WHERE THE EMPHASIS ON SEX WAS LESS

THE WOMEN'S SECTION OF THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE

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1990
"where the emphasis on sex was less"

THE WOMEN'S SECTION OF THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE

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by
Aileen Catherine Moffatt
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This work is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Margaret and Lefty Moffatt, who encouraged me to do whatever I felt was right for me.

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ABSTRACT

Between 1913 and 1918 farm women in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario took the initiative to organize women's sections of their respective provincially organized farm associations. By January 1919 executive members of the women's sections realized that co-operation between the provincial associations of the organized farm women would be valuable in addressing concerns and issues which superceded provincial boundaries. Thus, the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women was formed. The next step was affiliation with the Canadian Council of Agriculture, the farmers' national council, which hitherto had no provision for female representatives. The elite group of women who composed the membership of the Interprovincial Council believed the problems of the farming community were equally those of farm men and women. Hence, they joined a national farm association with a strictly male membership instead of affiliating with a national women's club. However, once the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture was initiated, the women had only minimal effect on Council business. Many difficulties besieged the Women's Section and the main Council throughout the 1920s, especially the controversial issue of whether the farmers should be active in politics. The final meeting of the Women's Section was held in 1929 but the Canadian Council of Agriculture floundered until it ceased operation in 1932.
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<td>Canadian Council of Agriculture</td>
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<td>I.C.F.W.</td>
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<td>United Farmers of Alberta</td>
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<td>U.F.C.S.S.</td>
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<td>U.G.G.</td>
<td>United Grain Growers Limited</td>
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INTRODUCTION - PART I

So what we women - East and West - should do, if the men do not perform their obligations in these respects, is to set to work and do what is necessary ourselves. ... To be effective in the highest possible degree, either as individuals or in the mass, we must be PART OF A GOOD ORGANIZATION.

"Diana"
The Weekly Sun, March 15, 1918

In January 1919 the organized farm women of the Canadian Council of Agriculture affiliates did just what "Diana", Miss Emma Griesbach, editor of the women's page of The Weekly Sun, had urged - they "set to work" and became "part of a good organization". The executives of the women's sections of the Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta farmers' associations took the initiative to form the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women (I.C.F.W.) which would address issues common to farm women regardless of the province in which they resided. Following the pattern that had been established in the formation of the provincial women's sections, they did not wait for an invitation from the executive of the central male association. Instead, they went ahead and made the necessary arrangements on their own.

The goal of the I.C.F.W. was to petition for membership in


2. Miss, Mrs. and Mr. are used in this thesis because I decided to respect the custom of the period of which I am examining and identify persons as they would identify themselves. It was not meant to be a political statement of any kind on my part.
the Canadian Council of Agriculture (C.C.A.), the most influential farm lobby in Canada and the national association of which their men were members. The timing was fortunate as only three months earlier the Council had adopted its 'New National Policy', an economic platform designed to appeal to a wider audience and attract new affiliates. Hence, the organized women of the grain growers' and united farmers' associations presented themselves on the door of the Council of Agriculture at exactly the same time as the Council was seeking to increase its membership.

Three key components form the nucleus of this study of the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women, later known as the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture (W.S.C.C.A.). First, farm men admitted women to their provincial and national organizations hoping to augment the farm vote with the newly enfranchised block of female voters. Secondly, the women who initiated the women's sections, in particular the Women's Section of the C.C.A., formed an elite and were not characteristic of those they were elected to represent. Thirdly, these women maintained that the problems of the farmer were also those of his family.

In the first case, the evidence demonstrates that the female franchise played a key role in the development of the I.C.F.W. and the provincial women's sections. Impending female enfranchisement caused the executives of the
organized farmers to assess the relative value of allowing women to join their associations. If nothing else, these men were practical and understood that more farm voters translated into a more powerful farm constituency. Their decisions to allow the formation of women's sections were not based on notions of equality between the sexes or on any hope that the emphasis on sex might be less. It was a business decision - women would soon vote and it was better to insure they would vote with their husbands than against them.

This thesis also examines members of the Women's Section who were appointed from their respective provincial women's executives. The constitution of the Women's Section provided for only six members, one from each of the four provinces, one from the Grain Growers' Guide and a secretary. These women were not typical of those they represented by virtue of the independent resources available to them and the amount of time which they were able to devote to association business away from the home. Members of the Women's Section were either not married or were married with no children, or had older children capable of assuming some of the responsibilities usually relegated to the wife and mother. They had some means by which to reduce their own work load either by hiring domestic help or by delegating work to family members. Their husbands, if the women were married at all, were frequently involved in
association business and supported the women's work. They were educated women of British heritage. Most sat on several committees and boards related to Council business and orchestrated provincial commitments plus any other outside interests they may have had. These were busy and capable women and unlike many of those whom they were elected to represent, they had the time and resources or were able to make the time and find the resources to cope with the heavy work load. They constituted an elite. Consequently, by focusing on the development of the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture and examining its members, this thesis is a study of an elite group of farm women who assumed the responsibilities of leadership. It is an examination of a specific institution, the Women's Section of the Council of Agriculture, and the elite circle of women who shared a vision of equal representation and comradeship with farm men.

The third fundamental point of this study is that members of the Women's Section fully believed the concerns of farm men were as much those of farm women. The primary objective of the Women's Section was to further the objects of the Council of Agriculture. Therefore, the Women's Section's first responsibility was to the Council rather than to strictly women's issues. Thus it is difficult to label the Women's Section as feminist, unless it is qualified, because by definition C.C.A. business came first.
Matters pertaining primarily to women and children were dealt with only when the women met separately from the men, which did not happen at every Council meeting. The concerns of the farmer - tariffs, freight rates, taxes - were of huge concern to the women because it was essential they understand and become involved in these issues which were so central to their lives. Their feminism blended some of the tenets of maternal feminism and a desire to improve the rights and legal status of women, with their own particular farm-oriented concerns. The result was a feminism which sought not only to improve the conditions in the farm home and of the family unit, but also insisted on a more equitable deal for the farm community. These were 'farm' women who related to their occupational class before they identified with their gender.

Accordingly, the organized farm women were not immune to the intensified agrarian agitation prevalent towards the end of World War I when a growing movement of discontented farmers demanded redress of their grievances. The executives of the provincial farm women's associations were prepared to assume their responsibilities as equal partners and become as "Diana" had suggested, "part of a good organization" where "the emphasis on sex was less". Unfortunately they would never realize this ideal as the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture.
PART II

In October 1987 John Herd Thompson and Ian MacPherson presented a paper to the Western Canadian Studies Conference entitled, "'How you gonna get'em back to the farm': Writing the Rural/Agricultural History of the Prairie West". They "concocted" the term rural/agricultural because so-called agricultural history "had often taken a narrowly economic focus or become a synonym for the history of farming". Rural history focused "more on the social structure, community institutions and demographic trends". The solution they suggested was to "forge links" between them. This study of the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture should be classified according to MacPherson and Thompson's suggested historiographical category because it is a study of an institution based in social and economic issues and cannot be defined by the parameters outlined in either of the original two classifications. It is a rural/agricultural history.

There is a paucity of literature about the associations of the organized farmers in Canada in the early years of the twentieth century. Louis Aubrey Wood's study, A History of

3. Ian MacPherson & John Herd Thompson, "'How you gonna get'em back to the farm': Writing the Rural/Agricultural History of the Prairie West", Western Canadian Studies Conference, University of Saskatchewan, October 23, 1987.

4. The authors acknowledge these are the definitions of Peter H. Argersinger, "The People's Past: Teaching American Rural History", History Teacher, 10, (1977), p. 408.
Farmers' Movements in Canada\textsuperscript{5}, explores the origins and development of agrarian protest 1871 to 1924. Although written sixty-six years ago, it is still the most detailed examination of agrarian protest movements in Canada prior to 1924. Unfortunately, the women's sections of the organized farmers receive short shrift in this book -- five of 364 pages -- which is useful only to the modern researcher of farm women as a point of departure. Harald S. Patton's Grain Growers' Cooperation in Western Canada\textsuperscript{6} is a study of cooperative institutions but also provides some useful chapters on the beginnings of the grain growers' associations. Neither of these standard works deals with the Council of Agriculture in any detail. Other agricultural and rural histories follow much the same pattern - there is little discussion relating to the Council of Agriculture and only passing reference to the organized farm women. Included in this category are Melville H. Staples', The Challenge of Agriculture;\textsuperscript{7} Paul F. Sharp's, The Agrarian Revolt in


\textsuperscript{6} Harald S. Patton, Grain Growers' Cooperation in Western Canada, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928).

Canada; 8 Ian MacPherson's, Each for All: A History of the Co-operative Movement in English Canada, 1900-1945. 9

Few works examine the Council of Agriculture in any depth. W.L. Morton's classic study The Progressive Party in Canada 10 analyzes the Council and its role in the development of the Progressives. It is an excellent source for those examining the organized farmers in politics, but because women are not mentioned, one is left with the erroneous impression that they were not involved. J.C. Mills' M.A. thesis "A Study of the Canadian Council of Agriculture 1910 - 1930" 11 is the only work specifically on the Council. Mills details the history of the Council but only mentions that the Women's Section was formed "largely through the efforts of the ladies themselves". There is no further discussion of the Women's Section.

There have been no studies of the Women's Section of the Council of Agriculture. The provincial farm women's associations have been the subject of a few articles such as


"Improving the Quality of Rural Life in Saskatchewan: Some Activities of the Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, 1913 - 1920"12, by R.G. Marchildon, and "The United Farm Women of Ontario: Developing a Political Consciousness"13, by Margaret Kechnie. There are a few more articles examining the lives of farm women, for example, Eliane Leslau Silverman’s "Women’s Perception of Marriage on the Alberta Frontier"14 and "Farm Women on the Canadian Prairie Frontier: The Helpmate Image"15 by Sara Brooks Sundberg.

Veronica Strong-Boag is responsible for some of the most original work in Canadian women's history. Her study of prairie feminism in the 1920s, "Pulling in Double Harness or Hauling a Double Load: Women, Work and Feminism on the


Canadian Prairie", determined that feminism did not perish after the female suffrage campaign was won. Rather, prairie feminists turned away from the public sphere and into the private sphere of the home and family. Although this article is fundamental to understanding the nature of feminism on the prairie, it does not take into account the involvement of women in the political process and the desire of the organized farm women to discuss political issues. Strong-Boag's definition of "working feminism" does not recognize farm women's primary identification with their occupational class.

Some more general studies, narratives and biographies are valuable as background material to any examination of the associations of the organized farm men and women. Gerald Friesen's The Canadian Prairies, A History is the most comprehensive and eloquently written review of Western Canadian history. Supplemented with more specific works such as Saskatchewan, A History by John H. Archer, these studies help to place any examination of the organized


farmers into context. The Diary of Alexander James McPhail edited by Harold A. Innis is an excellent example of the personalized view of the volatile situation in the farming community from 1920 to 1931. Several autobiographies by farm women provide a poignant first-hand account of the difficulties faced by women unfamiliar with the rigors of western living. Examples are With the West in Her Eyes, The Story of A Modern Pioneer by Kathleen Strange and the story of a farmer woman, Wheat and Women, written by Georgina Binnie-Clark in 1914 and reprinted in 1979.

This study of the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture attempts act as a bridge for some of the studies of the organized farm women. It brings together the local experience with the national and demonstrates that there was an interest in the public political realm. It shows that there were women who believed it was not only their right but also their duty to assume the responsibilities of citizenship. It is an agricultural history of economic grievances voiced by both farm women and men plus it is a rural history of an organization of farm women concerned with the farm family and home. Hence, it is


an agricultural/rural history.
CHAPTER I PROVINCIAL FOUNDATIONS

Not a few have asked what will be the best thing to come out of the union of men and women in the Grain Growers' Associations. Unhesitatingly I would say "comradeship". The working together for common objects without the eternal intrusion of the feminine and masculine. In other words they will more and more remember they are human beings and the emphasis on sex will be less, to the mutual advantage of both.

E. Cora Hind
March 1915

The early Grain Growers' Associations did not always have such lofty ideals or goals as those espoused by Cora Hind, agricultural reporter for the Manitoba Free Press. Women had virtually no role in the farm organizations until they mobilized their own forces to secure the provincial and federal franchise. Comradeship was not part of the credo of democracy hailed by the organized farm men. Women had to initiate the formation of the Women's Sections of the Grain Growers' Associations and demonstrate why their voices needed to be heard, not only as the female auxiliary to the central male membership, but also as fellow constituents of the rural community. Comradeship in practice did not come about easily, if at all in some cases. However, by early 1916 it was apparent a large bloc of female voters was about to be created in the prairie provinces. The Grain Growers' Associations had already recognized the importance and value

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of a stronger and more effective farm vote. Consequently, male support of the Women's Sections was based on practical reasoning and had little to do with comradeship. The men wanted what organized farmers had wanted since the formation of the Territorial Grain Growers' Association in 1901, "a permanent organization amongst the farmers, to represent the special requirements of the grain-growing interests of the country".2

The development of a stable farming community in Western Canada had been central to the advancement of expansionist dreams and "national aspirations of the young Dominion".3 Yet, this vision was one contrived by easterners to prop up ideals popular in central Canada, and did not reflect the western experience. In rejecting the transplantation of this eastern image of the role of Western Canada, settlers on the frontier were able to forge a new and strong regional identity.4 In particular, the life of those living in the farming community did not correspond with the idealistic pronouncements made by eastern propagandists about the virtuous and exceedingly rewarding lifestyle supposedly afforded to farmers and their families.


4. Ibid., p. 216.
In reality, farmers and their women often felt betrayed by the insensitivity and ingratitude demonstrated by their eastern neighbors.

Farm women were placed in a far more difficult situation than that of their men. They had not only to contend with the imposed romantic image of the "independent rural land owner" and his devoted family, but had also to grapple with the ideals of woman and womanhood which often emanated from the eastern-based national women's associations. These images were urban and did not take into account the life of a rural woman. Thus, farm women were forced to struggle either with an identity which was inappropriate to their situation, or to assume a new position which reflected their role as wife and mother in a farming community.

Rather than completely rejecting the popular ideals to which women were expected to aspire, farm women made adjustments to the dominant philosophy now known as maternal feminism, so it would correspond to their situation. Maternal feminism has been described as "the conviction that women's special role as mother gives her the duty and the right to participate in the public sphere" and that these "special nurturing qualities" were common to all women,

5. Ibid., p. 137.
married or not. This feminism did not challenge any of the traditional roles assigned to women; their primary responsibility was to protect the family and home from the increasing challenges of immigration, industrialization and urbanization. Women's feminine qualities could be utilized in the public realm to clean up the society; their moral superiority would be a catalyst that promoted purity and sobriety in the community. As George Chipman, editor of the Grain Growers Guide, wrote in 1918, women were expected to "not only be a factor in the solution of problems which the men deal with, but they will bring to bear a new viewpoint on social, moral and spiritual matters, which is bound to bring about an evolution in the rural civilization of the West." 

Farm women had difficulty transforming maternal feminism into an ideology that conformed with rural conditions. Maternal feminism was not totally unacceptable or inappropriate to rural circumstances because as wives and mothers farm women already assumed their responsibility was to look after the farm home and extended farm family. It was presumed that the woman of the family would instill the

8. Ibid, p. 147.
values and morals of a decent society into the next generation. However, the role as farm wife included many responsibilities which lay outside of the traditional feminine sphere. Farm women, out of necessity, often had to perform men's work and thus made significant contributions to the running of the farm. How then, could a farm woman relate to a definition of womanhood that did not recognize the reality of her own life?

The feminism of the organized farm women did not supersede the boundaries of the traditional feminine sphere. Rather, it accepted the primary importance of the nurturing role of the woman, it promoted the family as the bastion of the nation, and it encouraged farm women to influence the moral development of their communities. The corollary to all of this, however, is that it was also a feminism that demanded recognition of the tangible contributions made by farm women. As active participants in the rural community, their interests also became those of their men. The welfare of the family and the survival of rural society depended on the success or failure of the farm. Consequently, prairie feminists insisted the woman's sphere was inextricably tied to that of their men and the community as a whole. Comradeship was indeed to what they aspired.

Unfortunately, most farm women did not lead charmed

lives, and the recognition of her role as partner in the farm enterprise was not forthcoming. A woman's experiences were "tied to the needs of her husband and family" and her contributions to their welfare was expected, while her needs were not considered, or at best were deemed to be of some secondary importance. Obviously it is impossible to state that all farm women suffered such an inconsequential role. It is not, however, impossible to recognize that for many women, life on the Canadian prairie was extremely difficult. The work was hard, the hours spent in performing chores and trying to fulfill the expectations of the family were endless. Isolation was common, and opportunities for leisure or to socialize with other women, were infrequent. The women who joined organizations of farm women "were faced with dual isolation: first, physical, economic and social isolation and, second, sexism". For whatever reasons, when farm women decided to join the Grain Growers' associations, it was on their own initiative and was prompted by circumstances relative to their role as farm wife and mother.


and out of concern for their rural community.

Westerners had attempted to unite in efforts to seek redress of "unappeasable discontent" since the formation of the Manitoba and North-West Farmers' Protective Union in 1883. This short-lived Union survived only until 1886 as rumours circulated that it was actually an agent of the Liberal Party and therefore controlled by eastern party interests. In 1891, the Patrons of Industry began to organize western farmers, but by 1898 it too had failed largely due to fighting among the leaders. The Territorial Grain Growers' Association, established in 1901, hoped to avoid the mistakes of its predecessors and bring together individual farmers to show them the reasons for relinquishing some of their independence and explain the advantages of uniting for the common good. The Manitoba Grain Growers' Association (M.G.G.A.) was formed in 1903, and soon after the North West Territories was divided into the new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905, the


15. Patton, Grain Growers' Cooperation in Western Canada, p. 33.

Alberta Farmers' Association\textsuperscript{17} was established. The Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (S.G.G.A.) was adapted in 1906 from the former Territorial Grain Growers' Association.

The organized farmers of the early twentieth century had associations for farmers -- men involved in agricultural pursuits. Farm women, although their duties included participating in the work of the farm, the farm house and the care of the extended farm family, were not deemed to be farmers as such. Women farmers or landholders were few in number\textsuperscript{18} primarily because of the restrictions on females applying for homesteads. Men commonly attended association meetings without their wives and daughters and if the women did go along with their men, it was more often than not for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} The Alberta Farmers' Association and the Canadian Society of Equity joined in 1909 to form the United Farmers of Alberta.
\item \textsuperscript{18} The experiences and difficulties of the woman farmer were dramatically outlined by Georgina Binnie-Clark in Wheat and Woman, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979, (1914)). Miss Binnie-Clark paid \$5000.00 for a half-section of land in the Qu'Appelle Valley, as she did not qualify for a homestead. p. xx. The Dominion Lands Act, effective September 1, 1908, outlined the eligibility criteria in Section 9: 1) Every person who is the sole head of a family, or, being a male, had attained the age of eighteen years, and who is a British subject, or declares intention to become a British subject, and who makes application in the manner hereinafter provided, shall be entitled to obtain entry for a homestead for an area of available agricultural land, not exceeding one quarter section... 2) In the case of any woman who, claiming to be the sole head of a family, makes application for entry for a homestead, if any doubt arises as to her status as the sole head of a family, the Minister may decide whether her application shall be granted or refused.
\end{itemize}
a social opportunity or to relieve the monotony and isolation of the farm. Women did not hold memberships in the Grain Growers' Associations.

This trend was perpetuated in the national farm organizations. The Interprovincial Council of Grain Growers' and Farmers' Associations was formed in 1907 "primarily with a view to bringing united action to bear in the agitation for government ownership and operation of elevators".¹⁹ The Dominion Grange, the majority of whose membership was in Ontario, was included in 1909 and the new national association, endorsed by the Grange, the United Farmers of Alberta (U.F.A.), the S.G.G.A. and the M.G.G.A., was known as the Canadian Council of Agriculture (C.C.A.). This was the link between the prairie provincial farm organizations and Ontario.

Five original objectives were outlined by the Canadian Council of Agriculture: to study social and economic problems, to disseminate information to the people, to present their demands to elected officials, to encourage farmers to become politically active and to adopt cooperative methods.²⁰

¹⁹. Patton, Grain Growers' Cooperation in Western Canada, p. 387.

²⁰. Taken from a C.C.A. circular entitled The Canadian Council of Agriculture. No date is given but references to events in the development of the C.C.A. indicate it was likely printed in 1923. (Saskatchewan Archives Board (S.A.B.), Violet McNaughton collection (A1), A1 - E7). Full text is given in Appendix I.
In 1916 the Constitution of the C.C.A. was redrafted to allow membership to be extended to the farmers' commercial companies; apart from some changes in the wording, the objectives remained essentially the same until 1919. The functions of the C.C.A. were, therefore, to provide information as requested by farmers and to protect the economic interests and material prosperity of member associations. The affiliates of the C.C.A. were, however, composed strictly of men until farm women took the initiative to organize themselves.

Farm women were only too aware of the difficulties experienced in running a farm. They witnessed the hardships endured by their families year after year -- marketing problems associated with the grain industry and inequalities of the tariff legislation and freight rates. It was impossible to live on a farm and not be cognizant of the anxiety and distress that was common in a farm community. Yet, because the franchise had not been extended to women, they had no effective voice, no independent means by which they could express their opinions or share their concerns. Consequently, they had no political clout and no influence over matters which were central to their own lives.

Clearly, not all farm women were concerned about the

lack of political expression open to them, nor did all women perceive a need for female representation. However, there were women who would not be satisfied with having others determine the course of their existence and who were prepared to suggest that farm women should organize to address the issues that concerned their fellow constituents, men and women included. The material prosperity and economic interests of the farmer involved the entire family, not just the men.

Violet McNaughton took the initiative to organize the farm women of Saskatchewan in 1913. She arrived from England in 1909 to stay with her brother and in 1910 married a neighbor, John McNaughton. John was active in the local S.G.G.A.; his wife shared his interests and also attended meetings. In 1913, at the same time the Central S.G.G.A. convention was being held in Saskatoon, a group of interested farm women met to discuss the possibility of forming a woman's auxiliary to the association with which they were most familiar, the S.G.G.A.. Accordingly, Mrs. McNaughton discussed ideas for a separate women's section with Fred Green, Secretary of the S.G.G.A.. Mr. Green replied that if women wanted to join the Grain Growers, they should do so as members of the Central - there was no reason to form a separate association. He wrote to Mrs. McNaughton:

Personally while I think the women might organize
an auxiliary if they wish, I would prefer to see them be equals and develop in our institutions as regular members. Nothing of course can prevent them from organizing little meetings on the side, but I do not favour at the present time an auxiliary for women. I rather prefer to see them treated as equals. Nothing more, nothing less. I do not see however, any reason why each local should not form a Woman's Auxiliary in connection with it if they desire.22

Although Mr. Green's rhetoric was punctuated with noble ideals of equality between male and female members, his tone remained condescending. His attitude towards acceptance of women having "little meetings on the side", implied that issues women may care to discuss separately from the men, lacked importance. Mrs. McNaughton was unimpressed with Mr. Green's response and continued to seek support for a separate women's section. A motion in support of women's suffrage which had passed at the convention in 1913 held out a promise that there was support within the S.G.G.A. to recognize women as responsible farmer-voters. This resolution did not originate out of comradeship or equality; farmers were encouraged "to involve their women in an attempt to mobilize their entire strength".23 One member thought including the women in the association would also involve more men. He wrote to Mrs. McNaughton, "I find it hard to get the men out to the Grain Growers' meetings, but perhaps if the women come to the meetings it might help to

bring the men and get them interested...".  

Francis Beynon, women's editor for the Grain Growers Guide, had been advocating a farm women's club since 1912. She too had been in correspondence with Mr. Green about the formation of a separate women's section in Saskatchewan and found him to be patronizing. Privately she concurred with Mrs. McNaughton:

My opinion of him is the same as yours. That he does not regard our part of the movement as of the very slightest importance. ... I am not so clear as to whether he is deliberately trying to freeze the women's organizations out or whether he merely won't be bothered making arrangements for them.

The first Women's Section convention was, however, held


25. Francis Marion Beynon was born in Streetsville, Ontario in 1884; the family relocated to a rented farm in the Hartney district of Manitoba in 1889. The family adhered to strict Methodism, which Francis later repudiated in her semi-autobiographical novel, Aleta Day. She obtained her teaching certificate and taught in rural Manitoba schools until moving to Winnipeg in 1908. She was employed in the advertising department of the T. Eaton Company until 1912 when she accepted the position of women's editor of the Grain Growers Guide. Miss Beynon left the Guide in 1917 and moved to New York where she worked at the Seamen's Church Institute and freelanced as a writer. Ann Hicks, "Francis Beynon and the Guide", in Mary Kinnear (ed.), First Days. Fighting Days. Women in Manitoba History, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1987), pp. 41 - 52.


in 1914 in Moose Jaw at the same time as the Central convention which amended its constitution to allow full membership to women. Mr. Green left the convention in the hands of Mrs. McNaughton and Miss Beynon because he did not have the time to prepare for both the Central convention and the women's meetings. He also did not appear at the women's convention because, "I was so utterly fatigued that it would have been an injustice to myself and of no particular benefit to the women gathered there".28 Despite Mr. Green's apparent "fatigue", the women's convention was a success and a forum for farm women's concerns came into existence.29

The Women's Section of the S.G.G.A. (W.G.G.A.) was not independent of the Central association. Amendments to the S.G.G.A. constitution in 1915 which provided for a separate women's section instead of an auxiliary, did not segregate the two associations nor did the women want to be distinct from the Central. The women's section was an arm of the S.G.G.A., not a wholly autonomous or independent body. The new amendments which supposedly afforded women the same standing in the association as the men,30 also placed limitations on the Women's Section which would keep it under

28. Letter to Mrs. McNaughton from Mr. Fred Green, February 19, 1914, (S.A.B., Al - E92-1).

29. The provincial franchise was extended to Saskatchewan women in March 1916 affording women a political voice, at least in provincial affairs.

effective control by the Central. It was not "competent for them (women) to petition parliament or the legislature on any matter independently of the Central".\textsuperscript{31} Also, finances were kept out of the women's hands. Dues collected from female members went into the Central treasury and, consequently, financing of the Women's Section came upon the approval of a budget submitted by the women to the Central body.\textsuperscript{32} This meant all expenditures were monitored and the women had to justify any programs which required funding. Although there is no record that the S.G.G.A. was tyrannical about overseeing how the Women's Section spent its money, the arrangement definitely allowed the men to keep a tight control over the women's activities. Besides, many men were not prepared to give women the full responsibilities afforded to "equals". In a letter to Mrs. McNaughton, J.B. Musselman, Central Secretary of the S.G.G.A., expressed the familiar refrain of the S.G.G.A. membership:

I doubt that we shall ever get quite away from treating each other somewhat differently from the treatment which each accords to its own sex. I have always been of the opinion that if we as men ever found ourselves treating women as our equals and with no more courtesy than we exercise towards each other, that not only would the women seriously miss the special privileges which cultured society has accorded them but also that

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p. 14.
\textsuperscript{32} Wood, \textit{A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada}, p. 297.
men would be seriously the losers.33

The money granted by the S.G.G.A. to the women tied the Women's Section closely to that of the Central - perhaps even more than the women had intended. It was a humbling experience continually to request money from the men to finance the Women's Section. Miss Beynon, in her 'Country Homemakers' column, publicly expressed it was not "humiliating" for women to ask for money each year, but rather it was quite the opposite. She wrote "that the men pass this matter of a grant not as if it were a burden or a duty, but a great privilege to do so much to help the work of their women folk along."34 However, in private correspondence with Mrs. McNaughton her opinion was different:

As you say, some of the Grain Growers' Executive may not be too friendly - I think I could lay my finger on one who is antagonistic, but I also think that we can arrange to have the matter of our grant brought before the whole convention and there we would be safe.35

It would be more difficult for the men to cut funding to the women's section if a public vote was taken from the


35. Letter to Mrs. McNaughton from Miss Beynon, July 27, 1914, (S.A.B., Al - E23). Mrs. McNaughton had proposed that the Women's Section also ask the Grain Growers Grain Company for a grant but Miss Beynon suggested they "get along" on the money from the S.G.G.A. until the next convention and then ask for a larger grant.
convention floor. An association which proclaimed equality for all of its members would have a hard time justifying a reduction to the women's grant while not reducing expenditures of the central organization at the same time.

The experience of the Alberta farm women was much the same as their sisters in Saskatchewan. In 1912 the U.F.A. "adopted a resolution calling for equal political rights for women"36 and in 1914 the constitution was amended to "provide for the admission of women and to give them equal privileges to those of the men".37 Some women did join U.F.A. locals38 but membership fees were not equitable. Wives and daughters of members could be admitted upon payment of a fifty cent membership fee, but sons of members were admitted as part of a family ticket.39 There was no mention of whether women who did not have a male member in the family could join. The convention in Lethbridge in 1914 saw the first tentative meeting of Alberta farm women. A program put together by the Lethbridge women "had not been

carefully planned in advance\textsuperscript{40} and the women were unable to organize. Perhaps it was not even apparent to some of the women who attended the convention with their husbands that there was to be an attempt to form a women's auxiliary. Ironically, Miss Beynon had promoted the convention in her column as an opportunity "for a little holiday and a great deal of fun".\textsuperscript{41} Such remarks would not lead women to think there was business to which they should attend at the convention. She made it sound like a social occasion rather than a call for formal organization of a women's section. However, in anticipation of the next year's convention, Alberta farm women began to organize themselves into locals. The Alix Country Women's Club, formed in 1913 was the first local of what became the Auxiliary of the United Farmers of Alberta.\textsuperscript{42} The secretary, Mrs. Irene Parlby, who later became widely known for her activism regarding female

\textsuperscript{40} Cleverdon, \textit{The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada}, p. 70.

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{G.G.G.}, January 14, 1914, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{42} Ironically, the Alix Women's Club was originated by Miss Elizabeth Mitchell of London, England, who was visiting in Alix. She was touring Canada and making a study of women's organizations, and wondered if there would be any interest by the farm women of Alix and area to form a society. Subsequently, a meeting was called and the club was organized. Barbara Villy Cormack, \textit{Perennials and Politics. The Life Story of Hon. Irene Parlby, LL.D.}, (Sherwood Park, Alberta: Professional Printing Ltd., 1968), p. 56-57.
suffrage and women's rights, was familiar with the U.F.A. organization. Her father, Colonel Marryat, helped to start the Alix local of the U.F.A. in 1909, and her husband, Walter Parlby, was the local's first president.

In preparation for the convention of 1915, the U.F.A. secretary, P.P. Woodbridge, extended invitations to all farm women to meet in Edmonton with the intention of forming a provincial farm women's organization in connection with the U.F.A.. As secretary, he would have been aware of the growing number of women joining locals and their desire to have representation in the provincial association. The U.F.A. would have been aware of the advantages of a larger and more effective membership, to strengthen the farm vote. Also, the Saskatchewan farm women had already been organized and the U.F.A. was not to be outdone by its neighbour. Mr. Woodbridge obviously was familiar with the Women's Section of the S.G.G.A., as he wrote to its secretary, Irma Stocking, to ask for help in getting started:

...I feel that your practical experience will be very valuable to us and may possibly give that necessary impetus to get the thing started which was lacking last year when the movement failed simply for want of a practical leader. I do not know if Miss Beynon has told you of the difficulties that I am up against in this Province, but both

43. Mrs. Parlby was the second woman in Canada to hold a cabinet position (minister without portfolio, U.F.A. government of 1921), and was one of the 'Famous Five' involved in the 'persons case' of 1929. Margot Smith & Carol Pasternak (eds.), Pioneer Women of Western Canada, (Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1978), p. 85.
last year and this, the women's section of the work has been undertaken by me practically alone, with little or no assistance from the Directors, and in a few cases, what might perhaps most aptly be described by the old adage in regard to 'faint praise'.

Whereas Mr. Woodbridge attributed the failure of the previous year's attempt to organize Alberta farm women to the lack of a 'practical leader', the Guide stated that the meetings held in 1914 were disappointing because of poor attendance "owing probably to the inclemency of the weather". Perhaps they were both correct. In any case, Mr. Woodbridge did not appear to be receiving support from the Directors of the U.F.A. to devote energy and money to a woman's organization. Ironically, only days later, the Guide printed a complimentary statement commending the U.F.A.'s support of farm women: "For the executive of the farmers' organizations to plan and arrange for a large convention of women is the best possible proof of their desire to enlist the support of the women in the great work of the organization". The Guide was much more optimistic and enthusiastic about welcoming women into the farm movement than were the executive members of the U.F.A..

Despite the difficulties experienced in calling the meetings, a successful women's convention resulted. With the

assistance of Mrs. McNaughton of the W.G.G.A. and Miss Beynon of the Guide, the Alberta farm women organized the Women's Auxiliary of the U.F.A.. Almost all the work was done by the women, as they rallied their supporters, canvassed new members and prepared for their impending responsibilities as organized farm women. The report in the Guide, however, read as if the U.F.A. men deserved the praise and should feel "most proud" for "cordially inviting the women to take part in the work of the organization".47

At the Calgary convention of 1916, the Women's Auxiliary became the independent association of the United Farm Women of Alberta (U.F.W.A.). The U.F.W.A. retained the membership fee of one dollar giving the women financial autonomy. Also, the U.F.W.A. was allowed two representatives to sit on the U.F.A. executive.48 Thus, the organized farm women of Alberta had a forum for their own concerns and those of the farm community. It was only a short while later, March 1916, that the provincial vote was extended to Alberta women and a large bloc of potential farm voters was established.

Organizing the farm women of Manitoba followed a slightly different course than that of the women of Saskatchewan and Alberta. In January 1916, Manitoba was the first province to enfranchise women. It had been a long and

at times theatrical battle between the provincial government led by Sir Rodmond Roblin, who believed that "wifehood, motherhood and politics [could not] be associated with satisfactory results" and the supporters of the Manitoba Political Equality League (M.P.E.L.), which included the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association (M.G.G.A.). The M.G.G.A. had passed a resolution in favour of women's suffrage in 1911 and encouraged delegates attending the convention held at Brandon in 1914 to "suggest that each local secretary of the G.G.A. bring before his Association some scheme to form a Woman Suffrage Association in Connection with his branch of the G.G.A." It is possible that the M.G.G.A. so ardently campaigned for female suffrage because the M.P.E.L. was primarily an urban-based association. If the interests of the farmers were to be represented, the farm associations would have to ensure their voices were also heard. Historian Catherine Cleverdon also suggests that after 'The Woman's Parliament', suffrage


50. Ibid., p. 60. From a 1914 Conservative election pamphlet.

51. The M.P.E.L. received support from such women as Mrs. Lillian Beynon Thomas, Miss Francis Beynon, Miss Cora Hind and Mrs. Nellie McClung. Ibid., p. 55.

52. Ibid., p. 55.

became "respectable and fashionable".\textsuperscript{54}

In December 1914, the \textit{Guide} reported that farm women were invited to the upcoming M.G.G.A. convention in order that they "get in touch with the movement".\textsuperscript{55} Ironically, in the same \textit{Guide} column, Miss Beynon went on to suggest, "if at any time the discussions should prove dry, there is nothing to hinder the women from slipping out and going on a little shopping jaunt all by themselves".\textsuperscript{56} This was not encouraging because how many women would want to get in touch with a movement that they found tedious? Perhaps she was afraid women might not attend if they thought it was to be strictly business meetings.

Apparently there were farm women wanting to join the M.G.G.A.. Women who attended the 1915 convention with their husbands held separate meetings and voted to accept the men's offer to extend full membership to the women. However, whereas the men had offered to admit women at half of the membership fee paid by men, the women rejected this offer outright and insisted "we (the women) [be] allowed to pay the full membership fee, realizing that equal rights and privileges should carry with them equal financial burdens

\begin{itemize}
\item[54.] Cleverdon, \textit{The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada}, p. 59.
\item[56.] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 10.
\end{itemize}
and responsibility".57

True to form, the editors of the Guide were more enthusiastic and optimistic for the future of women's equality within the M.G.G.A. than were the male members of the farmers' organization. However, it was made clear in a report to the Guide that the M.G.G.A. expected some return for its beneficence towards its newly enfranchised members:

> Since women enter the association and work in it on equal terms with men it may be expected that in the immediate future they will use their influence to secure in connection with the work of the association the study and discussion of questions of public policy in which women have special interest... 58

By September 1917, Francis Beynon had left the Guide and prairie farm women lost one of the key figures who had helped to organize and motivate farm women throughout the West.59 Although her statements and promotion of the women's sections may seem pejorative to the modern historian, she was highly respected and admired by her female readers. Saskatchewan and Alberta women had created separate Women's Sections of their Grain Growers Associations, but the farm women of Manitoba were still in an Auxiliary. The M.G.G.A.

59. The circumstances under which Miss Beynon left the Guide are unclear, but Ramsay Cook suggests it may have been the result of her pacifist leanings, unpopular during World War I. Ramsay Cook, "Francis Marion Beynon and the Crisis of Christian Reformism", in C. Berger & R. Cook (eds.), The West and the Nation, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1976).
did not perceive the need for a separate women's section, regardless of the hopeful pronouncements by the Guide of the equitable treatment of Manitoba women. In a personal letter to Miss Stocking, secretary of the W.G.G.A., Mrs. Wienke of the Manitoba Women's Auxiliary explained the extreme difficulties she was encountering:

We have no funds at all and I have to stand all my own expense but may get it back next winter by asking the Women Grain Growers to apply to Central or take up a collection. I hardly know what I can do and how far I dare go on our own initiative and after talking with him (Pres.) [R.C. Henders] I feel all enthusiasm slipping away from me. He does not seem to favor the Auxiliary and would rather keep the men and women in one local.60

Miss Mary P. McCallum replaced Miss Beynon as the woman's editor of the Guide. Miss McCallum had experience dealing with women's organizations as she had been involved in the Saskatchewan equal franchise movement.61 She was enthusiastic and worked with the various women's organizations not only by publicizing their activities in the Guide, but also by becoming active in the farm women's associations. It is difficult to ascertain if she was a direct influence on the eventual creation of the separate


61. Interview with Mary Sutherland (nee McCallum) by Una MacLean, 1962. The Archives of the Glenbow Museum, Calgary.
women's section in Manitoba, but it is likely that her determination and persistence played a role. Women had already been forming locals and wanted provincial representation; at the convention of 1918, only five months after Miss McCallum's arrival at the Guide, the M.G.G.A. constitution was amended to provide for a women's section. Mrs. J.S. Wood, of Oakville, was elected the first president of the United Farm Women of Manitoba.

The farm women of Ontario were again in a different situation than their prairie counterparts although the move to organize Ontario farm women was also directly connected to impending female enfranchisement. Melville H. Staples, Educational Secretary for the United Farmers of Ontario (U.F.O.), recalled it was "abundantly clear to all that the woman electorate would soon be a force to be reckoned with at the polls."

Suffrage agitation in Ontario was almost completely directed by urban middle class reformers; the first suffrage society was formed in 1877 by Dr. Emily Stowe. A number of equal franchise unions and sympathetic clubs developed over the years, but most remained urban based.


64. Included are the Dominion Women's Enfranchisement Association (1889), the Canadian Suffrage Association (1907), and the W.C.T.U. which first lent support in 1894.
During the early years of the suffrage campaign, the farmers' associations were in disarray and therefore unlikely to be concerned about external issues that were not directly related to agricultural concerns. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.) had locals throughout the province, and rural communities had the opportunity to support suffrage through the temperance network.

Farmer societies had been in existence in Ontario since the early 1800s but it was not until 1874 when the Grange was established that farmers organized for "social and educational purposes to enable them to make their influence felt in public affairs and also to co-operate for mutual commercial advantage".65 The Patrons of Industry, organized in 1890, were more politically oriented and initially received tremendous support until they were rumoured to be connected to the Liberal party. In 1893 membership was reported to be 35,000 and had risen to 50,000 one year later.66 By 1896 the Patrons had collapsed. The Farmers' Association was formed soon after, and in 1902 they joined with the Grange to create a stronger organization. However, the reconstructed Grange was not destined to last either, and by 1912 it was floundering. The organization was

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"antiquated and out of touch with more modern thought" and had suffered defeat in the reciprocity campaign of 1911. The anti-reciprocity Conservatives won 134 of 221 seats.

In the fall of 1913, four Ontario farmers met to discuss the possibility of forming an organization like those of the Grain Growers' associations in the West. The first convention, held in March 1914, brought together not only the seed farmers, but also the fruit growers, cattle breeders and poultry specialists. The strength of the new United Farmers of Ontario would be found in the convergence of the diverse elements of Ontario rural communities - that is, most components except women, who were excluded.

The original Grange had provision for women members to be admitted on the same basis as men, but the Farmers' Associations, the Patrons and the U.F.O. did not. Ontario farm women wanted to be part of the United Farmers and began to petition the new organization almost from its inception. Women were familiar with club work through their efforts for the Red Cross during World War I and "felt a keen desire to give of [their] time and energy in making

67. Ibid., p. 36.
68. They were Col. J.Z. Fraser, E.C. Drury, J.J. Morrison and W.C. Good, all which later held key executive positions in the U.F.O., the C.C.A., or both. E.C. Drury went on to head the U.F.O. government in Ontario 1919-1923.
J.J. Morrison, secretary-treasurer of the U.F.O., received letters of inquiry about the possibility of including farm women in the organization and began to realize there would be certain practical advantages to co-operating with women anxious to join the farm movement. Not only were women soon to be granted the vote, but "in the active participation of farm women leaders saw hope of renewing and strengthening the movement".71

The U.F.O. executive did not, however, immediately support the move to allow women associate status. The provincial franchise was extended to women in April 1917 but it was not until the spring of 1918 that the U.F.O. took any action to admit women into its ranks. Miss Emma Griesbach,72

71. Ibid., p. 118.
72. Miss Emma Griesbach was the editor of the women's page of the Weekly Sun, from November 1917 to February 1922, when she was fired from the paper. Miss Griesbach's opinions often were the source of discord between herself and the owners of the paper, the U.F.O. As she was also the first secretary of the U.F.W.O., this led to some difficult situations. Miss Griesbach wanted the farm community to gain the power necessary to implement changes immediately and was impatient with the slow progress, particularly, where women were concerned. On one hand, she felt the U.F.O. did not accept the women but then insisted that "men would grant equality if the women would demand it, and [that] it was the women's lack of initiative that hindered the progress of the movement". (p. 276). When she was fired from the paper, Miss Griesbach was informed that there might be a place for her again "if she would temper her criticism of rural people in her writing. She refused...". (p. 276). Margaret Kechnie, "The United Farm Women of Ontario: Developing a Political Consciousness", in Ontario History, Volume LXXVII, Number 4,
"Diana" of The Weekly Sun, the official organ of the U.F.O., wrote to the secretary of the W.G.G.A. asking for information about how Saskatchewan farm women were organized: "There is a probability of the United Farmers of Ontario promoting a Women's Section of their organization along similar lines to the Western Associations and some tentative proposals have been made to me to assist...".73 The real impetus for organization came when Mr. Morrison learned that Mrs. McNaughton of the W.G.G.A. would be in Ontario in June for a meeting of the National Council of Women. Mr. Morrison requested Mrs. McNaughton address a group of farm women when she was in Ontario, and on June 17, three men and sixteen invited women met with the woman who had been so influential in the formation of the prairie farm women's associations. The reception was enthusiastic; a provisional charter for a women's section was drawn up and an executive appointed. Miss Griesbach was elected secretary and Mrs. George Brodie was provisional president.74

Mrs. Henry Wilson of Georgetown, one of the invited guests, called a meeting of farm women in her district only one month after meeting Mrs. McNaughton. The name United

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74. Mrs. Brodies' husband was active in the U.F.O. and a director of the Farmers' Publishing Company which owned The Weekly Sun, later to become The Farmers' Sun.
Farm Women of Ontario was agreed upon by those in attendance and later adopted by two other clubs prior to the general convention of the U.F.O. in December 1918. The thirty women who attended the convention first met separately and agreed to adopt the U.F.O.'s platform along with several supplementary items that were more specific to their interests as women: improvement of rural homes and schools; removal of disabilities of rural women in qualifying for school trustees; special attention to the system of education; appointment of county police matrons; labour-saving devices for the home on the free list.75

The women next met with the central convention where it was decided the women could form separate women's clubs under the auspices of the U.F.O.; where no separate women's section was available, a woman could join the U.F.O. local. However, the two organizations were not separate or autonomous. The U.F.W.O. was an auxiliary, and had no independent finances. All memberships were paid into the central treasury, as was the case for the Saskatchewan Women's Section upon which the Ontario auxiliary was modeled.

Not everyone was pleased with that status of the newly formed U.F.W.O.. By the spring of 1919, Miss Griesbach was of the opinion that the women "are not going to measure up to the men and the longer our organizations are distinct

(for they are in actuality if not in intention or expression), the more patent the fact will become". She was convinced the women would never be seen as equal partners as long as they were not equitable in terms of influence. She wrote to Mrs. McNaughton less than a year after the initial meeting to organize the Ontario farm women and suggested the U.F.O. and the U.F.W.O. should be "merged" and "simply all be United Farmers, men and women alike, have one executive with the offices open to women and certainly having some women in the Executive of the U.F.O.". Such radical ideas were not popular with the organized farmers. In theory women had membership privileges in the central organization, but in practice the Women's Section was where women belonged. For example, according to the constitution of the S.G.G.A. women could not hold an executive office "owing to the fact that [the] Executive is so heavily involved in Trading". Miss Griesbach's beliefs that the role of women in the farm movement should be more equitable than it was, were not shared by the rest of the U.F.W.O. executive, who began to worry about her suitability as secretary. Mrs. Brodie confidentially explained to Mrs. McNaughton that "I do not know what we are going to do but


77. Ibid.

78. Letter to Miss McCallum from Mrs. McNaughton, November 28, 1918, (S.A.B., A1 - E10).
one thing is certain, we will have to get a new secretary, no one can work with her, even Mr. Morrison dares not say his soul is his own."79 Even after Miss Griesbach was no longer part of the U.F.W.O. executive, Mrs. Brodie still found her to be an irritation: "We are having our hands full with Miss Griesbach, she is certainly a problem".80 Perhaps it was only a conflict of personalities, but it is also possible that Miss Griesbach's suggestions were ahead of their time. It was just months later that Mrs. Burbank, Secretary of the W.G.G.A. sent a letter to her Directors which outlined proposals not so far removed from those put forward by Miss Griesbach. She reported that at a meeting of the provincial secretaries of the three western provinces she had learned there was "a growing feeling amongst the organized rural women of Alberta and Manitoba that the women should be more closely identified with the general convention, and not have all their meetings separately."81 Mrs. Burbank concluded this would "tend to strengthen the organization, to lessen as far as practicable, the lines of demarcation".82


82. Ibid.
These were the same ideas put forth by Cora Hind in 1915 when the movement to organize the farm women of western Canada was still in its infancy. The comradeship of which she spoke and the hope that the emphasis on sex would be less, appeared possible. The farm women of the three western provinces and Ontario were, by late 1918 ready to take on new challenges. Their war-related work was winding down, and there was a desire to channel their efforts into other areas closer to home such as rural education and child welfare. They looked not so much across the world to an destructive and incomprehensible tragedy, as to the anguish it had wreaked in their own neighborhoods. The war had devastated many rural communities; the time had come to rebuild and plan for the future. The most important questions became: how could farm women best facilitate the healing process and in what manner could they assure their interests would be protected?

The Canadian Council of Agriculture and its affiliates had maintained pressure on government during the war years and had tried to "protect the material prosperity and economic interests" of its member associations. However, the war had absorbed much of the country's energy and the farm organizations were very involved in war efforts, both domestic and overseas.83 Late in 1918 when victory became

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imminent, the C.C.A. resumed its campaign and drafted The New National Policy which was "based upon the broad, national economic interests of Canada" and demanded "better co-ordination of the political effort organized thus far for the purpose of electing supporters of the New National Policy to the Dominion Parliament".84

There was a new mood prevalent in farming circles, a new activism that would involve the farmers in politics. Farm women were not immune to the intensified agitation felt by their men -- in fact they were anxious to assume their role as equals. This, in part, facilitated the move towards the formation of a national farm women's association "for the purpose of coordinating the work of the various provincial organizations and to have national machinery for the conduct of the vast amount of national business that is constantly before the organized farm women".85 Women could no longer be ignored or excluded from the burgeoning farm movement; they demanded a new voice and a national forum in which to give it free expression.

84. Minutes of the C.C.A., November 11, 1919.
CHAPTER II NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

...for we are all women of the West and many of our problems are inter-provincial. I look towards the day when the women members of the farmers' organizations will increase in such numbers that a woman's representative from each province will be elected to sit in the Canadian Council of Agriculture.

Mrs. Violet McNaughton
February 1915

Less than four years had passed from the time Mrs. McNaughton optimistically forecast representation for women in the farmer's national forum, until women seized the initiative and made the vision become reality. But these particular years had been far from ordinary, as the fledgling farm organizations struggled to keep up with the tumultuous changes at home and abroad. World War I circumscribed daily life on almost every Canadian farm, the woman suffrage movement promised to enfranchise a large bloc of voters who could strengthen the farmer's voice, and farm women worked to organize themselves into effective provincial associations which articulated their concerns as active participants in the rural community. By the fall of 1918 few facets of Canadian life were as they had been in early 1915.

Mrs. McNaughton shared her vision of representation for women in the Council of Agriculture with other organized farm women. Members of the women's sections of the Grain

Growers' associations had witnessed the positive effects of co-operation amongst the C.C.A. affiliates and had seen the tangible results that could be achieved by a solid national farm lobby.\textsuperscript{2} The membership of the Council was comprised of the farmer-owned companies and provincial farm associations which supposedly afforded male and female members the same privileges. However, there were no women and no provisions for women on the Council of Agriculture.\textsuperscript{3} Women were not specifically excluded but as women did not hold executive positions in all of the provincial central associations, they were not eligible to hold office in the C.C.A.. Yet, as Mrs. McNaughton had pointed out, many of their problems as farm women surpassed provincial boundaries and an interprovincial organization was needed to address these common concerns. Since affiliation with the C.C.A. was not readily available, farm women once again took the initiative to form their own association and set up an interim council which could eventually pursue full membership in the

\textsuperscript{2} For example, in 1917 the Union government "deemed it expedient to include the president of the United Grain Growers [T.A. Crerar] as its Minister of Agriculture". Patton, Grain Growers' Cooperation in Western Canada, p. 190.

Canadian Council of Agriculture.

Following the pattern that had been established when the provincial women's associations were formed, it seemed logical the women should affiliate with the same national council as their men. Mrs. McNaughton was explicit in her address to the U.F.W.M. convention of 1918 as she pointed out "an increase in the membership of the farmer's organizations meant [an] increase in power. Women should especially support these organizations..." Farm women did not want to be completely independent of the central male council, but rather, as they had demonstrated at the provincial level, women wanted to become "an integral part of the farmers' national body" and share the accompanying responsibilities. They wanted the "emphasis on sex to be less".

Miss Mary McCallum was particularly enthusiastic about setting up a women's interprovincial council. Although she had only been the women's editor of the Guide since Miss Beynon had left the farm journal late in the summer of 1917, Miss McCallum had become deeply committed to farm women's clubs and was especially involved with the Women Grain Growers' associations. She was keenly aware of the issues that were foremost in each province as it was her


responsibility as women's editor to gather information and publicize the goings-on of the various locals and of the provincial farm women's executives. She was, perhaps, more informed than any other woman and was in the best position to realize just how much farm women had in common. Miss McCallum expressed the opinions of the three prairie farm women's associations in her weekly column. She met frequently with the Manitoba women, as the Guide's office and the central offices of the U.F.M. were in Winnipeg, and constantly corresponded with the president and secretary from Saskatchewan and Alberta. In a column written in January 1918, she reiterated much of what Mrs. McNaughton had said about interprovincial work three years earlier, and suggested to her readers that the time was at hand to unite farm women:

Farm women are farm women in whatever province they live and their problems are much the same. The confines of the work of an organization of farm women are not those of the provinces. Yet, up to date we have been trying to confine our work to the provinces. Can we not make the interprovincial organization this winter?6

It is not surprising that her call for the interprovincial organization foreshadowed resolutions passed at the provincial conventions of 1918. Farm women of Manitoba, who met for the first time as the U.F.W.M. in January, passed a resolution that "an Interprovincial

Council be formed composed of two members of the executive of each provincial women’s section to confer on all matters pertaining in common to farm women in the three provinces."  

Almost identical resolutions were passed within six weeks by the conventions of the U.F.W.A. and the W.G.G.A. but nothing immediately came of these resolutions and no action was forthcoming from any of the provincial associations.

It was Miss McCallum who kept up the pressure for the formation of an interprovincial council. Her ideas about how to form such a council and about how it should be organized were apparently not fixed as she proposed several different options during 1918. Early in the summer, she considered the possibility of having Mrs. Parlby, President of the U.F.W.A., and Mrs. Wood, President of the U.F.W.M., "take their seats on the Council of Agriculture". Miss McCallum reasoned that as the president of the women’s section, and as a member of the central executive of their respective provinces, Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Parlby had every right to be chosen as delegates to a Council of Agriculture meeting.

10. The reason that Miss McCallum does not include a representative from the W.G.G.A. is because there was no provision for women on the S.G.G.A. Executive; since only executive members attended C.C.A. meetings, it was not
This would be one way of circumventing the lack of provision for independent female members in the C.C.A.. If Miss McCallum's proposal was accepted, Mrs. Parlby and Mrs. Wood could represent the U.F.A. and the U.F.M. at Council of Agriculture meetings rather than presenting themselves as delegates of the women's sections. However, there is no indication that the central provincial associations considered this idea.

Miss McCallum was surprised to find out that at the C.C.A. meeting to be held in Winnipeg 5 July 1918, there would be some discussion regarding women and the C.C.A.. She wrote to Mrs. McNaughton to see if she had any knowledge of motions pending for the upcoming meeting:

... I incidentally learned that the whole question of representation from our women's section on the Council of Agriculture is to come up at this meeting. Did you know that it was even remotely thought of before?11

The minutes of that meeting, however, show no record of any discussion of women representatives. There is also no indication that there were any deliberations with regard to women delegates or a women's section at the following meeting held August 19. Despite this, or perhaps as a result of the apparent lack of interest or enthusiasm of the male

possible to send a woman delegate from Saskatchewan. Letter to Miss McCallum from Mrs. McNaughton, November 28, 1918, (S.A.B., A1 - E10).

members of the Council to allow female representation, the provincial women's sections continued to plan for some kind of interprovincial organization. Their goal, as Mrs. McNaughton outlined, was eventual association with the C.C.A. "when the time was right".12

The first meeting to discuss an interprovincial women's committee was scheduled for Calgary in October 1918. Miss McCallum, who was on a planned trip through the West for the Guide, proposed to meet with Miss Spiller of the U.F.W.A. and Mrs. McNaughton of the W.G.G.A., "at some convenient place to discuss the winter's work of the three provinces with the idea of getting greater uniformity".13 Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Tooth of the U.F.W.M. suggested Miss McCallum represent the Manitoba Women's Section in meetings with the Alberta and Saskatchewan women. Miss Spiller arranged for the meeting to be held in Calgary while Miss McCallum was there on Guide business; however, it had to be cancelled due to the influenza epidemic.14 Invited to the meeting were

12. Letter to Miss Spiller (Secretary U.F.W.A.) from Mrs. McNaughton, October 9, 1918, (S.A.B., A1 - E78).


14. "It may be possible to call a meeting when this epidemic is over." Letter to Mrs. McNaughton from Miss Spiller, October 24, 1918, (S.A.B., A1 - E78). The U.F.A. informed its members that no public meetings were to be held at the request of the provincial government. "All meetings of a public nature of any sort have been forbidden, and late last night notices went out to the churches and schools ordering them to close." The Calgary Daily Herald, Saturday October 19, 1918, p. 13.
Mrs. Parlby, Mrs. Ross and Miss Spiller of the U.F.W.A., Mrs. McNaughton from the W.G.G.A., Miss McCallum of the Guide, and two male executive members from the U.F.A., President Mr. H.W. Wood and Secretary Mr. Higginbotham. It is likely that there were no representatives invited from Manitoba or Ontario because of the distances involved and the associated costs of travel.¹⁵ Years later, Miss McCallum suggested she was never surprised by what went on in Alberta because "Alberta could adopt queer ideas quicker than any other province". Accordingly she would not think it was of any consequence that it was Alberta which proposed the first meeting to organize farm women on an interprovincial level.¹⁶

Although the proposed interprovincial meeting had to be cancelled, Miss McCallum's trip was by no means a waste of time. Privately she met some of the people with whom she had intended to speak and used the time to develop some further ideas for the interprovincial council. When Miss McCallum returned to her office at the Guide, a flurry of letters were dispatched; she was even more eager to share her thoughts with the provincial associations and put her plans into action than she had been before her trip. Her most

¹⁵. There are numerous references in the minutes of all four provincial women's sections to the unfortunately high costs of train travel that often limited to where the women were able to go.

¹⁶. Interview with Mary Sutherland (nee McCallum) by Una MacLean.
detailed communiques, and those where she most freely expressed herself, were contained in personal letters to Mrs. McNaughton. For example, in the first letter sent after her return, she outlined her proposals for the interprovincial committee:

On my way to Calgary I had an opportunity to think and came to the conclusion then that since the provincial organizations are somewhat handicapped for funds that representation on the C.C.A. of say one woman from each provincial organization would form a nucleus of an inter-provincial women's council. Those representatives on the C.C.A. could then be made a committee to look after women's affairs particularly. ... This arrangement seems to me to have several advantages. It would be a connecting link between our women and the C.C.A., which cannot hurt either, so far as I can see. It would then provide that the C.C.A. finance the women's interprovincial council. There would be opportunities during Council sittings for the committee of women to meet and discuss their things particularly. It would be a relatively easy matter for the C.C.A. to pay the expenses of one additional delegate to each meeting from each province.17

Miss McCallum's suggestions were not much different from those she had put forth earlier that summer - a women's council formed of delegates from the central associations, who incidentally were women. This council could also meet on its own to discuss matters primarily of concern to women. As members of the Council of Agriculture their financial obligations would be met by the C.C.A. and thus the women would not have to be concerned with corresponding financial responsibilities associated with interprovincial travel. Her

plans demonstrated the desire to be a part of the main Council, to have a "link between the women and the C.C.A.", which she perceived as mutually beneficial. Miss McCallum, Mrs. McNaughton and many other members of the organized farm women understood "the interests of the rural movement would be best furthered" and that the "work of [an] interprovincial council of farm women [would be] greatly strengthened by its close relationship to the Canadian Council of Agriculture". As this relationship was to be reciprocal, the C.C.A. could expect to gain an expanded membership and an extended energy and vitality, not to mention the electoral strength of the organized farm women.

Miss McCallum had already canvassed Mr. Wood while in Calgary, and then Mr. Chipman, editor of the Guide and Mr. Kennedy of the U.G.G.L. for their opinions on women's representation on the Council of Agriculture. Mr. Wood promised the matter would be raised at the next C.C.A. meeting, and Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Chipman "thought it might be a beginning for some sort of representation". She had wished to seek out the opinions of several other of our


19. The bill to extend the federal franchise to women was passed May 24, 1918. Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, p. 136.

men" but had been advised not to do so by Mrs. Parlby who "thought that if I did they might think the women were pushing for representation on the council". Anxious to proceed, but not altogether sure about what direction to take, Miss McCallum wrote Mrs. McNaughton to ask what she "thought of this whole question". In her letter, Miss McCallum offered to write the women's executives of the three prairie provinces to solicit their opinions of an interprovincial council. She added that the correspondence could be handled through the Guide office for purposes of expediency.

Mrs. McNaughton had long been in favour of women representatives on the C.C.A., but only when the time was right. Miss McCallum apparently thought the time was at hand, yet she had no mandate to organize a council of any kind; her position was to publicize the opinions and policies of the organized farm women, not dictate what she thought they should be. She wanted to be sure what she was proposing was what farm women wanted, as there had been little discussion since the conventions held much earlier in the year. Although Miss McCallum received news from the locals and circulars from the provincial secretaries, she received little direction or advice on how the organized

21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
farm women wanted to deal with questions that were not specifically local. It was one thing to report the news, but quite another to assume what someone else was thinking. She explained the difficulty of her situation to Mrs. McNaughton:

Remember, if I say the wrong thing some time as a result of not being advised, I will not be responsible for blame. You will see that the reason I am so anxious for an interprovincial council is because I am up in the air so much of the time as to policy. I have only been here a year and four months, and I can't be expected to know one-tenth of what you people do concerning the movement.24

Mrs. McNaughton did not completely agree with Miss McCallum's proposals. She had already clearly stated that she believed women should be represented on the Council of Agriculture; however, she did not "think the time [was] ripe".25 She was inclined to side with Mrs. Parlby that "the move should be made by the men"26 although for different reasons. Whereas Mrs. Parlby stated she did not want it to appear that women were pushing for representation on the council, Mrs. McNaughton was more concerned with the ability of women to fulfill the responsibilities of membership in the farmers' national council. She had been involved with farm women's associations since 1913 and was acutely aware

24. Ibid.


26. Ibid.
of the difficulties in organizing and maintaining an effective organization and keeping the members interested. More than that, she was cognizant of the shortage of competent female leaders. There were, from Mrs. McNaughton's point of view, only a few women capable of accepting the challenges and coping with the obligations of national leadership. As she pointed out to Miss McCallum, "take Mrs. Parlby and myself out, and we are no longer leaders, and I don't think the other women have sufficient statesmanship".27

Mrs. McNaughton was in favour of an interprovincial council which could be set up immediately; affiliation with the Council of Agriculture could come at a later date. She explained to Miss McCallum that since the first resolution regarding the formation of such a council had originally been made at the U.F.W.M. convention in January 1918, it was they who should have the "privilege to start the thing".28

27. Ibid. By this date Mrs. McNaughton was the Honorary Secretary of the W.G.G.A. and not the president, and Mrs. Parlby was taking a leave due to illness. "Dr. Hynes whom I had out from Lacombe tells me that I must quit all public work at once for at least a year or become a chronic invalid..." Minutes of the Executive Meeting U.F.A., September 10 - 11, 1918. There are, however, records that show Mrs. Parlby did not give up all of her responsibilities as she was present at meetings throughout the year, and kept in touch with the other provincial associations. One author discusses Mrs. Parlby's "own particular war anxieties" as several close relatives were fighting overseas, which suggests perhaps her "illness" was psychological. Cormack, Perennials and Politics, p. 64.

However, she added that Miss McCallum's help would be needed because of her acquaintance with the other provincial associations. Mrs. McNaughton suggested Miss McCallum ask the Manitoba women to send a letter to her and Miss Spiller "asking for ideas and a draft constitution and also for one suggested representative from each Executive to form the nucleus of the Committee; that Committee might meet at the Manitoba Annual meeting and finish the whole thing."29

Mrs. McNaughton was as anxious for the interprovincial committee to go ahead as was Miss McCallum. The war work which had been the focus of so much volunteer activity was winding down and the timing was propitious to revitalize the organized farm women and draw them to the Grain Growers' associations. The provincial conventions were scheduled for January and February and it was prudent to have prepared before hand any resolutions or topics for discussion that were of importance. Enthusiasm and co-operation peaked while women were at the conventions; during the rest of the year interest was more likely to wane or be directed to other activities. The seasonal rhythm of the farm afforded women more time in winter to attend events away from the home than during the busier seasons when responsibilities associated with planting or harvesting crops filled their days. Consequently, if an interprovincial council was to be discussed and approved, the chance for success would be best

29. Ibid.
during convention. Since Manitoba was to have the privilege to start the thing and its convention dates were only a matter of weeks away, no time could be wasted.

Women's representation in the Council of Agriculture was finally discussed at the meeting of November 26, 1918. The Council, which had gone through a period of reorganization from 1916 - 1918, had become more financially stable, had appointed a permanent secretary with an office, and had recruited new personalities from the farmers' companies who provided "fresh enthusiasm and spirit as well as practical advice". 30 The idea that women should be associated with the C.C.A. with its new and vitalized constitution was, if nothing else, practical. Simply, the organized farm women had a substantial and growing membership, so it was better to have women understand and be part of the issues the C.C.A. supported, than to leave them out. Also, including a farm women's affiliate conformed well with the Council's reorganization along broader lines. 31 Accordingly, it was moved by C. Rice-Jones and seconded by G.F. Chipman "that the Farm Women's Provincial Associations should form an interprovincial council which would be in a position to co-operate with the Canadian Council of


31. Ibid., p. 114.
Agriculture".32

This "resolution of encouragement for the women to proceed with organization"33 came after the women had already set their plans in motion. It had been almost five months since Miss McCallum had first incidentally learned that women's representation was to be discussed by the C.C.A. During the ensuing months, the organized farm women on the Prairies had taken matters into their own hands, and without any prompting from the central Grain Growers' associations, took the preliminary steps towards the formation of an interprovincial council of farm women.

The Council of Agriculture had been involved with revising The Farmer's Platform into a new declaration of principles known as The New National Policy.34 Adopted by the C.C.A. in November 1918, the Policy was "a comprehensive programme, which, put into effect, would have reshaped the development of the Canadian economy".35 Accordingly, it was an extremely significant statement of policy for the organized farmers and its development had been of primary

32. Minutes of the C.C.A., November 26, 1918. Mr. Rice-Jones was a representative of the Western Section U.G.G.L., (his wife was active in the U.F.W.A.) and Mr. Chipman was editor of the Grain Growers Guide.


importance during the summer and fall of 1918. Concern with introducing a resolution regarding a women's affiliate certainly would have been secondary.

For the C.C.A., The New National Policy was a hallmark -- one which allowed it to generate policies for the first time on platforms dealing with issues not specifically related to agriculture. In addition to pronouncements on the tariff, taxation and the abolition of patronage, The New National Policy included recommendations about returned soldiers,36 labour37 and women38. The pronouncement about women was not a radical or sweeping statement of any kind. Rather, it called only for "the opening of seats in parliament to women on the same terms as men". Although women had been granted the federal franchise May 24, 1918, the right to be elected to parliament had not been included. Thus, the resolution to encourage women to form an interprovincial council came at a time when the C.C.A. was willing to broaden its appeal and seek support from other affiliates outside of the organized farm men and their companies.

That the provincial farm women's associations were already discussing plans for a national council, would only

37. Ibid., section 6.
38. Ibid., section 10.
have made the Council of Agriculture's reorganization work easier. The affiliation of a ready-made organization of farm women voters, sympathetic to Council policies and platforms, would certainly strengthen the national farm agency and lend credence to the claim that it was representative of not just men but of the entire farming community. The C.C.A. did not have to court the provincial associations to bring their women into the Council; farm women had already decided they wanted to sit in the Canadian Council of Agriculture. It made more sense for the C.C.A. to support the organized farm women and bring them under the auspices of the national farmers' council, than to risk losing this potentially valuable ally.

Once the C.C.A. had adopted The New National Policy, and passed the resolution of encouragement for the women to proceed with the formation of an interprovincial council, it made no further efforts to enlist the support of the provincial Women's Grain Growers' associations. Whether the women were either completely undaunted by the Council's lack of interest, or they had not counted on a sudden show of support by the C.C.A. in the first place, the executives of the three prairie farm women's organizations continued on their own to make plans for the development of their interprovincial council.39 Once the process was set in

39. It is possible the women were not even aware of the motion passed by the C.C.A. until later. Miss McCallum informed Mrs. McNaughton about the resolution a full week
motion, there was, as Miss Finch of the U.F.W.M. stated, rapid escalation in the urgency to "[get] this work started right away". Following Mrs. McNaughton's suggestion, Miss Finch officially petitioned the U.F.W.A. and the W.G.G.A. for their ideas on the formation of an interprovincial council of farm women. She also requested they nominate a representative so "the three provinces might form a committee to take up the matter of the organization of an Interprovincial Council of Women at the annual convention of the Manitoba G.G.A. in January".

A complex network was established amongst the executives of the organized farm women. Although some leaders had previously met and a feeling of kinship had developed, a new "esprit de corps" was evident in their affairs. Replies to letters and telegrams were promptly dispatched and usually contained expressions of fraternity and fellowship. For example, Mrs. McNaughton began to close her letters with "Yours Fraternally...". From the date of

after the meeting: "I believe the Council of Agriculture passed a resolution of encouragement to the women to proceed with organization". Letter to Mrs. McNaughton from Miss McCallum, December 3, 1918, (S.A.B., A1 - E10). Mrs. Parlby was notified through the mail by the U.F.A. Secretary, almost three weeks after the meeting. Letter to Mrs. Parlby from H. Higginbotham, December 17, 1918, (S.A.B., A1 - E10).


41. Ibid.

42. Letter to Miss Spiller from Mrs. McNaughton, December 2, 1918, (S.A.B., A1 - E10).
Miss McCallum's letter of November 22 until the Manitoba convention in early January, there were many suggestions made by all three provincial executives that were forwarded to their sister associations for discussion. Mrs. McNaughton, who had considered the possibility of such a council since at least 1915, had definite ideas which she forwarded to the U.F.W.A. upon their request. She suggested:

1) That the Executive of each of the three Western Provinces appoint one member to an Interprovincial Committee.

2) That this Committee be instructed to prepare a Constitution and by-laws for the proposed Interprovincial Council. (N.B. Would suggest that as much as possible should be derived from the Constitution of the Canadian Council of Agriculture with the idea that our women's Council will ultimately become part of the C.C.A.)

3) That the convener of the Committee gather suggestions from the other members, and prepare a report to be submitted to the various Executives for approval before the first of the three Prairie Conventions.43

The U.F.W.A. Executive did not offer any further recommendations to those proposed by Mrs. McNaughton but did carry unanimously a resolution to endorse the council because "questions of national importance are continually arising in which the farm women of the different provinces should be able to speak with a united voice".44

The U.F.W.M. was not hesitant about immediately joining with the Council of Agriculture. It is possible that since


44. Minutes of the Board Meeting U.F.W.A., December 4-5, 1918.
the U.F.W.M. had only been meeting in separate session from the men since January 1918, members were still very enthusiastic or overly optimistic about what they thought they could accomplish as farm women. They may not have been as aware of the potential difficulties they faced as were the longer standing associations of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Whereas Mrs. Parlby and Mrs. McNaughton had urged a cautious approach designed to proceed when the time was right, the Manitoba women were eager to move ahead quickly and decisively. Apart from the suggestions regarding the number of representatives and the preparation of a constitution, the U.F.W.M. Executive made two further proposals:

1) That a Women's Section or a Women's Department of the C.C.A. be formed instead of an Interprovincial Council of Farm Women, meeting at the same time as the Canadian Council of Agriculture and discussing all questions in common at joint meetings of these two bodies.
2) That provision be made in the constitution for a woman representative from the Guide.45

The Manitoba Executive, who had the most frequent personal contact with Guide editors, in particular Miss McCallum, were the only ones to suggest that a representative from the Guide should sit on an interprovincial council. However, the Executives of the Alberta and Saskatchewan women's sections readily agreed. At first they may not have thought of including Miss McCallum

because they did not have as much contact with her as did the Manitoba women but they would have realized it could only be advantageous to have such an influential farm journal as the Guide working with and supporting the new association.

The Executive of the W.G.G.A. was the last of the three associations to hold its meeting. Consequently, it had the suggestions and resolutions of both the Alberta and Manitoba women to consider. After some deliberation, the Saskatchewan women decided that they preferred to take a more conservative approach and recommended the new association temporarily be called the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women because "we are scarcely ready for the term Women's Section Canadian Council of Agriculture yet, although that is, of course the ultimate objective". 46 The W.G.G.A. also advised that expenses be shared equally amongst the three associations as "it would not be advisable at present to ask the Canadian Council of Agriculture to pay representatives' expenses". 47

For the W.G.G.A., which had no independent financing of its own, financial matters were always of primary concern. Mrs. McNaughton had all along argued it was premature to seek direct affiliation with the C.C.A. until the women were better prepared; thus, it would be presumptuous of them to

46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
expect the C.C.A. to underwrite the organizational expenses of a women's council that was not yet requesting membership.

The favourable response of the prairie organized farm women to the formation of the interprovincial council was opportune as the Manitoba convention was rapidly approaching. Despite the different views the three organizations held about how to structure an interprovincial council, they unanimously agreed that proceedings could be initiated at the U.F.W.M. convention in Brandon, January 8-9, 1919. Representatives were selected and arrangements were made to work out the details of the proposed council. It was not until one week prior to the convention that Miss McCallum wired Mrs. McNaughton to ask if Ontario farm women should be invited to the meeting. She stated it had been an "oversight on [the] part of Miss Finch and myself", and wanted Mrs. McNaughton's opinion. This had not only been an oversight by the Manitoba women who were coordinating the meeting, but it was a blunder shared by all three prairie associations. Mrs. McNaughton had helped the Ontario farm women organize only six months prior and had recently suggested to Miss Spiller of the U.F.W.A. that she include the U.F.W.O. on her mailing list because "I think it is very wise to work directly with Ontario, in order that we may be

preparing to come into the C.C.A. when the time is right". However, the possibility of the U.F.W.O. joining the prairie women in discussions pertaining to questions of national importance hitherto had not been discussed.

It had not been a deliberate move to exclude the U.F.W.O.. All discussions pertaining to an interprovincial council had previously been confined to the prairie associations and western women. As Mrs. McNaughton had stated in 1915, "we are all women of the West and many of our problems are interprovincial". They did not see past the imaginary boundary that divided East and West. Apart from Mrs. McNaughton, few of the other women were personally familiar with the leadership of the U.F.W.O.. The Ontario farm women had only organized that summer and there had been almost no contact with the sister associations. Also, the U.F.O. owned its own farm journal, The Farmer's Sun, which printed the news and views of the U.F.O.; the Guide was not its official organ. Thus, there was not the same opportunity for the Guide's subscribers to read of the farmer's situation in Ontario, as was possible for the organized farm associations of the prairies which shared their news in weekly issues of the Guide.

In order for a women's section of the C.C.A. to be truly representative of its membership, it would have to

49. Letter to Miss Spiller from Mrs. McNaughton, October 9, 1918, (S.A.B., A1 - E78).
draw its mandate from the women's sections of all of the C.C.A.'s affiliated associations of Grain Growers and United Farmers. This included the U.F.A., the S.G.G.A., the U.F.M. and the U.F.O.; somewhere along the line, the Ontario women were going to have to be included as part of the proposed women's council.

Apparently the lines of demarcation were about to intersect. Three days after first realizing the oversight, Miss McCallum informed Mrs. McNaughton that a delegate from the U.F.W.O. would be in attendance at the U.F.W.M. convention to discuss a national council of farm women.50

Five delegates met in Brandon and created "a national organization of women along the lines of the United Farmers and Grain Growers' movements".51 The representatives were:

Mrs. George Brodie; president United Farm Women of Ontario; (Newmarket)52

Mrs. J.S. Wood; president Manitoba Grain Growers' Association; (Oakville)53


51. The Regina Leader, January 10, 1919, p. 3.

52. Mrs. Brodie was a fourth-generation Canadian. In 1893, she married George Brodie, a York County farmer, who raised Clydesdale horses and Shetland ponies. "Mrs. Brodie believes in education through organization, and since her family is grown, she is devoting her time to the organization of the farm men and women of Ontario." G.G.G., April 9, 1919, p. 8.

53. Mrs. Wood was born in Scotland; her family immigrated first to Ontario and later relocated to Elkhorn, Manitoba, where she met and married J. Smith Wood in 1887.
Mrs. J.F. Ross; vice-president United Farm Women of Alberta; (Duhamel)54

Mrs. John McNaughton; honorary secretary Women's Section Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association; (Harris)55

Miss Mary McCallum; associate editor, Grain Growers' Guide; (Winnipeg)56

If each delegate had come with a separate agenda which she hoped to pursue, it is not apparent from the minutes. Discussion was directed by Mrs. McNaughton who was elected chairman "pro tempore" as she did not officially hold an executive position in any of the associations. The first motion was introduced by Mrs. Wood, that an Interprovincial Council of Farm Women be formed. This indicates a change in position from that recommended by the U.F.W.M. Executive in December. Originally it was the Manitoba women who wanted to affiliate immediately with the Canadian Council of

Mr. Wood had been a principal in Kingston before becoming a farmer. The Woods had four children. "Mrs. Wood has the distinction of having organized the first Women's Section in Manitoba and has been, since the organization of the Grain Growers in Manitoba, one of its staunchest supporters." Ibid., p. 8.

54. There is no biographical information available for Mrs. Ross.

55. Mrs. McNaughton was married in 1910 to a Scottish immigrant who had a farm near her brother. They had no children. G.G.G., April 9, 1919, p. 8.

56. Miss McCallum was raised on a Manitoba farm. She taught in rural schools in Manitoba and then in Saskatoon. In 1917 she became women's editor for the Regina Post, a position she held for six months before taking the job as women's editor for the Grain Growers' Guide. Interview with Mary Sutherland (nee McCallum) by Una MacLean.
Agriculture. The W.G.G.A. suggested a more conservative approach. This compromise allowed the meeting to proceed without any initial bickering or dissention. It is possible that Miss McCallum, who had almost constant contact with the U.F.W.M., had convinced the Executive to heed Mrs. McNaughton's advice; Miss McCallum had great respect for Mrs. McNaughton's opinion and frequently solicited her counsel. For example, she wrote to Mrs. McNaughton, "I was so glad to get your instructive letter [regarding interprovincial council suggestions]."

A constitution was drafted and a number of recommendations were carried. They agreed the new association should temporarily be called the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women (I.C.F.W.) until the necessary arrangements could be made to activate a Women's Section having full membership in the Canadian Council of Agriculture. In summarizing the reasons for the council, delegates agreed "the interests and work of the organized farm women are now nation wide, and steadily growing in national importance" and that "that the closest possible affiliation with the farmers' national organization, the Canadian Council of Agriculture, is in the best interests of the whole farmers' movement and the nation of which we form

58. See Appendix II.
a part ...". 59

Before the women could proceed, a proposal would first have to be made directly to the C.C.A. But, the women had already taken the initiative on their own to set up the framework for a Women's Section and had demonstrated they meant business. A motion was passed to send a copy of the recommendations to the C.C.A. along with a letter of explanation. Then, they would request permission for an I.C.F.W. delegate to address the recommendation before the Council. Not for a moment did they expect to be turned down by the Council of Agriculture. The C.C.A. had already expressed its intention of widening its mandate to include more than just farm men. The I.C.F.W. expected to be part of the expanded membership.

The women chosen to hold office reflect the committee's deference to experience. Mrs. McNaughton was elected president and Mrs. Parlby was elected vice-president. This is particularly interesting because Mrs. Parlby was not even in attendance. She did, however, have a national reputation and was involved not only in the United Farmer's movement, but was also a representative on other committees and boards. 60 Her well established connections could prove to be


60. Mrs. Parlby was on the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta and a member of the committee to draft the Municipal Hospitals Act. Cormack, Perennials and Politics, pp. 67-68.
valuable to the newly formed council. Also, these were two women who were well known to the organized farmers. They were accomplished advocates of women's rights and of the interests of the farming community in general. Also elected were Miss Finch as secretary and Miss McCallum as an executive member.

The I.C.F.W. members structured their council so that it would be compatible with that of the Council of Agriculture. Its purposes were "to further the objects of the C.C.A.; to popularize the study of social and economic problems; to deal with federal and interprovincial matters specially concerning women and children".61 The I.C.F.W. would support the New National Policy and all other aims and directives of the C.C.A.. It would, however, "have full autonomy for the conduct of such business as shall particularly concern women and children".62 When it affiliated with the C.C.A., it would be with full membership, equal to that of the other member organizations.

The initial step was taken; the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women had been established and was purported to be a viable and effective voice for the organized farm women of the Council of Agriculture affiliates. After a campaign almost completely devoid of assistance from the C.C.A., the leaders of the Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario

Women's Sections seized the opportunity to give their members a forum for national expression. They would affiliate with the C.C.A. which was the most influential national farmer's organization and the same council with which their men were involved.

The I.C.F.W. was a logical extension of the local and provincial associations and provided a "splendid opportunity for the farm women of the Dominion to serve their country as citizens". Although the I.C.F.W. did not fully represent all Canadian farm women, legitimately it was the voice of the organized women of the United Farmers and Grain Growers' movements. And, as this new national council of organized farm women prepared for its first meeting to be held to coincide with the meeting of the Council of Agriculture in April 1919, there was reason to be excited and optimistic for the future of the farm women's movement. The C.C.A. had only given the women the slightest nod of encouragement, yet it was enough to motivate the women to pursue their dream of a national farm women's council, and make it a reality.

CHAPTER III MEMBERS AND LEADERS

It has been a particularly trying year for farm women to attend to public work. The disheartening crop conditions in many parts of the West, shortage of help indoors and out, and in thousands of cases inability to pay for help if available. Women physically overstrained and desperately worried are not inclined to exert themselves in a public way unless they feel the necessity of the occasion.

Mrs. McNaughton, apx.1920

One of the major difficulties facing the executives of the provincial farm women's organizations was how to maintain an effective association and keep members interested. As Mrs. McNaughton pointed out, the demands placed on a woman in the rural community could be extreme as she desperately endeavoured to meet the needs of the family and struggled with the upkeep of the home. Usually the farm woman was responsible for the dairy and poultry. She also helped to subsidize the family income by taking in laundry, or serving as a babysitter or seamstress. If that was not enough, often she was required to complete chores that took her out of the traditional feminine sphere. There was occasion when the woman was expected to help in the fields or tend to her husband's chores while he was away on other

1. Excerpt from the circular "Women and the New Political Group", (S.A.B., A1 - E11(2)). No date but was likely written in early 1920 as she discussed the building up of the New Political Group, the Progressives.

2. Sundberg, "Farm Women on the Canadian Prairie Frontier", p. 95.
business. In essence, she was to maintain the household, raise the children, provide for the cultural development of the family and assume whatever responsibilities were necessary for the survival of her family. In an urban setting the conventional roles of mother and homemaker were difficult enough; in the rural environment they were next to impossible. It is no wonder women had little or no time to participate in outside activities such as those offered by the organized farm women. Many were far too busy.

There were, however, women who made the effort or were able to find time to participate in the women's affiliates of the United Farmers and Grain Growers' associations. Perhaps it was as Mrs. McNaughton concluded, they "felt the necessity of the occasion". But who would think participation was necessary and who would recognize and act on these occasions?

Veronica Strong-Boag suggests that women "barred from the inner circles of power in their society and lacking any strong tradition of looking to public politics for a resolution to their dilemmas ... carried on a discourse independent of the public world of male politics". The women who joined the organized farmers' associations sought not only a medium within which they could express their

political concerns; they also wanted, as Miss Cora Hind said, a common forum with their men where "the emphasis on sex was less". However, they experienced many difficulties when they tried to join the same organizations as their men. Comradeship was indeed to what they aspired, but their men were less than eager to accept the women as equals. The Guide, as the official organ of the farmers' associations, frequently commended the men for their benevolence and foresight in asking the women to join with them; however, it was the women themselves who more often than not organized their own locals and then campaigned for full membership in the central organization. The male membership generally was more interested in the electoral strength of the farm vote and when the women would be enfranchised. Equality was only found in the rhetoric of public pronouncements.

By 1919, women had only recently begun to participate in the political realm and consequently had little background or experience working within the established public political structures. They had not run for office, held seats in government or even voted until 1916. As Strong-Boag notes, they instead were "taught to find solutions in personal ways". Women set up private networks, systems for mutual aid and support, and long had relied on these for their own resources. These networks often originated within the family structure but frequently were

4. Ibid.
extended into the work place or into such organizational structures as those of the farm women's associations. The problem with setting up organizations separate from their men was that although it was wonderful to share kinship with their sisters, this was not enough for the women who joined the Grain Growers and United Farmers. They wanted to be a part of the national farming community, to share in the accordant responsibilities and work towards a better deal for the entire farm family. They were "inclined to exert themselves in a public way" because they "felt the necessity of the occasion".

Strong-Boag suggests that "prairie activists were highly sensitive to the particular situation of their sex" but also were "loyal" to the organized farmers. Their mistrust of such eastern and urban groups as the National Council of Women, and their disdain for the non-political rural women who belonged to the Homemakers' Clubs, brought them together under the auspices of the Grain Growers and United Farmers' associations.

Since these women were apparently "highly sensitive to the particular situation of their sex", does this necessarily mean they were feminists? In some respects they were feminists because they recognized the inequalities of


the gender-based divisions seemingly inherent in Canadian society. This is one of the reasons women originally united to campaign for female suffrage. But this feminism was not the same as that which emerged in North American society in the early 1960s. The definition of feminism as "a struggle to end sexist oppression"\(^7\) does not describe the feminism of the early twentieth century. Farm women would have agreed that feminism should not "privilege women over men"\(^8\) but they would not have perceived their role as one to "end sexist oppression". They did not challenge the basic tenets of society that the woman was primarily responsible for the home and family. They wanted to participate in the public realm but not at the expense of their family. They wanted to further the objects of their provincial associations and the Council of Agriculture, but they also wanted to promote family life. George Chipman, editor of the Guide, outlined the popular opinion of the farm woman's place in rural society in his column January 1921:

In a sense there is no such thing as a 'woman's sphere' any more than there is a 'man's sphere'; human relationships of all kinds affect both men and women and therefore the domain of both. In another sense however, it may truthfully be said that woman is the homemaker and where the home exists it is the primary duty of the man, as the provider, and woman as the manager, to

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\(^7\) Bell Hooks, "Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression", in Anne Phillips (ed.), Feminism and Equality, p. 71.

\(^8\) Ibid., p. 71.
make it the abiding place of all the virtues, material as well as spiritual.  

The feminism of the organized farm women recognized the inequalities of the tariff and freight rates as well as inequality between the sexes. They were, in part, maternal feminists, who believed their "special role as mother [gave them] the duty and the right to participate in the public sphere" but they also demanded recognition of the tangible contributions made by women to the home, the family, the farm and the rural community. The reality of a farm woman's life was that her responsibilities frequently lay outside of the traditional feminine sphere and as such she was more a participant than a spectator. Doing 'men's work' did not challenge the conventional female role because it was usually necessary to the survival of the farm and family. A farm woman assumed that the problems associated with the farm were as much her problems as those of her men. As a family unit, the woman and man were inextricably tied to one another.

Unfortunately for the members of the provincial and national farm women's councils, their men did not always agree that a woman's contribution entitled her to status

equal to that of a man. Separate women's sections usually meant the women were relegated to a position inferior to that of the central association. And, try as they might, the presence of female affiliates was not always recognized. As Miss Griesbach of the U.F.W.O. said in 1919, she was not "satisfied with the status of the U.F.W.O. ... and the only point in favour of having two organizations is that the women have their own organization in their hands and [if they] are forced to sink or swim they will make a greater effort." Miss Griesbach considered that the women could discuss their gender-related issues in separate meetings and "find solutions in personal ways" while developing leadership skills for when they joined with the men. However, when the women did assemble with the central association, their business was not given much priority. In reading the minutes from the C.C.A. meetings, for example, it is evident the women would meet separately, then join the men and briefly present a report on what the women's section had discussed. This was only a small portion of the Council's agenda which could last three or four days. Women sat on C.C.A. committees but never assumed prominent positions. Miss McCallum was appointed assistant secretary of the Council of Agriculture in 1921 and sat on publicity and banking committees, yet for all of her hard work, her

contributions appeared overshadowed by dominant male members. Despite the shortcomings of belonging to or affiliating with the organized farmers, women continued to express the desire to be part of a strong and united national farmer's lobby. By joining one of the four provincial associations of organized farmers, women also became members of the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women. The women's sections of the Canadian Council of Agriculture affiliates united to form the I.C.F.W. because they had decided to participate actively in the national farming community. They recognized that although they did not live completely similar lives, their situations were much alike and many of their problems were interprovincial. Representatives to the national organization were chosen from the executives of the originating bodies; thus, the I.C.F.W. had only a few members but indirectly represented many thousands of farm women.

The leadership of the Council of Farm Women was composed of the most dedicated members of the provincial executives. As leaders in their provinces they already spent many long hours organizing and promoting the Grain Growers and United Farmers and demonstrated their commitment to the objectives and goals of their associations. Often provincial leaders were required to travel throughout their province visiting locals and recruiting new members. They were expected to provide guidance and set an example for the
membership. Involvement in the I.C.F.W. required even more dedication to business and inevitably led to more time spent away from the family and farm. Those who took on the obligations connected with interprovincial work were required to attend meetings of the I.C.F.W. and C.C.A., attend to any business which arose from committee work, and sit on the requisite federal or provincial boards and panels where the interests of farm women were to be represented. Travel to conventions, meetings and conferences took these women away from their homes for extended periods of time. Clearly, there were only a small number of women who were capable of assuming the rigours of leadership or who had the resources, physical or monetary, to make such a complete commitment to the organized farmers. Even those women who were committed to their work in the organized farmers found the harsh realities of farming could curtail their activities. In 1919 Mrs. McNaughton explained to the president of the S.G.G.A. that "we have had an almost total crop failure I think. Even rain would not help much except for feed, now. This means that for a year I shall be tied at home more than I have in the past".  

The women who initiated the I.C.F.W. are excellent examples of the enthusiastic and dedicated women who devoted so much of their own lives to furthering the interests of

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the organized farmers and the rural community. Mrs. Violet McNaughton, president of the I.C.F.W. and past president of the W.G.G.A., was convinced that women needed to "educate themselves along the social and economic lines so necessary in the development of the citizenship [they] worked so hard to attain". Mrs. McNaughton was active in Grain Growers work since 1912, directed the suffrage campaign in Saskatchewan, helped to organize the women's sections of the United Farmers and Grain Growers in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, served on the executive of the W.G.G.A. and the I.C.F.W., and was the delegate of farm women at many national conferences. She attended National Council of Women meetings, was one of only sixty women invited to meet with the federal war cabinet in 1918 to report on women's position on reconstruction, was appointed Chairman of the Canadian Council on Women Immigration for Household Service in 1919, addressed the Tariff Commission in 1920, was a delegate of the C.C.A. committee which made a presentation before the Agricultural Committee of the House of Commons in 1923, and represented the W.G.G.A. and the I.C.F.W. at the 1923 National Conference on Education. Mrs. McNaughton travelled extensively, gave many speeches and addresses, and campaigned vigourously to promote and further the objects of the Council of Agriculture and the Women's

Mrs. McNaughton was by no means the typical farm woman as frequently she was able to leave her domestic responsibilities to attend to her other business. Her husband John, also active in the Grain Growers, was supportive of her involvement. This is important because if he had not approved of her activities or had restricted the amount of time she was able to be away from the farm, it is likely she would have assumed far less responsibility than she did and her influence would have been lessened -- much to the detriment of the farm women's movement. It is also significant that the McNaughtons had no children. This allowed Mrs. McNaughton more "free" time than women who tended to their offspring.

The strength of her marriage to a man who encouraged and shared her interests in the associations of organized farm women and men allowed Mrs. McNaughton to develop her leadership skills and participate in so many activities outside of her home. The love and affection they shared for one another is evident in their personal correspondence. For example, John would write to Violet when she was away on

15. A.J. McPhail of the S.G.G.A. worked closely with Mrs. McNaughton for a number of years when they served as directors of the S.G.G.A.. In his diary he recounts the many hours they spent in meetings, the frequent trips they made together and the number of times Mrs. McNaughton "spoke well". Harold A. Innis (ed.), The Diary of Alexander James McPhail, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1940), especially Chapters II and III.
business and tell her "not to be foolish about spending money, not spending it I mean, if you fancy anything just get it".16 He would typically close his letters with an expression of his love such as, "I can't send you my love for you have taken it with you".17

Violet McNaughton was often the linchpin that held together the fledgling I.C.F.W. or the W.G.G.A. when its membership declined. Without her determination and conviction, the organized farm women, particularly in Saskatchewan, would not have been so successful.18 Many other women were not as fortunate in their domestic situations and were not as able to take advantage of the relative freedom enjoyed by Mrs. McNaughton.

For many a farm woman the opportunity to take part in a meeting or social function depended upon whether she had completed her work at home or if her husband would permit her to attend. To assume a public or leadership role was quite another thing. Records which document the plight of

16. Letter from John McNaughton to Violet McNaughton, January 8, 1920, (S.A.B., A1 - A1 (Family Correspondence, John McNaughton 1911 - 1963)).

17. Ibid.

18. L.J. Wilson, "Educating the Saskatchewan Farmer: The Educational Work of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association", Saskatchewan History, Winter 1978. Wilson describes Mrs. McNaughton as a "tower of strength" and concludes that in 1925 when she became a journalist for The Western Producer and reduced her Grain Growers work, "the loss of her direct leadership was detrimental to the success of the women's association." p. 26.
women in the rural community consistently reiterate the point that numerous women had to work long hours in less than favorable conditions just to keep barely ahead of the next day's chores. However, these would not have been the women who were most involved in the organized farmers and certainly not those who dedicated so much energy to the duties of leadership. One needed time and resources to have the luxury of leaving family and home responsibilities, even for a short while. A supportive spouse and a family willing to share chores was definitely beneficial. And, if hiring domestic help was possible, so much the better.

Thus, those most likely to participate in Grain Growers' activities were not from the poorest farms nor did they live under the harshest conditions. Their families were likely to be slightly better off so help could be hired or were in a situation where older female children could assume some of the mother's responsibilities. Also, those women who were active in the organized farmers' associations were English-speaking, as all business was conducted in English


and written material was published in English.21

Other provincial leaders and founding members of the I.C.F.W. were also in a better position to assume office than many other rural women. The representatives on the I.C.F.W. were well educated: Mrs. McNaughton was educated in private schools in Britain, had done social work for two years in "big city slums", and taught for several years all prior to immigrating to Canada;22 Mrs. Parlby, of Alberta, was privately tutored by governesses hired by her parents while her family resided in England and India;23 Mrs. Wood, from Manitoba, completed a high school education in Ontario;24 Mrs. Brodie, of Ontario, also was educated in the Ontario public school system;25 Miss McCallum graduated from normal school in Winnipeg and taught school in Saskatoon prior to becoming a journalist;26 Miss Finch also "had a remarkably successful career as a public school teacher"27

21. The C.C.A. was the exception. In November 1919 a motion was passed that "a selection of the literature issued by the Canadian Council of Agriculture be published in non-English languages with the English text running side by side with the other text". Minutes C.C.A. November 11, 1919.


25. Ibid., p. 8.

26. Interview with Mary Sutherland (nee McCallum) by Una MacLean.

before becoming the secretary for the U.F.W.M. and the I.C.F.W.

All members of the I.C.F.W. were articulate and accomplished women who brought confidence and vitality to the women's sections of the organized farmers' associations. Not only did they see the necessity of the occasion, but they were able to seize the occasion and try to do something about it. Those who were married either had older families who had moved away from home or if the children were living with their parents, were able to assume some of the mother's responsibilities. The women who were not married or did not have a spouse, had moved from the farm to the city and worked out of their association's central office. Miss McCallum had been raised on a Manitoba farm but by 1918 was employed by the Grain Growers' Guide as editor of the women's page. She travelled frequently on Guide business and logged many miles in connection with I.C.F.W. and C.C.A. meetings and associated conferences and political activities. Because she was single, it was easy for Miss McCallum to leave home whenever necessary. However, in 1922 she married Dr. T.W. Sutherland of Shellbrook and resigned from her public responsibilities.28 The Council of

28. When asked how she had time to meet a man and get married, Miss McCallum admitted she knew Dr. Sutherland for ten or eleven years before they were married. "I knew him before he went to war and when he came back we renewed our acquaintance". Still, it was almost four years after the end of the war until they were married. Interview with Mary Sutherland (nee McCallum) by Una MacLean.
Agriculture passed a motion on receipt of her resignation which expressed "regret that her services [were] to be discontinued and pleasure at the thought of her advent into a new field of usefulness and happiness". She did not continue in her public work because as she later said, "I was just married and I started having children. I could not leave them".

Miss Finch of the U.F.W.M. was also prepared to give up her work to marry A.J. McPhail of the S.G.C.A.. In June 1923 she tendered her resignation with the directors of the I.C.F.W. and thanked them for "the opportunity for development which [they] gave [her]". Prior to her anticipated wedding, she accepted a teaching position, which, of course, allowed her to stay close to home and her fiance although she confessed to Mrs. McNaughton "teaching is pretty poor after a taste of public work". However, Miss Finch and A.J. McPhail never married and in 1925 she was asked to return to her position as secretary of the Women's Section C.C.A. and resume work for the U.F.W.M.. She

30. Ibid.
33. McPhail married Miss Marion Baird in 1927.
wrote to Mrs. McNaughton in early 1925:

It has all been so different from what I had counted on and though I realize it is better my fiance found he thought more of someone else before it was too late, yet after house plans it has been most difficult regaining enthusiasm and interest in secretarial work again.34

Mrs. Burbank, secretary of the W.G.G.A. who handled much of the I.C.F.W. correspondence for the Saskatchewan women had more in common with the single women than she shared with those who were married. She lived in Regina and had a son who resided in Minneapolis. Apparently she was deserted by her husband a number of years prior to coming to work for the W.G.G.A. because in 1924 she journeyed to the United States on holiday and "to clear up a mystery."35 For a number of years Mrs. Burbank had thought her husband might be dead as she "could think of no combination of circumstances which would have prevented him writing for such a long time".36 She hired an investigator who reported her husband had died in 1916 "in a city to which he had just gone, and as such cases occur every day in cities, no particular effort had been made to find his relatives".37

36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
She too wrote to Mrs. McNaughton, who was considered a friend and confidant of many of the women with whom she worked:

I found after all, that the certainty that I was above was more of a shock than I had expected but of course it will eventually be better for me to know just where I stand. At least that chapter of my life is definitely closed.38

Unlike Mrs. McNaughton, not all women had families or spouses who supported their involvement in outside activities. Mrs. Flatt, president of the W.G.G.A., had a violent and abusive husband who was angry at the length of time she was away. Captain Flatt, a doctor, served time in France during World War I. Upon his return, Mrs. Flatt found her "life with the doctor more intolerable than ever. He has come back more dogmatic and tyrannical and unreasonable than when he went away and that is saying a great deal God knows".39 Consequently, during the winter of 1919-1920, she worked in the Regina central office helping Mrs. Burbank with organizational work. Likely she was trying to escape her husband's "tyranny". However, in late February Captain Flatt came to the Regina office to convince his wife to return home. As Mrs. Burbank, who was working in the office at the time, later recalled, "they came to an understanding

38. Ibid.
--temporarily at least. Mrs. Flatt says he is so afraid of publicity that he is willing to promise anything, but she does not know [how long] that state of mind will last". Mrs. Flatt continued her duties as president; she felt "he had a proper scare and surely worried over it" and since had become "much tamer". She thought she had successfully made the point that he needed her and could not get along without her completely. It was a compromise, however, because as she confided to Mrs. McNaughton, "so long as he is not abusive and usually I can stand it and he now knows that. I intend to pursue my own course in life".

A bright and articulate leadership did not necessarily result in an effective organization. There also needed to be a membership willing to participate in discussion, take part in activities and fund raisers, become active in teaching members about political and economic issues and principles and generally ensure that the association met its objectives and goals. Recruiting new members was vital to keeping the organization from stagnating and to replace members who left the association, for whatever reason. In the early years of the I.C.F.W., membership was high in all provincial affiliates and continued to grow with the popularity of the


42. Ibid.
Progressives. In November 1919, Mrs. McNaughton estimated the I.C.F.W. represented twenty thousand women. Membership in the provincial women's associations, and correspondingly in the I.C.F.W. steadily increased in the early years of the movement. The U.F.W.A. reported 3063 members in 196 locals in 1919; 3926 members in 293 locals in 1920; 4536 members in 309 locals in 1921. The W.G.G.A., which frequently had problems getting locals to submit paperwork and thus was less certain on the exact number of members, reported in 1919 that membership had doubled in the past year; in 1920 the membership was estimated at 8,000, an increase of nearly 100% over the previous year; a steady increase was reported for 1921. The U.F.W.M. membership also grew during these years, in 1919 the secretary reported 695 members in 43 sections; in 1920 there were 1115 women in 100 locals; in 1921 she reported 1601 members. Membership in the U.F.W.O. was reported to be 2,000 in 70 clubs in 1919; by 1921 membership had peaked at 6000.

44. Fifteenth Annual Convention Program, Calgary January 16 - 19, 1923.
Women were continuously encouraged to study the farmer's political platform and become informed and conscientious voters. For farm women, the best place to do this was in the women's section of their provincial farm associations. However, apart from affiliation with the central body of their provincial association, not all farm women became involved in the political and economic issues in which the organized farmers were so deeply embroiled. It was inevitable that these issues would affect their lives in dramatic ways, but for some women, other issues were more suited to their interests. For example, the U.F.W.M. set out four special lines of work for 1919-1920 which included "the co-operation of young people in the association, better medical facilities for rural districts, making citizens of new Canadians, and the study of laws affecting women and children". These lines of work would opened the door for a broader range of members whose interests would cover a wide spectrum of positions.

It was vital to the women's sections to be continually seeking out and recruiting new members. After the suffrage campaign had been waged, and war work came to an end, the women's sections needed ideas and issues which would cause women to want to join the organized farmers. Tours by District Directors were arranged to seek out new members but unfortunately the publicity and advanced advertising of

meetings was sometimes neglected. In the Secretary's address to the 1919 U.F.W.A. convention, Miss Spiller reported the summer membership drive "was not perhaps as successful as it might have been due to the fact the arrangements were very hurriedly made and allowed very little time for advertising the meetings". Meetings were held in the local school house, the theatre, town hall or wherever space could be found. Mrs. John Mitchell of the W.G.G.A., District Director for the Neidpath area, sent out a circular in 1918 to the women in her district. It was addressed to "Dear Friends", outlined the achievements of the W.G.G.A., such as the Suffrage Campaign and fencing of school grounds, and concluded with a plea for new members:

The Work of the S.G.G.A. is for women, children and the Home. The greater the numbers, the more successful our efforts. Every farm woman in Saskatchewan should join our movement. Our objective for 1918 is 10,000 members in the Women's Section. We want your help to get your neighbours to join. Now is the golden opportunity.

On her summer recruiting tour of 1919, Mrs. Mitchell noted she had encountered "Socialists, Bolsheviks and Atheists". Interest did not seem as high as it had in previous years but she attributed it to "discouragement at

49. G.G.G., January 29, 1919, p. 44.
crop failure" and "insufficient advertising".52 Mrs. K. Clews also reported that her section had "fallen off" because "we have lost so many members through death or removal -- good old 'stand-bys' -- and the newer ones do not seem to take the same interest in the work as did the originators".53 Representatives from other locals wrote to the central asking for the opportunity to meet some of the leaders. Mrs. A.L. Hollis suggested to Mrs. McNaughton that "many of our women would appreciate an address from yourself; you must remember that the majority of us never get the opportunity to hear our leaders".54

There was also some religious animosity which prevented Catholic women from joining the W.G.G.A. Mrs. Emma Bielschonsky had been informed that "many of the Catholic priests are against the women taking any part in public life".55 She had been told when the priest announced the Grain Growers' meeting from the pulpit, "he told the men to go to the meeting and the women should go to the Sisters' in the mean time".56 Rather than try to convince the clergy

52. Ibid.
54. Letter to Mrs. McNaughton from Mrs. A.L. Hollis, Shaunavon, November 27, 1919.
55. Letter to Mrs. McNaughton from Mrs. Emma Bielschonsky, April 15, 1918.
56. Ibid.
that the W.G.G.A. was a necessary venture for all farm
women, Mrs. Bielschonsky thought it might be better just to
"bring the women to the meeting without the priests knowing
it". 57 She was also concerned about how to interest
"foreign" women in the association. In her opinion "the only
feasible way is to get the men to bring the wives". 58 But,
itt would be difficult for a so-called "foreign" 59 woman to
feel at home with the W.G.G.A. membership especially if she
did not speak English. Also, if the leadership of the
provincial associations and the I.C.F.W. were any reflection
of their members, they were all educated women, taught in
the finest British school tradition and raised in primarily
British-Canadian homes. Although most farm women shared many
of the hardships intrinsic to life on the Canadian farm
including overwork, isolation, and battles with nature,
their religion, education, language and heritage could be so
distinct that there were more differences than things they
might have in common with the organized farm women.
Obviously not all immigrant women fell into this category,
but it is likely that many simply did not have the time or
the inclination to join with a group of British - Canadian,
Protestant women with whom they could not communicate.

57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Foreign is defined as non-British or American,
hence also non-English speaking, immigrants.
The excitement and enthusiasm associated with the Farmer's Platform and the new political movement was often enough to bring rural people out to meetings of the organized farmers. The influenza epidemic abated and people were more able to get around; meetings and gatherings were no longer prohibited and communication amongst neighbours was done without trepidation. In the post-World War I years talk of reconstruction was prevalent and farmers wanted to ensure their needs would be met. They recognized the necessity of political action and co-operation of all the rural community if their voices were ever to carry any clout. Heavy losses had been sustained through crop failures and the farmers had carried an enormous burden during the war years with loss of manpower, soaring inflation and excessive tariff rates.60 It appeared that farm women and men were beginning to acknowledge what Mrs. McNaughton recognized as the "necessity of the situation".

CHAPTER IV ORGANIZATIONAL CHOICES

...we know today, as we have not known before, that every problem of the farmer is as equally a problem of the farm women. We came into the association to strengthen it and help build it up. We are a vital part of the locals throughout the country. We are as vital a part of the provincial organizations and we see each day the need opening out before us to be a part of the farmers' national organization, the Canadian Council of Agriculture.

Mrs. Janet Wood
January 1919

To become a vital part of the Canadian Council of Agriculture was, for the organized farm women, a logical extension of their local and provincial work. While the organized farm women sought a national forum for expression of their concerns as active participants in the rural community, the Council of Agriculture was concurrently reorganizing to broaden its appeal in an attempt to reach a wider audience. To the executives of the provincial women's sections a mutually beneficial relationship seemed imminent as they took immediate steps to bring together the organized farm women and men under the auspices of one strong and united national council. The timing appeared to be right for the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women and the Council of Agriculture to support one another.

Addressing matters which intersected the perceived

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spheres of responsibility\textsuperscript{2} of rural men and women were of the highest priority for the Women's Interprovincial Council. According to its statement of objectives, the primary function of the I.C.F.W. was to further the objects of the C.C.A.\textsuperscript{3} As Secretary Miss Finch pointed out in her first year-end report, the national council of farm women was "formed not with the idea of creating an organization of rural women separate from the organization of rural men but with the express intention of becoming an integral part of the farmers' national body, the C.C.A.".\textsuperscript{4} Members felt it was necessary for farm women and men to work together to further the interests of the farming community. As Mrs. Wood said, they came into the organization to strengthen it and build it up. Separately each represented only a portion of the farm population; together they had the potential to become one of the largest and most effective interest groups in Canada.

The I.C.F.W. was the voice of the organized women of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[2.] It was a commonly held belief that men and women "each naturally had a separate, but complementary and equally valuable, social place". Although this statement relates to mid-nineteenth century American feminism, it is also applicable to the Canadian experience which was similar, but did not emerge as an organized movement until the early twentieth century. Carole Pateman, "Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy", in Feminism and Equality, Anne Phillips (ed.), (New York: New York University Press, 1987), p. 112.
\item[3.] Minutes I.C.F.W. January 8-9, 1919.
\item[4.] Secretary's Report to the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women, 1920, (S.A.B., A1 - E10).
\end{footnotes}
the united farmers and grain growers' associations. And, although members hailed from four separate provinces, they shared many of the same difficulties and experiences. Their lifestyles were not identical, nor were their situations completely alike, but there were duties and responsibilities as the wife and mother of a rural family which were familiar to most farm women. They also shared common economic problems associated with farming and social issues that involved the rural community as a whole. Many of their problems, as Mrs. McNaughton had stated in 1915, were interprovincial and thus required redress by an interprovincial council with a mandate to represent the membership as a wholly united and cohesive body of farm women. These common concerns, experiences and issues brought the organized farm women together through a fellowship that transcended provincial boundaries.

If farm women had primarily related to one another simply because they were women there would have been no need to affiliate with a national council of men. Moreover, a farm women's national council would have been unnecessary if the provincial women's sections had remained as auxiliaries established only to fulfill the social functions of the central body. Instead, women could have joined the Women's Institutes or the National Council of Women (N.C.W.). If gender alone was the basis for the fellowship which developed amongst farm women, the Council of Agriculture
would not have appealed to them. A women's club focusing only on gender related issues of women would have had little in common with the C.C.A..

If the national organization of farm women was predominantly based on what they might share as women, why did they not join the National Council of Women (N.C.W.)? Formed in 1893 by Lady Ishbel Aberdeen, wife of the Governor General, the N.C.W. acted as an umbrella organization for local Councils of Women and affiliates from other women's clubs. Its mandate was to establish a "better place in the community" for women. The Canadian National Council was an affiliate of the International Council of Women, giving members not only a national forum but providing them with the opportunity to express their concerns on the international stage as well. The N.C.W. had locals active in Ontario and the western provinces at the time the I.C.F.W. was formed. Why, then, did the N.C.W. not appeal to farm women?

The National Council of Women was a middle class, Eastern-oriented, English-Canadian group who attempted to


6. For example locals were formed in Winnipeg 1894, Brandon 1895, Regina 1895, Saskatoon 1916, Swift Current 1918, Lethbridge 1914, Calgary 1912, Edmonton 1895, Ottawa 1894, Toronto 1893. Ibid., pp. 440 - 441.

appeal to the widest range of supporters. As one of the primary non-sectarian and non-political women's associations, it attracted a large number of women's clubs. By restricting its mandate to issues that were not overtly political, the N.C.W. hoped to rally support from the greatest number of supporters. Consequently, issues that received backing of most or all affiliates were those which united the women through a common denominator. For example, it was not until 1910 that the Council of Women endorsed female suffrage as the executive had previously deemed it to be too contentious. Although not all women's organizations supported the suffrage campaign, by the time the N.C.W. endorsed suffrage in 1910, it had taken on a "new respectability". The campaign for the female vote crossed class, religious and political lines to foster a co-operation between diverse groups of women, including farm women.

8. Bacchi, Liberation Deferred?, p. 31. Bacchi states that the suffrage campaign began to attract a wider audience as social reform and female suffrage became connected. She notes the new supporters of suffrage "were social reformers first and this made them staunch supporters of the traditional family" as opposed to the first generation of suffragists who "challenged the sexual division of labour". p. 24.

9. The Provincial Equal Franchise Board of Saskatchewan, the force behind the provincial suffrage campaign, was originated by members from the W.G.A., the Regina Local Council of Women, and the Equal Franchise Leagues of Yorkton, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw and Moosemin. (S.A.B., The Zoa Haight Collection, A5 - #5). After the provincial vote was attained for women, there was some suggestion that the P.E.F.B. carry on its work through the
The Council of Women accepted maternal feminism as the basic premise for its activism. The majority of the Council believed the "maternal instinct determined all 'normal' feminine behaviour and justified distinctive participation in the decisions of society". To this, the organized farm women had few objections as they too accepted the primary importance of the nurturing role of women and believed they had "the duty and the right to participate in the public sphere". When campaigning for female suffrage, farm women used many of the same arguments as the N.C.W. which promoted women as morally superior to men. For example, in Saskatchewan, the Provincial Equal Franchise Board (P.E.F.B.) published a circular which suggested that, "those who best observe the law should surely share in the selection of law makers", implying that women were the most law-abiding citizens.

Although the I.C.F.W. did not officially affiliate with the National Council of Women, some of its member

National Council of Women; however, it was unanimously decided to continue working as an independent board which was renamed the Citizen's Educational Board of Saskatchewan. (S.A.B., A1 - E18).


12. Excerpt from a circular, 'Reasons Why Women Should Be Enfranchised', (S.A.B., A1 - E18, no date but would have to have been written between February 1915, when the P.E.F.B. was formed, and March 1916, when the provincial franchise was extended to women in Saskatchewan.)
associations joined with their Provincial Councils of Women. The W.G.G.A. was affiliated from 1917 to 1921; the U.F.W.M. from 1918 to 1919; the U.F.W.A. from 1918 to 1919.¹³ The W.G.G.A. was particularly involved with the National Council of Women as they made sure the Saskatchewan farm women had a representative on most of the national committees. According to the Constitution of the National Council of Women, federated associations were entitled to a representative on each standing committee. The W.G.G.A. took full advantage of this placing one of their members on nineteen of twenty committees during 1919-1920.¹⁴

At the inaugural meeting of the I.C.F.W held in conjunction with the 1919 U.F.W.M. annual convention in Brandon, the Local Council of Women hosted a luncheon for the farm women's delegates.¹⁵ At that time relations between the farm women and the N.C.W. apparently were cordial. However, at the same time the national farm women's council was organized, the provincial associations began to withdraw from their respective Provincial Councils of Women. Strong-Boag notes that the Council of Women lost support of twelve western councils during the early 1920s and by 1922 there


15. Miss McCallum reported in her column that "it was a delightful informal luncheon, at which town and city women mingled and fraternized in a feeling of special good fellowship". G.G.G., January 22, 1919, p. 38.
were no affiliates representing rural or Western women.\textsuperscript{16} She suggests that by 1920 alternative public forums such as the associations of the organized farm women were ready to exploit the weaknesses of the N.C.W. In her opinion, the Council of Women "lost its way" in the 1920s and had "stagnated". \textsuperscript{17} It had "too long favoured a small group of Easterners and alienated other important sectors of the feminine community".\textsuperscript{18}

Mrs. Burbank of the W.G.G.A. attended the Council of Women annual meeting held in Calgary in 1921. In a letter to Mrs. McNaughton she noted the N.C.W. was just then beginning to discuss a "number of matters we (W.G.G.A.) have discussed and in some cases acted upon in our own organization".\textsuperscript{19} She added that she could have provided the N.C.W. with "information they (N.C.W.) did not have, but those Eastern women are so self-satisfied that it was not worthwhile".\textsuperscript{20} Besides, the organized farm women had already become actively involved in the political realm and had found a forum more appropriate than that of the National Council of Women.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 398.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{19} Letter to Mrs. McNaughton from Mrs. Burbank, June 19, 1921, (S.A.B., A1 - E92(5)).
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Ibid.}
The National Progressive Party, officially endorsed by the Canadian Council of Agriculture in January 1920,\(^{21}\) brought the farmers' movement into the political sphere and the organized farm women were eager to do their part. In the federal election of 1921, the women demonstrated they could be a "vital part of the national farmers' organization" as they campaigned vigorously for the Progressives, working in conjunction with their men on local and provincial committees and by participating in speaking tours. Sixty-five Progressives were elected. The women were elated with the victory and were especially proud of their contribution. Their enthusiasm and desire for continued opportunity to share in the responsibilities of the farmer's movement was expressed by Miss Finch in the Secretary's 1921 year-end report:

> With the political victory the Women's Section Canadian Council of Agriculture feel they have merged into closer and more vital relationship with the organization. Their work in the future will, without doubt, be that of greater oneness with the men.\(^{22}\)

Thus, by mid-1921 relations between the western farm women

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21. The minutes read: "Therefore be it resolved that we, the members of the C.C.A. ... do declare our intention of electing as many representatives as possible to the House of Commons at the next general election who will endeavour to bring the Farmers' Platform into effect." Minutes of the C.C.A., January 5, 1920.

and the largely eastern-based urban membership of the Council of Women were strained. A national woman's club involved only in non-political and non-sectarian issues had lost its appeal.

There were certain fundamental differences between the members of the organized farm women and the Council of Women. Strong-Boag points out that the N.C.W.'s association with the Canadian Reconstruction Association and the Canadian Manufacturing Association, both eastern-based organizations which supported protectionist policies, caused "rural feminists" to reject the N.C.W. 23 This alienation was clearly illustrated in 1920 with the vociferous reaction by Miss McCallum, associate editor of The Guide, to the May issue of the official organ of the N.C.W. Woman's Century. In a series of articles promoting high tariffs, Woman's Century contradicted the farmers' arguments in support of free trade. Miss McCallum, also an executive member of the national farm women's council, responded in her column with a vehemence that clearly demonstrates how polarized the Council of Women and farm women were on this issue. She attacked the pieces as "a storm directed against the Farmers' Party and the principles for which it stands". 24 She felt it was "unfortunate that Woman's Century [was] not better informed on the subjects it presume[d] to discuss,

but then if it [was] happy in prattling on in this half-baked fashion it [was] only Woman's Century's funeral.\textsuperscript{25} She went on to criticize in particular an article written by "so lurid an economist"\textsuperscript{26} which "packed into less than two columns more nonsense than Life can publish in a whole issue".\textsuperscript{27} Miss McCallum reiterated the farmers' views that Canadian manufacturers, by definition eastern, were exploiting consumers by pushing for protectionist policies. By employing the classic arguments against the tariff put forth by the Council of Agriculture, Miss McCallum discounted Woman's Century's arguments in favour of tariffs.\textsuperscript{28}

The organized farm women were not, however, adverse to considering the use of Woman's Century to promote their own ideas. Mrs. Hollis of the Saskatchewan Women's Grain Growers

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid. The author took the pseudonym 'Quadrich'.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} The New National Policy adopted by the C.C.A. in November 1918 stated the Protective Tariff was "by means of which the people of Canada -- both rural and urban -- have been shamefully exploited through the elimination of competition"; that agriculture was "unduly handicapped" because of increased costs of "practically everything the farmer has to buy"; and that "the Protective tariff has been the chief corrupting influence in our national life because the protected interests, in order to maintain their unjust privileges, have contributed lavishly to political and campaign funds, thus encouraging both political parties to look to them for support, thereby lowering the standard of public morality". Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada, Appendix C, "The Farmers' Platform", pp. 302-305.
wrote to Mrs. McNaughton in 1921 to suggest that a page in the Council of Women's magazine reporting W.G.G.A. activities and policies, and presumably likewise for the other provincial farm women's associations, would be beneficial. She thought Woman's Century was "too exclusive and Eastern", but since western women "must learn to think nationally", so too should Woman's Century. Mrs. Hollis felt that the official publication of the National Council of Women should reflect the interests of all affiliates, not just eastern associations. Although Mrs. Hollis did not "approve of its politics", she thought the paper was "a good idea and that [the W.G.G.A.] might make use of it". By that time, however, the provincial farm women's associations had already withdrawn from the National Council of Women and the I.C.F.W. did not affiliate. Consequently, there would be less chance that Woman's Century would publish submissions from the organized farm women.

The decision regarding membership in the Council of Women was left to the provincial associations. The Interprovincial Council of Farm Women never passed a motion in favour of federation with the Council of Women, although it did review N.C.W. policy. At the I.C.F.W. meetings April 1-5, 1919, the farm women's council discussed its

29. Letter to Mrs. McNaughton from Mrs. A.L. Hollis, April 12, 1921, (S.A.B., A1 - E92(5)).

30. Ibid.
relationship with the Council of Women. Mrs. R.F. McWilliams, president of the Winnipeg Local Council of Women, was invited to outline the minutes of the National Council meeting held in Brantford. It was then decided western farm women should attend the next annual meeting of the Council of Women since the meeting was to be held in Regina and expenses could likely be managed. The I.C.F.W. executive wanted the voices of farm women to be heard, thus, representatives were urged to attend the Regina meeting. At that time the three western women's associations were all federated with the N.C.W. through their provincial Councils of Women. Mrs. McNaughton suggested Miss McCallum could attend if the Manitoba delegates would give her one of their two votes. She was hopeful that as many of the I.C.F.W. executive members as possible would attend so they could make a stronger impression. However, finances were an impediment for the women of Alberta and Manitoba, who instead of attending the meeting, gave their proxies to Saskatchewan women. The result was of the six delegates, two from each provincial association, five were from Saskatchewan and one from Manitoba. The U.F.W.O. did not

31. Mrs. McNaughton wrote to Miss McCallum: "Why not get Manitoba to give you one of the two votes and come with Mrs. Wood." Letter to Miss McCallum from Mrs. McNaughton, April 26, 1919, (S.A.B., A1 - E10).

32. Mrs. Flatt and Mrs. Haight represented Saskatchewan; Mrs. McNaughton and Mrs. Frith held the Alberta proxies; Mrs. Burbank had the Manitoba proxy. The other delegate was Miss Finch of the U.F.W.M., who was also
send a delegate because they were not affiliated with the Council of Women and as Mrs. Brodie wrote to Mrs. McNaughton, "I don't think we will [affiliate] at present." According to the U.F.W.O., Ontario farm women needed to realize they were "part of an industrial class whose occupation was the most important in the nation". This was not a tenet with which the Council of Women would agree. Thus it would be difficult for the U.F.W.O. to affiliate with the N.C.W.

At the November I.C.F.W. meeting, affiliation with the National Council of Women was raised again. It was agreed that the matter be referred to the four provincial bodies, who in turn would decide whether they wanted provincial or interprovincial representation. At the next meeting of the I.C.F.W., discussion on the question of affiliation was "deferred until a later meeting". This was the last time the Farm Women's Council officially discussed membership in the National Council of Women, although in March 1923 the

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secretary of the I.C.F.W.


council "agreed that a copy of the resolutions, as passed by the National Council of Women at their annual meeting, be sent each Women's Section representative." This would presumably keep the farm women informed of the activities of other women's associations. Also, in March 1925, the Women's Section voted to send a representative to the Sixth Quinquennial conference of the International Council of Women to be held in Washington, May 4-14, 1925. They wanted a delegate to attend because forty different nations supporting international peace were to be in attendance. Thus, farm women wanted representation at this particular conference because of the peace issue and not because it was sponsored by the International Council of Women.

The relationship between the National Council of Women and the organized farm women had always been tenuous. Farm women wanted a national forum which would address their concerns as women, but more importantly, they wanted an opportunity to further the interests of the farming


38. Mrs. Amos, president of the Women's Section in 1925, was chosen to represent the C.C.A. at the conference. Minutes of the W.S.C.C.A., March 3-5, 1925.

39. The Women's Section passed a resolution in March 1923 which "declared themselves (the farmers' organizations) against the use of force in the settlement of disputes between nations" and "urge[d] upon the Government of Canada the desirability of making the League [of Nations] thoroughly representative of all nations". Minutes of the W.S.C.C.A., March 27-30, 1923.
community. They perceived themselves not only as women but as farm women which was, according to the principles of their provincial and interprovincial associations, what set them apart from their urban sisters. Accordingly, the National Council of Women had little to offer active participants of the rural community.

There were other clubs and associations that women could join, but these groups often were not specifically designed for rural or farm women. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.), which was active in the North-West Territories since 1886, was concerned mainly with prohibition. Although its membership grew and its interests were extended into the women's suffrage movement,40 the W.C.T.U. was not a farm women's organization. The purpose of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (I.O.D.E.), was "to encourage and promote imperialism".41 Farm women were cautious of the I.O.D.E. and suspicious of its motives.42 It


42. There are many references within the Violet McNaughton collection which indicate a wariness of the I.O.D.E.. For example: "She (Mrs. Dredge-Jones) is certainly very much interested in her work and gave me a very cordial invitation to her home - I will try not to forget she is an I.O.D.E.". Letter to Mrs. McNaughton from Mrs. Burbank, Secretary W.G.G.A., September 4, 1919, (S.A.B., A1 - E92-4).
was not a club within which many farm women were able to feel at home because of its "brand of imperialism -- its conservative approach to social reform". The Homemakers' Clubs, which were affiliated with the Federation of Women's Institutes, were popular with rural women and "did much to improve conditions in rural communities and to brighten the lives of rural women", but the Homemakers were "non-partisan and non-political".

The Homemakers' Clubs were organized prior to the formation of the women's sections of the grain growers' associations. The model for the Homemakers' Clubs was the Women's Institute of Ontario, established by Adelaide Hoodless in 1897. After Mrs. Hoodless' eighteen month-old son died because she did not know that milk needed to be pasteurized, she became an advocate for educational programs for women so they could learn "the duties of home life". In Ontario, the Department of Agriculture had "encouraged the formation of Farmers' Institutes ... so that farmers might learn the best methods of crop and stock

45. Ibid., p. 67.
production". Mrs. Hoodless approached the province for an educational scheme for farm women and the Women's Institute was organized in Stoney Creek in February 1897 with one hundred and ten women and girls. The Women's Institutes flourished but because they were sponsored by the provincial government, they were limited as to the political issues in which they could become involved.

Some Ontario farm women felt the Women's Institutes "stifled any sign of independent thought" and wanted a forum in which they could discuss any issues which they deemed to be of importance. There were also those women who were offended by the Women's Institutes "pro-war stance". Some women who were alienated by the Women's Institutes eventually formed the nucleus of the United Farm Women of Ontario. As Miss Griesbach of the Farmer's Sun reported, they had "absolutely no intention of starting a movement in opposition to the Women's Institute ... but rather

47. Ibid.
49. The Farmers' Sun, June 19, 1918.
50. Pauline Rankin, "The Politicization of Ontario Farm Women", in Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster (eds.), Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 316. Also see Margaret Kechnie, "The United Farm Women of Ontario: Developing a Political Consciousness", p. 276. Kechnie suggests the Women's Institute "had turned away from its ideal of home and country and had put the needs of a foreign war and the demands of an industrial population before the needs of the farm community".
[intended] to persuade the U.F.O. ... to put [farm women] on an equal footing with the men." 51 However, the Women's Institutes remained popular and some women retained their memberships in both the Women's Institute and the U.F.W.O.. One featured home and domestic responsibilities, the other had a broader mandate which included political expression.

In 1909 the Alberta Women's Institute, originally known as the Homemakers' Club, was formed and modelled after the Women's Institute in Ontario. It was only five years later that the Auxiliary of the United Farmers of Alberta was created. Many Alberta farm women preferred to join the U.F.A. Auxiliary because a women's club with no connection to their husband's farm organization did not meet their needs. They wanted to be a "vital part of the organization". The U.F.A. published a pamphlet which outlined the reasons why farm women should belong to the U.F.W.A. and presumably not some other organization. The concluding argument states:

Because whatever may be said to the contrary, and however specious the language in which it may be said, it is a fact patent to all clear and unprejudiced thinkers, that no other organization can accomplish for the farm women the final benefits that can be obtained by working as part of the great body of mobilized farm people. 52

Thus, farm women who were interested in more than just

51. The Farmer's Sun, June 19, 1918.

home and country, the ideal of the Women's Institutes, were encouraged to join with their husbands to "increase power with which to fight the farmers' battles". The situation was the same in Manitoba where the Home Economics Societies were started in 1910 and in Saskatchewan where the Homemakers' Clubs were originated in 1911.

The Women's Institutes were most successful in Saskatchewan because of support provided by the University. The Homemakers' Clubs grew when university support was given and declined when support was withdrawn. The Director of the Extension Division of the University, Hedley Auld, asked Miss Lillian Beynon to help him organize the Clubs for rural women. Although the Saskatchewan Clubs were modelled after the Women's Institutes of Ontario, "there was a resistance to adopting the same name, possibly because of Saskatchewan's anti-central Canada sentiment and independent

53. Ibid., p. 5.
54. In 1919 the name was changed to Women's Institutes.
56. Miss Lillian Beynon was the elder sister of Miss Francis Beynon of the Grain Growers' Guide who was active in organizing the women grain growers in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Miss Lillian was a writer for the Winnipeg Free Press and a well known activist for women's issues. She also had experience with the Women's Institutes in Manitoba and Ontario.
spirit". The Homemakers' Clubs were designed to provide homemaker training to women in rural Saskatchewan through the Extension Division of the College of Agriculture. However, because the Clubs were subsidized by the University, they were unable to become involved in political issues. The Homemakers' did not participate in the suffrage campaign because Miss Abigail DeLury, who was responsible for the Clubs, "was sensitive to the University's concern that controversial issues be avoided". Consequently, until the Women's Section Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association was formed in 1914, the farm women of Saskatchewan found themselves without a political forum.

As was the case with the National Council of Women, the Women's Institutes were part of a national association. In 1919 an interprovincial conference of Women's Institutes and Homemakers' Clubs was held in Winnipeg. The delegates decided to organize the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada which would provide their members with a non-partisan and non-sectarian national association. The timing of this conference is important as it was also in 1919 that the organized farm women of the united farmers and grain growers' associations met in Winnipeg to form their own Interprovincial Council which they expected would lead to national representation on the national farmers council.

58. Ibid., p. 57.
Thus, it appears in 1919 farm women were becoming more organized and were seeking association with their sisters, whether it was politically motivated or not.

Relations between the Women's Institutes and the members of the grain growers' associations is exemplified through an examination of the Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs and the W.G.G.A.. The two organizations of farm women in Saskatchewan shared common ground and on occasion worked together. Both were federated with the Provincial Council of Women -- the W.G.G.A. from 1917 to 1921 and the Homemakers' from 1918 to 1920. Miss McCallum, an avid supporter of the grain growers and an executive member of the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women, addressed the Homemakers' Convention of 1918 and Mrs. McNaughton was asked to speak at the Convention in 1919. Although this might indicate there were periods when the two groups co-operated, there were more issues which divided the women than brought them together. The W.G.G.A. was not especially troubled by the University's support of the Homemakers' ; it was that the University appeared to favour the Homemakers' when it came to accessibility to services and programs offered by the

59. The Saskatchewan example is employed because of the wealth of documentation available at the University of Saskatchewan on both the Homemakers' Clubs and the W.G.G.A..

60. Miss McCallum's address was titled "How the Press Can Help Women's Club Work"; Mrs. McNaughton spoke about "Domestic Help on the Farm". (University of Saskatchewan Archives, Extension Division, Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, A.3i Programs 1917-1971).
University that were to be available to all Saskatchewan women. During Mrs. S.V. Haight's tenure as President of the W.G.G.A. 1918 to 1920, she "successfully fought to receive the extension services for her organization already provided by the University of Saskatchewan to the Homemakers' Clubs of the province". In the Ninth Annual Report of the Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs Miss DeLury wrote, almost apologetically, that:

... our share in the Extension work of the University is designated the Department of Women's Work and therefore includes help for any woman's organization. At the same time, keeping the Homemakers' Clubs as an integral part of the University, our work in this respect is broadening and has this year included a good deal of work for the W.G.G.A. and a number of other organizations.

In January 1920 The Grain Growers' Guide inserted on the woman's page an editorial by Mrs. M.L. Burbank, secretary of the W.G.G.A., in which she explained why the Women Grain Growers were more effective than the Homemakers' Clubs. Based on a newspaper report she had read of the Federation of Women's Institutes annual meeting, Mrs. Burbank criticized the Institutes for their non-political stance. "Any organization which allows 'nothing political'  

61. L.J. Wilson, "Educating the Saskatchewan Farmer", p. 27.
to be discussed cannot fully meet the need at this critical time," she wrote. Mrs. Burbank noted that the Homemakers' had promoted community feeling but went on to say that was no longer enough. She felt the time had come when a greater awareness of the issues which affected the farm community was needed because "women have outgrown Institutes and Homemakers' Clubs, just as the more progressive men have outgrown machine politics." Her concluding statement emphatically promoted the women grain growers:

But while affording rural women opportunity for development along economic lines, the W.G.G.A. does not neglect the very necessary community work, and with the co-operation of the G.G.A. is in a position to make that work most effective.

Elizabeth Bailey Price, publicity secretary of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, responded almost four months later with a letter printed in the Guide. She "deplored ... any attempt to arouse antagonism between the two organizations" and criticized Mrs. Burbank for "forming one's opinions from newspaper reports". Mrs. Price claimed that the newspaper report was wrong and should have read, non-sectarian and non-partisan, rather than non-political.

64. Ibid., p. 67.
65. Ibid.
She countered Mrs. Burbank's statement that women had outgrown the Homemakers' by citing a total national membership of one hundred thousand women and girls.⁶⁷ In Mrs. Price's opinion, there was "no future for any philanthropic organization whose aims are of a partisan nature," ⁶⁸ thus, castigating the W.G.G.A. for its political activities.

Inadvertantly, in trying to defend the Women's Institute, Mrs. Price had defined the primary difference between the two organizations. If the Women's Institutes were "philanthropic", the W.G.G.A. was not. Although the organized farm women were deeply involved in reform work and charity work and had wholeheartedly participated in women's war work, they did not perceive their association as "philanthropic". Mrs. Price had mistakenly assessed the two groups as "one devoting itself to social, educational and philanthropic work, the other resolving itself into a political party with the same ultimate end".⁶⁹ She did not understand that the function of the women of the organized farmers and grain growers' associations was not only to improve domestic conditions in the farm home, but rather to strive for a better deal for the farm family. This necessarily included studying social and economic problems,

⁶⁷. Ibid., p. 44.
⁶⁸. Ibid.
⁶⁹. Ibid.
because as Mrs. Wood had said in her address to the U.F.W.M. convention of 1919, "every problem of the farmer is as equally a problem of the farm woman".70

Thus, there were specific reasons why the organized farm women joined the same associations as their men. These women sought a comradeship with their fellow rural constituents. They wanted to share in the responsibilities and burdens inherent to farming. As citizens they wanted to exercise their franchise in a meaningful and informed fashion. As farm women they needed to understand the issues central to their lives -- tariffs, railroad policies, inequities of the east-west dichotomy. Homemaker training, although useful and often necessary,71 was only a small part of the reality that was being a farm women.

The associates of the four farm women's organizations which joined to form the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women did not relate to one another simply because they were women or they would have been happy to be involved in the National Council of Women. Also, it was not only the shared experiences of living in a rural community that brought them together or they could have become members of the Women's


71. For example, in her memoirs Kathleen Strange, a British woman who immigrated to Alberta in 1920, recalled how inept she felt at first; "How vividly I recall my first day on the farm, and the almost overwhelming realization it brought me of my total lack of knowledge of the kind of life that lay ahead of me". With the West in Her Eyes, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1945), p. 29.
Institutes. Both the Council of Women and the Women's Institutes could offer national and international federation to affiliates. Yet neither of these influential women's groups attracted the women who joined with the organized farmers. These women wanted to strengthen the farm voice and share in the accompanying responsibilities. It was a logical extension of their work at both the local and provincial levels. Once it became apparent that their problems were interprovincial, they followed the pattern that had been established when the provincial women's associations were formed and initiated a council to seek affiliation with the same national association as their men, the Canadian Council of Agriculture.
CHAPTER V  COLLAPSE OF THE WOMEN'S SECTION

The strength of an organization is not gauged primarily by mere numbers, but is indicated by the spirit, the activities, the vision of its membership. Viewed in this light, our organization has made enduring progress.

Mrs. R.B. Gunn
January, 1925

By 1919 the Canadian Council of Agriculture had only given the slightest nod of encouragement towards forming a women's section of the C.C.A. but it was enough to motivate the executives of the four provincial farm women's associations to take the initiative to form the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women. Originally an independent body, the I.C.F.W.'s purpose was to co-ordinate eventual affiliation with the farmer's national council, the C.C.A.. The organized farm women wanted to become active in the same national council as their central associations because they believed farm women and men shared many of the same concerns. Affiliation with the C.C.A. would assure farm women a voice in the most influential council of Canadian farmers. Membership in the C.C.A. also would mean women would not only take an active role in the discussions and participate in C.C.A. committee work but they would also have the opportunity to lobby for recognition of "matters especially concerning women and children" which the council

might otherwise have overlooked.³

Although the constitutions of the provincial associations supposedly provided women and men with the same membership privileges, hitherto no female representatives had sat on the Council of Agriculture. In 1918 the Council decided to expand its mandate and broaden its appeal. This coincided with the desire of the leaders of the farm women's associations to organize along interprovincial lines. Accordingly, the C.C.A. was more willing at that particular time to listen to overtures from the organized farm women. After the initial decision was made to pursue national organization and "further the objects of the C.C.A."⁴ the executive of the newly formed Interprovincial Council of Farm Women carried a motion to have a woman's delegate address the Council of Agriculture on their recommendations.

The I.C.F.W. commenced business almost immediately following the January meeting. A resolution passed at the U.F.W.M. convention which endorsed the program of the Dominion Prohibition Committee⁵ was promptly dispatched by

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3. Miss McCallum encouraged women to study the Farmers' Platform and not to spend too much time on "those things that concern women and children more or less to the exclusion of the men although it is true that women are doing important things that it never occurred to the men to do". G.G.G., March 19, 1919, p. 49.


5. The resolution read: 1) That the Dominion Parliament at its next session pass a law continuing in effect the provisions of the present Order-in-Council. 2) That this legislation remain in effect until a vote of the people of
Secretary Miss Finch to the other I.C.F.W. affiliates for their approval. By February 5 she had received the replies which indicated a consensus on the subject. She then immediately forwarded a copy to the Council of Agriculture "to take action if they (the C.C.A.) see fit". This was the first official transaction between the I.C.F.W. and the Council of Agriculture.

There was a sense of urgency in the correspondence between Interprovincial Council members which demonstrated their eagerness to begin work. Mrs. McNaughton, President, asked Miss Finch to find out from each member which area was her "pet subject" so each one could specialize in some line of national work. Mrs. McNaughton chose immigration; Mrs. Parlby decided upon public health; Mrs. Wood wanted to study social service -- which included the criminal code, mother's pensions, prohibition and the mentally deficient; Mrs Brodie originally chose young people's work but was asked to report on marketing instead because she was "so near the market

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Canada is taken on the question of making it permanent. 3) That the decision as to when such a vote shall be taken be left with the Dominion Government, it being specified, however, that it shall not be taken until the soldiers of Canada are in a position to cast their vote with other citizens.


problem"⁸; Miss McCallum chose "to get all possible information on Dower and related property laws and prepare it into readable form for distribution"⁹ -- her position as associate editor for the Guide gave her the best access to publishing resources; Miss Finch became the convener of young people's work. At the April meeting it was decided Miss McCallum should also be responsible for any publicity work, again because she was able to insure the Guide would promote I.C.F.W. activities and she could address the council's work on her many scheduled speaking engagements.

In mid-March Miss McCallum sent a telegram to Mrs. McNaughton suggesting the I.C.F.W. attend the Council of Agriculture meeting in Winnipeg, April 1. She had discussed the agenda of the meeting with Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Lambert, members of the Council. The "political question [was] to be the big topic discussed"¹⁰ and both men agreed the women should be present. Although they could not promise any financial compensation for the female delegates, they assured Miss McCallum the meeting could be financed somehow. They promised joint sessions with the two councils because, as Miss McCallum enthusiastically reported, "they agree with

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me that women cannot afford to let council discuss politics in any shape or form unless Interprovincial members are present". Within four days the plans were made for the I.C.F.W. to meet in Winnipeg, in separate session to define the scope of their various committees and to hopefully meet with the men. It was also decided this would be the time to send a delegate to the Council to report on the I.C.F.W.'s objectives and goals, with membership in the Council of Agriculture as the primary goal. Before the women could proceed any further with affiliation plans, they would first need the approval of the Council.

At 10:00 a.m., Tuesday April 1, the I.C.F.W. met in the secretary's office. Mrs. Wood left the meetings early because she was notified her grandchild was ill with the flu and in her "extreme anxiety [she] 'hiked' for Oakville". Mrs. Brodie did not attend due to illness in her family, and Mrs. Parlby missed some of the proceedings owing to her own illness. However, the members were excited and eager to meet with the men -- so much so they deferred the formal opening of their meetings and reading of the minutes "because of urgent business pending an invitation to the meetings of the Council.

11. Ibid.

12. It is interesting to note Miss McCallum said the men promised joint sessions but the proposed agenda for the I.C.F.W. says only possible joint sessions.

Finally, at 11:30 A.M. an invitation was extended by the C.C.A. for the women to attend the meetings. The women were introduced and Miss Finch submitted the recommendations the I.C.F.W. had carried at its January meeting -- that a Women's Section with full membership privileges and financed by the C.C.A. be formed from the provincial women's sections of the Council's affiliates. Some discussion ensued and a number of motions were presented but not passed as they were ruled out of order. There was no provision for a women's section in the constitution so the first motion had to be an amendment to initiate a women's affiliate. It was not until the afternoon session that an acceptable motion was carried. The Council approved the principle of accepting the women's sections of the provincial associations as members, and agreed at the next Council meeting an amendment to the constitution would be introduced which would provide for "an increase in the number of each Association in membership by adding thereto a representative of the executive to its Women's Section". They agreed the women could meet separately at their own discretion to discuss matters pertaining to the interests of women. The Council, however, also voted to control the women's activities; with a statement that was not unfamiliar to the women, the C.C.A.


15. Minutes of the C.C.A., April 1-5, 1919.
placed the same restrictions on the women's section as had the provincial central associations. The men passed a motion that "it shall not be competent for [the women] to present their findings on matters involving legislation otherwise than through the Council".16

The women attended all of Wednesday's meetings where the necessity of political action was discussed and then began their own formal meetings on Thursday morning. That evening Miss McCallum and Mrs. McNaughton presented the Council with the resolution regarding the Dominion Prohibition Committee that had been approved by all the provincial women's sections. They reported back to the I.C.F.W. it had been adopted by the Council and that a copy of the memorial would be wired to Ottawa. This was the first time the organized farm women had any influence on the Council of Agriculture's business and although the memorial was only a statement of endorsement it was still an important step for the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women. The women had been recognized by the most effective farm lobby in the country with the indication that their future work would be considered of value to the Council.

It is remarkable that the I.C.F.W. passed so many resolutions at these meetings as the women's Council worked on the principle of unanimity -- all motions had to be agreed upon by all provincial representatives before they

16. Ibid.
were adopted. This was the same rule the Council of Agriculture followed. Majority rule was not acceptable; all affiliates had to agree. Thus the number of motions passed at this round of meetings indicated the provincial associations already were in harmony on a good many issues. In separate session the women carried a number of resolutions on different topics mostly pertaining to women and family life. A committee was formed to investigate the campaign of steamship companies to promote immigration of young girls for domestic purposes; the secretary was instructed to secure a full outline of the work for young people employed by the Dominion Young Womens' Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.); and a motion carried that if during the present term parliament did not give women the right to sit in parliament the secretary should "take the necessary steps to urge the government to take action".17 The women also agreed to urge the federal government to repeal the War Times Election Act and make the provincial voters' lists serve as federal lists.

Most of the political discussion had been carried out during the joint meetings. The Council had decided each association should be responsible for the political action

17. Minutes I.C.F.W., April 1 - 5, 1919. Women had been granted the federal franchise May 24, 1918 but did not receive the right to be elected to the federal parliament until July 1919. Catherine Cleverdon suggests the government adopted a policy of "one step at a time". Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, p. 136.
within its own province. The I.C.F.W. agreed that in the political field the women's section "as far as possible would assist in a publicity campaign as it especially appealed to women". Women who could speak on political questions were considered to be especially valuable and the women's council determined "every effort [would] be made by the Interprovincial to prepare and encourage women to assist in this way". This was the principal reason farm women had joined the women's sections of the united farmers and grain growers' associations -- to take an active role in the political questions which played such a large role in their everyday lives. A publicity campaign provided an opportunity to contribute in a tangible way, to assist the men with their political work and to educate other women voters. As Miss McCallum pointed out in her column, "there are no special clauses in the platform of the farmers but every clause in that platform deals with a fundamental economic principle and as such is of even more direct bearing upon the farm women than upon the farm men".

During the summer of 1919 interest in interprovincial


19. Miss McCallum later recalled the best speakers were Mrs. Parlby in Alberta, Mrs. McNaughton in Saskatchewan and in Ontario there was Mrs. Brodie and Miss Agnes Macphail. Miss McCallum spoke frequently in all four provinces. Interview with Mary Sutherland (nee McCallum) by Una MacLean.

20. Ibid.

matters became secondary to provincial work. The sense of urgency so prevalent only a few months earlier was no longer evident. Miss Finch confided to Mrs. McNaughton she could spend little of her time on Interprovincial work because she had so much field work to do for the Manitoba association.  

Mrs. McNaughton found her work load as honorary secretary of the Saskatchewan women had become so heavy it was impossible to carry it on in her home so Mrs. Burbank was appointed to direct the secretarial work from the central office in Regina. Also there were recruiting tours in each province to increase membership and spread the word of the organized farmers. As well, preparations for harvest had to be undertaken.

The Council of Agriculture met in July and amended its constitution to admit women into the membership of the C.C.A.. When the women met separately from the main Council they were to be known as the Women's Section. On the basis of the motion carried in April, the amendment stated each association was allowed one more member of its executive, a woman, to participate in C.C.A. business. Miss Finch thought the wording perhaps meant the existing members of the I.C.F.W. would not be eligible unless they were members of the provincial central executive and thus appointed by it to be the official representative to the Council. After some

deliberation Mrs. McNaughton decided "the Interprovincial [representatives] will by virtue of their present position come onto the C.C.A. since the main object of forming the Interprovincial was to be a woman's section of the C.C.A.".23

When the I.C.F.W. met briefly in Winnipeg on September 15, the vote to change its name to the Women's Section Canadian Council of Agriculture was carried.24 Members also decided the provincial women's sections should set up committees synonymous with those of the C.C.A.'s Women's Section to "facilitate gathering and disseminating information and to promote committee work generally".25 Mr. Lambert, secretary of the C.C.A. who had been invited by the women to attend this meeting, was consulted on how the Women's Section would be financed. He suggested the women should finance their own section "for administrative purposes and for any work especially Interprovincial and that the Council should finance it for all work relative to the Council."26


24. After various piecemeal motions were passed by the Council at meetings throughout 1919 and into 1920, a motion finally carried at the meeting in July 1920 that the I.C.F.W. be known as the Women's Section Canadian Council of Agriculture. The motion was introduced by Miss McCallum.


26. Ibid.
Thus, in September 1919, the basic framework for the Women's Section was developed. The Council of Agriculture would pay for work related to Council functions but the women would also require outside funding to finance their activities which did not specifically relate to the work of the main Council. In order to expedite the activities of the Women's Section a motion was carried that the provincial executives and the Guide each contribute twenty five dollars\(^27\) for purposes of administration. In 1923 the independent means of financing the Women's Section was rescinded. A motion introduced by Mrs. Sears and seconded by Mrs. McNaughton asked "that the necessary expenses of the Women's Section be incorporated into the expenses of the Council by means of a budget submitted to the Executive of the Council".\(^28\) The Council agreed; this allowed even more control over the Women's Section as independent financial contributions from the provincial associations would come to an end. For the women it meant they no longer had to worry about financing the administrative component of their work— as long as the Council approved their budget.\(^29\) Financial

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27. Future receipts came from the U.F.W.O., the U.F.W.M., the U.F.W.A., the Guide, and the S.G.G.A.. The Saskatchewan portion came from the central association's treasury because the women's section did not have an independent financial structure.


29. There is no record of the Council turning down the budget submitted by the Women's Section.
independence had been an important point when the provincial women's sections were originated, but for the W.S.C.C.A. which had no membership fees coming in to its account, financial autonomy was not practical. The Women's Section relied strictly on grants from the affiliates and the Guide. In June 1923, the Women's Section moved to close its bank account and transfer the balance of $87.76 to the C.C.A.. The 1923 budget totaled $180.00 plus the expenses of the secretary while at meetings.\textsuperscript{30}

The C.C.A. was willing to allow the women to affiliate as long as their section did not cost too much or embroil the Council in activities which were beyond the scope of the Council's mandate. The women could administer all their own activities unless legislation was involved, at which point the Council would take over. It was the same type of so-called equality or comradeship the women experienced at the provincial level. This is hardly surprising as the Council was composed of executive members and representatives of the provincial associations -- the same men from which they had endured any number of difficulties in securing and maintaining their provincial women's sections.

Both the Council of Agriculture and the newly created

\textsuperscript{30} Minutes of the W.S.C.C.A., June 6, 1923. The breakdown was as follows: Annual meeting $50.00; Expenses for special delegations $50.00; Stenographic services $25.00; Stationery and stamps $10.00; Telegraph and telephone $10.00; Publicity and literature $20.00; Incidentals $15.00.
Women's Section met in Winnipeg, November 11 - 13, 1919. A full contingent from the Women's Section was present to exercise their rights and privileges as members in the C.C.A.; however, the women did not have much to contribute to the discussions. In three days of deliberation there were only two occasions where the women participated actively. Mrs. Brodie reported on the situation with the Women's Institutes in Ontario and Miss McCallum made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Brodie, with regard to the discussion on bringing the Farmer's Platform up-to-date. She moved the section pertaining to the Dominion Election Act\(^3\) should read "A Naturalization Act based on personal naturalization only".\(^4\) This meant naturalization or citizenship based on individual application whether married or not.

Although the women played a small role in this set of meetings it was crucial that they attend as the future of the farmer's political movement was addressed at length. During the winter of 1918-1919, all four provincial affiliates had considered the ramifications of active participation by their associations within the spheres of provincial and national politics utilizing the Farmer's Platform either as a strict doctrine or as a point of departure. The organized farm women were keenly aware of the controversial and potentially divisive nature of the

31. The Farmer's Platform, Section 10, clause (a).

farmers' entry into politics. Saskatchewan had accepted the C.C.A. as the "formulating agency" and the Farmer's Platform had been "solely accepted". The Manitoba association had no political organization but members "seemed to favour the complete control of any political movement by the Grain Growers' Association". In Ontario "an appeal had been made to class consciousness of farmers because it was necessary to make a class appeal in order that results could be realized". In Alberta the decision of whether to accept the Farmer's Platform had been left up to the individual district conventions, which "in each case had approved of the Platform". Following the reports, an extensive discussion ensued on whether co-ordination of a national political movement would be a wise course of action for the Council due to the lack of uniformity in the four provinces. Members also considered whether it would be an economic class movement. In the end, the Council adopted a report

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid. Mr. Halbert reported "independent political action ... rather than economic doctrine ... had been the motive force behind the political movement in Ontario".

36. Ibid.

37. In a summary of the meeting presented by the secretary of the S.G.G.A., J.B. Musselman, he noted when Mr. Wood of Alberta spoke of an economic class "he really means a 'vocational class' assuming that those of our one general vocation have fully common economic interests. This is not the case." Circular to S.G.G.A. members from J.B. Musselman, November 25, 1919, (S.A.B., A1 - E6).
advocating a conference of provincial representatives to discuss the possibility of a national political strategy. This was more of a compromise than anything else. The resolution delineated the Farmer's Platform as "based upon the broad, national economic interests of Canada without respect to any particular class or occupation", which was intended to appeal to a wide range of citizens, not just farmers. It further stated, "conditions now demand the better co-ordination of the political effort organized thus far for the purpose of electing supporters of the New National Policy to the Dominion Parliament". As Mr. Musselman observed, by calling a conference instead of making an immediate decision, the Council was "forestalling, as far as possible, the creation of a separate and distinct institution for political action".

The Women's Section met following the conclusion of the C.C.A.'s proceedings. It was a brief meeting with several topics raised and discussed in only three hours. They decided to compile a speakers' handbook with suggestions to aid in delivering lectures. This would be helpful not only in routine speaking engagements but also could be beneficial if the women were to become active in political campaigns.

39. Ibid.
Other business was routine -- record of deposits, instructions to pay for stenographic help, some brief reports on communications. The most interesting entry was the suggestion that the secretary remind the affiliates to appoint a member for the upcoming year. National recognition had finally been achieved and the organized farm women were legitimate members of the farmers' national council, yet the provincial bodies had to be reminded to appoint a delegate. Apparently representation was not a top priority. The Interprovincial Council had been in existence for less than one year and already interest was waning. Why then, when enthusiasm should have been growing, was it necessary to prompt the executives to think about the upcoming meeting and the next year's program?

The organized farm women were extremely busy people. Women involved in their provincial executive had those responsibilities with which to contend; C.C.A. members were expected to keep abreast of Council activities and help to co-ordinate interprovincial and national developments. Many of the Women's Sections' members were involved in other community work or sat on federal and provincial committees and boards. All these commitments required a certain amount of time and effort and as some members realized, they could not cope with the work load. Mrs. Wood of Manitoba did not accept a second nomination to the Council because, as Miss Finch reported, "Mrs. Wood said she felt that she could not
undertake any more than her provincial work. It brought enough responsibility and she wanted to feel free to devote all the time she had spare to it".  

It is logical that in order to cope, such active women would review their responsibilities and set out priorities. Since the Women's Section met infrequently and generated less work, it would not have been the top priority. Also, there were a limited number of motions which affiliates could introduce with relative assurance they would be carried. Only national or interprovincial issues fell within the mandate of the Women's Section and the rule of unanimous approval dictated that all business must meet with the approval of all members. For example, Mrs. McNaughton was asked to represent the Interprovincial on the National Conference on Moral Education, but she felt it was "a very tall order for the Interprovincial delegate to speak for all the provinces on such a vexed question".  

The scope of work undertaken by the Women's Section necessarily had to be agreeable to all affiliates. As the women had seen demonstrated at the Council of Agriculture meeting in November, it was difficult to find unanimity among four provincial delegations each often having unique circumstances.


42. Letter to Miss Finch from Mrs. McNaughton, August 18, 1919, (S.A.B., A1 - E10).
The Women's Section did not meet again until July 1920 although women delegates did attend the C.C.A. meetings in January and March. By the time of this third meeting there had been a change in the representatives appointed by the provincial executives. Mrs. Parlby and Mrs. Wood declined to sit on the Council for a second year. Mrs. J.B. Parker, vice-president U.F.W.M., became the Manitoba delegate, and Mrs. Sears, newly elected president of the U.F.W.A., represented Alberta. No longer were the original members of the Interprovincial Council directing the future of the farm women's movement. Miss McCallum resigned in 1922 to marry and Miss Finch left in 1923 in anticipation of her pending marriage. When Mrs. McNaughton became "disenchanted with the farmers and modified her once enthusiastic support of the organized farmers of Saskatchewan", she began to withdraw from association activities and channel her energy elsewhere. The loss of her vitality, experience and

43. Mrs. Wood wanted to concentrate on her provincial work. Mrs. Parlby resigned as president of the U.F.W.A. in January 1920 because she "felt her health demanded her retirement". G.G.G., January 28, 1920, p. 3.

44. Wilson, "Educating the Saskatchewan Farmer", p. 25.

45. Mrs. McNaughton had been elected to the Executive of the S.G.G.A. in February 1922. This kept her extremely busy travelling on G.G.A. business and attending meetings. One year later she was no longer involved with the W.S.C.C.A.. It was at approximately this time she became less active in her women's section work. In 1925 she accepted the position as woman's editor for The Western Producer. However, in 1926 she was once again actively involved in S.G.G.A. business as she campaigned for amalgamation of the S.G.G.A. and the U.F.C.. In March 1926
leadership was a serious blow to the Women's Section. The last meeting she attended was in March 1923. Consequently, there was little continuity of W.S.C.C.A. delegates after the first few years. The personnel changed and along with the new faces came different visions of what the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture should be. The old network of leaders, familiar with the struggles to organize farm women, was gone and in their place was a new assembly, most of whom had never met before coming onto the Council. The Women's Section never regained the sense of comradeship that had been a source of strength in the formative stages of its development. An unfamiliar tone of bickering and gossiping began to hinder amiable relations between members. The "esprit de corps" had perished.

Personalities clashed almost from the start of the second year. In March 1920, Miss McCallum wrote to Mrs. McNaughton concerning the C.C.A. meeting in Toronto later that month. As financing such a long journey would be difficult it was decided the women need not necessarily go because no separate Women's Section meetings would be held. The new members did not understand why they were not encouraged to attend and confusion became the order of the day. Miss McCallum confided to Mrs. McNaughton her impatience and dissatisfaction with the new Manitoba and she was appointed to the Amalgamation Committee, a highly prestigious appointment.
Alberta representatives:

As for Mrs. Sears - she has not yet been able to distinguish the difference between the I.C.F.W. and the National Council of Women. She wrote a woefully mixed letter to Miss Finch in which there is not the slightest gleam of light which would indicate that she believed there was any difference between the two. Mrs. Parker, however, is a militant suffragist type who thinks non-attendance only a slur on women because they are women.46

Mrs. Parker was aware of Miss McCallum's opinion of her and the lack of co-operation between Council members disturbed her. After the October 1920 C.C.A. meeting she wrote to Mrs. McNaughton stating she had missed her and was sorry she had not been there. "Perhaps I am too sensitive", she wrote, "but I cannot get rid of the idea that Miss M.P.[McCallum] counts me out".47 In two separate letters to Mrs. McNaughton, Mrs. Parker characterized Miss McCallum as overbearing and manipulative. "She can control Miss Finch. I don't know how she feels to you but I believe she fears you

46. Letter to Mrs. McNaughton from Miss McCallum, March 19, 1920, (S.A.B., A1 - E23). Years later Miss McCallum spoke more kindly of Mrs. Sears and remembered her as a "very fine woman and a very good worker". However, she did add some commentary on what she obviously considered an eccentricity: "She belonged to some cult called Dr. Somebody's Food thing, of Denver, Colorado", and then tried to explain it by saying, "but you could put over more unorthodox ideas in Alberta than any other place". Interview with Mary Sutherland (nee McCallum) by Una MacLean.

and for that I am glad". On the second occasion she described how she thought the executive would "humbly follow Miss McCallum's advice and show proper appreciation so they will be a happy family save when they quarrel among themselves, which they did last summer".

Miss McCallum was a strong and hardworking force for the organized farm women and the Council of Agriculture. She travelled extensively on business, sat on committees and worked for the Guide. When she became assistant secretary to the C.C.A. she resigned her position as woman's editor. She had many contacts, was well known and was keen to see the farmer's movement flourish. Where others may have thought she was abrupt or even controlling, Miss McCallum saw things differently. In 1922 she complained there was not enough time to do all the things she would like but "this Council seems to be a one star cast", implying she was doing most of the work.

There are many examples of the petty squabbles that developed amongst the members. This was not, however, confined to the interprovincial council as the provincial locals frequently had to deal with quarrelling members. It should be noted that the main Council also suffered from

48. Ibid.
major personality clashes especially about the question of political activity and wheat pools.\textsuperscript{51} Some of the dissension in the women's sections came from overworked executive members who did not feel appreciated or were frustrated by the lack of support from the membership or the male executive. Miss Lottie Linfoot of the Saskatchewan Women's Association resigned her position as secretary in 1923 because she felt she was being overwhelmed by the magnitude of the work while few others in the association were paying any attention or making any valuable contribution. She related her anger over the proceedings at an executive meeting to Mrs. McNaughton: "the majority of the members seemed to be more concerned about getting out to the exhibition and to Simpsons than planning any constructive activities for the Association".\textsuperscript{52} She went on to criticize their conduct even while not on Grain Grower's business: "I have also been told by several people that the manner in which they acted at the Hostel all hours of the night was certainly not becoming to women of their years".\textsuperscript{53} Miss Linfoot also expressed her frustration with the central at not keeping the women's section informed of association

\textsuperscript{51} A thorough examination of the Council of Agriculture's internal difficulties is found in J.C. Mills, "A Study of the C.C.A. 1910-1930", Chapters VIII & IX.

\textsuperscript{52} Letter to Mrs. McNaughton from Miss Lottie Linfoot, September 17, 1923, (S.A.B., A1 - E92).

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
activities. "Nobody ever thinks that either Mrs. Burbank or I are interested in various moves and then everyone is surprised when we know nothing about what has been done".54

On occasion the women became insulting, although this type of derogatory commentary seems to have been reserved for women outside of the association. In 1921 Mrs. Burbank of the W.G.G.A. reported from the National Council of Women convention in Calgary. She described Dr. Augusta Stowe-Gullen, vice-president for Ontario, as resembling a frog.55

Internal problems and overwork were not the only hardships with which the women had to contend. As much as they wanted to be equal with the male members, and as frequently as they touted out the old adage of women and men having the same responsibilities and rights within the Council and provincial associations, it simply was not the case. Right from the initial organizing meetings in 1913 and 1914 farm women out of necessity had taken the initiative themselves to form the women's sections. They decided in 1918 that interprovincial representation was imperative and set out to become an affiliate of the Council of

54. Ibid.

55. Letter to Mrs. McNaughton from Mrs. Burbank, June 19, 1921, (S.A.B., A1 - E92). Dr. Stowe-Gullen, the first woman to receive her medical education entirely in Canada, was a founding member of the Canadian Suffrage Association and was an outspoken activist for women's rights. See Carol Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? for a complete discussion of the female suffrage campaign in English Canada and of the key personnel.
Agriculture. They did not wait for an invitation. All of this was undertaken by the women with little or no encouragement from the farm men. The central associations had wanted women to join the grain growers' and united farmers' associations because of the electoral strength the farmers could expect from the soon-to-be enfranchised farm women. The Council of Agriculture accepted the women at a time when it was trying to widen its scope. As a lobby group, the more people for which the Council claimed to speak, the more likely government was to listen to its requests. Once the women found themselves as part of the farmer's movement, their battles did not end. Miss Linfoot of the Saskatchewan women's section complained "one gets sick and tired reminding others that 'women have the same standing as men' simply to have it forgotten again".56

When finances became a trouble spot for the associations and the Council, the men often would look towards the women's sections for relief. In times of financial restraint the women had a more difficult job securing monies from the men who began to see the separate women's section as an expensive appendage. Under the guise of equality there were statements of how much better it would be if the men and women could work together in one local. Many women believed this was the ultimate goal and

favoured such rhetoric from their central associations. However, the majority of the female members believed the separate women's section would serve their interests much better than would a male-dominated organization, at least for the time being. As Mrs. Wienke of the Manitoba women's section stated in 1917, "women's true feelings will never be openly expressed when there are a lot of men present".57 Until farm women were equal in all respects to men, there was a need for a separate women's association in which their concerns would be addressed without disdain or treated as frivolous.

A classic example of the Council's attempt to cut costs at the expense of the Women's Section came in early 1920 when there was some difficulty with arranging financing for the March C.C.A. meeting in Toronto. Mr. Lambert suggested to Miss McCallum since the discussion would be largely on the banking system, it might be of "minimum interest to women members".58 This assertion angered Mrs. McNaughton who pointed out "there are no restrictions on the women's membership and I would not like to have us put in the position that where economy is needed to be practiced,

it shall start with the women members". In the end, however, only two women attended the meeting, both from the U.F.O.. The costs associated with interprovincial travel were simply too restrictive for all provinces to send a full delegation.

Members of the provincial central associations often wished expenses associated with their women's section could be curtailed or done away with altogether. In 1922 the S.G.G.A. was suffering under serious financial constraints. Membership was low and accordingly the treasury reflected the loss of revenue from membership fees. Mrs. McNeal, a Women's Section director, feared Mr. Musselman, secretary of the S.G.G.A., was "determined to dissolve the Women's Section" because he claimed "he certainly had no idea our work would cost them so much". Mrs. McNeal was distressed that after eight years of work she was told "that it (the women's section) should not exist". Mr Musselman implied the men were doing more work than the women and "also that it was our place to encourage and push our husbands ahead and all such talk ...". This was the type of derogatory commentary which became more prevalent when conditions


61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.
became difficult.

Other difficulties also plagued the Council of Agriculture and its affiliates, including the Women's Section. The women joined almost exactly at the turning point of the Council's fortunes and could not help but become embroiled in the controversies. Problems arose in 1919 as soon as the C.C.A. began discussing its possible role in future political activity. The divisions resulting from the decision to move from an educational co-ordinating body to one with a political direction caused friction among affiliates. At the January 1920 meeting the Council declared its "intention of electing as many representatives as possible to the House of Commons at the next general election who will endeavour to bring the Farmers' Platform into effect".63 The resolution of the Council to become politically active has been called "The Great Mistake"64 and from that point on, the Council of Agriculture was characterized by "disharmony and lack of co-operation".65 It was unfortunate for the Women's Section that its national council became the target for much rumour and speculation. Together with the internal difficulties the Women's Section was experiencing, the decreasing provincial membership rolls


64. Mills, "A Study of the C.C.A. 1910 - 1930", Chapter VIII.

65. Ibid., p. 133.
which became more and more of a problem each year and the frequent lack of co-operation of the men, the Women's Section never had the ideal situation or opportunity to become what the original members had hoped it might.

After the meeting of July 1920, the women met separately from the main council sixteen times, until the final meeting in February 1929. The reports of the standing committees on immigration, public health, social service, marketing and young people dominated the proceedings at most meetings. The purpose of the committees was:

to gather information from each of the provinces on the subjects outlined, to co-relate the work of the various provinces, and to disseminate the information gathered, thus assisting the provincial associations in their endeavors to develop these different phases of work by using the successes or failures of the other provinces as a guide.66

In most cases the reports were referred to the provinces for study but if all provinces had already agreed on a matter of concern and legislation was the goal, the reports and resolutions of the Women's Section were then presented to the Council of Agriculture. The Council would discuss the resolution and either vote to endorse it or send it back to the women for further study or clarification. Never was a motion on behalf of the Women's Section rejected outright;

66. From a circular titled Women's Section: Canadian Council of Agriculture, (S.A.B., Al - E11). This was a review of 1922 activities.
however, issues brought to the Council were not contentious as they had already been approved by the four provincial women's sections and usually had been discussed at the annual conventions. Thus, there would have been no surprises with regard to matters the women desired the Council to endorse. Once a resolution had received the unanimous support of the C.C.A. it was forwarded to the appropriate government body or department for consideration.

The Women's Section presented only a small number of different resolutions to the Council in the ten years of its existence. Several issues were recurring and were brought before the Council on a regular basis. These included naturalization of women, divorce laws and resolutions with regard to marketing and the grading of poultry, eggs and cream. Strong-Boag has suggested that during the 1920s prairie feminism "concentrated on assistance to women in the private sphere".67 Although this was the case for the provincial women's sections, issues such as electrification and labour saving devices for the farm home did not fall within the mandate of the national farm women's council. Only issues and matters which could be considered national problems were discussed by the Women's Section. Other concerns fell to the provinces or were considered to be within provincial jurisdiction and therefore exceeded the mandate of the C.C.A.. The Council had no business preparing

resolutions on local or provincial issues.68

The legal rights of women were often discussed by the Council although not at length. The question of naturalization raised in 1921 and 1922 dealt with amendments to the Naturalization Act which outlined the rights of women who married British citizens and of British women who married aliens. The Council wanted the Act to enable married women to take out personal naturalization papers and for female British citizens to retain their British citizenship regardless of her husband's nationality.69 In April 1924 J.H. Ward, Secretary C.C.A., wrote Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King to outline the Council's recommendations on personal naturalization. He received a reply from Mr. Thomas Mulvey, Under-Secretary of State stating the Naturalization Act was a Treaty between the United Kingdom and the Dominions and therefore could not be altered without approval of both parties.70 Mr. Ward then wrote back to the Prime Minister requesting he "bring the question of the

68. The best example is education which is a provincial responsibility; accordingly, the Women's Section did not report on the educational systems. However, as an educational body the women felt it was their duty to disseminate information on the various aspects of the farmers' movement. This was a different type of education than that of the institutionalized structures outlined by the provincial governments.


naturalization of married women before the forthcoming Imperial Conference". Mr. Mackenzie King's private secretary replied with a polite but perfunctory letter: "This communication will be placed before Mr. King and will have his consideration at first possible opportunity". The Council's stand on naturalization was reaffirmed in 1924, 1925 and 1926.

In 1924 the Council adopted a resolution which "[urged] the Dominion Government to amend the Divorce Law of Canada so as to make the grounds for divorce the same for women as for men". It was reaffirmed in 1925. In 1926 a resolution which was only a cursory summary of previous Council decisions was passed. It outlined that in previous years "resolutions asking that the inequalities in our laws, as between men and women in the matters of domicile,


72. Letter to John H. Ward from F.A. McGregor, July 11, 1923, (N.A.C., MG 26, J 1, Vol 96). The nationality of married women was raised at the Imperial Conference in London, October 1 to November 8, 1932, and the following resolution was passed: "The Committee are of opinion that the principle of the existing law that the nationality of a married woman depends on that of her husband should be maintained. They nevertheless recommend that power should be taken to re-admit a woman to British nationality in cases where the married state, though subsisting in law, had to all practical purposes come to an end". Maurice Ollivier, (ed.), The Colonial and Imperial Conferences From 1887-1937, Volume III, (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1954), p. 17.

73. Minutes of the C.C.A., February 19 - 21, 1924.
homestead and personal naturalization be equalized" had passed and went on to resolve that "we reaffirm our position regarding the matters mentioned ... and respectfully request the government pass the necessary legislation".74 In 1928 a motion concerning the legal domicile of women was carried although it was not specific and there were no recommendations included. The minutes simply noted "the Council of Agriculture feels the inequalities of our law as between men and women in the matter of legal domicile should be equalized" and then in an obsequious statement "resolved that we respectfully ask the Dominion Government to pass the necessary legislation".75

Issues of marketing, grading of farm products and duties on eggs received much more discussion when presented to the Council than the rights of women ever did. At almost every C.C.A. meeting there was a report from either the Women's Section or from a committee formed as the result of a Women's Section proposal concerning matters closely related to agricultural pursuits. Although the Council professed to be a defender of the rights of women, there was little effort exerted by the main Council to secure the appropriate legislation. The C.C.A. was more confident when dealing with farm issues and economic barriers to production than with "matters specially concerning women and

74. Minutes of the C.C.A., February 23, 1926.
75. Minutes of the C.C.A., March 26, 1928.
children". 76

The Council soon came to regret its decision to enter politics, signalling the first in a series of death knells for the Council. There was a great deal of discussion in 1922, 1923 and 1924 on the future of the Council and which direction it should take. The farmer's movement was suffering in all provinces as membership fell and the associations began to fight for their survival. In March 1923 the Council of Agriculture resolved it "shall in future not take part in the conduct of any campaign for the election of candidates for parliament". 77 It decided to return to its original principles as outlined in the revised Farmer's Platform of 1918 -- "to encourage the farm population of the Dominion to organize for the study of educational, social and political problems having a bearing on the happiness and material prosperity of the people". 78

Unfortunately this decision came too late to save the Council. The farmers in Saskatchewan were particularly disdainful of the Council of Agriculture and its foray into the electoral wasteland. In 1921 the Farmers' Union of Canada (F.U.C.) was founded in Saskatchewan by a small group of farmers who felt that the S.G.G.A. and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company were not addressing their

78. Ibid.
concerns. 79 Also, the fear that even the most trusted and
dependable farmer politicians might become corrupted by the
political process gave many farmers cause to doubt the
wisdom of their leaders who were proponents of the farmers
in politics. The agricultural depression of 1920 to 1925
caused many farmers to experience severe economic hardship
and rather than waste time and money with party politics,
they wanted their associations to concentrate on better
deals for the farmer in marketing, transportation and
reduced tariffs. When the Farmers' Union presented a non-
political platform of economic improvement through co-
operative action and pools, those who disagreed with the
S.G.G.A.'s politics joined with the new Union. In only two
years its membership had reached almost ten thousand 80 while
the Grain Growers' membership declined at a steady rate. As
The Western Producer explained, the S.G.G.A. attempted to
"revive and reestablish" itself but "at the moment when the
G.G.A. had reached its lowest mark, the Farmers' Union
commenced organization and proceeded to enlist the farmers
of the province into its ranks". 81 For three years the
S.G.G.A. and the F.U.C. waged a membership battle but
finally in 1926 a huge joint convention was held and plans

80. Ibid., pp. 194 - 195.
81. The Western Producer, January 7, 1926, p. 4.
for amalgamation went ahead. The United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section (U.F.C.S.S.) was formed and by March 1927 it had a membership of 25,633.\textsuperscript{82} It was a huge body of farmers and represented the major agricultural province in the Dominion.

For the Council of Agriculture, the amalgamation sounded the second death knell because the U.F.C. refused to associate with the Council as long as the commercial companies were involved. The Farmers' Union was open only to "bona fide" farmers\textsuperscript{83} and it did not want membership on a council it felt was dominated by members who were not farmers. The problem lay especially with the grants from the United Grain Growers Limited which the Council relied upon to help finance its activities. Without the U.G.G. and the Guide, the Council could not survive. However, without delegates from Saskatchewan on the Council, it was no longer representative of the major farming interests in Canada. The C.C.A. repeatedly approached the U.F.C. to ask if it would reconsider affiliation so Council members could, as the Guide put it, "get together like sensible people and put the

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., March 24, 1927, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{83} The bylaws read: "No application for membership shall be accepted unless the applicant owns or operates or is the wife or husband, son or daughter of one who owns or operates a cultivated farm or ranch, or is a retired farmer, man or woman, or farmers' wife or widow not engaged in any other business." Bylaws of the United Farmers of Canada Saskatchewan Section Limited, Article II, Section 4; July 1926.
Council in a position where it is adequately staffed and financed to effectively speak for and represent agriculture". The Union, however, was adamant. As one farmer indicated, he did not wish to affiliate with "a mixture of farmers, businessmen representing the grain trade and newspapermen". In 1927 the U.F.C.S.S. passed a resolution "to affiliate with the C.C.A. as soon as the C.C.A. is composed of bona fide farmers and is independent of and not receiving assistance from any commercial organization". It wanted no part of the Council on any other terms.

The Council of Agriculture continued to meet, as did the Women's Section, but the farm movement was more fractured than it ever had been. Meanwhile, as the influence and strength of the C.C.A. steadily declined, the Farmers' Union attempted to promote itself as the only body able to unite the farmers in a national coalition. Unfortunately, this was not a viable solution to heal the schism between the provincial associations because, as the Council of Agriculture had learned, it was almost impossible to bring together such diverse interests, even though they were all farmers. The United Farmers of Alberta, which maintained its

86. Ibid, March 31, 1927, p. 7.
political machinery, passed a resolution in 1927 instructing its board "to propose to the organizations in the sister provinces the adoption of the Alberta plan as the basis for interprovincial co-ordination and national organization".87 President Amos of the United Farmers of Ontario warned "U.F.O. delegates to beware of rushing into any hasty decisions to divorce the farmer movement entirely from politics".88 In January 1928, the Western Producer reported "concrete proposals for the amalgamation of the U.F.M. and the Manitoba Section of the United Farmers of Canada were approved unanimously at the U.F.M convention".89 The farmers' movement was fragmented along provincial lines as it had been prior to the formation to the Council of Agriculture.

In March 1928, the U.G.G. and the Guide, withdrew from the Council of Agriculture. It was hoped this would precipitate the return of the Saskatchewan farmers into the

87. The resolution read: "Therefore, be it resolved, that we the U.F.A. are prepared to amalgamate with any or all provincial organizations of farmers that will adopt the principles of industrial group organization as the fundamental basis for industrial and political action." Ibid., January 27, 1927, p. 4.
89. Ibid., January 19, 1928, p. 1. At the 1929 convention a motion to change the name to U.F.C. Manitoba Section was not carried. The U.F.M. had maintained its relationship with the U.G.G. and accepted grants from it in order to maintain the organization. This made it impossible, at that time, to join with the U.F.C. which was completely against the commercial companies being involved in the farmers' associations.
Council and renew and revitalize the farmers' national council. This was not to be the case. The U.F.C.S.S. did not consider the C.C.A. to be a viable organization of farmers and instead promoted the United Farmers of Canada as the alternative. Time had passed for the Council; it was not effective, did not represent the majority of agricultural interests in Canada, but most importantly, the farmers themselves thought its usefulness had been exhausted. The Council met until June 1932 and continually tabled discussion on the future of the Council and possible steps for reorganization, but it was to no avail. The Women's Section had moved in 1928 to carry on the next year's business by correspondence "in view of the fact that the Canadian Council of Agriculture is likely to be reorganized during the coming year". 90 There was a brief Women's Section meeting held the following February when the main Council met, but no committee reports were presented and no new business was raised. This was the final meeting of the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture.

The Council of Agriculture died a slow and lingering death. The Women's Section suffered from fewer contortions and less traumatic breaks but as an affiliate it too had been subject to the disparaging rumours which so frequently were heaped upon the Council after 1921. The vision of its members was lost and as the original members left and the

90. Minutes of the W.S.C.C.A., March 27, 1928.
provincial associations drifted farther apart, the spirit expired. The last meeting was held in 1929 but long before that the Women's Section had ceased to be an effective representative body of the organized farm women of the grain growers' and united farmers' associations. The dream of an interprovincial council of farm women so eagerly sought by the founders of the provincial women's associations had been laid to rest.
A farm wife isn't always free to join a farm group because she has small children at home or her husband isn't comfortable with the idea of his wife in a public role. It (joining a group) depends on the partnership women have on the farm.

Jacqueline Fernet
May 17, 1990

The more things change, the more they stay the same. In 1990 many farm women are experiencing the same difficulties as their mothers and grandmothers did in the early years of the twentieth century. Ms. Fernet's statement that "if women want to be recognized as a valuable component in the intricate balance of farm business they have to jump in", could have been made by any of the members of the Women's Section of the Council of Agriculture in 1919. Unfortunately it appears that the legacy of the Women's Section was not to break down any barriers to leadership for farm women because today there are still only a few women in elected positions in the farm associations.2

The Women's Section was not as successful as it might have been but neither was it a total failure. The most obvious accomplishment was that the Women's Section was formed at all. Prior to the recommendation by the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women that a women's

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2. The W.C.W.G. has only one woman director at present.
affiliate to the C.C.A. be created, there were no provisions for women in the main Council. A precedent for women members in the national farmers' associations was thus established. Once this constitutional breakthrough was achieved, however, the women did not take advantage of their membership privileges. It is difficult to determine if this was by choice or whether the women were dominated by the men. Their record of participation in Council meetings and committees indicates regular attendance but not much contribution. They were, however, more vigorous and vocal in their meetings held separately from the main Council.

The women who initiated the I.C.F.W. shared a vision of comradeship with farm men but by the end of the first year the composition of the women's council had changed and the cohesiveness was shattered. Mrs. McNaughton had foreshadowed disaster in 1918 when she claimed there was "a shortage of competent female leaders". The goal which had brought the women together -- affiliation with the C.C.A. -- had been realized and there were only a few other issues upon which they could agree unanimously. Bickering amongst members was not uncommon and personalities clashed. They were all farm women and wanted a better deal for the farm community but the diversity of conditions in the provinces made it difficult to reach a consensus on some central issues. The provincial economies were different and questions of politics divided the farm movement.
The Women's Section was formed at the turning point of the Council's fortunes and thus never had an ideal situation in which to flourish and develop as a solid national organization of farm women. The men were less than eager to exert much energy in support of the women, particularly with regard to women's rights. When finances were strained, proposals were made to economize by cutting back on the expenses associated with the women's sections. The executives of the central provincial associations and the C.C.A. had allowed women to join their organizations to increase the farm vote but once that was done scant attention was afforded to the women.

The Women's Section of the Council of Agriculture did not represent all farm women but because its members were appointed from elected representatives of the provincial affiliates of the C.C.A., it was legitimately the voice of the women's sections of the organized farmers of the Council of Agriculture. Although its accomplishments were not numerous, it created an awareness amongst at least some farm women of the political, economic and social issues which were central to their lives. That can only be defined as a success.

The Canadian Council of Agriculture floundered until June 1932 when it ceased operation. In 1935 the Canadian Chamber of Agriculture was formed. The name was changed in 1939 to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. After giving
up their membership in the Women's Section some of the women remained within the public sphere for many years. Mrs. Irene Parlby was elected in 1921 to the Alberta provincial legislature and represented her constituency until 1935 when she retired from public work owing to poor health. Mrs. Mary Sutherland (nee McCallum) was asked in 1957 and 1962 to seek political office but both times she declined. Mrs. McNaughton remained as an editor of The Western Producer for twenty-five years and was active in numerous organizations. In 1934 she was honored as a Member in the Officers Division of the Order of the British Empire.

These were remarkable women who had once shared a vision of an organization "where the emphasis on sex would be less". Sadly, it was never realized in the Council of Agriculture.
APPENDIX I

Objects of the Canadian Council of Agriculture (1909):

a) To organize the farm population of the Dominion for the study of social and economic problems having a bearing on the happiness and material prosperity of the people.
b) To collect such material from scientific and literary sources; the annals of class movements and the records of legislative enactments in our own and other countries as are necessary for the proper information of our people and disseminate the same.
c) To formulate our demands for legislation and present them through the officers of the Association to the notice of Parliament and our different legislative bodies.
d) To encourage the entry of our farmers into membership in one or another of the political associations according to individual predisposition as a means of making the political parties without distinction responsive to and representative of the demands of the people who form the bulk of the population.
e) To urge the adoption of co-operative methods by our members (but outside our association) in the purchase and sale of commodities that equity may be established in the business of exchange.
APPENDIX II
Constitution of the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women (1919):

Article 1.
This association shall be called temporarily The Interprovincial Council of Farm Women.

Article 2.
The objects of the association shall be:
1. To further the objects of the Canadian Council of Agriculture.
2. To popularize the study of social and economic problems.
3. To deal with federal and interprovincial matters specially concerning women and children.

Article 3.
The officers of the association shall consist of a president and a vice-president elected from among the members, and a secretary who may or may not be a member.

Article 4.
The executive committee shall consist of the president, vice-president and one other who shall be elected from the members at the annual meeting.

Article 5.
Three members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business provided a less number may adjourn the meeting.
Article 6.

The Interprovincial Council of Farm Women shall hold meetings at least twice a year.

Article 7.

The time and place of meeting shall be fixed by the president, provided however, that a meeting shall be called when requested by any three organizations having membership in the Council.

Article 8.

That necessary travelling expenses of the representatives be pooled, and that necessary administration expenses be shared, and that organizations having membership in the Council bear expenses.

Article 9.

The constitution may be amended at any meeting of the Council by a two-thirds vote of the members provided that notice of such proposed amendment has been given at a previous meeting of the Council.
APPENDIX III

Meetings of the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture

January 8- , 1919
April 1-5, 1919
September 15, 1919
November 14, 1919
July 14, 1920
November 6, 1920
February 16, 1921
September 28, 1921
February 27-28, 1922
March 27-30, 1923
June 6, 1923
February 20-21, 1924
October 25, 1924
March 3-5, 1925
November 3, 1925
February 23-24, 1926
November 2-5, 1926
April 4, 1927
November 9, 1927
March 27, 1928
February 26, 1929
Brandon
Winnipeg
Winnipeg
Winnipeg
Winnipeg
Winnipeg
Regina
Winnipeg
Regina
Toronto
Winnipeg
Regina
Winnipeg
Regina
Winnipeg
Winnipeg
Winnipeg
Winnipeg
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