done nothing to solve the unemployment problem, the local campaign unfolded in a rather unexciting manner.

The 1940 federal election in the Brandon constituency was a political rout. Despite the support provided to J. W. Thompson by M. A. Macpherson of Regina and H. H. Stevens, the former leader of the Reconstruction Party, J. E. Matthews out-pollied his National Government opponent 8,908 to 6,168 while Harry Wood badly trailed the field. In fact, the CCF nominee's 2,609 total was his poorest showing ever. The 1940 results, both nationally and locally, had never been in doubt. Without a particularly strong local Conservative candidate such as a Dave Beaubier or a George Dinsdale, there were insufficient local factors (such as the influence of the pro-Conservative Brandon Daily Sun) to offset the national trend. As goes Canada, so normally goes Brandon."

Although Brandonites had preferred to elect government members on most occasions in the past, the 1941 provincial election was a curious anomaly in that both of the two candidates were government supporters. Premier Bracken had formed, in early 1940, an all-party coalition in the hope that a united government could lobby more successfully for a vastly improved federal-provincial agreement (in the aftermath of the Rowell-Sirois Commission Report) and, in addition, could effectively direct the province's war effort. As a result, 26 MLA's were re-elected in 1941 by acclamation while only 20 anti-coalitionist candidates entered the field in opposition. The defeat of the government was never a possibility.

Although the Independent Labour Party (which remained distinct from the CCF) did briefly consider contesting the Brandon constituency as anti-coalitionists," the election proved to be a two-way contest between the incumbent George Dinsdale, a Conservative coalitionist, and Dr. H. O. McDiarmid, the Liberal-Progressive coalitionist who had been his party's standard-bearer in the 1936 provincial election. Ironically, both the Conservatives and the Liberals contended that a contest could have been avoided in Brandon in 1941, if the other party had only co-operated. George Dinsdale had argued that he, as the incumbent, was entitled to the coalitionist nomination' (and only four incumbents were, in fact, opposed by rival coalitionists) and as he "didn't give a hoot for politics and he did not think there should be any at this time.'" The Liberal-Progressives, on the other hand, claimed that they were prepared to support any single coalitionist candidate who was chosen by a joint nominating convention." When the incumbent

Dinsdale refused to undergo that test, the Liberal-Progressives proceeded to nominate their own coalitionist candidate.

As both candidates were supporters of Bracken's coalition ministry, the election became essentially a personal struggle based upon the two candidates' record of service to the Brandon community. Dinsdale's advertisements, for example, emphasized that the Conservative MLA had served Brandon "not for five years, but for 35 years as alderman, Mayor, Member of the Legislature and as a private citizen."⁶ On the other hand, Liberal-Progressive advertisements maintained that McDiarmid, even though he was only a defeated candidate, had done more for Brandon in five years than Dinsdale, as the city's MLA, had in nine years. The Liberal-Progressives also focused on the fact that Dinsdale had not been appointed to the cabinet: "There is something wrong when a member after sitting for nine years has been passed up in the Coalition Cabinet."⁷ This could, in fact, be a telling criticism if the desire of Brandon voters to be represented by a cabinet minister (so as to ensure that they receive their fair share of "goodies") was as strong as it had, on occasions, appeared to be.

As there was no CCF candidate in this election, much of Dinsdale's attention was directed towards the 1,300 votes that Spafford had polled in 1936. The Conservative coalitionist organized a number of public meetings in "the Flats" for which he recruited John Leronowich, a north-end resident and a one-time municipal candidate, to speak on his behalf. While Dinsdale's advertisements also stressed the co-operation which he had provided Labour and CCF members in "all measures for the benefit of the laboring men of Manitoba,"⁸ his efforts were largely in vain. A close affinity between the CCF and the Liberals had been apparent throughout the 1930s in Brandon's north end and McDiarmid, as a result, benefitted the most from the absence of a CCF candidate in 1941.⁹

Despite unfavourable weather conditions and evidence of political disinterest (which some believed to be a natural by-product of World War II), 65 per cent of the eligible electorate voted in Brandon in 1941. Although this election was a "non-event" for much of Manitoba, the results in Brandon were interesting as the voters re-elected Dinsdale in spite of the fact that he had not been appointed to the cabinet. They had likewise rejected McDiarmid

who was widely viewed to be cabinet material. George Dinsdale's strength as an incumbent and his personal popularity, as attested to by Conservative fears of the outcome should he not be the candidate, obviously compensated for his back-bencher status.

Although public interest in municipal politics may well have been one of the casualties of the war in that a miniscule 19 per cent of the electorate voted in 1941 and as there were no contested aldermanic elections in 1942,²¹ the amount of public interest generated by Mackenzie King's 1942 conscription referendum was in marked contrast. Those who wished to free the Liberal government of its earlier promise not to introduce conscription were well organized in Brandon. Approximately 20 civic organizations were represented in the planning of the campaign and in the mass meetings which followed. Although the outcome in the city was never in doubt, a slightly smaller percentage of Brandonites (i.e., 89.6) voted to release the King government from its pledge than did so in the constituency as a whole (i.e., 91.6 per cent). Of the 815 Brandon voters who voted "no," 212 (or 26.1 per cent) were residents of the three north-end polls. Yet, 495 electors (or 70.9 per cent of those voting) in those same polls supported the referendum.²² Therefore, a surprisingly decisive majority of Brandon voters, including those who lived in the so-called ethnic section of the city, approved the pro-conscription referendum on April 27, 1942.

The November, 1943 provincial by-election, which was necessitated by the death of George Dinsdale, was one of the most interesting contests in the political history of Brandon due to the sudden emergence of the CCF as a force of consequence. The war, as events subsequently proved, had passed its mid-point and people had begun to look to the post-war era and the hopes which the prospects of peace generated. There was, however, a wide-spread fear in 1943 that a depression would reappear once the war had ended, unless significant governmental policy changes occurred. Despite the coalitionists' reiteration of Winston Churchill's "dictum" — "this is not the time for those who have practical war work to do to dream of a brave new world,"²³ those dreams, marred though they were by fear, persisted.

In retrospect, 1943 seemed to belong to the CCF. Nationally, the Gallup polls rated them ahead of both the Liberals and Conservatives late that year. Provincially, the CCF had achieved a



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Dr. Dwight Lyman Johnson, the winning CCF candidate in the 1943 byelection.

new-found status as His Majesty's Loyal Opposition when they had withdrawn from the coalition on the grounds that Premier Bracken's resignation (to accept the national leadership of the newly-named Progressive Conservative party) had terminated the 1940 agreement. They had, furthermore, won an unprecedented three of the four provincial by-elections held to date in 1943. In addition, the party was essentially united after an apparent show-down with the often troublesome ILP.²⁴ The province-wide membership totals had increased dramatically, from 1,026 in October, 1942 to 2,762 in late August, 1943;²⁵ and even the often dormant Brandon group was growing slowly, from 59 in August to a 100-plus by mid-October, 1943.²⁶ While both Lloyd Stinson and Stanley Knowles admitted that the November, 1943 by-election would be an extremely difficult contest," they believed that they had a good chance. They also recognized how significant a victory would be to their party's future."

The CCF chose a local doctor and school board member, Dwight Lyman Johnson, to be their candidate in 1943. The 45-year-old Johnson was a rather extraordinary individual. Born in nearby Rapid City in 1898, Johnson had served overseas in the World War. He had returned to graduate from Brandon College and from the University of Manitoba's College of Medicine. The young graduate served as a medical missionary in the Philippines from 1926 to 1931, during which time he may have developed an interest in the Communism with which he later sympathized." Upon returning to Brandon, he won election to the school board, serving in that capacity from 1937 to 1943. As a doctor, he was extremely well-known and respected within the community. In short, he was the type of strong candidate whose political appeal would extend beyond traditional party lines.

Just as the election of A. E. Smith in 1920 had led to a coalescence of the Liberal and Conservative forces, the growth of the CCF in 1943 (supplemented by the persuasiveness of Premier Stuart Garson, Bracken's successor) re-united those forces which had fought each other as recently as the 1941 provincial election. While it is true that "the external enemy unifies," Premier Garson significantly encouraged local Liberal-Progressives in both Brandon and Portage la Prairie, the two vacant constituencies to permit their PC partners to select the successors to the two deceased PC

MLA's." Certainly the fact that Brandon's (PC) Mayor, Fred Young, whose primary qualification was his extensive municipal record, was the only individual nominated at the coalitionist convention" supports Stanley Knowles's contention that all of the details had been settled in advance.

This by-election campaign was strenuously and bitterly fought in the newspapers, on radio, with household mailings" and on public platforms, where political notables such as Premier Garson, T. C. Douglas MP, Stanley Knowles MP, and Berry Richards, the newly elected CCF MLA for The Pas, spoke. The CCF stressed the need to provide jobs during the up-coming demobilization period for the one and one-half million men and women who were in the military and in wartime industries. They also refreshed the electorate's memory of the Depression which, they prophesized, would return at the end of the War unless there was a radical change in governmental policies. In the words of an election-eve CCF advertisement, a vote for the government candidate would mean "soup kitchens, bread lines and riding the rods for our returned men and youth. All the old parties will have for them will be the police clubs, and tear gas they used at Vancouver and Regina.""

The coalitionists, by way of reply, stressed their government's record in the provision of social services, their own plans for post-war readjustment, and the advantages to Brandon (as Manitoba's second city) of being represented by a Government member." This positive approach paralleled an exceedingly vicious scare campaign. Brandon citizens were warned that the "CCF is an anti-British Revolutionary Nationalist Socialist Party";" that personal bank deposits would be confiscated; that the two competing candidates personified "Democracy vs. National Socialism";" that taxes would rise astronomically as in the "Labour showcase" of New Zealand;" and that a proposed amalgamation of the two railway companies would mean lost seniority and lost jobs." Whether the tenor of this coalitionist campaign or the shrill arguments of the **Brandon Daily Sun** (which unblushingly and unequivocally declared that Canada would have been governed by "Hitler or Hirohito or both"" had the CCF been in power federally in 1939) were too extreme to be believable was, perhaps, the main question raised by this fear campaign in 1943.



Leslie H. McDorman, elected mayor in 1943.

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One of the characteristics of politics in Brandon since the era of the Great War had been the presence of a potential labour vote totalling some 2,000 in number. While a portion of that vote traditionally had gone to the Conservative Dinsdale,^o Dr. Johnson won the three north-end polls by a total of 573 to 168^u in 1943. Although Errick Willis contended that Johnson's support was centred "in the industrial districts,"^u the well-known doctor polled, in addition, a significant segment of the retired farmer vote." As a result, the CCF candidate defeated Mayor Fred Young, the PC coalitionist, by a vote of 3,722 to 3,204.

Several factors appear to have contributed to these results. First of all, Dr. D. L. Johnson — who was, according to veteran MP Stanley Knowles, an able orator" — was clearly the beneficiary of the wave of pro-CCF sentiment which was attested to by the Gallup poll ratings. Secondly, the CCF candidate was a well-known medical practitioner and, as such, he was, in the words of some Brandonites, "looked up to" in the community. As a result, Dr. Johnson, who was not yet identified as an "extremist," was politically more appealing than the CCF party which he represented. The total vote statistics also suggest that the CCF organization succeeded, as it frequently did in by-elections when the party was able to concentrate its resources, in polling an extra-ordinarily heavy percentage of the vote. In 1941, 6,206 Brandonites had voted; in 1945, 6,296 Brandon electors would go to the polls after a very intensive campaign; in the 1943 by-election, however, an unprecedented 6,926 Brandon residents cast their ballots and the results clearly indicate that the infrequent voter was, on that occasion, a Dr. D. L. Johnson supporter. Johnson's "get out the vote" organization, which is a vital part of any successful campaign, had played a vital role in his success. The coalitionist's also blamed themselves for some of their misfortune: "There is no doubt in my mind that the poorly organized Conservative Association here, doubtlessly let the candidate down and that coupled with the deliberate betrayal by the Liberal party, resulted in the election of the CCF.""

The political "left" had displayed little interest in Brandon's municipal politics during the early stages of the war. The only party candidate in the 1941 aldermanic election had been the veteran ILP alderman, Harry Spafford, while labour in 1942 had

confined its activities to the school board elections in which William Bain and Peter McDuffe were candidates." The resurgence in support of the CCF which began in 1943 and which culminated in Dr. D. L. Johnson's stunning by-election victory, however, so intoxicated the Brandon members that they fielded their largest contingent of municipal candidates to date. Whether the tide that had elected Dr. Johnson with 3,700 plus votes could also sweep the five CCF aldermanic (plus the four school board) candidates into office was the crucial question.

This sudden manifestation of CCF interest in municipal politics resulted in the formation of an allegedly non-partisan Brandon Citizens' Committee. This new coalition of the "right" did exceedingly well as Brandon Citizens' Committee candidates won four of the two-year aldermanic terms, one of the one-year terms," and the mayoralty in that L. H. McDorman, a prominent Liberal businessman, narrowly defeated Frank Williamson, a local pump manufacturer and a prominent Progressive Conservative.

Although the Independent Labour Party had, at its peak in the late 1920s, held four seats on council, only two CCF candidates were successful in 1943, one being the long-serving and ever-popular Harry Spofford." Those who had voted for Dr. Johnson in that November 18 by-election primarily as a result of his personal appeal were not prepared to support other CCF candidates at the municipal level. The alarm generated by Johnson's by-election victory had resulted, moreover, in the successful coalescence of the political "right." Thus, victory for the CCF in provincial politics could hurt, rather than enhance, their cause at the municipal level.

The election of Dr. Johnson proved to be extremely troublesome for the provincial CCF in yet another, and more serious, way. Dr. Johnson and Berry Richards, both of whom had won by-election victories for the CCF in 1943, were insistent that their party should join forces with the Labour Progressive Party (i.e., the Communist party) in Manitoba. A proposal for affiliation, however, had previously been rejected by the CCF" and a fierce, internal struggle ensued. In the words of a party official,

He (i.e., Dr. D. L. Johnson) regards the CCF as little more than a liberal party. He expresses an almost complete lack of confidence in both the national and provincial leadership, and

regards the movement as autocratic rather than democratic. These are clearly his convictions and they are shared quite as strongly by his wife . . . As to the prospects of his becoming a CCF'er, I scarcely see any hope."

As the constitution of the Brandon unit contained a clause which would permit consultation and co-operation with "other progressive groups" (i.e., the Labour Progressive party),⁵¹ the provincial CCF refused to ratify it. The result was a near impasse.

This internal dispute seriously disrupted the CCF party's preparations for the 1945 federal election. As Stanley Knowles reported to David Lewis, a meeting of the federal CCF candidates for Manitoba had been badly marred by the conflict.

They (i.e., Johnson and Richards) denied any LPP connection or affinity, but said categorically they thought the CCF was wrong in plumping for socialism now, and that the LPP line was realistic, right, etc. They claimed deep thought, sincerity, honesty, a conscience, etc., all of which we lack, as we try to run the party from the top. . . . Each time a vote came near they would arise and say, "If you turn us down we will have no option, in all conscience, but to disassociate ourselves from the CCF." We told them OK every time, but they kept on with their bluff. Doubt if they will resign. They would rather have us put them out. We know it's bad business, but it's worse to keep them in at this crucial time."

Although provincial CCF leaders were anxious that the local constituency organization should undertake the necessary disciplinary steps,⁵² it was the provincial council of the CCF that ultimately expelled the unbending Dr. Johnson. Although the Brandon executive remained loyal to him, the local membership (by a vote of 36 to 26) repudiated both their executive and their MLA." As the majority of the executive consequently resigned in protest, the CCF in Brandon were bitterly divided on the eve of two very important general elections in 1945. It was as if they were determined "to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory."

The Brandon area CCF, nevertheless, succeeded in recruiting a well-known and popular Brandon druggist, Alex M. Brown, to be their federal candidate.⁵³ The 52-year-old Brown, whose popularity was attested to by several local political observers," had migrated from Scotland in 1913. In common with many British

emigrants, he had returned home almost immediately to fight in the Great War. After studies in pharmacy at the University of Manitoba, Brown had settled in Brandon in 1925 in order to practise his profession. Brown, a former Liberal, explained that the origin of his newly-discovered political radicalism was in the poverty of his native Scotland." Brown, however, was not to enjoy the unqualified support of the political left as A. E. Smith, Brandon's former Labour MLA (from 1920-22) and a man who had in the 1930s become a nationally-known Communist, announced his intention to stand as a Labour Progressive candidate, on the very eve of the CCF nomination."

As their party leader, John Bracken, in early 1944, had declined an invitation to stand for Brandon" and as the idea of an Independent or a coalitionist candidate had been quickly rejected," local PCs agreed on the desirability of selecting a Brandon resident "to counteract the vote that both Brown and Matthews will get from the city polls." Although Colonel Art Ross, MP for Souris and his party's Manitoba organizer, favoured Whitby Kerr," the nomination went to Fred Young, Brandon's ex-mayor and the coalition's unsuccessful candidate in the recent provincial by-election. Young had been selected over John Thompson, another loser of 1940 fame, and J. H. Sibbald of Brandon. The lack of new blood suggests that Brandon area PCs did not truly believe that they could defeat the incumbent Matthews at this particular time.

The 1945 federal election was unusually important in that the nature of post-war Canada would be largely determined by its outcome. It was an election in which the voters looked to the future; in which issues such as "rehabilitation, taxation reform, agriculture, housing, employment, (and) social security"" were of national importance. The 66-year-old J. E. Matthews" consequently argued that the next five years would be as crucial to Canada as the previous five. The nation could not afford to change leaders at that crucial time. Matthews also emphasized what the King government had done in those last five years: the economically important war plants and air bases that had come to the Brandon area in such numbers that the Brandon MP was jokingly referred to as "Airport Matthews"; and, more recently, the establishment of Family Allowances which were obviously designed to lure away would-be CCF voters.

Although the CCF, as an opposition party, should have been on the offensive, the 1945 campaign was not conducted in a normal fashion. The CCF were viciously attacked from two fronts in 1945: by the Drew government in Ontario which was simultaneously engaged in its own provincial election, and by supposedly non-partisan bodies such as the "Public Information Service." The latter organization, which was obviously well-financed, stated unequivocally that "every CCF candidate is committed to complete State Socialism, and State Socialism spells slavery . . . under an Absolute dictatorship.' As a result, the CCF were kept on the defensive throughout much of the campaign. Although Alex Brown did attempt to generate an interest in local issues by deploring the "wanton and callous destruction" of army supplies, including medicines, which had followed in the wake of the departure of the local Artillery training unit; by stressing his strong personal interest in rehabilitation; and by refreshing the electorate's memories of the Depression with photographs of the unemployed during the Bennett and King years:" the CCF were forced to spend much of their time and their money in refuting what they described as the "shameful lies" of their opponents."

The PCs rather curiously paid little attention to local issues, despite their expressed preference for a Brandon candidate. Although Fred Young did stress his opposition to railway amalgamation — an important issue in Brandon where 8.69 per cent of the local work force were railway employees" — the Progressive Conservatives' main argument was that Manitoba's ex-premier, John Bracken, led the only party that could win a majority. George Drew's PC party had just swept Ontario and Brandon PCs earnestly exhorted their fellow constituents to "FOLLOW ONTARIO'S LEAD." Brandon voters, however, failed to heed that advice as J. E. Matthews, the Liberal incumbent, led in both the rural and city polls. Ex-mayor Fred Young, who complained of lack of "outside assistance," was a strong second in the rural area and in total vote, even though he trailed both Matthews and Brown in the same city which he had previously served as mayor. Alex Brown, despite his reported rural popularity as an entertainer, placed third in the more populous rural polls and third over-all. A. E. Smith's support, it is interesting to note, was divided equally between rural and urban although his total vote of 463 was

rather dismal in light of his earlier political success in 1920." In conclusion, Brandon was very much in the mainstream as the constituency was one of 10 Manitoba constituencies to elect a Liberal in 1945 and Brandon residents (as distinct from the riding as a whole) even voted in step with the province by giving the second largest number of votes to the CCF in spite of the portrayal of that party as "dictatorial" and "revolutionary."

One of the unusual features of the 1945 federal election was the overseas vote." The PCs had recommended that each local campaign organization write to those overseas voters even in advance of the writs being issued and that cigarettes and local newspapers be sent. While the PCs were confident that the men overseas were fully aware of the Mackenzie King government's war record, they feared that the CCF's war record was being effectively camouflaged. Whether that was true or not can not be determined decisively. Alex Brown did, however, poll 50.9 per cent of the overseas vote (i.e., 733 votes) while both J. E. Matthews (with 392 votes) and Fred Young (with 321 votes)" trailed the field. The overseas voters were obviously less concerned with conscription than they were with the proposals for the post-war era." The fact that those overseas voters were not subjected to the scare campaign directed against the CCF may help explain why Alex Brown rather ironically did better abroad than he did at home.

Although the incumbent Dr. Johnson was seeking re-election in the 1945 provincial election as an Independent CCF candidate, the CCF officially nominated Peter McDuffe, a stationary engineer at the city-waterworks plant and a school board member. In contrast to the bitterly divided left, the Conservatives and the Liberal-Progressive appointed a joint committee to establish the ground rules for choosing another coalitionist candidate." As each party was represented by two voting delegates per poll, 88 voting delegates met to choose between Mayor L. H. McDorman, a Liberal-Progressive, and Charles Johnston, a retired CPR roadmaster and the president of the Brandon PC Association. McDorman, who significantly was nominated by Cam Donaldson (a prominent Conservative), triumphed, presumably with the assistance of some Conservative votes. As Fred Young, a Progressive Conservative, had lost to Dr. D. L. Johnson in the 1943 by-election, some PCs may have quietly agreed that it was the Liberal-Progressive's turn.

Local issues were a central part of this provincial election campaign. As neither Johnson nor McDuffe would receive a very sympathetic hearing from the Garson government, McDorman argued that Brandonites must recognize that he alone could take care of the city's interests. McDuffe, on the other hand, stressed the need to re-open Brandon's Normal School due to the current shortage of qualified teachers; the necessity for improved service at the Manitoba Liquor Commission; the desirability of moving the headquarters of the Manitoba Power Commission from Winnipeg to Brandon; and the need for more housing. The official CCF candidate — in addition to extolling the accomplishments of Saskatchewan newly-elected CCF government (of which several members, including Premier T. C. Douglas, campaigned on his behalf) — warned the workers that Big Business would, if permitted, proceed to smash unions and to cut wages as the war was over. While McDorman, the coalitionist, and McDuffe, the official CCF nominee, campaigned most extensively against each other, both men on occasions took "political shots" at Dr. Johnson, the presumably weaker incumbent. It was a rather unique election contest.

Although L. H. McDorman won that 1945 election, the division within the political left was primarily responsible for his success. While McDorman was the first choice of 3,088 Brandon voters, McDuffe (who was second with 1,650) and Johnson (with 1,556) together polled 3,204 first choice votes. Had the CCF remained united, their 1943 by-election victory might well have been repeated. The severity of the divisiveness within the political left was vividly demonstrated by the fact that only 396 of the 1,554 Johnson voters gave McDuffe their second vote while 200 actually preferred the coalitionist McDorman. Thus, 74.5 per cent of Johnson's supporters refused to endorse the official CCF candidate, even as their second choice. A combination of traditional Liberal-Conservative strength, the advantages to be derived by being represented by a government member, and the bitter division within the political left had defeated the incumbent Dr. Johnson."

The war, of course, had concluded well in advance of the October, 1945 provincial election. Many had feared that the sudden cessation of military purchasing and the subsequent demobilization of hundreds of thousands of military personnel would lead to a stagnant economy and the return of the Depression. Those fears

had fuelled in substantial part the rise of the CCF in 1943 and, ironically, a deliberately generated fear that a CCF government would be "revolutionary" in nature subsequently contributed to its decline. As the post-war economic readjustments began (aided and abetted by the distribution of Family Allowance cheques), the fear of a renewed Depression gradually waned. As the danger of economic recession lessened, the political fears which were fostered by the political right were enhanced. The result was a substantial political setback for that same CCF party (and even for 18-year aldermanic veteran Harry Spafford who was defeated in 19459 which had led the Gallup polls only two years before.

1945 marked the end of World War II. It also marked, for a time, the demise of the CCF whose meteoric rise had first brilliantly illuminated the political horizon only to fade suddenly, as in a burst of anti-aircraft fire. During the latter stages of the war, the CCF had told the electors what the latter had feared but did not want to hear — that the Depression would return once the war had ended. Aided and abetted by a CCF party which was internally and bitterly divided, their opponents on the right had united together; and playing upon the electorate's terror of the political and economic upheaval which had accompanied the expansion of European Communism, they had succeeded in persuading the voters to kill the messenger — the harbinger of economic woe.

FOOTNOTES

1. Census of Canada, 1941, vol. 6.
2. Census of Prairie Provinces, 1946, vol. 2.
3. According to census statistics, Brandon's population at the time of the 1936 report was 16,461 which constituted a slight decline from the 1931 total of 17,082. By the time of the 1941 report, the city's population had expanded again to 17,383. Census of Canada, 1941, vol. 1.
4. Brandon Daily Sun, March 19, 1940.

5. PAC, CCF Records, vol. 60, IL J. Peddie to David Lewis, January 31, 1939. While this document was dated 1939, other evidence suggests that the date should have read January 31, 1940.
6. PC Association, file M-M-6, J. M. Robb to W. Miller, April 14, 1939. W. Miller was the Conservative's Manitoba organizer.
7. Ibid., file M-M-5, J. M. Robb to W. Miller, April 14, 1939.
8. Willis reluctantly agreed after he was persuaded that the Brandon provincial seat could be won by another candidate. Ibid., file M-M-4, E. Willis to J. M. Robb, May 1, 1939.
9. Mayor Fred Young and Justice area farmer, Wes Pentland, were defeated by Thompson at the nominating convention. George Beaubier, whose name had also been proposed, was not considered by the convention as he had enlisted with the Cameron Highlanders and would be unavailable to campaign. **Brandon Daily Sun**, February 9, 1940.
10. PC Association, file M-M-6, W. C. Miller to J. M. Robb, February 14, 1940.
11. That Brandon was in the mainstream of Canadian politics was also evident when the results of the special military poll were released. While National Government candidates nationally received 50 per cent of military votes to the Liberals 43 per cent, Thompson polled 83 votes (i.e., 50.3 per cent) to Matthews's 72 (i.e., 43.6 per cent). Wood again trailed the field with 10 votes. **Brandon Daily Sun**, April 2, 1940.
12. Ibid., March 31, 1941.
13. The Conservatives, for instance, noted later in their advertisements that they had not opposed any sitting coalitionist supporters. Ibid., April 21, 1941.
14. Ibid., March 27, 1941.
15. It was also rumoured, at one point, that Mayor Fred Young, a Conservative, might also seek the coalitionist nomination. Ibid., March 2, 1941. Perhaps the dissatisfaction with George Dinsdale was not entirely confined to the Liberal-Progressive camp.
16. Ibid., April 17, 1941.
17. Ibid., April 16, 1941.
18. Ibid., April 17, 1941.

19. Ibid., April 23, 1941. McDiarmid's total in 1941 was almost 900 votes greater than the first ballot results in 1936 while Dinsdale's total had increased by only 600 votes.
20. Voting occurred on a "cold drizzling day." In addition, as Stanley Knowles noted, the war itself could be a major cause of electoral apathy: "The make-up of a provincial legislature is unimportant in many people's minds, it is the war alone that matters." PAC, CCF Records, vol. 60, Stanley Knowles to David Lewis, April 26, .1941.
21. There was no mayoralty election in 1942 as Mayor Fred Young was entering the second year of his term.
22. **Brandon Daily Sun**, April 28, 1942.
23. Fred Young, the coalitionist candidate, used this Churchillian quotation in the by-election campaign to no avail. Ibid., November 19, 1943.
24. "The ILP still stinks of course but we've got them beaten. . . . The main thing is that we control the ILP and whip is going to crash very gently from now until we're ready for the showdown." PAC, CCF Records, vol. 61, Alistair Stewart to David Lewis, March 17, 1942. The conflict between the CCF and the ILP, however, had never been particularly damaging in Brandon itself.
25. Ibid., vol. 62, Minutes of CCF (Manitoba) Executive meeting, September 2, 1943.
26. Ibid., vol. 61, Lloyd Stinson to David Lewis, October 15, 1943.
27. "So far as our own organization goes, our chances are poor in both seats. But if we can tie the CCF tide to our candidates and get an organization functioning, we might make the grade." Ibid., vol. 98, Stanley Knowles to David Lewis, October 18, 1943.
28. Lloyd Stinson, who admitted that these two by-elections "are not going to be easy . . .," argued that "if we can win them then we can form governments all over the lot." Ibid., vol. 61, Lloyd Stinson to David Lewis, October 15, 1943.
29. There is a disagreement among Brandon residents as to the nature of Dr. Johnson's political philosophy as of 1943. While Cater had hinted rather strongly in 1937 that Johnson and others were "Red" (**Brandon Daily Sun**, November 26, 1937),

- many residents who voted for Johnson as an individual in 1943 insist that they were unaware of any extreme political convictions. Stanley Knowles, Winnipeg North-Centre MP who assisted with Johnson's campaign, has stated quite emphatically that Johnson was not a Communist at the time of the 1943 by-election. Interview with Stanley H. Knowles MP, May 29, 1976.
30. PAC, CCF Records, vol. 98, Stanley Knowles to David Lewis, October 18, 1943.
 31. Young was nominated by Dr. H. O. McDiarmid, the Liberal-Progressive candidate in both 1936 and 1941, and the nomination was seconded by J. C. Donaldson, a future Conservative MLA. *Brandon Daily Sun*, October 15, 1943.
 32. The CCF was reportedly the only party to employ what was described as a "mail order appeal. . . Every Brandon home where a registered voter dwells has received pamphlets and circulars." *Winnipeg Tribune*, November 16, 1943.
 33. *Brandon Daily Sun*, November 17, 1943.
 34. *Ibid.*, November 9, 1943.
 35. *Ibid.*, November 15, 1943.
 36. *Ibid.*, November 12, 1943.
 37. *Ibid.*, November 9, 1943.
 38. *Ibid.*, November 15, 1943. The attempt by the coalitionists to arouse the fears of railway employees apparently was unsuccessful as the advance poll, which was usually a railway vote, went 39 to 12 for Dr. Johnson. *Ibid.*, November 19, 1943.
 39. *Ibid.*, November 17, 1943.
 40. *Winnipeg Tribune*, November 16, 1943.
 41. *Brandon Daily Sun*, November 19, 1943.
 42. *Winnipeg Tribune*, November 20, 1943.
 43. The significance of that retired vote is difficult to determine. However, according to the 1941 census returns, 2,359 residents or 18.86 per cent of Brandon's "20 years and plus" population were 60 years of age or older. *Census of Canada, 1941*, vol. 2. The comparable figure in the 1946 census return was 22.59 per cent. *Census of Prairie Provinces, 1946*, vol. 1.

44. Stanley Knowles recalls Dwight Johnson as being an "able orator . . . well-known as a medical doctor," and a personally attractive political candidate. Interview with Stanley Knowles, May 29, 1976.
45. PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 47, C. H. Johnston to Bracken, March 2, 1945. C. H. Johnston was the president of the Brandon PC Association.
46. The two well known labourites led the polls although only 10 per cent of the electorate had responded. **Brandon Daily Sun**, December 2, 1942.
47. The four "two-year" victors were Dr. Stuart Schultz, a local physician who led the polls; W. H. Boreskie, a locomotive engineer who had proclaimed his independence of the CCF; N. A. McDowell, a tinsmith; and John Popkin, a local businessman. A. D. Burneski, a local businessman, began what proved to be a most extensive civic career in 1943 with his one-year term. *Ibid.*, December 1, 1943.
48. Spafford placed fifth among those who were seeking two-year terms while W. M. Smith was elected to a one-year term.
49. PAC, CCF Records, vol. 62, Minutes of CCF (Manitoba) Executive meeting, September 2, 1943.
50. *Ibid.*, vol. 98, Lloyd (Stinson?) to David Lewis, April 2, 1944.
51. **Brandon Daily Sun**, October 26, 1944.
52. PAC, CCF Records, vol. 98, Stanley Knowles to David Lewis, February 18, 1945. Lewis proposed that the CCF should make a determined stand on this issue. *Ibid.*, David Lewis to Stanley Knowles, February 21, 1945.
53. "I hope you will be able to succeed in winning the support of their local organizations so that the action to be taken against them will be taken not by the top but by their own rank and file." *Ibid.*, vol. 61, David Lewis to Don Swailes, March 5, 1945.
54. **Brandon Daily Sun**, May 2, 1945. The local membership also elected Peter McDuffe — the man who would emerge as the "official" CCF candidate within a few short weeks — to replace Johnson on the provincial CCF council. *Ibid.*, March 22, 1945.
55. The 71 voting delegates elected. Brown over Peter McDuffe, a civic employee, after L. V. Robson of Deleau had declined to stand. Harry Wood, who had stood previously in 1940, was now

- employed as a full-time organizer at a salary of \$1,500 per year. PAC, CCF Records, vol. 62, Minutes of CCF (Manitoba) Executive meeting, September 8, 1944.
56. A Progressive Conservative constituency report described Alex Brown in respectful terms: "A former Liberal and fairly popular due to the fact that he travels in the neighboring rural area as an entertainer specializing in elocution and Scotch readings." PC Association, file M-B-1. A prominent Brandon PC also described Brown as "a well known and popular drug-gist." PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 47, C. H. Johnston to Bracken, March 2, 1945.
- 57. Brandon Daily Sun**, November 9, 1944.
58. Smith was nominated on November 7, 1944 at a meeting held "in a city residence." Gavin Broadhurst was to be Smith's official agent. **Brandon Daily Sun**, November 8, 1944. Within days, the former Methodist minister was holding public meetings in the city and broadcasting "radio talks" over local station CKX which suggests that the Labour Progressive Party candidate had significant financial support.
59. PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 47, Morgan W. R. John to Bracken, May 3, 1944.
- 60. Brandon Daily Sun**, January 30, 1945.
61. PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 47, C. H. Johnston to Bracken, March 2, 1945. Johnston was the president of the local PC Association and he stated that his views were shared by his executive.
62. Art Ross noted that some young Liberals, who were presumably disenchanted with the elderly Matthews, had encouraged Kerr to stand. Ross believed that Kerr could be persuaded to accept the nomination even though "both Mayor Young and John Thompson are angling for the nomination." *Ibid.*, vol. 37, J. Arthur Ross to Bracken, January 4, 1944. Kerr, however, did not formally seek the nomination.
63. PC Association, file M-B-1. The source is a Progressive Conservative constituency analysis prepared prior to the 1945 federal election.
64. Matthews had reconsidered his earlier decision to retire from politics. **Brandon Daily Sun**, March 14, 1945.

65. This organization, which advertised extensively in the 1945 federal election campaign, was headed by one B. A. Trestrail. Its message was direct and compelling: "Even though a CCF candidate be your minister, or your son's teacher, or a member of the Armed Forces, or a personal friend, you simply cannot vote for him (or her) unless you want to forfeit the freedom which our boys have fought so desperately to preserve." *Ibid.*, April 26, 1945.
66. Pictures of the "Bennett camps" combined with the reminder that one million Canadians were on relief during King's administration constituted the last CCF advertisement of the campaign. *Ibid.*, June 9, 1945.
67. *Ibid.*, May 29, 1945. The CCF — both nationally and in Manitoba — were desperately short of funds in 1945: "The National office is in a terrible financial situation, entirely due to the failure of provinces like Manitoba to carry out their obligations to us." PAC, CCF Records, vol. 60, David Lewis to H. A. Chappell, November, 28, 1945.
68. **Census of Prairie Provinces, 1946**, vol. 2, 41.
69. "My experience in the last campaign (which I am positive would have been won if I had one or two speakers to help me." PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 107, F. H. Young to Bracken, March no date, 1949.
70. The official totals were reported to be Matthews — 6,870; Young — 5,621; Brown — 5,294; and Smith — 497. **Brandon Daily Sun**, June 22, 1945.
71. The Liberals won 34.7 per cent of the popular vote in Manitoba; the CCF 31.6 per cent; and the PCs 24.9 per cent. Beck, **Pendulum of Power**, 257. The results in Brandon City were in the same order but they were somewhat closer: Matthews — 35.08 per cent; Brown — 32.93 per cent; and Young — 28.88 per cent.
72. One of the interesting features of the 1945 campaign was the fact that the next of kin of eligible voters who were currently prisoners of war were entitled to cast a ballot on behalf of the prisoner. PC Association, file E6-G(1), R. A. Bell to all candidates and constituency presidents, April 19, 1945.
73. A. E. Smith, on the other hand, polled only four votes. **Brandon Daily Sun**, June 19, 1945.

74. It should be noted that J. E. Matthews had been a strong advocate of conscription. He had deplored the fact that Brandon farmers were forced, by 1942, to work 300 plus acres on their own, due to the number of local men who had enlisted while other sections of the country had not responded equally. *Ibid.*, June 23, 1942.
75. Admittedly, a small minority of Brandon Progressive Conservatives had wanted their own separate candidate. The decision to choose a single representative was justified with a rather interesting argument: "Members held that provincial politics are getting in much the same state as municipal councils, and that the man best suited to act for the entire city, should be sent to Winnipeg." *Ibid.*, September 14, 1945.
76. The CCF in Manitoba subsequently attempted to resolve the differences that had presumably cost them the Brandon constituency. While Berry Richards, who had won re-election as an Independent (without having to oppose an official CCF candidate), was readmitted to party ranks, a motion to reinstate Dr. Dwight Johnson was defeated by a vote of 80 to 30. PAC, CCF Records, vol. 62, Minutes of Convention, December 6-8, 1945. Perhaps the success of Richards and the defeat of Johnson had affected the respective dissident's willingness to compromise as well as the delegates' tolerance of previous indiscretions.
77. Municipal electors may have felt a particular distaste for "party" politicians in 1945. Spafford placed seventh; C. H. Johnston — the president of the local PC Association and a unsuccessful contender for the coalitionists' nomination in 1945 — was 10th; while R. O. Lissaman — a future Conservative MLA — was a rather dismal 11th! *Brandon Daily Sun* November 29, 1945.

IX

The Post-War Era and the Emergence of the Progressive Conservative "Opposition" Party

Despite the dire predictions of the CCF and the fears of an uneasy populace, there was no depression in the post-war era. Thanks to an increasingly managed economy, a consumers' spending spree and the continuation of substantial defence spending (due, initially, to the Cold War and, secondly, to the Korean conflict), World War II was followed by a period of gradual economic growth. Nevertheless, there were — by 1950 — economic difficulties: farm incomes were "lagging," the cost of living was rising, old age pensions were becoming increasingly inadequate and housing remained in short supply. Yet when Dr. D. L. Johnson (Brandon's former CCF MLA and an Independent candidate in the 1949 federal election) warned that a depression would soon return and that a vote for either "old line" party was "a vote for war," the electorate was notably unresponsive. On the other hand, the Progressive Conservative candidates emphasized these same issues during the 1951 and 1952 by-elections and they were elected in both instances. Had the PCs supplanted the CCF as "the alternative" party in the public's mind? The results would seem to indicate so.

The post-war era was one of gradual, but limited, economic improvement in Brandon. The city enjoyed a small financial surplus in 1946; at least a dozen new industries began production in those 12 months while Brandon retailers reportedly enjoyed their

greatest year ever in 1947.' This new found prosperity, however, was not yet evenly distributed. Only 53 per cent of Brandon's 4,015 residential dwellings had a telephone, for which one had to wait from six to 24 months,' while just 32 per cent were equipped with mechanical refrigerators. Only a similar 32 per cent of Brandon householders owned an automobile in mid-1947.' Even city services were not universally available. Despite the "half-promises" of many years and the protests of Alderman A. D. Burneskie (a "north ender" by birth whose 1943 election launched what would prove to be an unequalled 26 consecutive years as a Brandon alderman), Brandon's sewage system had not yet been extended to the north side of the tracks. Those who had chosen to live on the "wrong" side of the tracks were even warned that extending the city sewage system into their neighbourhood might never be economically feasible due to the inadequate gradient of the area.'

For most Brandonites, however, living conditions were slowly improving and future prospects were encouraging by 1949, the year of two general elections. The local housing shortage appeared to have lessened;' Brandon's new and pre-paid water treatment facility was in operation; the city's capital debt had been reduced from a high of approximately \$2 million in 1937 to \$95,000;' the city's population had finally reached 20,000;' and this western Manitoba railway and agricultural market centre now even had airplane connections with the outside world, thanks to its new municipal airport and TCA.

With the exception of the 1945 municipal elections in which an unprecedented 16 aldermanic candidates vied for the honour of providing civic leadership,' the early years of the post-war period curiously constituted a period of relatively little political interest. All of the aldermanic candidates were elected by acclamation in 1946; only seven candidates sought five council seats in 1947 even though three (rather than the traditional two) candidates contested the mayoralty election. By 1948 the number of aldermanic candidates had increased to nine, perhaps as a reflection of the pending provincial and federal elections.

Commencing with the 1945 municipal elections (in which the CCF did not participate), the political "left" became notably inactive in post-World War II Brandon. Whether this reversal in



John Bracken

Manitoba Archives

political behaviour was essentially a negative result of the division which had bitterly divided the CCF and their subsequent defeat in the two disappointing general elections in 1945 cannot be determined conclusively. To some degree, the vacuum on the left was filled ironically by the two Johnsons whose radicalism had so divided the local CCF. Although Dr. D. L. Johnson, the former MLA, had been defeated in the 1945 provincial election, Mrs. D. L. Johnson, the more extreme of the two, won election in 1947 to the school board, that haven for would-be female politicians.' Despite the fact that the Brandon area CCF had polled a significant 28.96 per cent of the vote in 1945, they decided not to contest the 1949 federal election as a result of the hospitalization of Samuel Johnston, their "unofficial" candidate." Dr. D. L. Johnson decided, therefore, to file just hours before the deadline as an Independent. Although Dr. Johnson remained "beyond the pale," L. V. Robson of Deleau, one of the rural area's most prominent CCF members, signed his nomination papers which suggested that Johnson, despite the 1945 split, would receive some traditional CCF support.

The question, therefore, of who would represent the Liberals and the PCs in the 1949 federal contest was a matter of considerable interest. As John Bracken's Neepawa constituency was to be merged with the Portage constituency due to redistribution, Brandon PCs offered the local nomination to their national leader, an offer which he accepted in 1947. The PC organizational strategy was to concentrate initially on their most promising constituencies and Brandon, which the PCs had lost in 1945 by only 1,245 votes, was one such target area." While election campaigns were normally of eight to 10 weeks in duration, the preliminary organizational work in the Brandon riding began in early 1948. Bracken, nevertheless, was disappointed by the pace of that activity: "Off the record I can tell you that he feels that the local people have been a bit slow and they should get ahead at once with organization in the towns and with the polls in the city of Brandon, leaving the spring and summer months for organization work in the rural polls." As a result, Bill Wilton, a 28-year-old businessman-farmer from the High Bluff-Portage area who had recently been appointed provincial organizer," became directly involved in the Brandon constituency. Wilton, who would prove to have exceptional or-



G. R. Rowe, campaign manager for Liberal J. E. Matthews, 1949.

ganizational talents, supervised the selection of zone chairmen who, in turn, managed three polls each" and, subsequently, conducted "tests" in one poll to determine how effectively the job of poll organization could be done."

Bracken's July, 1948 resignation as national PC leader, reportedly for reasons of ill health,³⁷ led to a series of rumours that the veteran politician would retire from politics prior to the next election. While Bracken did later offer publicly to step aside in favour of a younger candidate," there is no evidence to indicate that such a change was ever seriously contemplated.

J. E. Matthews, the Liberal incumbent who would be 80 years old in 1949, was understandably considering retirement. Whether his party would permit him to do so, however, depended largely on the PCs. If John Bracken remained the candidate, the president of the Manitoba Liberal Federation believed that J. E. Matthews would have to stand again. "Brandon would be certain only if J. E. Matthews . . . ran against Bracken . . . On the other hand if Bracken didn't run then I think we could take the seat with someone else." As a result, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, during his April, 1949 visit to Brandon, announced that he had been able "to persuade" the reluctant Matthews to stand again."

Despite Dr. D. L. Johnson's shrill predictions of depression and war, the 1949 federal campaign in Brandon consisted primarily of claims and counter-claims as to what Matthews and Bracken could do for the constituency. Although the Sun enthusiastically described the visit of George Drew, the national PC leader, as the highlight of the PC campaign, local PC advertising clearly emphasized John Bracken and his record (i.e., as premier) rather than George Drew and the national party. Bracken was accredited with saving the wheat pool in 1931; with "rescuing" Brandon Packers in the late 1930s from "unfair" competition; and with securing much-needed provincial aid for a beleaguered Brandon College." In response to Bracken's list of accomplishments, Matthew's advertisements reminded the electors that it was Manitoba's "Liberal" government which had rescued the wheat pool; that it was Dr. H. O. McDiarmid, one of Brandon's most prominent Liberals, who had successfully "carried the torch" for Brandon Packers to the provincial authorities in Winnipeg; and that it was the Liberals, the dominant force within Bracken's coalition government, who de-

served credit for all the progressive legislation which had been produced. J. E. Matthews additionally and unabashedly proclaimed that the city's recent economic and population growth were due to Liberal policies and to his own efforts as the area's representative. The voters, therefore, were urged to vote for "High Employment, Social Security, Continued Prosperity and Good Government," a list of goals which significantly offered something to every segment of the Brandon community.

This campaign of claim and counter-claim inevitably produced an element of bitterness in the contest. Brandon PCs, for example, angrily responded to what they described as "Brandon Liberal Office Lies." It should be noted in passing that this PC accusation was directed at the "Brandon Liberal Office" rather than at J. E. Matthews. Although the 80-year-old Matthews was deemed to be above reproach, G. R. Rowe, Matthew's campaign manager, presumably was not.

Although the issue of Bracken's non-residency in the constituency did not receive a great deal of public attention, Brandon Liberals did subtly urge local electors to elect "A Brandon Man for Brandon, Man." The "parachutist" Bracken, in reply, stressed his long-time connection with the community: "It is now over 40 years since my work in agriculture first brought me to Brandon and western Manitoba. To this city and community I have returned on almost countless occasions, this time in a different capacity from others."

This severally faceted campaign took a related, but different, turn near the end as the PCs appealed to the community's pride by stating that "it's time Brandon had a Cabinet Minister (i.e., Bracken) as its representative!"^B The Liberals, on the other hand, concluded by appealing to the constituency's self-interest in a slightly different fashion: after having stated emphatically that "Canada Will Vote Liberal on June 27," they exhorted Brandon voters to "Re-Elect a Supporter of the Government!"²⁷ While the Liberals repeatedly warned local electors to "Beware of the Roorback," Brandonites went to the polls on June 27 without further political harrassment. It had been a most intensive and wearying campaign.

Despite the vituperative nature of the last few days of the campaign, only 70.9 per cent of the eligible city voters went to the polls. The 74.8 per cent response in the rural area was slightly larger which is interesting as the two local candidates were both Brandon residents. Perhaps this campaign of claims and counter-claims, charges and counter-charges, had alienated some of the uncommitted city voters." In any event, the decision was most decisive as the 80-year-old J. E. Matthews received 11,263 votes to Bracken's 7,150. Dr. D. L. Johnson, with 1,964 votes, polled only 9.6 per cent of the vote which was in marked contrast to "the left's" 31.7 per cent in 1945.

Although J. E. Matthews polled a slightly small percentage of the Brandon vote than he did the rural vote, he won all but two of the city's polls and he even outdrew the former CCF MLA in the north and east end pro-labour polls. There are several explanations for the fact that the 80-year-old back-bencher had so easily turned back the former national Progressive Conservative leader's challenge. Matthews was the experienced incumbent and incumbents rarely lose in Brandon. Matthews was a popular local resident; Bracken, famous or not, was a "parachutist" and some observers contended that "outsiders" could never, under normal circumstances, win in Brandon.' The ease with which Louis St. Laurent's government won re-election in 1949 suggests that any Brandonites who were inclined to vote "ministerialist" would automatically vote Liberal. These factors together constituted, in the world of Brandon politics, a virtually unbeatable combination as one PC organizer conceded when he described J. E. Matthews as the type of candidate "whom it was nearly impossible to beat as long as he wanted to run.""°

After that strenuous and sometimes bitter federal election campaign, it is not surprising that the two traditional parties encountered difficulty in selecting a single coalitionist candidate for that fall's provincial election. Although L. H. McDorman, the incumbent Liberal-Progressive MLA, was reportedly prepared to stand again," it would appear as if local Liberals had quietly decided that a more aggressive candidate would be desirable." As a result, Brandon Liberals selected G. R. Rowe to represent them at the coalitionist nominating meeting. Rowe was a 54-year-old school principal who had been active in Brandon community and Liberal

party activities for three decades: he was a past-president of the Brandon Kinsmen Club; he had served as provincial president of the Manitoba Teacher's Society; and he was a past-president of the local Liberal Association. Rowe, however, was somewhat of a controversial figure. When he initially moved to Brandon to accept the principalship of Alexandra school in September, 1922, Rowe was apparently unaware of the fact that he was filling a vacancy created by that year's "teachers' strike." He was, as a result, subjected to considerable criticism." Rowe, moreover, was a dogmatic and exceedingly partisan politician who had just served as J. E. Matthews's campaign manager in the bitterly-fought 1949 federal election. The choice of Rowe as the Liberal-Progressive nominee made the selection of a single, coalitionist candidate rather difficult, if not unlikely.

The events of the recent federal election campaign had clearly contributed to the difficulties of those provincial politicians who were attempting to keep the 1940 coalition intact." Some Brandon PCs, moreover, were becoming increasingly restless within that coalition. E. S. Martin complained that he was tired of "being led around by the nose" while Mrs. Roy Wilton perceptively noted that the coalition should be disbanded as the CCF were no longer a serious danger." Nevertheless, three PCs — A. C. Pearson, a young businessman; S. A. Magnacca, owner of a local real estate company and an unsuccessful aldermanic candidate; and S. C. McLennan, the manager of the provincial exhibition — announced their willingness to seek the coalitionist nomination. Brandon PCs, however, selected J. "Cam" Donaldson," the 58-year-old president of the Brandon federal PC Association and one of Brandon's most celebrated success stories. A member of a prominent pioneer family, Donaldson had been born in Brandon itself in 1891. Educated locally (but not extensively), Cam Donaldson had many of the characteristics of the legendary "Horatio Algiers" of that era. In addition to being the inevitable newspaper vendor, young Donaldson had gained business experience selling peanuts at local ball games! At age 17, Donaldson had joined the local fire department. Dismissed upon the instructions of his father who feared for his safety, Donaldson had turned to banking and then to his father's meat business. Following an initial period in the family store, Cam Donaldson had spread his wings by securing em-



Manitoba Archives

J. Cam Donaldson, successful provincial election winner, 1949.

ployment with the legendary Pat Burns in Calgary, the Hudson's Bay Company at various Canadian locations and, finally, with several major American firms. Donaldson returned to Brandon in 1936, in the midst of the Depression, where he soon re-established the family's interest in the meat business. By 1940, Brandon Packers was organized and that firm, by the time of his nomination in 1949, had grown to become one of the city's largest businesses.

The joint coalitionist nominating convention, at which 84 delegates, two per party per poll, were registered, failed to reach agreement as each delegation voted en masse in each of four ballots for their own man. As the two delegations appeared to be immovable and as the utilization of the preferential ballot would presumably minimize the effect of a split in the coalitionist ranks, the convention (with the encouragement of Premier D. L. Campbell who was present throughout those four hours of balloting) approved a motion by S. A. Magnacca (PC) and J. B. Craig (Liberal) which instructed each delegation to nominate its own coalitionist candidate.

The 1949 provincial election in Brandon, therefore, was rather unique in the fact that two government supporters — G. R. Rowe, Liberal-Progressive coalitionist, and J. Cam Donaldson, PC coalitionist — opposed both each other and W. R. Webb, the CCF nominee and the single anti-coalition candidate. Although Rowe and Donaldson concurred that it was in Brandon's interests to elect a coalitionist so that the city could continue to share in the "goodies" of politics," they predictably parted company on the question of which government supporter was best qualified to assist Brandon.

One of the curious traits of the democratic system is that the candidate who least wants to be a politician is often preferred to someone who openly aspires to the position. Aware that some of the electorate harbour such a basic distrust of "politics and politicians," Donaldson's supporters portrayed their man as the classic reluctant candidate who had agreed to stand only "in response to public demand." Donaldson, moreover, met the prerequisite of being a good community man: 26 years as a member of the Chamber of Commerce, 22 years as a member of Kiwanis, five years of service on the prestigious Board of Directors of the Brandon General Hospital, and three years as president of the Provincial

Exhibition Board. Cam Donaldson's principal qualification, however, was the fact that he was an extremely successful businessman who employed 165 Brandonites and whose company contributed an annual cash flow of \$4 million to the area's economy." The significance of that experience was made vividly clear: "The Manitoba government is big business and . . . Mr. Donaldson is a businessman!"

G. R. Rowe was in some difficulty if measured only by that same criteria. Judging by his activities, he was undoubtedly guilty of wanting to be a politician. His list of community activities was neither as extensive nor as prestigious as Donaldson's. And, finally, G. R. Rowe was only a school teacher: he was not an extremely successful businessman and he did not employ a large number of Brandonites. The Liberal-Progressive coalitionist, however, was not without qualifications. G. R. Rowe was a success in that that he had been appointed principal of David Livingstone school; he did discuss intelligently the needs for more governmental assistance for education; he did argue logically that "Brandon's Voice will be Heard" more effectively if Brandon's MLA were a member of the dominant Liberal-Progressive caucus within the coalition; and he (unlike his opponent) did have a university degree." Nevertheless, in the politics of Brandon in 1949, G. R. Rowe, BA was no political match for J. Cam Donaldson, wealthy entrepreneur.

Brandon voters elected Cam Donaldson, the Progressive Conservative coalitionist, by a very considerable margin in 1949 as he received 3,743 "first" choices or 52.3 per cent of the total. G. R. Rowe, who was a rather weak second with 1,933 votes, carried only the north-end polls, the area in which his school was located. W. R. Webb, the single anti-government candidate, trailed with 1,478 votes,⁴³ a total substantially lower than the average Labour-CCF vote in Brandon. The abnormally high percentage (i.e., 79.3) of pro-government votes in this particular election can be explained both by the fact that the re-election of the D. L. Campbell government was a virtual certainty" and in terms of a general decline in CCF support. As economic conditions had improved, the possibility of a post-war depression had diminished. Although few voters would deny the validity of segments of the CCF platform — i.e., the need for more industry, cheap electricity and the widening of the First Street bridge, there was no particular reason for the uncommitted voter to vote CCF in this campaign.

The death of J. E. Matthews, Brandon's veteran MP, in 1950 necessitated a federal by-election in 1951. Having virtually despaired of victory as long as the incumbent Matthews remained as a candidate, Brandon PCs were initially hopeful as they began the crucial, but potentially divisive, task of finding the most suitable candidate. A suitable candidate would fulfill two important qualifications: he (and that pronoun is used advisedly) would have to be able to win the seat and, secondly, he would have to be prepared to accept the nomination.

As the question of suitability was largely subjective, there was ample opportunity for sincere differences of opinion which a local nominating convention, in due course, would normally resolve. As by-elections are deemed to be of exceptional significance to the party as a whole in view of the publicity which they receive, the party's central organization is inclined to demonstrate an unusual interest in the proceedings and that, in turn, can be very disturbing to the local association and its desire for constituency autonomy. The party's central organization could interfere in one of two ways: they could attempt to parachute their choice into the constituency or they could seek, by utilizing their own staff and their control over election funds, to manipulate the local association by remote control. Brandon PCs were determined to avoid all such pitfalls.

Although there were rumours in the early weeks following J. E. Matthew's death that a "big name" Conservative would be parachuted into the riding, one Brandonite was particularly insistent that "any Bracken or any outsider is out"⁶⁶ as an "Ottawa or Toronto" selected parachutist simply could not win the seat. A young party activist also warned that the local association "might be led and persuaded to go certain ways but it would be asking for trouble to attempt to dominate it."⁶⁷ And, to be more specific, this perhaps over-zealous correspondent emphasized "that Bill Wilton, the Provincial Organizer, should be kept as far away from the riding as possible. He is not liked in this region at all and will do considerable harm if he organizes for an election, convention, or what have you in this constituency."⁶⁸

While evidence of considerable interest in a party's nomination is a positive sign in that the number of would-be candidates generally bears a direct correlation to the likelihood of success, a



Grant MacEwan Liberal candidate, 1951, federal byelection.

strenuous fight for the nomination could also be extremely divisive. Although the Brandon PC Association was reportedly "the most active and strongest" " in Manitoba, it was divided into two rival camps. A so-called rebel faction, which was challenging Cam Donaldson and his provincial executive, was allegedly headed by Arthur Pearson, the young party activist who had lost his party's provincial nomination to Donaldson in 1949, and local businessman Len Young, who reportedly wanted to run in the 1951 by-election." This split was sufficiently severe that the only possible resolution, in Wilton's mind, was to "drop" both Young and Arthur Pearson from the party." The conflict did not end there, however, as the prospect of Mayor Frank Williamson being nominated was reported to be equally troubling. In the opinion of the out-spoken Jack Bowie-Reed, Mayor Williamson was "just about the worst possible candidate . . . (and) the probable result of his being a candidate would be two PC candidates — and a lost riding!" Finding an acceptable PC candidate could obviously be a difficult task.

Although the names of several "possibles" were publicized during the early stages of the campaign," all of the evidence indicates that Brandon's MLA, Cam Donaldson, would have been nominated if he had so agreed. The fact that Brandon's MLA declined the opportunity to seek so-called higher office and that he announced, within weeks, his intention to retire from politics is intriguing. Whereas it is traditionally assumed that a political career can be captivating, Donaldson demonstrated that he, at least, could break "free." But why, after only two years in office, did he do so? Cam Donaldson was a businessman who was extremely proud of his business accomplishments as a paid full-page advertisement (with his own photograph strategically situated in the centre) on the occasion of Brandon Packer's 15th anniversary demonstrated. This boastful advertisement was a self-satisfied proclamation of the firm's success: the staff had grown from 17 in 1936 to 150, the annual payroll totalled \$350,000. \$25 million worth of livestock had been purchased and \$4 million had been expended locally in "wages, taxes, supplies, etc. in 15 years."³ Although Brandon had traditionally been politically represented by businessmen, Donaldson was "bigger" than most such businessmen-politicians and it appears as if he, to his surprise, had found politics to be a disappointing and unrewarding career. Donaldson was a "doer"; he was a very promi-

ment member of his own community; and, it would appear, he had found his back-bench position in the Manitoba legislature to be lacking in excitement and to be disappointing in its rewards. He had, therefore, no desire and obviously no personal need (in terms of seeking self-fulfillment) to seek so-called higher office or even to continue in the one which he currently held.

The number of PCs who had indicated an interest in their party's nomination was demonstrative of a widespread belief that the opposition party could win the 1951 federal by-election. The announcement that Brandon Liberals had successfully recruited one of Western Canada's best known and most respected agriculturalists to be their candidate suddenly dampened the Progressive Conservatives' enthusiasm. Grant MacEwan had been born in the Brandon district (within eight miles of City Hall, as his advertising reiterated) and educated in Brandon's elementary schools. Although MacEwan had no previous political experience, his decision to resign his position as Dean of Agriculture and Home Economics at the University of Manitoba in order to accept the Liberal nomination in Brandon was welcomed by several Canadian newspapers, several of which predicted his immediate elevation to the cabinet as Minister of Agriculture while the enthusiastic Calgary Albertan even visualized him as the next Prime Minister. Certainly his agricultural qualifications — his experience as a farmer, his acclaim as a nationally recognized livestock judge, his achievement of a Master of Science in Agriculture, his status as Dean of Agriculture, and his reputation as a widely-read author who had written extensively on rural history — were exceptional. MacEwan appeared to be eminently qualified to be both the MP of a constituency in which 55.04 per cent of the registered voters were rural residents and to be a Minister of Agriculture. Brandon Liberals had secured an exceedingly attractive candidate.

While a number of Brandon PCs had been reportedly seeking their party's nomination in the early months of the 1950-51 winter, the local PC association was forced to postpone its March 30, 1951 nominating convention due ostensibly to the severe storms which had swept the area." In reality, the party did not yet have an acceptable candidate. Cam Donaldson, to the disappointment of many, had adamantly refused to reconsider his earlier decision not to seek the nomination. Instead, he announced — prior to the

rescheduled nominating convention on April 26, 1951 — that he would retire from politics in the near future." In the absence of a suitable candidate who was willing and able to stand and in view of the likelihood that Grant MacEwan would be appointed Minister of Agriculture should he be elected, many rural area PCs concluded that their party should not contest the by-election." The city PCs and particularly those who had favoured withdrawing from Manitoba's coalition government were determined, however, to oppose MacEwan. They believed that there was a suitable candidate in the offing, if he could be persuaded to run.

The choice of the city PCs, Cam Donaldson included, was Walter George Dinsdale who, in retrospect, appears to have been the "near perfect" candidate for that particular by-election. The son of a former Conservative MLA, the 35-year-old assistant professor at Brandon College had grown up in the world of Brandon politics. He had, from an early age, joined his father in his many community activities, including the work of the Salvation Army, and Walter, even as a youth, was exceedingly well-known to the residents of the Brandon area. Despite his exemption as a Salvation Army captain from military service, Walter Dinsdale had served overseas as an RCAF fighter pilot. Due perhaps to his family's prominence, Dinsdale's wartime experiences were regularly reported. As an example, the **Brandon Daily Sun** reported (with photo attached) in late January, 1945 that Flight Lieutenant Walter "Dinny" Dinsdale had recently shot down his fourth German plane, even though his own Mosquito night fighter was itself in flames." Brandon's most celebrated World War II "hero" remained, however, a humanitarian at heart as he reportedly wished to return to his Salvation Army "street work" after the war. Following graduate studies in sociology and political science at the Universities of Toronto and Chicago, Dinsdale returned to the city where he had been born in 1916 and to the college from which he had graduated in 1937. Employed as an assistant professor, Dinsdale had varied responsibilities as a lecturer, as a public relations officer and as a recruiter. Dinsdale, in that latter function, travelled extensively throughout southwestern Manitoba, including that portion which constituted the rural segment of the Brandon federal constituency.

Subjected to considerable pressure from those Brandon PCs who were determined that the by-election should not go uncontested, a hesitant Walter Dinsdale — on the day of the nomination — acquiesced and, as a result of that decision (for the nomination was uncontested), he was promptly fired by a politically-nervous Brandon College. Although Dinsdale had been rejected by his employer, the new PC candidate enjoyed one immense political advantage in what could be described as the extended Dinsdale family. While a family photograph is a must in political advertising and the Sun did carry such a photo (including Gunnar, the first born) as a "news" item, Walter Dinsdale's family was more significant than most. Named in his father's honour and clearly proud to be following in his footsteps, Walter Dinsdale was the evident beneficiary of his pioneer father's hard-earned reputation. Married to a young woman who had strong ties in the northern segment of the constituency and was well-known in Brandon and the surrounding area due to her work with the YWCA, Lenore (Gusdal) Dinsdale proved to be as active and as effective a campaigner as her husband. The Dinsdales — husband and obviously pregnant wife — travelled together, they attended the many public meetings at which each spoke together, and they, on numerous occasions, musically entertained together. The Progressive Conservatives, probably to Grant MacEwan's eventual dismay, had nominated what would prove to be a very formidable Dinsdale team.

Grant MacEwan also discovered that he, despite his impressive agricultural qualifications, carried "an albatross on his back." The Liberal nominee was a parachute candidate and all of his qualifications disappointingly seemed to pale in significance as a result. As Walter Dinsdale stated on his nomination night, Brandon — as far back as that 35-year-old could remember — had always been represented "by men whose roots were deep in the community." According to the admonishing words of Errick Willis, the provincial PC leader, Brandon should "hang its head in shame if it is not able to produce a candidate of its own and has to import one from 140 miles away."^o Willis rather ironically reminded Brandon electors that they, just two years before, had rejected a similar agricultural expert in John Bracken, who also was a former Dean of Agriculture at the University of Manitoba and whose reputation as an agricultural researcher greatly ex-

ceeded MacEwan's, for the very reason that he did not live within the constituency! Certainly the PCs did all that they could to keep the residency issue alive throughout the campaign:¹ they obviously realized that parachute candidates historically had been ill-received within this constituency.

One of the interesting features of the 1951 by-election was the struggle to determine which party would define the issues in the campaign. The Liberals tried unsuccessfully to argue that party policies were of the utmost significance. In addition to presenting their own "positive platform" of proposed amendments to the old age pension programme, "a "pay as you go budget," the extension of Canada's foreign markets and "agricultural prosperity," they attacked their Progressive Conservative opponents for their failure to present any alternatives. The Hon. Stuart Garson, Canada's Minister of Justice and Manitoba's former Premier, described the PCs as a party who, for 15 long years, had been unable to develop a policy: "They challenge our wheat policy . . . What is their policy? . . . Do they want to abolish the wheat board? Do they want to cancel the wheat agreement?" MacEwan himself played upon the same theme. Conceding rather condescendingly that his opponent was "a fine young man," the former Dean of Agriculture complained, however, that he could not "figure out what the opposition . . . stood for." The PCs, in reply, calmly and successfully asserted that "the opposition in a by-election is not called on to form a platform as a government cannot be put out of office in one by-election."²

The PCs, nevertheless, did proclaim, in very general terms, what they "stood for." As the bold-print words of one advertisement proclaimed, "WALTER DINSDALE STANDS FOR TRUE DEMOCRACY.' In fact, "DEMOCRACY or DICTATORSHIP" was a predominant theme during one stage of this by-election campaign. Capitalizing upon the well-publicized statements of the infamous C. D. Howe — "Who is there to stop us" and "what's a million dollars," Dinsdale and company characterized the Liberal government as a "dictatorship" which governed by orders in council." Voters were urged to "jar the government to its senses . . . Let the government realize that they are still the servants, not the masters of the people."³ Although the Hon. Stuart Garson, for one, labelled the charge that there was an "incipient

dictatorship" in Canada as "ridiculous,"⁹ the PCs persisted in portraying the government as "dictatorial" in nature. Appealing to his legendary "little Canadians" to demonstrate that they could not "be pushed around," John Diefenbaker, in one of three well-attended (and perhaps exceedingly significant⁹ meetings during the by-election campaign, urged even Brandon area Liberals to vote for Dinsdale. Local Liberals could safely protest (by voting for Dinsdale) against both inadequate farm incomes and government by order in council as the Liberal government's majority was not endangered. The Liberals, should Dinsdale be elected, would "still be as numerous as the grains of sand in the ocean, and some of them almost as effective."

The second major emphasis to PC attacks on the Liberal government was economic in nature. Having asked rhetorically whether "\$\$\$ GROW ON TREES?," Dinsdale advertising focused on several "facts." The government's budget and its tax rates were the highest in peace time history; the cost of living had soared to its highest level since Confederation; and the Canadian dollar had sunk to its lowest point in history.⁷⁴ Brandon area voters were also faced with the frightening spectre of an even more serious decline: "What are you going to do when your dollar drops to 40 cents? Are you and your Children going to go Hungry to Bed?" There were other important economic issues as well: the recent "Liberal negotiated" international wheat agreement — as Souris MP Colonel Art Ross stressed throughout the rural areas — was costing farmers 37 cents in lost revenue for each bushel sold;⁷⁵ Canadians had been hurt by a recently established sales tax;⁷⁶ and the Liberals had wastefully spent \$439,200 on the purchase and remodelling of the Prime Minister's residence.

One of the Liberal strategies in this contest was to portray Dinsdale as a George Drew candidate as former Ontario premiers were never popular in Manitoba. The PCs, however, succeeded in presenting their candidate on his own individual merits and as an anti-government candidate, rather than as George Drew Progressive Conservative. The leader of the federal PCs did not visit Brandon during the by-election; his picture was not included in any advertisements, and, according to published reports, the PCs rarely even mentioned their leader during the campaign. The PCs had succeeded in portraying the by-election in "David and Goliath"

terms, that of the "local boy" who was protesting in the name of "Democracy" the extravagant, dictatorial policies of an eastern machine which was shamefully represented locally by ("Evil of Evils") a parachute candidate.

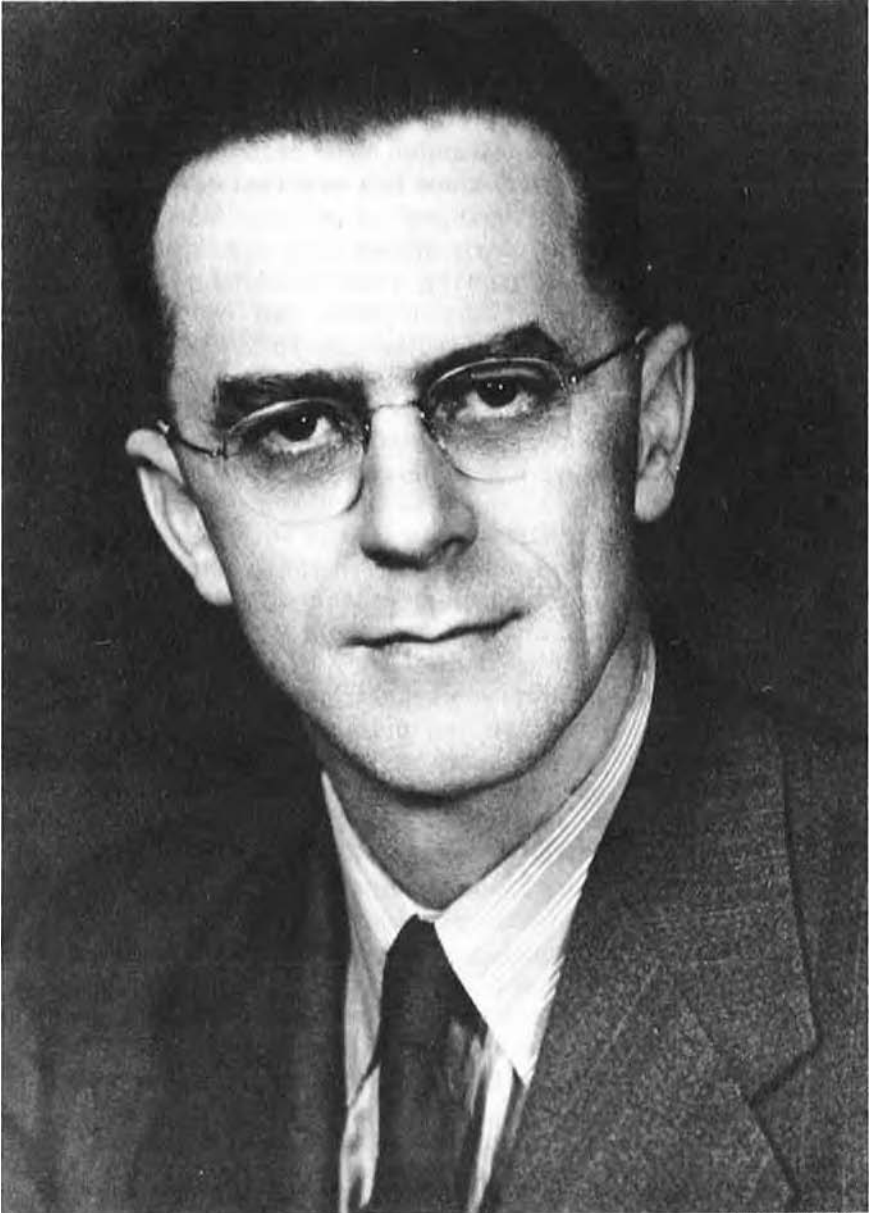
That local boy was also, of course, a well-known World War II fighter pilot and that analogy was surely not lost upon the Brandon area electors when Dinsdale's election-eve message was delivered to virtually all of the constituency via means of a powerful public address system attached to a four-passenger Stinson aircraft. Attracting the attention of unexpecting townsfolk and farmers alike with a stirring rendition of martial music, the voters were subjected to the last pleas of the campaign. Although there were reports of startled horses and angry farmers, the novelty of the technique could not be discounted. The message-bearing aircraft completed its journey by swinging over Kinsmen Stadium where a large (and responsive) crowd were happily witnessing their hometown Brandon Greys baseball team defeat the visiting Elmwood Grants 6-3. That victory for the local team proved to be an omen of what would transpire on June 25, 1951.



Walter Dinsdale with wife Lenore and son Gunnar as pictured in The Brandon Sun.

The Dinsdale team won that by-election with a surprising 56.9 per cent of the vote as the son of Brandon's former MLA swept both the city, except for the north end, and the traditionally Liberal rural polls, where he had been ably assisted by veteran Souris MP Colonel Art Ross. Why had Brandon area residents voted for an opposition member when they knew full well that only government members could provide the "goodies" of politics? The PCs, first of all, had nominated a particularly strong local candidate. They had also carefully nurtured a growing voter dissatisfaction with the federal government. The PCs, moreover, had cleverly and successfully combined those two factors as they demonstrated to Brandon area voters that they could vote "no" to Liberal policies only by voting "yes" to Walter Dinsdale. Confident perhaps in a newly-discovered post-war sense of security, but disappointed that the material rewards were not yet greater, Brandonites had seized this unique opportunity "to speak to the nation." Flattered by the attention — the "eyes of Ottawa are on the voters of the Brandon constituency" — Brandon area electors, in 1951, stood up in concert with those of three other constituencies where the Liberals suffered by-election defeats on June 25 and were counted, albeit in a negative manner.

Walter Dinsdale was remarkably similar to his predecessor J. E. Matthews in all but age and political affiliation. Both were well-known members of the business and professional class; both perceived their primary function as politicians to be one of service to their constituents, a role which earned, in return, the political gratitude of many electors, irrespective of class; both were generally well-liked by those who knew them; and, finally, both carefully provided their opponents with few, if any, opportunities for attack. Once such men as Matthews and Dinsdale were elected to office with its accruing advantages of status and publicity, they as incumbents proved to be virtually invincible. In the words of party worker Len Earl, Dinsdale was "an example of a man who can be elected so long as he wants to run in Brandon. So far as I can see he is (in) about the same position as his predecessor J. E. Matthews whom it nearly was impossible to beat so long as he wanted to run. Dinsdale is young and subject to ordinary care holds a seat which will probably remain Conservative for a long time." Could ever a prophet be more accurate?



Manitoba Archives

Reg Lissaman

Cam Donaldson had been elected in 1949 as a PC coalitionist. In late 1950, he had announced that he would resign his seat in the legislature should his party decide to withdraw from the coalition. Although he had indicated originally that he would seek re-election in an ensuing by-election as a "straight" Progressive Conservative,^{B°} Donaldson had decided instead to retire at the end of the 1951 session in order to devote more time to Brandon Packers and to his work with the Provincial Exhibition Board." Consequently, a January 27, 1952 by-election was necessitated, a noteworthy by-election in that traditional partisan rivalries reappeared in the provincial Brandon riding.

R. O. (Reg) Lissaman, the 43-year-old businessman who was selected to be the new Progressive Conservative candidate, had been born in Brandon where he had subsequently resided, except for a period of a study at the Chicago Technical College and for a few months of employment with the Canadian Bank of Commerce at Grandview, Manitoba. Lissaman then joined the family's long-established construction firm which had, according to PC advertisements, a payroll in excess of \$60,000 by 1951. Curiously described by his advertisements as a "deep thinker," Lissaman had been a regular contributing author to **Popular Science Monthly** during the Depression,⁸² a claim which no other Brandon politician was ever able to make. Although Lissaman had many of the usual community affiliations such as membership in First Baptist Church, the Chamber of Commerce, the Industrial Commission and a lodge, this Brandon businessman does not seem to have been exceedingly active in such organizations. He had, it is true, stood for aldermanic election in 1945 but the future MLA had finished an exceedingly dismal 11th (out of 12) in that contest.

By way of contrast, 54-year-old Alex McPhail, the Liberal candidate, was a considerably more prominent member of the **Brandon community**, even though he had **not** (as PC advertisements constantly re-iteratee) normally resided within the city itself. Born and raised in the district, the graduate of Brandon Collegiate Institute had served overseas with the Royal Flying Corps during the Great War. He had then returned to the family farming enterprises which had been begun by his late father in 1881. Internationally known as a breeder of Yorkshire swine, president of the Provincial Exhibition Board, vice-president of the



Walter Dinsdale, PC incumbent since 1951.

Winter Fair Board, director of the Manitoba Livestock Association, Alex McPhail was one of the area's most eminent agriculturalists. Although McPhail had moved his family to the city some two years before and despite the fact that he was a director of the Brandon General Hospital, member of the Brandon Wheat King's executive and member of the local Chamber of Commerce, he remained, as his nomination papers indicated, a farmer who currently lived in the city. This, in the minds of his Progressive Conservative opponents, was a serious weakness as the 1952 by-election was "for the sole purpose of securing representation for The City of Brandon not a representative for Rural Brandon."⁵⁴ So much for the economic union of town and country. So much for the history of Brandon as the "Wheat City."

The third candidate in the 1952 by-election was 63-year-old Harry Spafford, a well-known and well-liked CNR locomotive engineer who had previously and unsuccessfully sought election to the Manitoba legislature as an Independent Labour Party nominee in 1932. The CCF nominee was best known to Brandonites, however, as the former alderman who had served for 18 consecutive years, from 1928 until 1945.

There was only one issue in the January, 1952 by-election, although there were several variations of that theme. Had the D. L. Campbell coalitionist government governed Manitoba successfully and had Brandon benefitted as a result? Would Brandon's interests be further enhanced by contributing to a more numerous and thus, presumably, more effective opposition or by electing, as the McPhail advertisements so aptly stated, "A Man Who Can Contribute to Government Policy, Not Just Criticize It." Although Harry Spafford, who was clearly the weaker of the three candidates, attempted to discuss other social issues, especially in light of CCF achievements in Saskatchewan,⁵⁵ he could not divert the electors' attention from the question of community self-interest. The issue in 1952 had become one of either sustaining the coalition or reinforcing the principal opposition, the role which the PCs effectively claimed for themselves. The fact that the PCs had, until 1950, been a party to those government failures which they now so vehemently denounced and that it had been the CCF who had initially withdrawn from the coalition in 1943 and who had there-

fore been its critics for many years was ironically lost upon the electorate.

Conveniently forgetting for the moment that Brandon had been w Progressive Conservative seat since 1949, large Lissaman advertisements boldly proclaimed: "It Is Time For A Change." Manitoba had the "poorest educational system in Canada"; the Campbell ministry had provided a "paltry" \$2,500 to Brandon's celebrated Provincial Exhibition; and Brandon College — western Manitoba's "only College" — had received a "starvation" grant of \$22,500, whereas the University of Manitoba had received \$1,000,000." The "present provincial government" had also "CLOSED YOUR NORMAL SCHOOL"" (although the PC advertisement failed to note that Brandon's Normal School had been closed in 1942 due to declining enrolments and at a time when all of the political parties had been members of the coalition"). Lissaman, moreover, advocated the implementation of a teachers training program at Brandon College." For those voters for whom education as an issue was not of the highest priority, there was additional evidence of unforgiveable government neglect. "Did this 'Key' city of Brandon merit a visit during (the) recent Royal Tour? . . . No — we were forgotten like — THE DEER LODGE VETERANS." Need Lissaman's supporters have said more?

Alex McPhail, assisted by Premier D. L. Campbell and the Hon. Ron Turner, the Provincial Treasurer, gamely responded with "Answers to the Opposition's Statements." They categorically denied that Brandon's hydro supply was endangered due to the mismanagement of the Manitoba Power Commission. They protested that provincial financial aid to Brandon schools was four times as great as it was five years ago; that Manitoba had the lowest provincial taxes and the lowest gasoline taxes in Canada. And — irrespective of the PC charges that the Campbell government was acting in a "dictatorial" manner, like a "one party system" behind "CLOSED DOORS"" — the coalitionists explained that all governments had caucus meetings and that they were hardly a threat to democracy.'

Premier D. L. Campbell, speaking in Brandon, noted that the "main plank in the Progressive Conservative platform in the current campaign was the same argument used in the recent federal by-election — the need for a strong opposition."" Certainly

there were many similarities in the two PC campaigns, not the least of which was the major role played in this campaign by the recently elected Progressive Conservative MP (and his wife Lenore who, as a "housewife," made radio broadcasts on behalf of Lissaman). Dinsdale joined Lissaman in both his opening and concluding radio addresses. In fact, the final broadcast featured the new MP's "first hand impressions of Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill" formed during the current visit of Britain's famous war leader to Ottawa. The PCs had successfully defeated an outsider during the 1951 federal by-election; they were clearly modelling this provincial by-election campaign on that successful example, especially in the emphasis that only Lissaman truly qualified as a "Brandon man."

Finally, there was a definite — but unimpressive — attempt by the PCs to capitalize upon the anti-Ottawa sentiment which had elected Walter Dinsdale just seven months before. Lissaman advertisements, in spite of the fact that this was a provincial by-election, included intermittent references to federal politics as in one complaint that only 1.5 per cent of the federal government's defence contracts were given to Manitobans" and in another reference to the arrogance of "the Liberal dictators at Ottawa." The last Lissaman advertisement, moreover, reminded Brandon voters: "Don't Forget Your Voice in Electing Reg Lissaman Will Be Heard In Ottawa."

Although only 55 per cent of the eligible electorate braved a raging blizzard to go to the polls on January 21, 1952, the anti-government message which they expressed was unmistakably clear as Reg Lissaman had a commanding lead on the first ballot with 2,940 votes to Alex McPhail's 2,224 and Harry Spafford's 1,308. Thus, 65.6 per cent of those voting (i.e., for Lissaman or Spafford) had supported an anti-government candidate. Although the vast majority of CCF voters plumped for Spafford, 67.3 per cent of the minority who did indicate a second preference opted for Lissaman, the other opposition candidate. As a result, Lissaman won with 3,223 votes to McPhail's 2,361.

As in 1951, Brandon voters had deliberately voted to strengthen the opposition in a by-election in which the government's mandate was not endangered. They, in rather uncharacteristically defiant fashion, had spurned the opportunity to be represented on the ministerialist side of the house. They had, for

the second by-election in a row, voted "no" to the government by voting "yes" to the PC candidate. Reg Lissaman, like Walter Dinsdale, had been swept into office by a wave of protest during the unique circumstances of a by-election when it was possible "to slap the government's hands" without endangering the government itself. Once in office, Reg Lissaman, even though he personally was neither a Walter Dinsdale nor a J. E. Matthews, would prove extremely difficult to dislodge. As some wise person once said, "Possession (of the seat) is nine-tenths of the election."

When the post-1945 era began, Brandon was represented both federally and provincially by "ministerialist" Liberals, although L. H. McDorman, the Liberal-Progressive coalitionist MLA, had been elected with PC support. By 1952 Brandon was represented both federally and provincially by anti-government Progressive Conservatives. In the 1945 provincial election, the Liberals and PCs had coalesced together in the face of two CCF candidates. By the 1952 provincial by-election, the CCF, the victims of the post-war economic recovery and of the Cold War were no longer a threat and, as a result, the province-wide coalition had essentially fallen apart. As the CCF had diminished in strength, the right wing had grown in confidence until it reached the point when it could again afford to divide into its various components. As a consequence, the Progressive Conservatives withdrew from the coalition and traditional party rivalries were renewed. In the early 1940s, the CCF had constituted a serious threat both as an opposition party and as an alternative economic system. By the 1950s, the CCF no longer threatened either of the so-called "old line" parties or the prevailing capitalistic economic system. The Progressive Conservatives happily supplanted the CCF as the principal opposition party, both provincially and federally, and, to the combined relief of both of the traditional parties, the capitalist system went essentially unchallenged.

The "game" of Brandon politics had ended as it had begun: the city's business and professional class, irrespective of the party which they favoured at the moment, remained firmly in control. They had again convinced the electorate that the traditional parties could adequately accommodate the community's many divergent interest groups; that they could transcend class differences; that they could "serve" all members of the constituency; and, as a consequence, that "Liberals versus Conservatives" was "the only game in town!"

FOOTNOTES

1. Brandon Daily Sun, January 23, 1947.
2. Ibid., December 31, 1947.
3. Ibid., September 8, 1948.
4. Ibid., September 19, 1947.
5. Ibid., February 18, 1947.
6. Ibid., June 4, 1949.
7. Ibid., January 4, 1949. The remaining sum would hopefully be paid by the end of 1951.
8. The city's population in 1949 was 20,045. Ibid., May 12, 1949. While the total population had increased, the area "north of the tracks" had suffered a slight drop in population.
9. Perhaps the return to peace time "normalcy" and the decision not to extend the financial supervisor's term beyond 1947 (ibid., November 28, 1945) led to this renewal of interest in municipal government.
10. Mrs. D. R. Doig, a Brandon Women's Civic Association candidate, was likewise successful in that year's school board election. Ibid., October 29, 1947.
11. Johnston, a CPR trainman and the secretary of the Brandon CCF Association, had not yet been nominated at the time of his automobile accident but the local executive did not believe there was sufficient time either to locate a suitable replacement candidate or to conduct a proper campaign. Ibid., June 1, 1949.
12. The seats which were represented by PC members would be left to those MPs. PC Association, file M-M-3a, R. A. Bell to W. R. (sic) Wilton, January 17, 1947.
13. Ibid., file M-B-1, R. A. Bell to W. K. Wilton, February 6, 1948. Bell was the party's national director while Wilton was Manitoba organizer.
14. Ibid., file M-M-3a, Cal C. Miller to R. A. Bell, December 20, 1946.
15. Ibid., file M-B-1, W. K. Wilton to Bracken, March 1, 1948.
16. Art Pearson, a young party activist, was to organize poll 23 to the extent that every PC supporter in that poll was to be contacted.

17. The Sun, however, suggested rather strongly that opposition from the old guard had severely hindered his attempts to lead the party in a progressive direction. **Brandon Daily Sun**, July 30, 1948. The implication of this and other editorials was that Bracken was being forced out.
18. Ibid., October 29, 1948.
19. PAC, National Liberal Federation Papers, vol. 657, Irving Keith to H. E. Kidd, March 5, 1949.
20. **Brandon Daily Sun**, April 21, 1949. Although G. R. Rowe, the former president of the Manitoba Liberal-Progressive Association and, subsequently, the party's provincial candidate in 1949, was nominated in addition to Matthews, he did not stand. Ibid., May 16, 1949.
21. Ibid., June 15, 1949.
22. Ibid., June 4, 1949.
23. Ibid., June 20, 1949.
24. Ibid., June 25, 1949.
25. PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 108, Bracken to all electors, (no date), 1949. It is also interesting to note that Fred Young, Bracken's campaign manager, believed that the support of John Diefenbaker "in one or more meetings in Brandon . . . would help considerable in getting some extra urban support." Ibid., vol. 107, F. H. Young to Bracken, March (no date), 1949. Diefenbaker, however, did not campaign in this constituency until the 1951 by-election when, in his opinion, he made an important contribution.
26. **Brandon Daily Sun**, June 14, 1949.
27. Ibid., June 25, 1949.
28. Ibid. This was certainly true in Manitoba where Liberal candidates won 12 seats, the CCF were victorious in three while the PCs were limited to one representative. The national results were also comparable as the Liberals, with 193 seats, won their most decisive victory ever. The PCs with 41 seats were a very distant second while the CCF trailed badly with 13 members. Beck, **Pendulum of Power**, 272.
29. "Any Bracken or any **Outsider** is out." PC Association, file M-M-2, R. D. Guy to W. H. Kidd, December 19, 1950.
30. Ibid., file **M-B-1**, **L. F. Earl** to W. H. Kidd, August 13, 1951.

31. **Brandon Daily Sun**, October 13, 1949.
32. McDorman reportedly had been in poor health for some time.
Interview with Robert Clement, August 5, 1975.
33. Interview with Mrs. G. R. Rowe, August 12, 1975.
34. Actually the coalition, now headed by Premier D. L. Campbell with PC party leader Errick Willis serving as Deputy Premier, had displayed signs of internal dissension for several months prior to the 1949 election. Young Liberals in Manitoba were publicly uncomfortable in the coalition; a Liberal-Progressive MLA, Edmond Prefontaine, had decided to sit as a "straight Liberal"; while three Progressive Conservative MLA's and an Independent broke with the coalition government during the pre-election 1949 legislative session. The "opposition" PCs then combined, in mid-1949, with the Independent Liberal Prefontaine to form the Manitoba Democratic Movement, an organization which was dedicated to providing the voters with a non-socialist alternative to the government.
35. **Brandon Daily Sun**, October 12, 1949.
36. After Steve Magnacca had declined to stand, Art Pearson was eliminated on the first ballot. Donaldson won the nomination on the second ballot over S. C. McLennan.
37. G. R. Rowe's advertisements boldly outlined the choice that was presented to Brandon electors: "Will it (Brandon) vote itself into the wilderness of opposition or will it truly vote Brandon 1. Brandon has a big stake in the Government of Manitoba. Grants of Social Services and Education in Brandon exceed annually \$100,000.00. 1949 vote for Brandon Mental Hospital \$866,380.00 with an additional capital outlay to provide an extra 108 beds \$70,000.00. Grants to Provincial Exhibition, Winter Fair, Livestock Shows and Horticulture \$7,437.81. These figures are exclusive of Hydro, Telephones, Good Roads, Jail, Agriculture Courses in Normal School."
Brandon Daily Sun, October 29, 1949.
38. *Ibid.*, November 7, 1949.
39. *Ibid.*, November 2, 1949.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*

42. One of the unusual features of this 1949 contest was the fact that the Liberals attempted, perhaps unwisely, to capitalize upon G. R. Rowe's educational qualifications. *Ibid.*, November 8, 1949.
43. *Ibid.*, November 11, 1949.
44. There were 18 seats in which the coalitionists were not opposed by anti-coalitionists while the CCF, the principal opposition, fielded only 25 candidates in total in 1949.
45. PC Association, file M-M-2, R. D. Guy to W. H. Kidd, December 19, 1950.
46. *Ibid.*, file M-B-ly, Jack Bowie-Reed to W. H. Kidd, November 28, 1950.
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*, file M-M-2a, W. K. Wilton to Hon. George Drew, November 30, 1950.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*, file M-B-ly, Jack Bowie-Reed to W. H. Kidd, November 8, 1950.
52. According to rumour, several Brandon area men including Mayor Frank Williamson, Professor Walter Dinsdale, William Pearson, a local lawyer and a recent campaign manager, Reeve Wes Pentland and John Thompson, the Elkhorn area lawyer who had stood unsuccessfully in 1940, were interested in the Progressive Conservative nomination in 1951. *Ibid.*, W. K. Wilton to Hon. George Drew, November 30, 1950.
53. **Brandon Daily Sun**, April 2, 1951.
54. Brandon Liberals advertised the pro-MacEwan comments of the two Winnipeg dailies, the **Calgary Albertan** and the **Vancouver Daily Province**. *Ibid.*, May 29, 1951.
55. *Ibid.*, March 30, 1951.
56. *Ibid.*, April 18, 1951.
57. Interview with Walter Dinsdale, August 26, 1981.
58. **Brandon Daily Sun**, January 27, 1945.
59. *Ibid.*, April 27, 1951.
60. *Ibid.*
61. One of Dinsdale's advertisements stated: "A Brandon Man

- with a vote in this constituency is the man to represent you." Ibid., June 20, 1951.
62. As the Hon. Paul Martin, Minister of Health, explained to some 400 Brandonites, all Canadians over 70 years of age would receive \$40 a month without a means test and the same pension would be paid to the 65-69 age group should they require such assistance. Ibid.
 63. Ibid., June 5, 1951.
 64. Ibid., June 15, 1951.
 65. Ibid., June 20, 1951.
 66. Ibid., June 18, 1951.
 67. Ibid., June 7, 1951.
 68. Ibid., June 6, 1951..
 69. Ibid.
 70. Ibid., June 21, 1951.
 71. Ibid., June 15, 1951.
 72. Diefenbaker's role in the by-election campaign was undoubtedly of immense significance in that he drew capacity crowds in each of his appearances. The degree to which his assistance contributed to Dinsdale's victory was subsequently a point of contention as the future Prime Minister was angered by what he perceived to be Dinsdale's inadequate appreciation.
 - 73. Brandon Daily Sun, June 23, 1951.**
 74. Ibid., June 14, 1951.
 75. Ibid., June 19, 1951.
 76. Ibid.
 77. Diefenbaker predicted that the new sales tax would cost each family \$58 per year. Ibid., June 12, 1951.
 78. Ibid., June 22, 1951.
 79. PC Association, file M-B-1, L. F. Earl to W. H. Kidd, August 13, 1951.
 - 80. Brandon Daily Sun, October 4, 1950.**
 81. Ibid., April 30, 1973.
 82. Ibid., January 5, 1952.
 83. One Lissaman advertisement stressed the need to elect a sound businessman "who not only IS NOW but always has

- been a resident of Brandon City Proper." Ibid., January 8, 1952.
84. Ibid.
 85. Ibid., January 14, 1952.
 86. Spafford stressed particularly his party's proposals for "government sponsored automobile insurance at cost to owner" and "complete health and hospital care for everyone at a price you can afford to pay" which, he stated, were not "dreams" as they were in effect in Saskatchewan. The CCF candidate equally emphasized such local issues as increased financial aid to Brandon College, the re-opening of the Normal School to meet the needs of the 600 "permit" teachers in the province, routing the Trans-Canada highway through Brandon, and the provision of cheaper electricity combined with the location of new industries in the "Wheat City." Ibid., January 19, 1952.
 - 87 Furthermore, two PC cabinet ministers and a handful of PC MLAs continued to support the coalition, despite the 1950 decision of their party to withdraw.
 88. Brandon Daily Sun, January 12, 1952.
 89. Ibid.
 90. This point interestingly was raised by S. C. McLennan, a Progressive Conservative who had unsuccessfully sought his party's nomination in 1949, and who, as general manager of the provincial exhibition board, was closely associated with President Alex McPhail. Ibid., January 16, 1952.
 91. Ibid., January 18, 1952.
 92. Ibid., January 15, 1952.
 93. A three-quarter page advertisement entitled "BRANDON OPEN THE DOOR" attacked Premier Campbell's argument that it was important to elect a government member as the essential decisions were made in caucus before matters were introduced to the legislative assembly. The PCs somewhat hysterically responded: "Is not this caucus control comparable to a DICTATORSHIP Is it not a "ONE PARTY SYSTEM?" Ibid., January 18, 1952.
 94. One Lissaman advertisement stated: "We are still a Democracy and object to the Business of the Province being conducted behind CLOSED DOORS (Gov't. Caucus). Only a

Government NUMERICALLY STRONG but MENTALLY and MORALLY WEAK operated this way." Ibid., January 17, 1952.

95. Ibid., January 19, 1952.

96. There were a series of such daily radio broadcasts which were made by party activists. Ibid., January 3, 1952.

97. Ibid., January 16, 1952.

98. Ibid., January 10, 1952.

99. Ibid., January 18, 1952.

100. Ibid., January 19, 1952.

X

Brandon's Politics and Politicians in Retrospect

Brandon's Politics And Politicians is an account of those who provided leadership and exerted authority from the late 1890s until the early 1950s as Manitoba's second city grew from a nucleus of 5,000 to a sub-metropolis of some 20,000 residents. **Brandon's Politics And Politicians, therefore,** is an account of the city's growth, intermittent though it may have been; it is an examination of the political significance of the city's business and professional class which played a pre-eminent role throughout the period in question; and it is an explanation of the changing relationship of that class to those within the community who, on occasion, threatened their pre-eminence. **Brandon's Politics and Politicians,** in short, is the study of power; it is an examination of the origin of power and an analysis of the changing manner in which that power is exercised.

To comprehend the nature of and, to a limited extent, the uniqueness of politics in Brandon, one must first appreciate the significance of its relationship to Winnipeg and, to a lesser degree, its western Manitoba neighbours. Brandon's spokesmen demanded on frequent occasions the special recognition (such as representation in the cabinet) to which they believed they were entitled as residents of Manitoba's second city. They complained, just as frequently, that their share of the political "goodies," which were distributed by the government located in Winnipeg, was inadequate.

Although Brandon's political leaders did not speak of metropolitan centres and of hinterlands, it is apparent that they understood all too clearly the nature of the interrelationship which existed between Brandon and Winnipeg. Brandon was part of a larger political whole (i.e., the province or the nation) and, as such, it was obviously very dependent upon those who made decisions in the name of that larger political body. A new and developing community such as Brandon was especially in need of the jobs and contracts — whether they be distributed in the form of immigration sheds, an agricultural college or a police barracks — which a partisan government could distribute to the favoured. Politics and political decisions, therefore, were of vital importance to many of those who lived in this small and, as yet, dependent city.

Those who were all too conscious of the degree of Brandon's dependency on distant governments ironically demonstrated little awareness of the needs and aspirations of those who resided within Brandon's own "sub-hinterland." Those who promoted the growth of this small prairie city as a commercial centre, whether it be as a market town, a wholesale distribution depot or a manufacturing community, exhibited little sympathy for the smaller market centres within Brandon's trading area which, undoubtedly, were as threatened by Brandon's growth as was the "Wheat City" by Winnipeg's. Those outraged Brandonites who loudly protested the interference of "Winnipeg parsons," to cite the example of the prohibition campaign, consistently nominated and elected Brandon urbanites to speak on behalf of the entire Brandon federal constituency, including that 60 per cent of the electorate which was rural.

The most notable feature, however, of politics within the Brandon community until the post-World War I era was the virtually unchallenged domination by the city's business and professional class. Comprised of men of achievement and thus of confidence, members of the city's commercial elite were regularly elected to office at the municipal, provincial and federal levels from the 1880s until the latter stages of the Great War. As successful and, hence, respected members of the business and professional class, men such as **T.** Mayne Daly, Clifford Sifton and G. R. Coldwell easily achieved both social and political prominence. Attracted to politics by their awareness that the growth and develop-

ment of their adopted community was in their own economic interests and supported by the electorate on the assumption in part that all Brandonites would be the beneficiaries of such growth and development, Brandon's commercial elite easily inherited the mantle of political leadership.

While there were admittedly changing dimensions to the Brandon community in which the business and professional class constituted but a minority, this class capitalized upon its domination of the two political parties and, hence, its control of patronage to persuade others, such as the newly-arrived foreigner, members of the working class or the small businessman, of the merits of the traditional political parties. As jobs were scarce and the desire to be accepted was strong, many of the above were willingly co-opted into a political system in which they would, consciously or otherwise, remain subservient to Brandon's WASP business and professional class. This remained curiously true even after the emergence of a labour or CCF party which likewise extended a welcoming hand. Identification with, or membership in, those "new" parties, however, did not provide access to the city's economic and social establishment and that difference may explain the continued political dominance of the traditional parties and the weaknesses of their challengers.

Although the members of the business and professional class divided themselves by tradition or by chance into opposing political camps, the difference in political philosophy between those so-called alternatives was hardly discernible. The similarity in the nature of the class which dominated both the Liberals and the Conservatives and in the long-term development goals which they espoused ensured a substantial and vital degree of continuity and stability in that early pioneer era. As the political parties were able, via the judicious use of patronage, to incorporate many disparate segments of society into the traditional party structure until the 1920s, the Liberal and Conservative political machines provided the business and professional class with the all-important vehicles by which they were able to continue to regulate the society in which they were only a minority.

The emergence in the 1920s of labour and the farmers movement constituted a direct challenge to the two traditional

political parties. Although labour's most significant strength would prove to be at the aldermanic level with the election of a fourth Independent Labour Party alderman in 1928 marking the peak in that struggle, A. E. Smith's victory on behalf of the Dominion Labour Party in the 1920 provincial election was labour's most dramatic political accomplishment, prior to World War II. It is noteworthy, however, that that "landmark" for labour had been achieved by a former Methodist minister, a prominent member of the city's professional community whose support undoubtedly transcended class lines to a substantial degree. It must also be noted, in passing, that the CCF candidate who achieved the second "break-through" in Brandon provincial politics in 1943 was a medical doctor, another member of a widely respected profession.

The ability to transcend class lines, to mediate the differences between divergent community groups was, in fact, a vital characteristic of most of those politicians who served successfully in the post-World War I era. The "boom" years — the development era which foresaw an unlimited future for the city and its residents — had ended. Gone were the heady days of unlimited expansion. No longer did promoters visualize Brandon's street railway system connecting the city with its summer resort community at Lake Clementi. Fiscal conservatism came in to vogue and Harry Cater, with his penchant for civic economy and reduced taxation, became the political spokesman for all but the commercial elite. Even Brandon's labour community, which admittedly experienced difficulty in acting in a monolithic fashion, found Harry Cater, small businessman though he was, to be more acceptable than the various challengers whom the commercial elite presented in opposition to him. The city's substantial and expanding retired community naturally applauded Cater's fiscal conservatism as they could not foresee themselves as benefitting in any manner from the growth and development schemes of the commercial elite. The success of politicians such as Harry Cater and, to a lesser degree, George Dinsdale was due to their ability to accommodate the varying goals and values of most of the several disparate segments of the Brandon community.

The emergence of labour and the farmers' movement in the 1920s forced the business and professional class to re-examine its strategies. Just as the Liberals and the Conservatives on occa-

sion deliberately nominated a businessman, such as George Dinsdale or J. E. Matthews, whose appeal clearly transcended the economic and social class from which he originated, so did the business and professional class cleverly support railwaymen, such as Aldermen A. B. Patterson and B. L. Patterson, with whom they were philosophically compatible. By doing so, the business and professional class effectively divided the labouring class by ensuring that it spoke with two (rather than one) philosophical "voices."

The members of Brandon's business and professional class also accepted the necessity to speak in concert when they could no longer afford the luxury of a divided viewpoint. The rise of labour led directly to the formation of allegedly non-partisan Citizens Committees in municipal politics and to a "fusion" of Liberals and Conservatives in provincial politics. Consequently, labour's victories were frequently of brief duration, especially at the provincial level. It should, however, be remembered, as a somewhat contradicting postscript, that the CCF would probably have retained the Brandon provincial constituency in 1945, had it not been for the ideological dispute which led to the expulsion of Dr. D. L. Johnson from the party.

There is a further and rather curious dimension to Brandon's business and professional class and that was the pre-eminence of Ontario-born WASPs within that political leadership group. As both Brandon and the region were largely populated by transplanted Ontarioians in the 19th century, it was to be anticipated that the city's initial political leadership would be provided primarily by the Siftons and the Aikins; men of substance and of accomplishment in Ontario who, having emigrated, were accepted as men of substance and political prominence in Manitoba. By the 1940s, however, the opposition parties curiously and probably deliberately began to emphasize the fact that their candidates were locally born.

Aware perhaps that Brandon had achieved a new sense of maturity by the 1940s, and especially in the post-1945 era, the opposition's organizers deliberately encouraged Brandon electors to defy the government, both federal and provincial, by electing an opposition member. In fact, the display of such political defiance was specifically applauded as evidence of a new-found maturity. Simultaneously, however, Brandon electors were presented with a

series of "native son" candidates, the first such in Brandon's provincial and federal politics. One suspects that those who engineered local politics were trusting that their emphasis on their candidate's local origin would distract, to some degree, from the fact that those native sons, if elected, would sit on the relatively powerless opposition side.

The first Manitoba-born (i.e., Rapid City) politician to succeed in Brandon politics was Dr. D. L. Johnson who did not attempt to capitalize upon his local origin, presumably as his CCF philosophy was sufficiently unique in itself. The Brandon-born successors to Johnson were Conservatives all, Cam Donaldson, Walter Dinsdale and Reg Lissaman, and their campaigns, to varying degrees, very deliberately emphasized their local origin and their continuing residency. Just as nationalism, in theory, is a unifying force which federal politicians attempt to invoke in times of crisis, so too could the issues of local origin and residence constitute, in theory, a rallying cry with which all Brandonites, irrespective of economic and social character, could identify. In this manner, and for such reasons, the issues of origin, birthplace and residence were politically important.

Questions of origin, birthplace and residency were not, however, the principal criteria which determined electoral success or assured longevity in office. Those who succeeded in Brandon politics were those who discovered the means to satisfy the interests of a broad spectrum of the electorate which extended well beyond that segment to which they, as candidates, belonged. The means, however, by which they transcended those differences varied with the passing years and, as a result, the art of "practical politics" itself changed. Patronage (i.e., the sharing of prosperity) in the pre-1914 era (as in the examples of Clifford Sifton who offered immigration sheds in 1904 and G. R. Coldwell who provided a new court house in 1910) kept open the door to political success. Shortly, thereafter, the patriotic and, hence, unifying appeal of a "Win the War" campaign was sufficient to elect H. P. Whidden in 1917. The emergence of labour and the farmers movement in the two decades following the Great War compelled those who aspired to power to adjust substantially; to modify their policies (as in the introduction of Old Age Pensions), to abandon traditional partisan differences (as in the example of the Fusionists) and even to

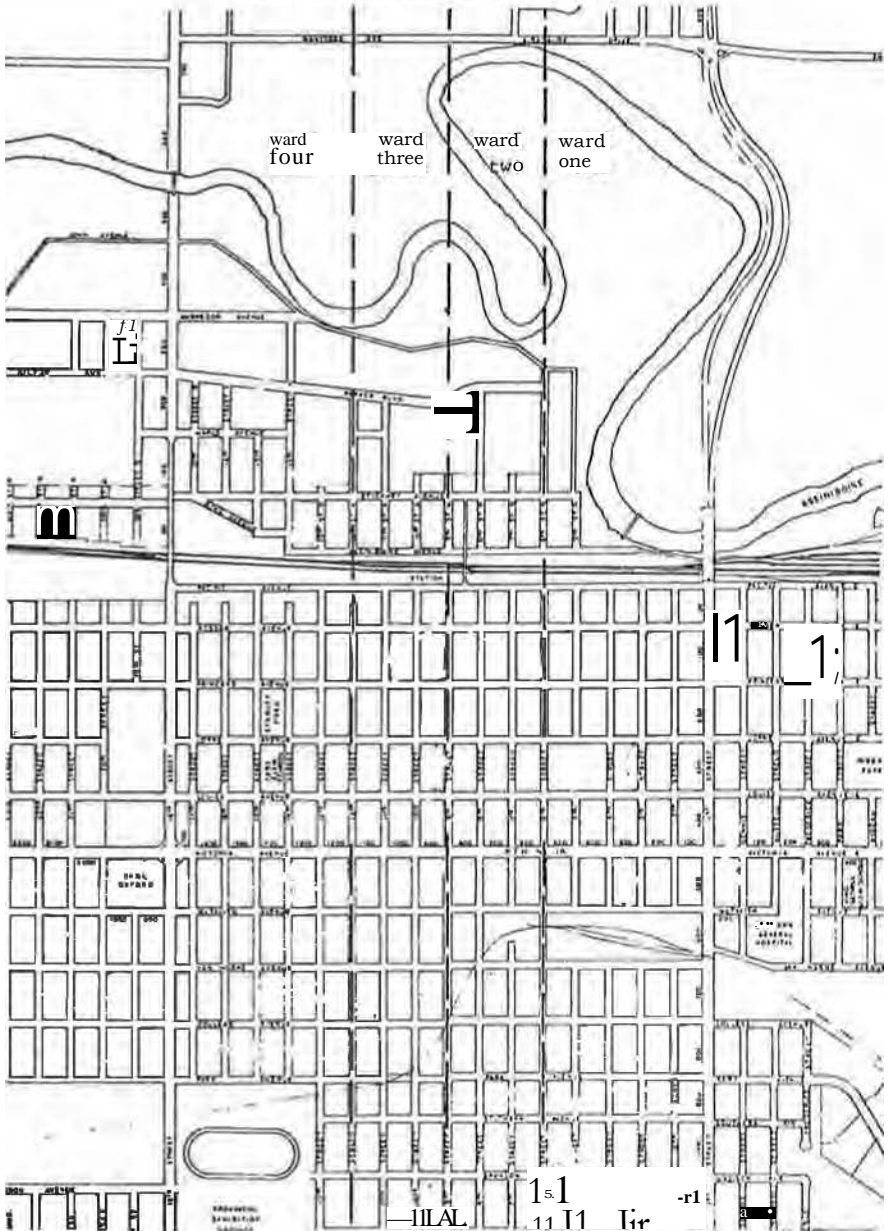
support those such as the Pattersons who economically and socially remained "beyond the pale." By the 1940s, as a result of a growing and complex bureaucracy, those (such as J. E. Matthews and Walter Dinsdale) who diligently and sincerely served their constituents by dispelling the mystery of bureaucratic government earned the gratitude of the electorate and, in doing so, discovered the key to political success in post-1945 Brandon.

The city's business and professional class had intuitively known that those who controlled the political process exercised a degree of power, power which could further or hinder their economic and social goals. They understood, moreover, that political success had to be earned; it, unlike wealth, could not be inherited or automatically retained. They, more than any other special interest group, recognized that they would have to maintain an unceasing interest in and commitment to the art of "practical politics." As an intriguing but concluding example, successful entrepreneur Cam Donaldson, who was in many ways an anachronism, had been tempted to test the "political waters" directly. When that proved to be an unrewarding experience, Donaldson readily and wisely returned to his real love, to the business world. However, he, as was typical of his class, took the necessary precautionary measures to ensure that the federal Progressive Conservative nomination, which he declined in 1951, went to the candidate of his choice. The Cam Donaldsons of Brandon's business and professional class understood that the purpose of politics was to achieve power; they had learned, however, that power could be exercised indirectly as well as directly. The Cam Donaldsons had also recognized that, in order to retain their predominant role in the political process, they would have to accommodate on occasion the aspirations of some of the disparate segments of the community. They understood, therefore, both the nature and the limitations of "practical politics." And they were eminently successful as a result.

Appendix

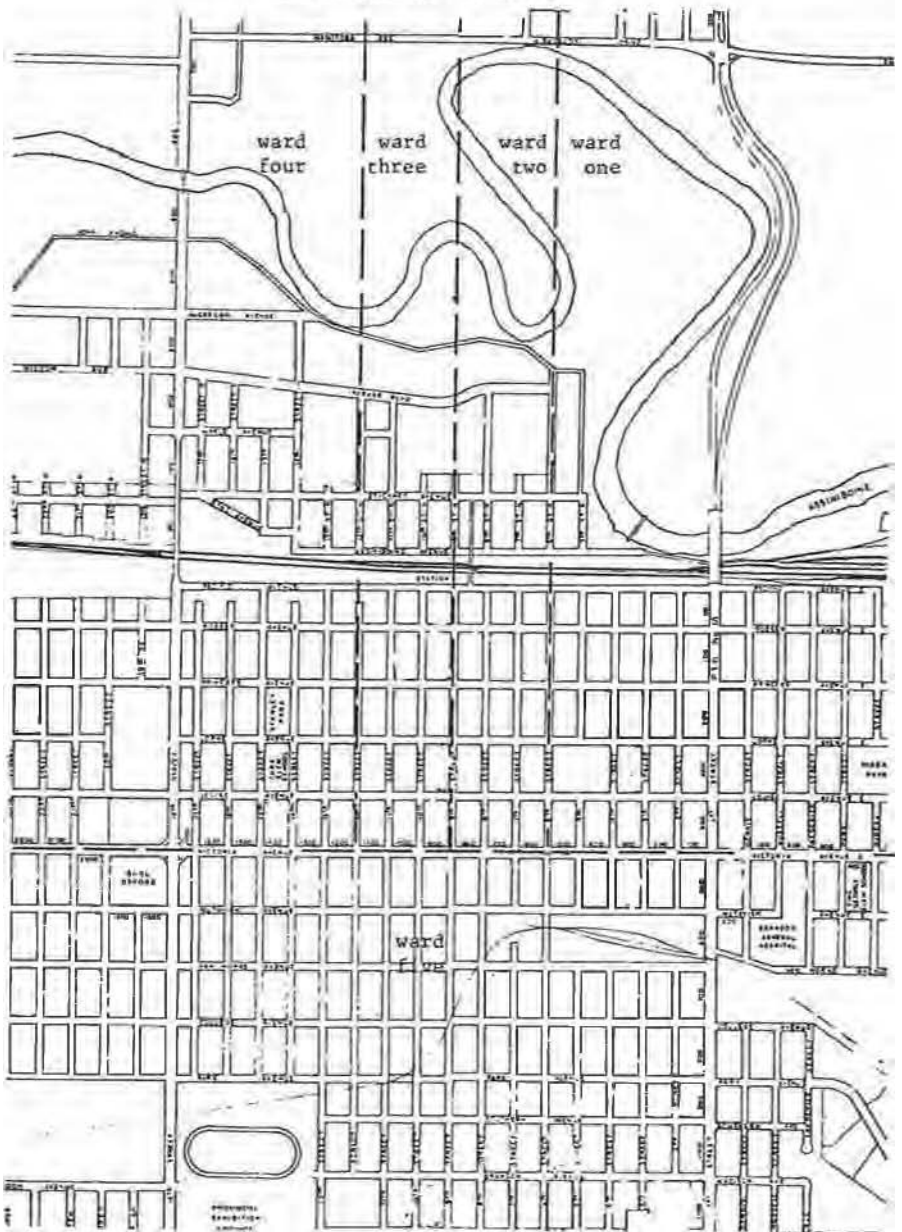
Appendix One

Ward Boundaries; to 1904



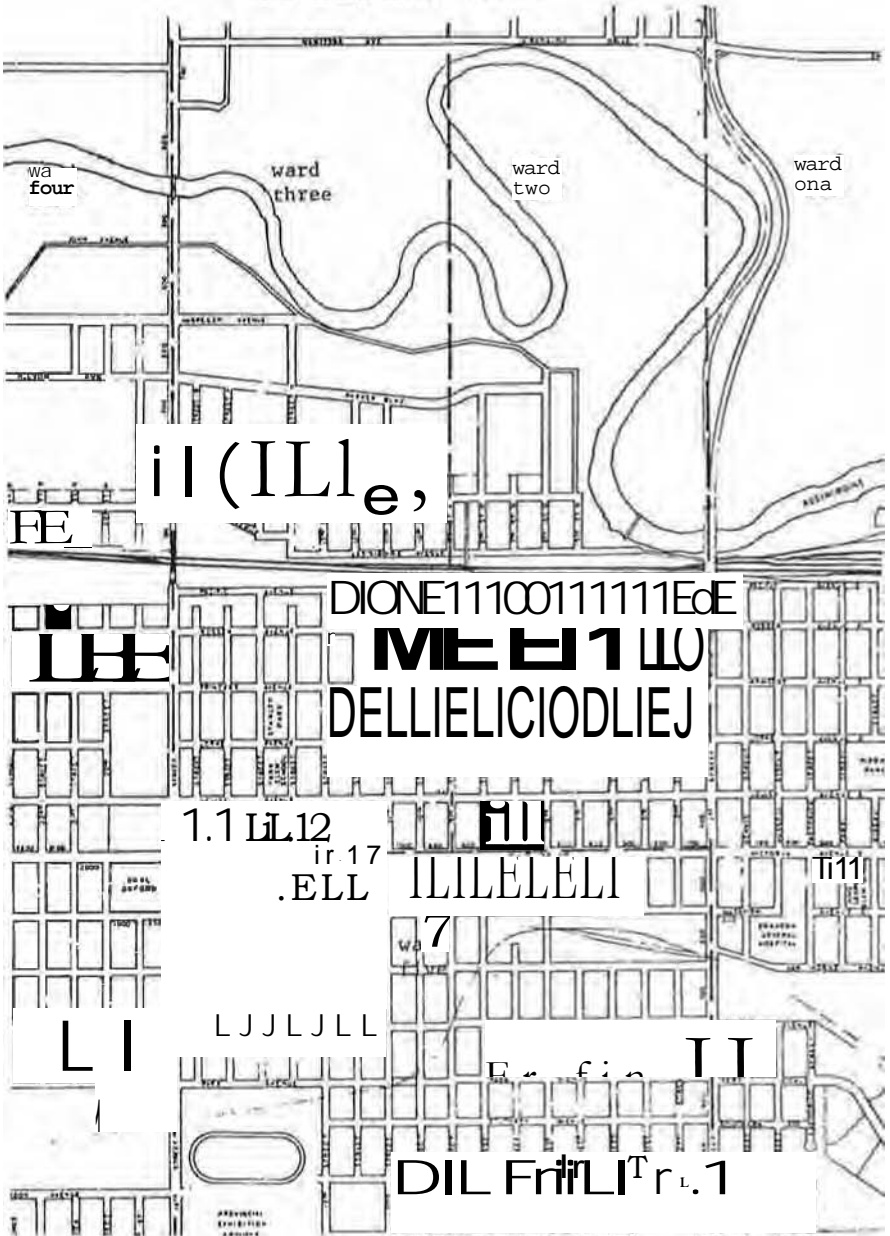
Appendix Two

Ward Boundaries: 1905-15



Appendix Three

Ward Boundaries: 1916-22



Appendix Four

Brandon Mayoralty Election Results¹

1899	Dr. John McDiarmid (L) *	Acclamation'
1900	A. C. Fraser (L)	461
	John Hanbury (C)	454
1901	A. C. Fraser (L)*	Acclamation
1902	J. W. Fleming (L)	5203
	Fred Nation (C)	416
February, 1903	Robert Hall (L)	476
(by-election)	John Hanbury (C)	392
1903	Robert Hall (L)*	Acclamation
1904	J. W. Fleming (L)	Acclamation
1905	J. W. Fleming (L) *	955
	Dr. John McDiarmid (L)	319
1906	S. E. Clement (L)	498
	Dr W. L. Harcourt (L)	186
1907	S. E. Clement (L)*	905
	R. D. Evans (C)	468
1908	H. L. Adolph (L)	884
	S. C. Doran (C)	649
1909	H. L. Adolph (L)*	Acclamation
1910	J. W. Fleming (L)	872
	B. D. Wallace (C)	787
	R. D. Evans (C)	103
1911	J. W. Fleming (L)*	Acclamation
1912	J. W. Fleming (L)*	1,228
	J. H. Hughes	689
1913	J. H. Hughes	1,243
	H. W. Cater	1,085
1914	H. W. Cater	1,590
	J. A. McDonald	860
1915	H. W. Cater*	Acclamation

1916	H. W. Cater*	1,131
	J. F. Fisher	481
1917	H. W. Cater*	Acclamation
1918	A. R. McDiarmid (L)	961
	H. W. Cater*	755
1919	George Dinsdale (C)	1,068
	H. W. Cater	995
1920	George Dinsdale (C)*	Acclamation
1921	H. W. Cater	1,711
	George Dinsdale (C)*	1,638
1922	H. W. Cater*	2,035
	George Dinsdale (C)	1,519
1923	H. W. Cater*	Acclamation
1924	H. W. Cater*	Acclamation
1925	H. W. Cater*	Acclartiation
1926	H. W. Cater*	2,018
	Dr. H. O. McDiarmid (L)	1,464
1927	H. W. Cater*	2,006
	D. E. Clement (L)	1,857
February, 1928 (by-election)	H. W. Cater*	2,178
	H. L. Patmore	998
1928	H. W. Cater*	2,267
	F. H. Young (C)	1,687
1929	H. W. Cater*	Acclamation
1930	H. W. Cater*	2,490
	F. R. Longworth (C)	1,592
1931	Ed Fotheringham	4,033
	H. W. Cater*	2,358
1932	Ed Fotheringham*	Acclamation
1933	H. W. Cater	3,1245
	F. H. Young (C)	2,491
1935	H. W. Cater*	2,369
	James Giddings	829
1937	F. H. Young (C)	2,095
	H. W. Cater*	1,300
	Dr. P. C. Hughes	765
1939	F. H. Young (C)*	3,145
	James Kirkcaldy (C)	1,373
	H. W. Cater	645

1941	F. H. Young (C)*	Acclamation
1943	L. H. McDorman (L)	2,194
	Frank Williamson (PC)	2,169
1945	Frank Williamson (PC)	2,543
	F. H. Young (PC)	2,046
1947	Frank Williamson (PC) *	3,770
	F. H. Young (PC)	1,709
	James Kirkcaldy (PC)	374
1949	Frank Williamson (PC)	Acclamation
1951	James Creighton (L)	3,815
	Frank Williamson (PC)*	2,392

1. Political affiliation of candidate identified were known — e.g., Liberal (L); Conservative (C); and Progressive Conservative (PC). Also, the incumbent candidate, wherever such exists, is identified by an asterisk — i.e., *.
2. Mayoralty election results cited are those provided by the local newspaper of the day.
3. Fleming subsequently resigned when it was discovered that he had unknowingly contravened the regulations.
4. These elections results were declared invalid due to a minor contravention of the Municipal Act.
5. The mayor, as of 1933, was now elected for a two-year term.

Appendix Five

Provincial Election Results in Brandon (City) Constituency'

January 15, 1896	C. Adams (L) ²	5013		
	A. Kelly (C)	402		
December 7, 1899	Dr. S. W. McInnis (C)	569		
	C. Adams (L) *	561		
July 20, 1903	Dr. S. W. McInnis (C)*	765		
	A. C. Fraser (L)	723		
March 7, 1907	Dr. S. W. McInnis (C)*	1,210		
	J. W. Fleming (L)	1,081		
November 19, 1907 (by-election)	G. R. Coldwell (C)		Acclamation	
July 11, 1910	G. R. Coldwell (C)*	1,402		
	S. H. McKay (L)	1,150		
July 10, 1914	G. R. Coldwell (C)*	1,897		
	S. E. Clement (L)	1,734		
September 16, 1915	S. E. Clement (L)	1,914		
	J. A. M. Aikins (Ind C)	1,213		
June 29, 1920	A. E. Smith (DLP)	2,007		
	S. E. Clement (L)*	1,403		
	J. Kirkcaldy (Ind)	1,245		
July 18, 1922	Dr. J. H. Edmison (Ind)	3,281		
	A. E. Smith (DLP)*	2,060		
June 28, 1927	Dr. J. H. Edmison (Ind)*	3,526		
	W. Hill (ILP)	1,288		
	H. W. Cater (Ind)	489		
			First Second Third'	
June 16, 1932	G. Dinsdale (C)	2,647	2,758	3,021
	H. Spafford (ILP)	1,574	1,824	2,192
	D. E. Clement (L-P)	1,423	1,555	
	H. W. Cater (Ind)	893		
			First Seconds	
July 27, 1936	G. Dinsdale (C)*	2,647	2,974	
	Dr. H. O. McDiarmid (L-P)	2,042	2,204	
	H. Spafford (CCF)	1,300		

April 22, 1941	G Dinsdale (C coal)*	3,285	
	Dr. H. O. McDiarmid (L coal)	2,921	
November 18, 1943	Dr. D. L. Johnson (CCF)	3,722	
(by-election)	F. H. Young (PC coal)	3,204	
			First Second
October 15, 1945	L. H. McDorman (L-P coal)	3,088	3,288
	P. McDuffe (00)	1,650	2,046
	Dr. D. L. Johnson (Ind CCF)*	1,554	
November 10, 1949	J. C. Donaldson (PC coal)	3,743	
	G. R. Rowe (L coal)	1,933	
	W. R. Webb (CCF)	1,478	
			First Second
January 21, 1952	Reg Lissaman (PC)	2,940	3,223
(by-election)	Alex McPhail (L)	2,224	2,361
	Harry Spafford (CCF)	1,308	

1. The incumbent candidate, if any, is identified with an asterisk — i.e.,*.
2. Political affiliation identified as follows: Conservative (C); Progressive Conservative (PC); Liberal (L); Liberal-Progressive (L-P); Independent (Ind); Dominion Labour Party (DLP); Independent Labour Party (ILP); Independent Conservative (Ind C); Independent CCF (Ind CCF); Government (G); Liberal-Progressive coalitionist (L-P coal); Official Opposition (00); Conservative coalitionist (C coal); Progressive Conservative coalitionist (PC coal); and CCF.
3. The vote totals are those provided by the several relevant editions of the **Canadian Parliamentary Guide**. Although local newspaper reports occasionally published totals that varied by a few votes, any discrepancies are insufficient to alter — in any manner — the basic conclusions of the study.
4. The second and third count totals are those published in the local newspaper. **Brandon Daily Sun**, June 18, 1932. The **Canadian Parliamentary Guide** did not provide these totals.

5. The second count total is that published by the local newspaper. **Brandon Daily Sun**, October 18, 1945. **The Canadian Parliamentary Guide** did not, in this instance, provide "second count" totals.

Appendix Six

Federal Election Results of Brandon Constituency¹

November 27, 1896	C. Sifton (L)	Acclamation ¹
(by-election)		
November 7, 1900	C. Sifton (L)*	5,011
	H. J. Macdonald (C)	4,342
November 3, 1904	C. Sifton (L)*	3,625
	L. Richardson (2,804
October 26, 1908	C. Ind) Sifton (L)*	3,565
	T. M. Daly (C)	3,496
	B. D. Wallace (Ind	101
September 21, 1911	J. C) A. M. Aikins (C)	4,436
	A. E. Hill (L)	3,570
		Civil Military Total
December 17, 1917	Dr. H. P. Whidden, (U)	9,340
	H. S. Paterson (L-L) R.	2,125
		11,465
		1,237
		92
		1,329
December 6, 1921	Forke (P)	9,596
	C. E. Ivens (C)	4,067
	F. C. Cox (L)	404
October 29, 1925	R. Forke (P)*	6,411
September 14, 1926	D. W. Beaubier (C)	5,428
	R. Forke (L-P)*	8,267
February 5, 1930	D. W. Beaubier (C)	7,101
(by-election)		
July 28, 1930	T. A. Crerar (L-P)	Acclamation
	D. W. Beaubier (C)	8,512
	T. A. Crerar (L)*	6,457
	B. Brigden (Lab) D.	1,331
October 14, 1935	W. Beaubier (C)*	6,575
	J. E. Matthews (L)	6,368
	H. Wood (CCF)	3,396
	C. Leech (R)	556
November 14, 1938	J. E. Matthews (L)	6,580
(by-election)	G. Beaubier (C) H.	5,600
	Wood (CCF) J. E.	3,577
March 26, 1940	Matthews (L)*	8,908
	J. W. Thompson (NG)	6,168
	H. Wood (CCF)	2,609

June 11, 1945	J. E. Matthews (L)*	6,870
	F. H. Young (PC)	5,621
	A. Brown (CCF)	5,294
	A. E. Smith (Lab-P)	497
June 27, 1949	J. E. Matthews (L) *	11,263
	J. Bracken (PC)	7,150
	D. L. Johnson (Ind)	1,964
June 25, 1951 (by-election)	Walter Dinsdale (PC)	11,124
	Grant MacEwan (L)	8,371

1. The federal constituency of Brandon was established under the Re-distribution Act of 1892. It was altered in 1903, 1924 and 1947. The constituency disappeared in 1952 due to redistribution.
2. The incumbent candidate, if any, is identified with an asterisk — i.e.,*.
3. Political affiliation identified as follows: Conservative (C); Progressive Conservative (PC); Liberal (L); Independent (Ind); Independent Conservative (Ind C); Unionist (U); "Laurier" Liberal (L-L); Progressive (P); Liberal-Progressive (L-P); Labour (Lab); Reconstructionist (R); National Government (NG); Labour-Progressive (Lab-P); and CCF.
4. The vote totals are those provided by the several relevant editions of the **Canadian Parliamentary Guide**. Although local newspapers occasionally published totals that varied slightly, any discrepancies are insufficient to alter — in any manner — the basic conclusions of the thesis.

Bibliography

It was indeed fortunate that Brandon was represented on different occasions by politicians of considerable prominence. As a result, the sources available for this study were unusually extensive during certain time periods. However, the amount of information available on Brandon's many politicians varied considerably in accordance with their national significance and this discrepancy is inevitably reflected in the final product.

Those who have observed and particularly those who have participated in the community's political life have a more intimate knowledge of certain past events than the historian can ever hope to achieve. Many such as Walter and Lenore Dinsdale, Stanley H. Knowles, John G. Diefenbaker, William Pearson, A. I. Cristall, Mrs. G. R. Rowe, Fred McGuinness, Robert Clement, Jack Donnelly, E. R. McGill, Stephen A. Magnacca, Mr. and Mrs. Alex McPhail, Lawrence Stuckey and A. D. Burneskie have been most helpful, both in the course of formal interviews and informal conversations.

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1. While the "names" of individual newspapers were altered slightly on occasions, the "name" cited is that by which the newspaper was most generally known.
2. The Brandon Weekly Sun, a condensation of the week's daily editions, was read in those few instances when the daily edition was unavailable.

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The Author

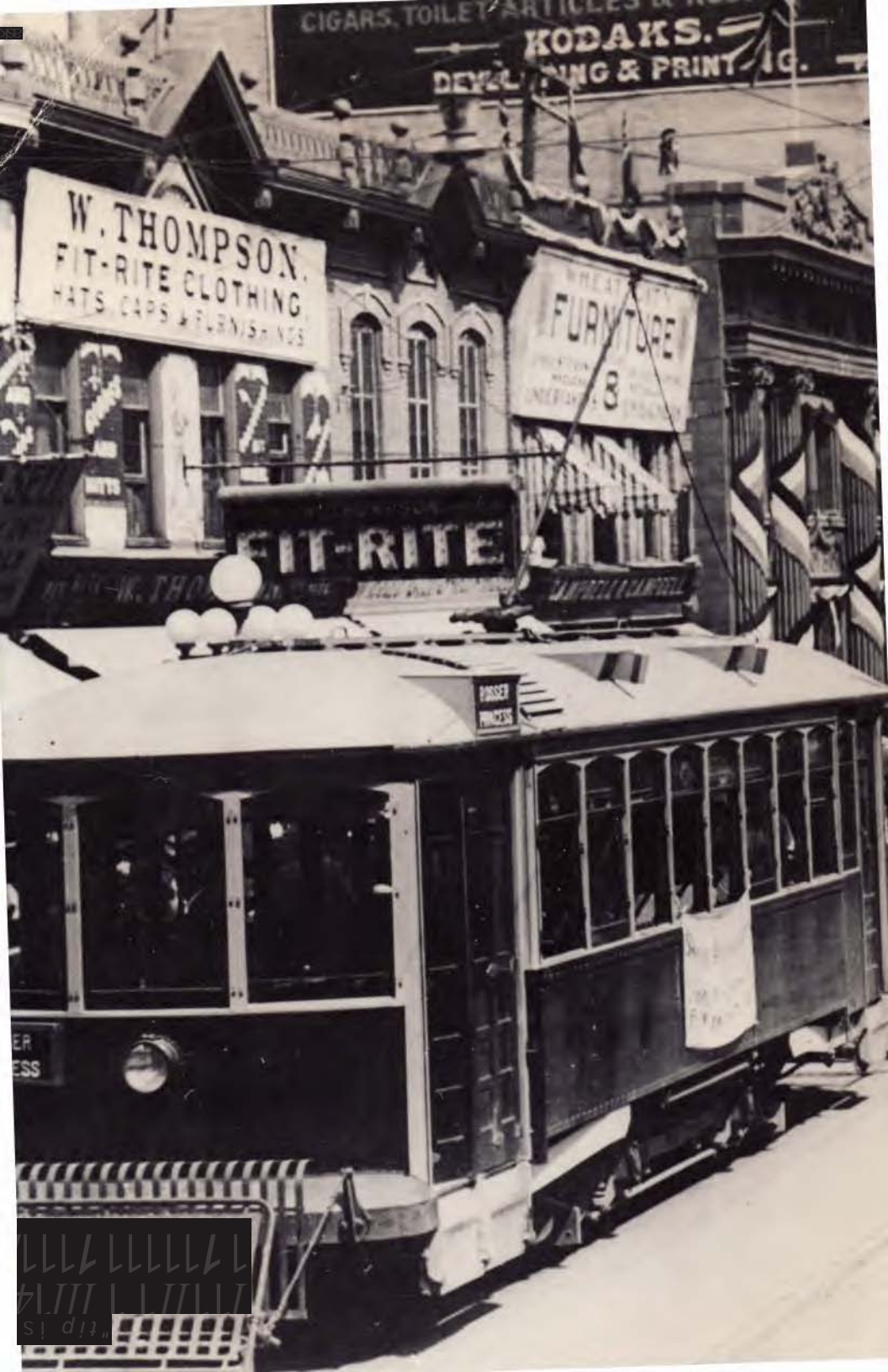
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