

W. R. MOTHERWELL
AND THE CRISIS OF FEDERAL LIBERALISM
IN SASKATCHEWAN
1917 - 1923

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1917-1926

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ABSTRACT

This thesis follows the political career of W.R. Motherwell during the crisis years of federal Liberalism in Saskatchewan from 1917 to 1926.

After a brief Introduction describing Motherwell's background, and something of his honest, but partisan, approach to politics, Chapter 2 tells of his reaction to the issue of Union Government in 1917 -- how he chose to stay with the Laurier Liberal camp and eventually resigned from the provincial Cabinet in December, 1918, over Premier W.M. Martin's continued support of Union Government.

Chapter 3 deals with Motherwell's attitude towards the threat to the Liberal party from a different source -- the Farmers' movement into politics. The Assiniboia by-election, which this Chapter is about, remained to Motherwell, for the rest of his political life, his greatest stand for the Liberal party, its principles and leader.

Chapter 4 describes the years 1920 and 1921, during which time Motherwell, sobered by the size of his defeat in Assiniboia, and by the opposition of close friends to his running in that by-election, decided to hide his hostility towards the new Farmers' party, and also towards Premier Martin, who had refused to back Motherwell in Assiniboia, and who shortly thereafter had announced that his provincial Liberal organization was in no way connected with the federal Party in the province. In the 1921 general election, Motherwell found his forced silence paid dividends in both cases, as he was

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elected in the Regina constituency with some segments of Progressive support, as well as the backing of Premier Martin during the campaign.

Chapter 5 discusses Motherwell's problems with patronage during his first two years as Minister of Agriculture in Mackenzie King's cabinet and the failure to re-unite provincial and federal segments of the Liberal party, at least openly, with the Liberal defeat in the Moose Jaw by-election in April, 1923. Finally, while the Wheat Board issue illustrated Motherwell's political honesty, and while the "stand pat" tariff in the 1923 Budget showed the difficulty in effectively representing the West in an eastern-orientated Cabinet and party, both issues left Motherwell and the Liberal party in even worse political esteem in Western Canada than in 1921.

Chapter 6 describes Motherwell's part in the Liberal party's comeback during 1924 and 1925 from this nadir of popularity in the West at the end of 1923, and the re-establishment of strong federal-provincial Liberal bonds. The chapter concludes with the victory of federal Liberalism in Saskatchewan in the 1925 and 1926 general elections, and draws attention to events in those years that almost saw Motherwell replaced in the Cabinet, and his accepting the Lieutenant-Governorship of Saskatchewan.

The thesis ends with a brief Conclusion.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Between the years 1917 and 1926, the federal Liberal party passed through a period of crisis in Saskatchewan. In the first two federal elections held after Saskatchewan became a province, the Liberals had dominated the returns, receiving 56.6% and 59.4% of the popular vote respectively, and 90% of the seats in both cases.¹ In 1917, however, most liberals in the province were attracted by the call for non-party national administration to best oversee the continuation of Canada's war effort including conscription of manpower. Forsaking the federal Party, whose leader, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and Quebec segments opposed conscription, they threw their support behind the formation of a Union Government composed of Conservatives and English Liberals. Unfortunately, the end of the war did not see a reunion of Unionist and Laurier Liberals and a return to power in Saskatchewan. Instead, agrarian dissatisfaction with the two old, eastern-based parties, which had been put aside during wartime, now erupted all across the West into an enthusiastic and virile movement to form a federal farmers' political party. Again, many Liberals in Saskatchewan, especially those who had broken once with the party in 1917, were drawn away from the federal Liberal camp, and the Progressives, as the farmers soon called themselves, all but swept

¹ Howard A. Scarrow, Canada Votes (New Orleans: 1962), pp. 26-27.

the province in the 1921 federal election. Thereafter, weakened by internal divisions caused by the Union issue in 1917, out-maneuvred by a more progressive Farmers' Platform, and finally troubled by the tendency of the provincial Liberal Government to save its own skin by avoiding association with its federal counterpart, the federal Liberal party faced a long, tough uphill climb before it was able to regain its former prominence in Saskatchewan in the elections of 1925 and 1926.

One man who played an important part in the federal Liberal party in Saskatchewan during these years was W.R. Motherwell. Born in Perth, Ontario in 1860, he came to Saskatchewan in 1882, and, armed with a diploma from the Guelph Agricultural College, took up a homestead near what soon became the village of Abernethy. Although early homesteading life was tough, he soon established himself as a successful farmer, winning awards at local agricultural shows for his farm's produce. From the beginning, he took a great deal of interest in Church, Community and public affairs, and in the 1890's made two unsuccessful attempts at election to the Northwest Territory's Legislative Assembly. At the turn of the century he became a leader in the movement to form a farmers' organization to combat the unfair practices of the C.P.R. and the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, and in 1901 was elected the first President of the Territorial Grain Growers' Association. He retained this post until, in September of 1905, Walter Scott

invited him to be Saskatchewan's first Minister of Agriculture in his Liberal Government.²

As Minister of Agriculture, a portfolio he held until December, 1918, his work included the formation of marketing co-operatives for a number of farm products, and the setting up of the first hail insurance scheme in Canada. He encouraged the diversification of farming activities, and was largely responsible for the creation of a College of Agriculture within the new University of Saskatchewan.³ He was an amiable if a firm boss in his Department, and quickly built up a sense of loyalty among his staff members that made his tasks much easier.⁴ Before many years had passed, he was well known all across Canada as an energetic and capable agricultural administrator.

His success on the hustings did not match his success in the Department of Agriculture. After already losing two Territorial elections he lost badly in North Qu'Appelle in 1908, and had to seek re-election in the Liberal stronghold of Humboldt. While he was in no danger in Kindersley constituency in 1912, in 1917 he

² A.R. Turner, "W.R. Motherwell and Agricultural Development in Saskatchewan: 1905-1918", Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1958. pp. 1-17.

³ See ibid. for a detailed account of Motherwell's activities while with the Department of Agriculture in Saskatchewan.

⁴ Archives of Saskatchewan, W.R. Motherwell Papers, I. Cummings to F.H. Auld, December 1, 1922.

barely "scraped through", while in the rest of the province, Liberals won easily.⁵ It was not that Motherwell could not read the political wind -- it was simply that too often he chose deliberately to run with his face into it. In politics, as in his private life⁶, Motherwell formed strong opinions as to what was right and what was wrong, and acted accordingly. Once he had made a decision on the propriety of a particular policy, he felt obliged, to himself and to the electorate, to be completely honest and make his views public, regardless of the effect they might have politically. One example was his opposition in 1912 to the proposal of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, that the Government build its own elevator system, as had been done in Manitoba. As a laissez-faire Liberal, Motherwell could not condone, even by remaining silent, any form of Government ownership. Motherwell's blunt, open devotion to causes, so evident in 1917 and after, had been noticed even before 1905. One Saskatchewan paper, on the occasion of his becoming Minister of Agriculture, noted that,

No word or hint of wrong doing has ever been laid against him, and the only charge ever laid against him during his career is this that in his advocacy of anything he thought would be for the benefit of his community or country, he ever sought the reform itself regardless of what men might

⁵ Scott told Motherwell that he had won North Qu'Appelle in 1905 due to a broken leg, which kept him off the hustings and attracted a sympathy vote. Public Archives of Canada, William Lyon Mackenzie King Papers, Walter Scott to W.R. Motherwell, November 3, 1919.

⁶ Motherwell was a strong Presbyterian and Temperance man.

think of his course. He found what he believed was the right way and that he pursued, let the opinions of others be what they might. Had he been less of a reformer and more of a politician he might have had a larger modicum [sic] of what is termed popularity. But it stands to his credit today that he has never been in the slightest sense of the word, either an opportunist or a trimmer.⁷

Motherwell's being neither an "opportunist" nor a "trimmer" often made him a political liability, but it also made him one of the strongest, if most partisan Liberals, in early Saskatchewan politics. It was simply loyalty and devotion to a cause on a larger scale -- the Liberal party, its principles and leader. Not only was he convinced that only Liberal government could give the best administration to a young and growing West, but also that the two party system, and the whole concept of party government, was the most effective way to govern Canada, as well as the most responsive to the people. Motherwell was not a political hack interested in power and prestige; he was simply a Westerner, whose long experience convinced him that the traditional political framework was the best.

This was the background, and these were the characteristics and convictions of W.R. Motherwell, as his political career became intimately involved with the crisis of federal Liberalism in Saskatchewan in 1917.

⁷ Prairie Witness (Indian Head) n.d., from Morning Leader (Regina), September 20, 1905. Quoted in Turner, "W.R. Motherwell and Agricultural Development", pp. 17-18.

2. W.R. MOTHERWELL AND UNION GOVERNMENT

W.R. Motherwell's involvement in Western events surrounding the great political issue of Union Government in 1917 marked the beginning of his serious participation in federal politics. For every Liberal in that year, the question involved a crisis of conscience as to the course each would follow. Motherwell's strong loyalty to his leader and his party, after almost two decades of active Liberal politics, was too much to forsake. He threw himself wholeheartedly to their defence against all talk of Union with the Tories, and when that proved in vain, against Union Government itself. It brought him into disagreement with most of the leadership, as well as with the overwhelming rank and file, of Saskatchewan Liberalism. In particular, it eventually brought serious estrangement from the Premier, W.M. Martin, and provided the basic reason for Motherwell's resignation from the provincial cabinet in December, 1918.

As the war went into its third year late in 1916, the Canadian political scene was becoming increasingly uneasy. The truce made in 1914 to avoid partisan battles that could endanger proper prosecution of the war, was becoming harder to maintain in face of evidence of mismanagement and even corruption in the Borden Government's handling of the war effort. In fact, the 1916 session, while it had seen the passage of a Resolution delaying by one year the calling of an election constitutionally due in 1916, had also witnessed stormy debates on supposed frauds and

favoritism in the work of the Shell Committee which performed the vital task of supplying munitions to the British government.¹ As the year passed, it became obvious that the confidence of the Canadian people in the Borden Government was falling constantly, and as the New Year dawned a good many Liberals, though not confident of their own stock with the voters, saw that Liberal election chances were better than they had been in a good many years, while the most optimistic of them felt that Laurier would again be the Prime Minister of Canada before 1917 was out.

Such might well have been the outcome of that year had not needs of the war aggravated the dissensions between the English and French races in Canada -- dissensions which had been growing since the Manitoba and Ontario school questions of the late 1890's, fed by Bourassa's Nationalists during the Boer War and Naval Bill controversies. Growing animosity between the two races was bound to divide the federal Liberal party, which since 1911 had been based in Quebec and in the West, particularly Saskatchewan. This growing disunity had been illustrated during the 1916 session when nine Western Liberals had voted with the Government against Lapointe's resolution calling for the federal Government to intervene on behalf of the French in Ontario against that Province's Regulation 17, which severely restricted the use of French in Ontario's public schools. The feelings over French language rights had been intensified by far more dangerous

¹ O.D. Skelton, The Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Carleton Library (2 vols.: Toronto: 1965), II, 165-66.

differences over the recruitment of manpower for service overseas. The Borden Government had been guilty of certain indiscretions in recruiting in Quebec, but to the majority of English Canadians, the reluctance of the French Canadians to enlist in the same proportions as English speaking men, was due more to unpatriotic motives -- motives all the more suspect because of the well-broadcasted threats of civil war voiced by extremists like Armand Lavergne, and the warnings of strong Nationalists like Bourassa, against participation in Britain's wars.² If Liberal chances looked good at the start of 1917, closer scrutiny revealed Western Liberalism in particular was becoming more dissatisfied than ever with their Quebec Liberal friends and Leader. J.W. Dafoe, editor of the Manitoba Free Press and a leader of western liberal opinion (if often a good deal in the lead) voiced sentiments during the Lapointe resolution crisis that served as a harbinger for both Unionist Liberal, and later, Progressive splits from the federal Liberal party in the West.

The time is ripe for Western Liberals to decide that they will rely upon themselves -- and thus do their own thinking, formulate their own policies and provide their own leaders. Canadian public life will thus be given what it sorely needs -- a group of convinced radicals who will be far more interested in the furthering of their programme than in office-holding and will be indifferent to the time-servers and opportunists to whom the enjoyment of office is the be-all and the end-all of political existence.

With Borden's return from the Imperial War Cabinet meetings in

² Ibid., pp. 168-69, 183.

³ W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada (Toronto: 1950), p. 50.

May of 1917, and his announcement of conscription in Canada, the divisive issue was thrown squarely in the faces of the Liberals. Laurier soon made it clear that he would oppose the policy. For Western Liberals, loyalty to the party became a question of conscience. Could they support a party whose leader, and large Quebec segment, opposed a policy they felt was vital to the allied cause? Union Government, which had become increasingly advocated by both Conservatives and English Liberals, became the only salvation for Western Liberals who supported conscription, but who felt no confidence in the Borden Government's ability to administer it. Borden was thus on fertile ground when during the summer and fall of 1917, he turned to the West, and especially to prairie provincial governments, to supply the needed Liberal personnel for a national government. With Unionist Liberal elements from Ontario, the position of the West was crucial for the success or failure of Union Government.

In Saskatchewan, the provincial Liberal Government had been in power for almost twelve years. Under Premier Walter Scott, the party had built up a strong political position with the electorate, and the new Premier, W.M. Martin had inherited the position, and with it, James A. Calder, an astute organizer and politician, and an important figure in molding public opinion in Saskatchewan. Among the new Premier's ministers, only W.R. Motherwell remained from Scott's original personnel, although W.F.A. Turgeon, the Attorney General, came a close second in seniority. At the party's provincial convention, March 28th and 29th of 1917,

nothing had been said on the subject of Union Government, and an early resolution of the meeting had been one expressing continued confidence in Sir Wilfrid Laurier as "the true exponent of the aims and principles of Liberalism".⁴ The Saskatchewan Government having no intention of lessening the strains on the Canadian federation at this time, passed unanimously a series of resolutions on Dominion-Provincial relations, labelled Saskatchewan's Bill of Rights, and meant as part of a platform for a provincial election planned for late June.⁵

There may have been no need in March to consider any resolutions for or against Union Government, but with the events of May, as we have seen, revealing the importance of the Western Liberal position, a decision on Union Government by the Liberals of all Western provinces became increasingly urgent. Dafoe, with his usual energy led the campaign to influence this decision in favor of Union through the Manitoba Free Press. His employer, Sir Clifford Sifton, supplemented his efforts with a speaking tour through the prairies and British Columbia in the latter part of July. This flurry of Unionist propaganda preceded a Western Liberal Convention called for August 7 to 9 in Winnipeg. "It was decided upon at Ottawa", Dafoe later wrote, "by a group of conscription Liberals; the intention was to bring into existence a

⁴ J. Castell Hopkins (ed.), Canadian Annual Review, 1917, p. 762. Hereafter cited as C.A.R.).

⁵ J.G. Turriff, Liberal member for Assiniboia and later a Unionist Liberal, objected that the resolutions would embarrass the Federal Government during wartime. Ibid., p. 765.

Western Liberal group free from Laurier's control who would be prepared to consider coalition with Borden on its merits...."⁶

In Saskatchewan attention during recent weeks had been focused on provincial issues for the election in late June, but once it passed, with the Liberal government winning 51 seats of the 62 seat legislature, different observers viewed the strong Liberal victory as a portent of different long range results. J.W. Dafoe saw the victory as evidence that a Union Government would be formed. Not only did the results show the Conservative party to be extinct in the West, but the federal Liberal party as well, since it could claim no credit for Martin's victory. Proclaiming that the West was for "the vigorous prosecution of the war", as well as for "national and fiscal policies which, to the occupants of the ministerial benches at Ottawa, represent the extreme of heterodoxy", Dafoe felt this latest "break-up of parties has given the West its opportunity; and there is no doubt but that it will take advantage of it".⁸ For a good many Saskatchewan Liberals, like W.R. Motherwell, the election victory meant something very different. Considering the weakened state of the Borden Government, and combined with another Liberal victory in Alberta, the chances of Liberal victory in a federal general election appeared

⁶ Public Archives of Canada, J.W. Dafoe Papers, J.W. Dafoe to Augustus Bridle, June 14, 1921.

⁷ C.A.R., 1917, p. 774.

⁸ Manitoba Free Press, June 28, 1917. Editorial, "The Saskatchewan Victory", cited in Morton, Progressive Party, pp. 53-54.

most promising. These Liberals had an instinctive Western distrust for high-tariff Eastern Conservatives and so loathed the possibility of becoming their political bedfellows. If a position on the conscription issue could be avoided, or the Liberal stand made equivocal, as it had in the provincial elections, it could retain English support, as well as the traditionally Liberal foreign vote. Liberals like Motherwell, moreover, could not countenance the handing of the Liberal organization over to the enemy, nor its dissolution; neither could they accept the loss of patronage such action would entail.⁹

Dafoe's assertion that the Saskatchewan election results showed it possible to create a Western liberal party prepared to co-operate with willing Conservatives, was thus on shaky ground. He realized his error later during the Winnipeg Convention, and in a September letter to Robert Borden admitted it was due to his misjudging both the strong liberal tradition of the province, and the effect of the provincial Liberal victory itself on local Liberals.

Until the last election, which was a walk-over, the Saskatchewan government always had to fight hard to win; and there developed in the province a type of extreme liberal partisan not to be found in the other provinces. To bind the party together and give it a fighting edge are (and) actual or assumed economic grievances of the Saskatchewan farmers were exploited with great skill and persistence. Certain phrases like "big business", "predatory interests" took possession of the popular mind; there grew up a feeling not far removed from fanaticism...

After their victory in June the Liberal party organization in Saskatchewan began to consider itself invincible.

⁹ S.G.D. Smith, "Politics and the Party System in the Three Prairie Provinces, 1917-1958", Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Oxford, 1959, p.28.

The movement for a union government once it became formidable, excited the suspicions of this powerful Liberal organization with its following of farmers, suspicious and jealous (sic) of Eastern influences; with (the) result that there was an outburst of party feeling which showed itself in many ways by among other (sic) a rabid press campaign directed against you the Tory party generally, Eastern interest, etc. etc. etc.

He had failed to see that these would be the sentiments of the Saskatchewan delegation to the Winnipeg Convention because it had been impossible "to glean from the press or from Saskatchewan public men what their objective was".¹⁰

A look at the editorial opinion the Regina Morning Leader verifies Dafoe's statement. On July 10th, it came out in support of conscription,¹¹ but mentioned it very little after that; instead, on the 30th, it denied that the Canadian people should follow "dishonest flag-waving" and win-the-war election campaigning by the corruption-ridden Borden Government. The duty of the West, it stated, "is to remain true to those principles avowed and supported in the past", by sending Liberals to Ottawa who would stand for a thorough organization of the whole country as well as handle "after-the-war" problems. Borden had to go, though the Leader admitted that Laurier as the proper head of the next Government, was open to argument.¹² In an editorial on Clifford Sifton's visit to Regina on July 30th, it denied that it intended to discard

¹⁰ Dafoe Papers, J.W. Dafoe to Sir Robert Borden, September 29, 1917.

¹¹ Morning Leader, July 10, 1917. Editorial, "In a Quandary".

¹² Ibid., July 30, 1917. Editorial, "The Crisis at Ottawa and the Duty of the West".

Laurier as quickly as Sifton had. The Liberal leader had always been a friend of the West, especially in 1911 -- a friendship to which neither Borden nor Sifton had claim.¹³ Two days later, the Leader encouraged westerners to organize a distinct party of Western Liberalism, with a Western leader, a comprehensive win-the-war policy, and progressive after-the-war policies.¹⁴

Liberal politicians in Saskatchewan had deliberately avoided discussion of conscription and Union Government issues during the provincial election campaign, and it was not until July 30th that Premier Martin made any statement at all in favor of Union Government.¹⁵ James A. Calder's position at this time is unclear. His control of the liberal machine made it likely that a large number of pro-Unionist delegates would have been chosen had he, or any number of his colleagues, been strongly in favor of Union at this time. Instead exactly the opposite happened. J.W. Dafoe was warned on July 27th, that the sentiments of the Liberal organization were decidedly against Union.

Is it to be an open convention, or are delegates appointed by local associations only entitled to be present? If the latter course is adopted I fear that the Liberal machine of this province ... will absolutely control the situation, and those in sympathy with the policy as enunciated by ... yourself will not have an opportunity of placing themselves on record.¹⁶

¹³ Ibid., August 1, 1917. Editorial, "Clifford Sifton and His Message".

¹⁴ Ibid., August 3, 1917. Editorial, "Power, Responsibility, Opportunity, Now Rests with the West".

¹⁵ C.A.R., 1917, p. 571.

¹⁶ Dafoe Papers J.H. Barr to J.W. Dafoe, July 27, 1917.

Obviously, years of loyalty to the federal Liberal leader would keep the rank and file for a time at least, pro-Laurier, even if some of its leaders, including the Premier, were for Union. As well, Calder's colleagues, Motherwell, George Bell, George Langley and Archie McNab were "obdurate & between them ... controlled the chief Liberal newspapers of the province"¹⁷, exercising a good deal of influence over local organizations. Calder's position appears to have been closer to the Martin than to the Motherwell-Langley group, but he took no special pains to direct his organization to select Unionist delegates for fear he could not carry much of the rank and file and many of his colleagues with him.¹⁸

When the Convention opened on August 7th in Winnipeg, the pro-Union forces soon realized their minority position. Frank Oliver's Edmonton delegations demonstrated at the opening of the Convention, and Oliver estimated that as many as 95% of the delegates were pro-Laurier. Dafoe, Sifton, and the four pro-Union Premiers of the Western Provinces realized the odds were not that great, but nonetheless knew, as Dafoe worded it, that "the Western Liberal Convention of 1917 was a bomb that went off in the hands of its makers".¹⁹ It is impossible to know the exact position of the Saskatchewan delegation; since discussions and decision making were carried on in closed Committees, the dissensions of the Convention never reaching the floor of the assembly. Nonetheless,

¹⁷ Ibid., J.W. Dafoe to Robert Borden, September 29, 1917.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ ... to Augustus Bridle, June 14, 1921.

the machine-chosen Saskatchewan delegates were strongly pro-Laurier.²⁰

Evidence does not exist on Motherwell's activities during the Convention, but one may assume that he was one of the strongest supporters of Laurier as leader of the party, and of the Liberal party as the only party capable of giving Canada the government she needed during the present crisis. As to conscription, his position was probably that of the Convention, which passed a resolution on the second day calling for all effort necessary to keep reinforcements at the front. This "win-the-war" resolution was shown to mean conscription, when J.G. Turriff's amendment to add "by compulsion" to the wording of the Resolution, was overruled as redundant.²¹ Despite this resolution, Motherwell could also wholeheartedly support the leadership of Laurier, in a resolution on the third day.

That the convention places on record its admiration of the life and work of the greatest of all Canadians, the Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and of his earnest endeavour to carry out his duty as he sees it in the interest of all Canada respecting our part in the great world struggle. We express the hope that his undoubted ability, his long experience and matchless statesmanship may be utilized in re-uniting the people of Canada in this great crisis, in the successful prosecution of the War and in carrying out the platforms laid down by this Convention.²²

The T.A. Crerar resolution, that "whichever party is returned to power the business of the Government of Canada should be

20 Ibid...

21 C.A.R., 1917, p. 573-74.

22 Ibid., P. 574.

carried on by a truly National Government composed of representatives drawn from the different elements and industries of Canada"²³, was meant to appeal to both pro-Unionists, as an expression for National Government, and to the pro-Laurierites, since it provided for an election with the old parties before Union was formed. As such, this position, was seen by Dafoe as that held by the majority of Saskatchewan delegates:

There was, I think, an idea in their heads that with the strength of their party organization and the popular sense of grievance they would send a large body of independent Liberals to Ottawa to deal with the situation as it would appear when the new parliament met. The possibility that alternatively a union with the Conservatives would be necessary was always freely acknowledged; but they wanted an election first.²⁴

While Motherwell would never agree to joining the Conservatives under any circumstances, he might accede at the Convention to a resolution allowing at least one more appeal to the electorate by the Liberal party under the leadership of Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

The equivocal position of Western liberalism as expressed in the Winnipeg convention brought denunciation in the Free Press. On August 15th, Dafoe made a scathing attack on the machine tactics that had prevented the true spirit of the West from expressing itself. The Alberta and Vancouver delegations had been disgraceful in their demonstrations of machine politics, while the Manitoba delegation had confined its fighting to the committee rooms, not having the moral courage to bring the split

²³ Ibid., p. 575.

²⁴ Dafoe Papers, J.W. Dafoe to Sir Robert Borden, September 20, 1917

to the floor of the convention. The Saskatchewan delegation had been a "confused conglomeration which had no collective mind; it might have responded to patriotic leadership if this had been forthcoming".²⁵

By the end of September, Dafoe believed that "a campaign of education" had been successful in bringing even the most "obdurate" of Saskatchewan liberals, Motherwell, McNab, Langley and Bell, into line.²⁶ He was only partly right. Only Archie McNab had moved to the Unionist camp when, on October 12th, James A. Calder, Arthur Sifton, ex-Premier of Alberta, and T.A. Crerar entered a Union Cabinet. Motherwell, George Bell, and George Langley, joined by the Attorney General, W.F.A. Turgeon, became the leaders of Laurier Liberalism in Saskatchewan.²⁷

The effectiveness of these men in the election campaign that followed the formation of Union Government, however, was reduced to the weight their own reputations carried with the Saskatchewan electorate. Calder had control of the Liberal organization, and put it to work for the Government, amalgamating with the Conservative provincial organization to form the National Government Association of Saskatchewan. On November 20th, he issued an election Manifesto to Saskatchewan electors calling for the election of the Union Government -- a National non-partisan

²⁵ Manitoba Free Press, August 15, 1917. Editorial, "The 'Spirits and Results' of the Liberal Convention".

²⁶ Dafoe Papers, J.W. Dafoe to Sir Robert Borden, September 29, 1917.

²⁷ C. A. D. 1917 - 626.

Government advocating conscription. He was soon joined in the support of Union by J.A. Maharg, President of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, and W.M. Martin, who threw the prestige of his office behind Calder. On December 10th, the Premier said that though he differed with Laurier only over conscription, on that one issue alone he had no choice but to support a Union Government well supplied with Liberal blood. J.A. Calder, he continued, had long considered the question of Union Government, and eventually, with "the utmost sincerity of which a man is capable" had decided to accept Borden's invitation.²⁸ C.A. Dunning and Archie McNab joined Premier Martin in actively campaigning for the Union cause. On December 6th, J.A. Calder made one last appeal for the votes of Saskatchewan's electors:

Now is the time for action. Let the call go forth in every nook and corner of the Province. Patriotic, public-spirited citizens should everywhere take the lead ... Don't hold back, act now. Otherwise it will be to (sic) late.²⁹

Against the strength of the Calder organization, and the prestige of the Premier and the leader of the S.G.G.A., the Laurier Liberals fought a losing battle. For these men, loyalty to the leader of 1911, and to the great principles of Liberalism were the paramount considerations -- not conscription. Motherwell's one hope was that the majority of the farming west would refuse to put to one side their tariff and other grievances; that Westerners would recognize Union Government was just the Borden administration

²⁸ Ibid., P. 615-16.

²⁹ Ibid., P. 616.

hidden behind the names of a few disillusioned and dis-loyal Liberals, of whom Calder was the chief example. Speaking at Regina on December 11th, with Laurier and Langley on the same platform, Motherwell said that he believed "his former colleague, Mr. Calder, had been "duped by appearances at Ottawa". If anything was proof that the Union Government was just a facade behind which sat the "big interests", it was the fact that it recently passed the Wartime Elections Act, and the Military Voters Act. A truly National government did not need these artificial aids to secure victory. All that had been done by these franchise acts was that the "Government chose the voters instead of the voters choosing the Government".³⁰

For a time it seemed the farmers might not put aside their economic grievances in the election, but Crerar's inclusion in the Cabinet, the declaration of the Grain Growers' Guide supporting Union on October 31st, and J.A. Maharg's like action shortly after, virtually ended Laurier Liberal hopes that this might occur.³¹ The final blow to Liberal chances came with the granting of conscription exemptions to farmers' sons on the eve of the election.

The most obvious disadvantage experienced by the Laurier forces, was the lack of press support. The vociferous Manitoba Free Press wasted no words in its denunciations of Motherwell and Langley. "Room in the pillory for W.R. Motherwell and George Langley",

³⁰ Ibid., p. 602.

³¹ Ibid., p. 616-17.

blared out the paper on December 6th. "They have declared their membership in the Canadian Bolshevik party".³² The next day featured a less impassioned editorial:

Hon. W.R. Motherwell and Hon. George Langley, of the Saskatchewan Government, have declared themselves supporters of the Laurier-Bourassa party. It is well.

These men have long been known as secret, bitter opponents of the Union movement. Mr. Motherwell has one of the chief mischiefmakers behind the scenes at the notorious Liberal convention held here in August. Mr. Langley did not attend the convention, but his influence was there.

There will be plenty of time in the future to deal with Mr. Motherwell and Mr. Langley. They can be safely left³³ to the judgment of the Canadian electors of Saskatchewan.

This severe treatment was duplicated in the W.F. Herman papers in Saskatchewan, the Regina Daily Post and the Saskatoon Daily Star, which, since March of 1917 had been strong supporters of the Canadian Council of Agriculture Farmers' Platform. During the election they were strongly pro-conscription and pro-Union, but also campaigned to prevent any losses among their own farmer supporters to the Laurier Liberals over the tariff issue.³⁴

As for the Liberal press of Saskatchewan, both the Regina Morning Leader and the Saskatoon Phoenix came out in support of Union Government shortly after its formation. Once the election

³² Manitoba Free Press, December 6, 1917. Editorial Note.

³³ Ibid., December 7, 1917. Editorial, "In the Open".

³⁴ For a comprehensive survey of the attitudes of the daily press in Saskatchewan in both federal and provincial aspects of the farmers' movement in the years 1916 to 1926, see Lorne Alvin Brown, "Progressivism and the Press in Saskatchewan, 1916-1926", Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1966. For this particular reference see pp. 31, 39.

campaign got underway, they both called for the Laurier supporters to join with others in the West who, like T.A. Crerar, had forsaken old allegiances for the time being, but who would resume in Parliament the fight for low tariffs once the war was over.³⁵

Neither paper however, practised the impassioned journalism of the Free Press; but rather depreciated at every turn the type of campaign the Free Press and J.W. Dafoe were waging. By doing so, the Liberal press was taking the stand of most Unionist Liberals in Saskatchewan, who supported Union Government as the best Government to win the war, but opposed both the Wartime Elections Act, and the bitter racial and anti-Quebec campaigns of some Ontario and Manitoba Unionists.³⁶ The Regina Morning Leader constantly defended the integrity of the Laurier Liberals. After an editorial in which it declared itself emphatically opposed to bitter name-calling in the campaign, another editorial took the Free Press sternly to task for its December 6th remarks about Langley and Motherwell.

This is the kind of campaign (waged by the Free Press) which is driving scores of earnest Win-The-War Liberals away from the Union party; it is the kind of campaign which makes it difficult for all liberals to continue to support that Government. By the campaign it is carrying on, the Free Press is doing more to weaken the cause of Union Government in the West than it could possibly accomplish by coming out flat-footed and fighting against it.

It is not union among the people of Canada that is promoted by the tactics and conduct of the Free Press, but disunion.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 38-39.

³⁶ In his speech of December 10th, declaring his continued advocacy of Union Government, Premier Martin had attached these same conditions to his support. C.A.R., 1917, p. 161. The Morning Leader encouraged its readers to listen closely to Martin's stand. November 17, 1917. Editorial, "A Stain on Our Flag that

W.R. Motherwell and George Langley are just as true British subjects, just as keen Win-the-War advocates and practical war workers as the editor of the Free Press. Nay more, as minister of agriculture in this Province since its inception, and particularly in the years since war was declared, W.R. Motherwell had done more to organize and place Saskatchewan in a position to practically assist in winning the war than the Free Press could ever hope to do.³⁷

The tactics of the Leader in soft-peddalling Union, yet defending the integrity of the Motherwell-Langley group, did not only attract Laurier Liberals into the Union camp, but also avoided the kind of bitterness that could have split the Provincial Government in two. Undoubtedly the fact that George Bell, a part-owner of the Regina and Saskatoon liberal papers, remained a Laurier supporter, was also partly responsible for the moderate tone of the Leader and Phoenix. That Motherwell did not resign from the Provincial Cabinet in 1917 is evidence itself of the tolerant attitude taken by Calder, Martin, and the Liberal Press towards the Laurier Liberals.

As election day, December 17th, approached, conditions did not look good for the small group of Liberal partisans surrounding Motherwell and Langley in Saskatchewan. Only a few Liberal M.L.A.'s had joined their camp, one curious example being

³⁷ The Morning Leader, December 8, 1917. Editorial, "Quit it". The Free Press in return on December 11th, called the Morning Leader a traitor in disguise for its refusal to back Union to the same extent as did the Free Press. In fact, the editorial continued, most of the Saskatchewan Liberals were only Unionists on the surface, and Laurierites underneath, as they could not "afford to get into the black books of German and Austrian electors in their constituencies". These men would suffer the fate they deserved. They were "the Motherwell's and Langley's of Saskatchewan, who, at the moment of supreme crisis have betrayed the traditions of their race." Editorial, "False Friends and Open Enemies".

G.W. Scott, brother of ex-Premier Walter Scott, who had thrown his prestige behind the Unionist cause. Laurier had made a last minute western tour, accompanied by H.H. Dewar Liberal Leader of the opposition in Ontario, and W.G. Mitchell, Treasurer of Quebec, but as his biographer has noted, the Liberal Leader had realized that the people's cheers did not mean their votes.³⁸

The results were a foregone conclusion on the prairies. Only one Laurier Liberal was elected, and he in Alberta. In Saskatchewan 70% of the votes were cast for Union candidates, either Conservative or Liberal Unionists.³⁹ The dual base of federal Liberalism -- Saskatchewan and Quebec -- was destroyed by the conscription and Union issues. In Saskatchewan the election had served to break the remaining ties of the farming electorate with the Liberal party, and made any sort of rejuvenation of that party difficult by dividing its public representatives into Laurier and Unionist sections. It would take ten years for this crisis of federal Liberalism in Saskatchewan to pass.

W.R. Motherwell returned to the business of his Department once the election was over, but he nurtured a growing bitterness towards his former colleague, J.A. Calder, and to a lesser extent, towards Premier Martin. Calder, he felt, had betrayed the Liberal party, its leader and principles, by entering the Union Government,

³⁸ Skelton, Life and Letters, II, 198.

³⁹ In Manitoba, 80% of the vote went Unionist; in Alberta, 60%. Smith, "Politics and the Party System", p. 39.

and then using the provincial Liberal organization to secure Unionist victories across Saskatchewan. Calder, and the other Liberals turned Unionist, had been political opportunists, and had changed their allegiances merely to secure office. This animosity towards all Unionists, bred of Motherwell's strong partisanship, was to last the rest of his political life.⁴⁰ As for Premier Martin, his betrayal of the federal party, as leader of Liberal forces in Saskatchewan, had particular significance to Motherwell. His other colleagues in the Government, Charles Dunning and Archie McNab had not endeared themselves to the Minister of Agriculture. Motherwell remained within the Cabinet, but the seeds of more serious discord with his Unionist Liberal colleagues had been sown.

Conversely, Motherwell drew closer to the Laurier Liberals in the Cabinet. He was thereafter to hold warm regard for George Langley, although the "Honorable George" was later to be a strong force in the Progressive movement. He drew a good deal closer to W.F.A. Turgeon, the Attorney-General, and second in seniority to himself in the Cabinet. Addressed as "Alphonse" even in the most businesslike letters from Motherwell, Turgeon became Motherwell's confidant during the 1918 resignation crisis and during the 1919 Assiniboia by-election; and much later proved to be a valuable

⁴⁰ The discussion of Jim Calder's motives, and their validity, was to fill many pages of correspondence between ex-Premier Walter Scott and Motherwell. Calder had been extremely valuable to Scott, as the man behind the scenes, and had often been called the "real" Premier of Saskatchewan. Motherwell too had been close to Scott, and so the estrangement was particularly painful to the former Premier. See Motherwell Papers, Walter Scott File.

ally as Chairman of the Royal Grain Enquiry of 1923 and 1924. For later years, undoubtedly Motherwell's most important associate in the 1917 election was a young M.L.A. from Lemberg, James G. Gardiner. In Gardiner, Motherwell found a compatriot who shared his zeal and loyalty for the Liberal party and leader, despite the odds against electoral success. Both men felt that the practice of true Liberalism countenanced no compromises or deals with political opponents, since to make deals or compromises only exhibited a lack of conviction in the rightness of their principles and methods. Their identical views brought them together in 1917 against Unionist Liberals, and was to keep them together in the later fight against the Progressives.

The months that followed the election of 1917 were busy ones for Motherwell in the Department of Agriculture. In urging increased poultry breeding, and purchasing sheep for Saskatchewan grazing, he was fighting the War the best way he knew how -- maintaining Saskatchewan's contribution to the Allies' food supply.⁴¹ Nonetheless, as Minister of Agriculture, he soon publicly announced his disagreement with some of the domestic war measures of the Union Government. The first, the "Thrift & Prosperity" programme, had been carried over from the Borden administration, and had received Motherwell's criticism before. He was "horror-struck" by federal advice to farmers to grow more and more wheat, rather than to diversify farming operations; and to grow grain

⁴¹ C.A.R., 1918, p. 691.

year after year on the same land rather than to summerfallow every third season.⁴² The continued wartime sale and manufacture of oleomargarine in Canada brought him to the defense of Saskatchewan's dairying interest.⁴³ The strongest of his attacks was directed against what he called the "special interests entrenched" in the activities of the Food Controller and the Food Board, and he demanded frequently that T.A. Crerar, the new federal Minister of Agriculture, correct the situation.⁴⁴ Finally the April, 1918 extension of conscription to farmers' sons, during seeding time, particularly enraged him.⁴⁶

Privately, Motherwell confided most of his grievances against Union Government to Walter Scott, ex-Premier of Saskatchewan, and owner of the Moose Jaw Times. Scott had not been surprised when Motherwell had backed Laurier during the 1917 campaign, and had agreed completely with Motherwell's reasoning that Laurier, "aside from his great record and admirable character, had always been a splendid friend of the West". Nonetheless, Scott had supported Union Government, not wanting an alternative Government during war-time, he wrote to Motherwell, with "the head and body of it so much

⁴² A.R. Turner, "W.R. Motherwell and Agricultural Development in Saskatchewan, 1905-1918". p. 123.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 122.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 125.

⁴⁵ C.A.R., 1918, p. 691.

⁴⁶ Archives of Saskatchewan, W.M. Martin Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.M. Martin, December 10, 1918.

subject to Quebec". Had he been "in Calder's shoes", he continued, he too would have gone into the Union cabinet. "I hope you have not quite broke (sic) with Calder", Scott concluded,

I know Jim has lost the confidence of a lot of good friends ... I cannot believe that Jim's course was other than sincere, and if he was honest in what he did, time will vindicate him, and in the field he is in there is full scope for his wonderful capacity. I never saw a selfish or a dishonest sign in Calder and I knew him pretty well. I⁴⁷ am satisfied he will make good, as he always did with us.

Calder became a prominent topic in the correspondence between the two men. Scott did all in his power to justify Calder's actions in 1917, and was always concerned lest Liberals, such as Motherwell, would drive him into the Tory party, or out of politics altogether.⁴⁸ Despite Scott's representations, Motherwell remained unmoved. It was Calder who had to return to the fold and make amends. On September 13th, after noting that Scott seemed to be losing faith in the Government himself, Motherwell went on to write:

With respect to Jim there would appear to be from my viewpoint only one course now left for him to pursue, if he desires to return to the liberal party; not only return but take up the prominent place that he formerly held. That one, I think, is to come out from among them and that right quickly. No man can continue to be with such an aggregation, that secured election under such despicable methods and that have fallen down so lamentably in the estimation of both their friends and opponents, without himself becoming more or less contaminated by his environments. Even this action on the part of Jim wouldn't restore him to the confidence of many of his friends, as confidence is a thing that cannot be commanded at will, but something which once lost is

⁴⁷ Motherwell Papers, Walter Scott to W.R. Motherwell, May 30, 1918.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Walter Scott to "Uncle", July 3, 1918.

hard to regain ... We each must take him as we find him, and I have to confess that my finding, during last fall's campaign was most disappointing.⁴⁹

As 1918 drew to a close, Calder's continued presence in the Union cabinet increased Motherwell's disappointment, and when he resigned in December, his letters revealed that he even suspected Calder held a sinister influence over the Premier of Saskatchewan.

Motherwell's continued criticism of Union Government and its personnel still drew heavy fire from the Herman press in Saskatchewan⁵⁰, but the Liberal press, while continuing to support Union Government as well, was outwardly kind to Motherwell and his compatriots. On May 22nd, the Morning Leader defended Motherwell from the attacks of the Herman papers, and in other editorials forecast the reunion of Laurier and Unionist Liberals after the war.⁵¹ As the year neared its end, the Liberal papers' support of Union became lukewarm. Finally, on November 25th, Walter Scott had his Moose Jaw Times come out openly against Borden. This was followed on the twenty-seventh by the Morning Leader. It reflected a slow return to the pre-1917 days by many provincial Unionist Liberals.

Still, the Martin Government had said nothing to end the impression that it still supported Union Government. By December, W.R. Motherwell felt that any statement at all by the Premier on the issue was long overdue. The whole situation increased his earlier

⁴⁹ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to Walter Scott, September 13, 1918.

⁵⁰ Brown, "Progressivism and the Press", p. 45.

⁵¹ THE ...

exasperation with Martin's stand during 1917 and since, to the breaking point. On December 8th, he met with the Premier and,

most regretfully intimated that I did not see how I could longer remain a member of your government unless you quickly made an overdue statement on the merits or demerits of not only our present Federal Union Government, based upon its general record, but also on Union Government as to the probability or improbability of its being a means of securing prompt efficient administration during the present reconstruction period and during normal times generally.⁵²

Two days later Martin had done nothing to meet Motherwell's grievance of the eighth. Not only that, but as we shall see, he was more immediately alarmed about the future of French language instruction in Saskatchewan which had been put in jeopardy by anticipated provincial legislation. On the tenth, therefore, Motherwell decided to take the irrevocable step of resignation to make quite plain his disagreement with the Premier on both issues; it was to take place at Martin's pleasure. In his official letter of resignation he expressed the enjoyment he had had over the years working for the province, and regretted the need to resign. But, "while the war in Europe is now happily over", he wrote,

we are confronted with the strong probability of a mighty conflict in Canada between the privileged classes and the common people. As my sympathy and my heart are with the latter, I must have perfect freedom to champion their cause at every opportunity, in season and out.⁵³

At the beginning of this crisis Motherwell chose to emphasize Martin's failure to make a statement on Union Government as the reason for his resignation, and so enclosed in a separate document

⁵² Martin Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.M. Martin, December 9, 1918.

⁵³ W.R. Motherwell to W.M. Martin, December 10, 1918.

with his letter of resignation an explanation why some sort of statement by the Premier was in order. It centered around the argument that Martin, as leader of the provincial Liberal party in Saskatchewan, was obliged to give leadership to federal Liberalism within the province as well. Walter Scott had been "Leader of the Saskatchewan Liberals on both provincial and Dominion affairs", he told Martin, so that in Saskatchewan at least the Premier had always been looked on as Liberal leader in "all capacities". Motherwell was not asking Martin for a statement in his capacity as Premier of the province and leader of the Saskatchewan Government, though he admitted that Martin's performance during the 1917 federal election was a suitable precedent for such an action. Instead, with an immediate post-war election possible, Motherwell wanted Martin to give leadership to the "nineteen out of twenty" Liberals in the province who now looked to the provincial Liberal leader and Premier for guidance on post-war federal political questions, especially that of Union Government.⁵⁴

To Motherwell, there were many grievances against Union Government worthy of Martin's denunciation. For instance, there had been the needless expense of registering Canada's manpower twice, the continued "patriotism and Production" programme, the Wartime Elections Act and the activities of the Food Board. Union Government had been ready to adopt two white elephants as National railways, but had left the C.P.R., the "robust pioneer", out. The recently

⁵⁴ Ibid...

completed Natural Resources convention had been a farce, with the Prime Minister and his chief colleagues conveniently out of the country. Borden's promise to kill patronage in titles had fallen through, and while Motherwell gave the Government credit for successful Victory Loan appeals, and successful manpower re-enforcement, he noted that after encouraging farmers to expand, the Government had conscripted their sons. Finally, Motherwell told Martin, the Unionists, as a Government, were an impotent aggregation because their raison d'être had disappeared with peace. If federal Liberals in the province were caught leaderless in a snap election Motherwell concluded, these "high-tariff, profiteering, privileged enemies of agriculture" could "succeed in fastening their fangs once more in the common people and agriculture".⁵⁵

Although Motherwell asked for his resignation to be accepted sometime before Christmas, so that he might wind up his Department's sessional business, Martin gave him no such delay. On the 11th, Motherwell received a short note from the Premier regretting the Minister's decision and accepting his resignation. The Premier intimated that Motherwell's reasons for resigning had been under discussion between the two men for some time, but that during these discussions Martin had never completely understood Motherwell's position, since in matters of federal jurisdiction and federal politics, Motherwell had always been free to take any public or private stand he wished.⁵⁶ By turning around Motherwell's

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ This was Martin to W.R. Motherwell, December 11, 1918.

argument in this way, Martin was denying, by implication, that he need make any statement either as Premier of the province, or as provincial Liberal leader. In the first case, the grievances Motherwell had mentioned were "of federal jurisdiction"; in the second, of "federal politics", implying that since provincial and federal Liberalism were separate he was not obliged to make any pronouncement on the latter.

Motherwell's resignation was not made public on the eleventh. Instead, the two men met again that evening in one last attempt to settle their differences, but, on the 12th, in a final letter to Martin, Motherwell announced that negotiations were closed and that his decision was final. In this letter he enclosed a further elaboration of the reasons for his resignation, but in a manner that indicated he was taking a different approach from his first letter. He admitted that technically speaking, his complaints against Union Government, as outlined in his letter on the 10th, were federal questions. Nonetheless, he said, they were issues to which the Provincial Government should take exception, since they were part of a Union Government threat to provincial autonomy. The Natural Resources question needed no elaboration as a case in point. Secondly, the Wartime Elections Act deliberately violated "provincial rights and autonomy", since its passage had abandoned the long-time practice of the federal franchise being based on the provincial franchise. The Calder land settlement scheme was an example of interlocking provincial-dominion interests leaving "the former financially dependent on the latter". A dominion

proposal for aids to technical education and "an attractive and almost fantastic scheme of housing to say nothing of another attempt at Dominion administration of highways" were other examples of Union Government's attempt to tie every province financially to the central government.

There is therefore to me a danger to the autonomy, not only of this province but of all our provinces in the situation that is arising from week to week and from day to day and to which I have previously referred. And all these things are inseparably tied up with the question of Union Government, and this province's relationship mainly through you with that government. It is because of this I have been so insistent that Saskatchewan's government should be absolutely free to deal with each of these questions purely on its merits, and that cannot well be done with the well known political intimacy between the Minister of Immigration [James A. Calder] and yourself.⁵⁷

Taken all together, Motherwell's resignation correspondence as it related to Union Government seems equivocal. His first letter stated that his was a resignation due to Martin's failure to take a stand either for or against Union Government as leader of Saskatchewan liberalism. Martin had skillfully evaded the question by replying that Motherwell, like any other Minister, could think and say what he pleased concerning federal issues, and so need not resign. Since the resignation threat had proved powerless in moving Martin to make a declaration as provincial Liberal leader, Motherwell's letter of the 12th sought to do what he denied he was trying to do on the tenth -- namely, to force Martin as leader of the Saskatchewan Government to make a statement against Union Government policies. Motherwell did not even try to refute the

⁵⁷ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.M. Martin, December 12, 1918.

implication in Martin's reply that federal and provincial Liberalism were separate; instead he tried to show that a number of the political grievances in his first letter, were in fact provincial grievances to do with dominion-provincial relations, and so merited an appropriate stand by the Provincial Government.

If Motherwell's tactics changed over the three days, his purpose did not -- to break Martin's ties with the Union Government especially as maintained through Calder (intimated in his allusion to "the well known political intimacy between the Minister of Immigration and yourself"). Motherwell was worried that in case of an early election, the Liberal party in Saskatchewan, with Martin refusing commitment one way or other, would be without both leader and inspiration for the contest. "I cannot understand how anyone who pretends to lead is satisfied with merely following", he wrote to Walter Scott about Premier Martin.

Doubtless Calder figures in the matter somehow and advises procrastination until the nearer approach of the election itself. Some morning we will wake up to find ourselves confronted with the nearness of the battle and with⁵⁸ neither infantry, cavalry or artillery ready for the fray.

Motherwell's strategy in resigning did not meet with the approval of his two closest confidants. W.F.A. Turgeon wrote Walter Scott on the 12th of December that Motherwell had resigned, partly due to Martin's refusal "to make a public statement announcing his breaking with Union Government". Turgeon regretted Motherwell had acted so precipitately, before having a chance to see Scott.⁵⁹ Walter

⁵⁸ Archives of Saskatchewan, Walter Scott Papers, W.R. Motherwell to Walter Scott, December 13, 1918.

Turgeon to Walter Scott, December 12, 1918.

Scott's first reaction was dismay. He wrote Turgeon that,

I now very badly want to see Union Government killed and buried a million miles deep; but a fool course bringing dissension and turmoil into what I thought I could count on as a main agency at the execution and for the funeral, doesn't help me much.⁶⁰

Although he was later more sympathetic towards Motherwell's course when he heard of the part played by the language question⁶¹, Scott still remained concerned about the strains that had been intensified within Saskatchewan liberalism.

Mr. Motherwell's action teaches me something; or reminds me; Dissension is always dangerous. The fiercest onslaughts by the enemy are to be coveted in preference. Motherwell's action does not endanger Martin, but if Union Government "jumps" we have less chance to beat it in Sask. because of the dissension that the action inevitably means.⁶²

Scott, who described Motherwell as "desperately earnest, tense and sincere in his convictions, -- and I daresay prejudices too", felt his friend's attempt to provoke a statement from Premier Martin had been unnecessary. He didn't think the Assembly session could have passed without some sort of condemnation of Union Government by Martin's Government, likely on the natural resources issue. Sparing that, "some recalcitrant Member" would surely have made some such motion before the session ended. Finally, while he knew Motherwell lacked "political sense", he was most surprised that the Government had not tried harder to work out a solution by

⁶⁰ Ibid., Walter Scott to W.F.A. Turgeon, December 13, 1918.

⁶¹ Ibid., (wire) Walter Scott, to W.F.A. Turgeon, December 15, 1918.

⁶² Ibid., Walter Scott to George Smith, December 17, 1918.

inviting himself or Senator Ross of Moose Jaw to Regina to work on Motherwell.⁶³

Press reception of Motherwell's resignation varied. Scott's reproaches were mild compared to those that issued forth from the pages of Dafoe's Free Press. While admitting Motherwell had been a "devoted and competent public servant", it added that he was also "a violent and incorrigible" partisan, who had, in 1917, cared more for party than for state. "Petulant and rebellious" since, he was now eager to "resume the political hostilities" from which he, and others of his type, had been compelled for a time to abstain.

For Motherwell, the rabid ramblings of the Free Press about his resignation were so much hot air, compared to the important attitude of the Morning Leader, which indicated local liberal feeling. An editorial on December 13th took much the same stand as did Walter Scott. The Leader, of course, had been a supporter of Union Government until November 27th, and so could not agree with Motherwell's criticism of its policies before that time. Union Government was opposed now only because it had not a peacetime mandate.

Nor can The Leader agree with Mr. Motherwell that it is the duty of Premier Martin, and the Saskatchewan Government, to take a stand against Union Government as such. The Saskatchewan Government may, and no doubt will as occasion arises take issue with Union Government in regard to certain policies, just as it did not always see eye to eye with former Governments at Ottawa, both Liberal and Conservative. But even in the days of the old Borden Government, Saskatchewan's Premier and Saskatchewan's Government never took the position in the Legislature that the Government should be ejected from office.

⁶³ Ibid., Walter Scott to W.M. Martin, December 24, 1918; Walter Scott to George Smith, December 17, 1918.

Nonetheless, the Liberal press had no intention of treating Motherwell in the same manner as did the Free Press.

Mr. Motherwell was never in sympathy with Union Government. His attitude has been consistent throughout; he opposed it from its inception. His opposition, we know, was solidly based in honest conviction, and although The Leader supported Union Government for the war ... this paper always respected Mr. Motherwell's convictions and refused to follow the example of the Winnipeg Free Press and certain other papers in declaring that Mr. Motherwell should be placed in the pillory after the same manner that men of courage and conviction were persecuted in ages long past.⁶⁵

The attention given to the issue of Union Government, in resignation correspondence, in private correspondence and in the press generally, illustrate that this was the most important issue behind Motherwell's departure from the Martin Cabinet. As it turned out, however, it was not the immediate cause of Motherwell's resignation. Motherwell found he could resign more justifiably over another issue, on which he felt strongly, and at the same time provoke discussion on the larger issue of Union Government.

The Cabinet had been considering, since the first of December, a piece of legislation that would have ended all French language instruction in Saskatchewan's schools, except for special one hour per day sessions approved by local school boards. As such, it was a continuing response to popular pressure in English speaking provinces that had seen French language teaching restricted in Ontario with Regulation 17, and ended in Manitoba by action of the Norris Government in 1916. Motherwell was opposed from the beginning to the restricting of French language rights in Saskatchewan.

⁶⁵ Morning Leader, December 13, 1918. Editorial, "Resignation of Hon. W. D. Motherwell".

His liberal upbringing dictated against his ignoring the minority rights of any group, especially the French, and Laurier and Lapointe's stand in 1916 over Regulation 17 remained a clear example of the practice of true liberal principles. "The prospect of another French language question in Canada after what happened in Ontario and Manitoba was too terrible to contemplate", he wrote to Laurier.

Further, I was most anxious to not only avoid the possibility of such another upheaval because it was wrong in itself but also because it would prejudicially affect yourself. You know the roar that was set up last fall all over Canada against your race and your religion and now that Peace has come to this troubled world, God forbid that we should do anything in Saskatchewan that would help in the slightest degree to choo [sic] away that 'Blessed Dove'.⁶⁶

Motherwell's differences with his colleagues over this issue, which was so closely connected with the Unionist victory of 1917, were not clear in his letters to Martin. On December 10th, only one line referred to the "veritable Gethsemane" he had gone through in the past ten days over a "strictly provincial issue"; but that issue was not defined.⁶⁷ All Martin said in his reply was that he had understood that an agreement had been reached and the matter was closed, so he was surprised to see it referred to "in your statement relating to your resignation".⁶⁸

The reasons for Motherwell's silence on the issue were at least

⁶⁶ Scott Papers, W.R. Motherwell to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, December 10, 1918. This letter appears to be incorrectly dated. It should be dated December 14, 1918.

⁶⁷ Martin Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.M. Martin, December 10, 1918.

⁶⁸ ... " " Lin to W.R. Motherwell, December 11, 1918.

two fold. On one hand he did not want to place "Turgeon in a false position" as the single French Canadian member of the Ministry by making the issue public.⁶⁹ On the other, he could "not very well particularize what this legislation was in advance of the legislation itself being brought down", since it might undergo further change in Council.⁷⁰ There was likely a third reason why the language issue did not come to the fore sooner. Since Motherwell felt most strongly about the Union Government issue, he emphasized it in order to force a statement from Martin. By the evening of December 12th, after his resignation correspondence had been presented to the Assembly, and he had sensed the unfavorable reaction of the bulk of Liberal members towards his attempt to make the Union issue the cause for his resignation, he probably felt he had better make clear his immediate, and more justifiable cause for leaving the government -- the "last straw" of a long list of grievances. In an unprepared statement to the press that evening, as he left the Assembly chamber, Motherwell said:

My first letter to Premier Martin was written hurriedly and perhaps may create the impression that I am leaving the government on a federal issue. An attempt will no doubt be made to make it appear that such is the case, but the last straw -- and I want to emphasize this -- in influencing me, was the legislation which the government plans to submit to the assembly next week.

I found that nothing I could do would swerve the government from its attitude, then I felt I should resign to elucidate my position. When legislation comes before the house, I

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.M. Martin, December 12, 1918. See also Evelyn Lucille Eager, "The Government of Saskatchewan", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1957, pp. 295-97.

intend to use my liberty ... for which I have paid a tremendous price, and not abuse it.⁷¹

The next day the Morning Leader agreed that his resignation was justifiable on the language issue. "If ... the Government has decided on some line of provincial policy to which effect is to be given by legislation this session and which Mr. Motherwell cannot conscientiously support", the paper commented, "then, of course, Mr. Motherwell has taken the proper course, the constitutional course, the only course open to him ...".⁷²

Nonetheless, there can be no doubt that even if the resignation had been precipitated by the immediate question of language rights, the Premier's past and present support of the Union Government represented a preponderant backlog of grievances on top of which the language question was only "the last straw". He made this abundantly clear one week later when the language bill was being debated in the Assembly.

I told the Premier the last thing the night before I left the government that if he would fix me up on the language question as it affected the French that I would swallow the Union Government in silence for a while longer. Inasmuch,⁷³ however, as the Premier would not do this ... I resigned.

⁷¹ Manitoba Free Press, December 13, 1918.

⁷² Morning Leader, December 13, 1918. Editorial, "Resignation of Hon. W.R. Motherwell".

⁷³ Ibid., December 19, 1918. Judging from Motherwell's whole temperament and approach to politics, one cannot escape from the fact that, as he said, the language issue was only a "last straw". Other researchers have intimated that the language question was the "main" reason for his resignation. It could be termed a more "immediate" reason, but not the "main" one. See Keith A. McLeod, "Politics, Schools and the French Language, 1881-1931", Politics in Saskatchewan, ed. by Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (Don Mills, 1966), 38-39.

Martin may not have "fixed up" Motherwell on the question before the Minister resigned, but he did soon after. On the evening of December 13th at a meeting of the Liberal caucus asked for by Motherwell, Premier Martin announced a change of policy on the language question.⁷⁴ In a new draft of the Language Bill, French was retained as the language of instruction for grade one, although it was not to be used for grade two, a condition that had existed until then. Nonetheless, Motherwell reported to Laurier that Martin had "capitulated and conceded what Turgeon and I wanted with respect to the French language in our public schools".⁷⁵

If Motherwell in his correspondence with Laurier, interpreted this development as a victory, he gave Walter Scott an entirely different impression -- that Martin had used the language issue to "jockey" Motherwell out of the Cabinet, and so rid his Government of an embarrassing Minister. Motherwell related this interpretation of events to Walter Scott, in a visit with his friend at St. Paul, Minnesota on December 26th. Scott reported the meeting to Laurier the next day.

Motherwell paid me a strictly private and confidential visit last night -- we talked till 3 a.m.. His story amazed me -- he was practically jockeyed out of the Cabinet -- had written Martin saying he must quit if French language intention adhered to; then in Council the Premier threw a letter across the table asking his resignation.

Motherwell said to me (and he nearly split my desk with his fist) -- "I said 'Darn you Martin' -- I wish I could have

⁷⁴ Scott Papers, W.R. Motherwell to Walter Scott, December 13, 1918.

⁷⁵ McLeod, "Politics, Schools, and the French Language", pp. 139-40. Also Scott Papers, W.F.A. Turgeon to Walter Scott,

used a stronger term and I still wish it -- 'you can't do that with me; you have my resignation since yesterday'".

Dunning and Martin proposed withdrawal of both letters, and at length Martin withdrew his. Motherwell gave the Premier until Christmas to think things over but resignation was accepted 12th -- and then at once everything Motherwell insisted on was put in School Bill. I gather that Dunning, McNab and Knowles sided against Motherwell; Turgeon and Langley with him; Latta was friendly to Motherwell but almost neutral.⁷⁶

From Scott's account of the meeting, it appears that Motherwell felt he had been skillfully caught off-guard by the Premier. Just how much this interpretation can be believed is a moot point, since even Motherwell had admitted to Scott earlier that the "boys" in the Assembly had "objected strongly" to Martin's draft⁷⁷, and so their majority opinion may have changed the Premier's mind. Then too, Walter Scott may have dramatized the tone of the meeting. Nonetheless, Scott obviously felt very strongly in the letter, about Motherwell's mistreatment, even to the point of denouncing James A. Calder, the man he had defended so vociferously the summer before as a trusted friend and sincere statesman. As for Motherwell, Scott concluded, it would be best if Sir Wilfrid could get him into the Senate before "another Christmas comes".⁷⁸

Motherwell's resignation from Premier Martin's cabinet brought to a climax over a year of staunch opposition to the Union Government, and was caused primarily by his dissatisfaction with the

⁷⁶ Ibid., Walter Scott to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, December 27, 1918.

⁷⁷ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to Walter Scott, December 13, 1918.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Walter Scott to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, December 27, 1918.

Premier's position throughout, as leader of the Provincial Liberal party and the Saskatchewan Government. While he may have reluctantly admitted Martin's perfect right to his own opinions in 1917, he was far from happy with the Premier's continued Unionist sentiments throughout 1918. In December of that year with peace at last realized and so many other Liberals breaking with Union, Motherwell felt it was time for the provincial leader to make clear his stand, so that forces could be mobilized, with or without him, for the next electoral battle. The language bill provided an honest, if convenient, opportunity to resign and make these grievances with the Premier public. Martin, embarrassed by Motherwell's continual criticism of Union, was probably not adverse to letting him go, and so spent little effort in persuading him to stay. The language issue may even have provided him with an opportunity to "jockey" the Minister of Agriculture out of the Cabinet.

Motherwell's reaction to Union Government revealed a good deal about his approach to politics. His strong partisanship and his loyalty to leader and principles of the Liberal party were obvious, as was his tendency to blunt and open honest in stating his position. Equally clear was his belief in a close federal-provincial party relationship, in which the provincial Liberal leader naturally assumed the leadership of federal Liberals in the province. This theme was to re-appear less than a year later when he was to clash once more with Premier Martin over the relationship of the two branches of the party. The issue was to be the same -- loyalty to party and principle -- but this time the challenge came not from Union Government, but from the movement of the Grain

3. ASSINIBOIA BY-ELECTION

The Assiniboia by-election was to become the single most important event in W.R. Motherwell's political life. Following closely upon the National Liberal Convention in August, 1919, the October by-election presented the first opportunity to put the new platform and leader to the test in the West. For Motherwell, there was to be no hesitation in contesting the by-election. The new third party movement that had sprung up across the West and in Ontario had to be discredited by a head-on battle with the federal Liberal party, and defeated while it was still young. To his disappointment, Motherwell was to find the provincial Liberal Government under Premier Martin did not share his zeal for battle, for fear of attracting the enthusiastic Farmers¹ into the provincial political arena. In spite of these difficulties, Motherwell was to go ahead and contest the by-election himself, and go down to a resounding defeat. Although the results were to have a sobering influence on his tendency for headstrong action resulting in isolated political stands, the by-election was to remain to Motherwell his greatest political moment, when, against overwhelming odds, he stood by the Liberal Party's methods, principles and leader.

The subject of running a Liberal candidate in Assiniboia where during the summer of 1919, it appeared the Government was soon to call a by-election, was discussed in August in Ottawa during the

¹ The expressions "Farmers" and "Grain Growers", were commonly used to denote those farm organizations which were entering politics. Both were used, though less frequently, after these groups formed the Progressive Party in 1920.

National Liberal Convention between Premier Martin, W.R. Motherwell, and the new leader, Mackenzie King. Premier Martin had broken with Union Government only two months before to call for the nomination of delegates that he now led to the Convention.² Motherwell, who had expressed pleasure at Martin's resumption of federal liberal leadership in Saskatchewan, after their differences on the matter of the previous December, was attending the Convention as one of the Saskatchewan delegations' mainstays.³ At their meetings over the Assiniboia issue, all three agreed that the best course was to nominate a candidate as soon as possible, before the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, who had been organizing for federal political action since their convention in February, got someone into the field.⁴ After returning to Regina, and surveying

² C.A.R., 1919, p.779; Daily Post (Regina), October 4, 1919. Editorial, "Motherwell and Martin". The National Liberal Convention was organized, and eventually controlled by Laurier Liberals. They had refused to put Premier Martin's name on the twenty-three member committee to organize the convention, which included every other provincial Liberal leader, due to his continuing support of Union Government. Peter S. Regenstreif, "The Liberal Party in Canada: A Political Analysis", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Cornell University, 1963, p. 130.

³ Daily Post, October 4, 1919. Editorial, "Motherwell and Martin". There is little evidence on Motherwell's activity during the Convention, except for a line in a letter from Walter Scott to Mackenzie King in October, 1919, saying that had Scott and Turgeon thrown their weight behind Premier Martin as a candidate for the leadership, there would have been no contest, with it going to Martin almost by acclamation. The reason they had not advised Martin to run had "to do with Motherwell". One can only speculate that these two men wanted the strong Laurier Liberal to back their advice, thinking that Motherwell's influence with Western Laurierites, and even some French Canadians may have been enough to put the Premier over the top. King Papers, Walter Scott to W.L. Mackenzie King, October 8, 1919.

⁴ This was Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, August 23, 1919, and King to W.R. Motherwell, September 5, 1919.

the situation, however, Premier Martin changed his mind. On August 16th he wrote Mackenzie King that while the Grain Growers were "friendly disposed" towards the Liberal party generally, they would still nominate in Assiniboia even if the Liberals selected a candidate first. "It will never do", he told King, "for the Liberal party in this province to get into conflict with the Grain Growers' Organization"; if it did, the party could be ruined in the province for "several years to come". It would be better, he concluded, to "move slowly" in Assiniboia.⁵

Premier Martin had only implied to Mackenzie King, in speaking of the "Liberal party in the province", what was really on his mind. Since 1905, the Liberal Governments' successive electoral victories had been largely due to the presence of prominent "S.G.G.A. men" such as W.R. Motherwell, George Langley, and Charles Dunning, in the Cabinet, which enabled the provincial Government to sense and meet farmers demands before they became contentious enough issues to endanger its existence. But meeting federal grievances of the farming population was something else, and since the defeat of reciprocity in 1911, these grievances had been growing, and with it a disenchantment with the federal Liberal party as an effective political tool for the West.⁶ In 1919,

⁵ Ibid., W.M. Martin to W.L. Mackenzie King, August 16, 1919.

⁶ W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party, p. 25. See also Morton's analysis of Progressivism within the historical framework of Western Canadian politics in "The Bias of Prairie Politics", Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 3rd Ser., Vol. XLIX, Sec. II, June, 1955, pp. 57-66.

the tariff grievance, put aside during wartime, re-emerged stronger than ever, accompanied by dissatisfaction over the high cost of living, the discontinuation of the Wheat Board, and the conscription of farmers' sons.⁷ The result was the formation of a Farmers' party. While Martin could do nothing about meeting these federal grievances, he could not ignore the effects of this dissatisfaction on provincial politics, especially when it became evident that many Grain Growers were ready to turn out any established Government, despite its record, just for the sake of it.⁸ To avoid provoking the Grain Growers into entering the provincial political field, then, it became necessary to shun public shows of support for the Farmers' federal political enemies -- including the federal Liberal party. If a federal Liberal candidate were nominated in Assiniboia, his short reunion with federal Liberalism would have to come to an end in order to save his own Government from the fate that was soon to befall less politically astute Liberal regimes in Manitoba and Alberta.

⁷ W.L. Morton, "The Western Progressive Movement, 1919-1921", Report of the Canadian Historical Association, May 23-24, 1946. pp. 46-47.

⁸ It was only direct intervention of J.B. Musselman, Secretary of the S.G.G.A., and other leaders that prevented the organization from entering provincial politics in 1919. Smith, "Politics and the Party System", pp. 67-68. Musselman wrote to Motherwell in June, 1921 that though it sounded like "rank egotism", Had I had in June, 1919, I could have capitalized on the popular demand for a Grain Growers' political organization covering both federal and provincial fields which, if it had not absolutely overthrown the existing Government of Saskatchewan during the recent election, and I believe it would, would at least have brought about a condition as chaotic as that which exists in Manitoba.

Association of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association
-- to W.R. Motherwell, June 17, 1921.

Motherwell met with the Premier in Regina on August 21st, and noting with disappointment Martin's new frame of mind, blamed it rightly on a reluctance to fight a grain grower due to provincial political considerations, but also speculated that Martin did not want to fight J.A. Calder's nominee in Assiniboia either.⁹ Motherwell returned to Abernethy for the harvest, and had no more meetings with the Premier, despite Mackenzie King's encouraging him to do so.¹⁰ Instead, he chose to present his arguments for a Liberal nomination in Assiniboia by letter, in order to have, he told King, "a much better record of events than a quickly forgotten conversation".¹¹ Obviously, Motherwell meant to make both his own, and the Premier's positions clear for future reference. This time he would have a written record should history repeat itself, and Liberalism be betrayed by political opportunism. " ... you will think I am somewhat mistrustful of the provincial Liberal Leaders [*sic*] wholeheartedness in federal politics", Motherwell wrote to Mackenzie King, but,

what happened after the Wpg. Liberal convention two years ago, is liable to make anyone distrustful & watchful that it doesn't occur again, after the recent Ottawa convention.¹²

⁹ King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, August 23, 1919.

¹⁰ Ibid., W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Motherwell, September 5, 1919.

¹¹ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 11, 1919.

¹² Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, August 25, 1919.

Premier Martin's whole approach to the problem of Assiniboia was to try to equate the best interests of the provincial party with those of the federal party, and so avoid, for the time being, making a statement separating completely his provincial organization from the federal party. Even if the new Liberal platform did merit the support of all "progressive people", it was just as much in Liberal interests to avoid creating a split in the low-tariff vote should the Grain Growers stay intent on nominating a candidate in Assiniboia on their own New National Policy Platform. Perhaps even a joint Liberal-Progressive candidature could be arranged, but if not, then the "most important object to keep in mind", he replied on September 3rd to Motherwell's representations, was,

that someone, whether a Grain Grower or a Liberal, goes to Ottawa who will at all times support the principles for which both the Liberals and the Grain Growers in this Province stand. He must represent the true sentiment of the West and if he does this it will make little difference whether he is called a Grain Grower or Liberal.

If a Grain Grower were nominated, he preferred placing no Liberal candidate in the field -- a course identical to that of Mackenzie King in Glengarry-Stormont.¹³

As a result, the Premier's course was to do nothing, letting events take care of themselves. The Grain Growers would nominate a low-tariff candidate, in what promised to be a large convention

¹³ Ibid., W.M. Martin to W.R. Motherwell, September 3, 1919. King had refused to run against a Farmer candidate in this constituency, in making a bid for a seat in the House as new Leader of the Opposition. R. MacGregor Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, 1874-1923 (Toronto: 1958), p. 313.

already set for September 25th. The local Liberals, outmanoeuvred, and seeing the popularity of the Farmers' party, would probably fall in behind the Grain Growers' candidate, and in the ensuing by-election, the Liberal Government would be able to endear itself to the Farmers by supporting their low-tariff candidate. This "wait and see" attitude he justified by telling Motherwell that since discussions with local Liberals had indicated there was no consensus of opinion as to what to do, it would only cause dissension in the constituency to "dictate" any particular course.¹⁴

Martin's decision to do nothing in the way of organizing the Assiniboia Liberals for the probable by-election was extremely frustrating for Motherwell. "A bold front in Assiniboia at this time", he wrote Mackenzie King on August 23rd, would "dispel half our fancied difficulties ... To display timorousness & timidity would be fatal".¹⁵ If the Grain Growers chose to fight, then the by-election struggle in Assiniboia would provide an opportunity to dissuade them from political action, and subsequent division of the low-tariff vote. It would also give the Western Liberals their first chance to exhibit confidence in the fidelity to the new leader and platform, scarcely two weeks old.

Motherwell's attitude towards the entrance of the organized Farmers on to the political battlefield was easily predictable. As one of the founders, and as the first President of the

¹⁴ King Papers, W.M. Martin to W.R. Motherwell, September 3, 1919.

¹⁵ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, August 23, 1919.

Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (called the Territorial Grain Growers' Association from 1901 to 1905), he had nursed the infant organization through its most difficult years, and had helped secure its first significant victories for agrarian rights over line elevator companies and the C.P.R.. He saw it as a vehicle for expression of farmers' demands, and as an educational institution -- "to educate [its] members in collective action, a knowledge of their legal and political rights, and an appreciation of the dignity of their calling".¹⁶ Outside of these functions Motherwell felt the S.G.G.A. should not go. In 1914, he had opposed a movement within the organization to have it undertake commercial activity under the Agricultural Co-operative Association Act, fearing that as time passed it would lose its original "educative character" and be looked upon by successive Governments as merely a "trading body".¹⁷ Political activity was worse, since it would gradually destroy the organization from within, once significant minorities formed over important issues unrelated to basic agrarian demands. Again, the educational value of the institution would be subverted, this time to the preaching of political propaganda. These facts and others, Motherwell felt, could be laid before the Grain Growers by a Liberal candidate contesting Assiniboia, and might turn the S.G.G.A. back from political action before it was too late.¹⁸

¹⁶ Morton, Progressive Party, p. 11.

¹⁷ Turner, "W.R. Motherwell and Agricultural Development", p. 106.

¹⁸

. Motherwell to W.M. Martin, August 25,

The by-election might also show the Farmers their mistake in entering politics and dividing the low-tariff vote at a time when it had to be united to defeat the Union Government. Since the Liberal party traditionally represented the low-tariff, and could continue to represent it on the basis of the 1919 Liberal platform, it was not to blame for dividing it, and Motherwell viewed J.B. Musselman's statements to that effect in a new Grain Growers' political circular as "gall and impertinence ... beyond description".¹⁹ Assiniboia, if necessary, would serve to teach the Farmers the error of their ways, even if it meant a loss to the Government candidate. "The inference to be drawn from your allusion to dividing the anti-government vote", Motherwell wrote to Martin, "is that the net result would likely be the election of the government Candidate".

This would, I admit, be highly probable, but even so, there would appear to be nothing but an actual object lesson in such an eventuality that would help to drive home to the Farmers of this province the unfortunate results that were bound to follow their advent into the political arena at this time.²⁰

Motherwell's whole approach to the Farmers' challenge was indicative of his conviction that bloc or class politics was a futile venture. The two party system, while not free from faults, represented the facts of political life in Canada. It was within this framework that farmers had to carry on their activities; it was in the Liberal party that these activities would lead to concrete

¹⁹ Ibid...

²⁰ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.M. Martin, September 10, 1919.

solutions from the seats of power.

Finally, a fight in Assiniboia not only exhibited his belligerent attitude towards the third party movement, but also his loyalty to a new leader, and his conviction of the propriety of the new platform for the West. By September 10th nothing had been done by the Premier to organize a concerted Liberal front in the constituency, as Motherwell had urged him to do on August 25th,²¹ and so the former Minister wrote to Martin once more. Since the Liberal party had just held a "most successful and enthusiastic political convention", had adopted "the most progressive, comprehensive and practical platform" and had chosen a "most promising leader", there was no excuse for the party to bow out to anyone in Assiniboia, which would be a crucial preliminary test of strength to the eventual federal election. "... The question that now confronts us", Motherwell concluded, was simply this -- "are we as a Liberal party in Saskatchewan going to fight in Assiniboia or are we going to funk?"²²

Since this letter of the tenth was part of the series between the Premier and Motherwell, meant by the latter to be a "record" of events, it went on to refute in detail various arguments in an earlier letter from the Premier against contesting Assiniboia.²³ Of particular interest was Motherwell's point that the Grain

²¹ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.M. Martin, August 25, 1919.

²² Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.M. Martin, September 10, 1919.

²³ These reasons had been enunciated to Motherwell in a letter on September 3rd. Ibid., W.R. Martin to W.R. Motherwell.

Growers' movement also contained former Tories, and should one be nominated and subsequently unopposed, he would certainly not be a trustworthy custodian of Liberal low-tariff sentiments. Motherwell also took exception to Martin's concern about offending constituency autonomy. "There is a wide margin", he wrote, between "dictation and doing nothing", such as "consulting, advising, informing and generally keeping in touch with the wishes and hopes and aspiration of our friends in the constituency in question". As for local differences of opinion on the proper course, they would always exist in any situation, and delay to present a bold front had so far only served to let many good friends wander into the Grain Growers' camp for want of leadership. That leadership had to come from Regina, and even Motherwell, at this time, refused to go into the constituency without Martin's sanction. Mackenzie King counted on Martin's support, as would Martin were situations reversed.

Our duty, as a party, is to go on and take up the gage of battle when thrown down as of yore; and yours, as I see it is, having put your hand to the plow in calling recent federal constituency conventions [to select National Convention delegates] , not to now turn back.

"You hold the key to success in the West ..." he concluded.²⁴

It was undoubtedly a strong case for action in Assiniboia. But Martin remained unmoved, leaving Motherwell no doubt on September 19th that he meant to continue the present course of inaction. While "glad to have your views" he wrote in a short note, he had

²⁴ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.M. Martin, September 10, 1919.

secured the approval of all his Cabinet colleagues in taking his present course in Assiniboia.²⁵ Motherwell suspected there was more to it than that. He had written to King on September 11th that Premier Martin had not the will to overcome the influence of "two evil genii, one within -- Mr. Dunning & the other without -- Mr. Calder -- his Cabinet".²⁶ He was undoubtedly implying that Dunning encouraged co-operation with the Grain Growers, while Calder, the Premier's personal friend, tried to prevent a Liberal candidate from opposing a Government standard bearer.

The only man whose influence Motherwell felt might be effective in goading Martin to action was Mackenzie King. Throughout the weeks following the Liberal Convention, the Liberal leader was kept well informed of events in Assiniboia by Motherwell, who also sent along copies of the correspondence between himself and Martin on the issue.²⁷ On August 25th, with a Grain Growers' convention called for the 25th of September, and alarmed that no directives had yet gone from Regina to the Assiniboia Liberals, Motherwell

²⁵ W.M. Martin to W.R. Motherwell, September 18, 1919. Published with the rest of the Martin-Motherwell correspondence over Assiniboia in the Morning Leader, November 18, 1919. It is unclear who released the letters to the press, but it appears to have been Premier Martin, who wanted to show he had not approved Motherwell's candidature in Assiniboia.

²⁶ King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 11, 1919.

²⁷ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, August 23, 1919. When Motherwell sent the first letter to Martin along to King, he suggested King not mention his receipt of it to anyone, since it was marked "personal". W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, August 25, 1919.

specifically suggested to King that he write the Premier.²⁸ King complied, telling Motherwell that he was "wholly in accord" with Motherwell's "views and suggestions".

I do hope that somehow our friends in Assiniboia will find it possible to get the right candidate in the field. In every way it seems to me of the utmost importance that a Liberal Convention should be held before the Grain Growers' Convention on September 25th.²⁹

This was also the general tenor of the letter he wrote to Martin. While King hoped conflict with the Grain Growers would be avoided, and felt the most important thing was to have a candidate in Ottawa who would sit with the Opposition, nonetheless, in the Assiniboia by-election, the most important of all those up and coming, he wanted to avoid what had happened in Glengarry-Stormont, where a well-known Liberal had been nominated by the Farmers before a Liberal convention could be held to nominate himself.³⁰ He had not written to the Premier before, because he had been assured by the Premier that good care was being taken of the matter,³¹ but now a number of Liberal Members were demanding to know if a Liberal was "being pushed", especially with a Grain Growers convention having been called.³² Martin replied that it was still

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Motherwell, September 5, 1919.

³⁰ King told Motherwell that his willingness to step down for a Grain Grower in Glengarry Stormont, should move the Grain Growers to return the favor in Assiniboia. Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., W.M. Martin to W.L. Mackenzie King, August 16, 1919; W.L. Mackenzie King to W.M. Martin, August 20, 1919.

³² Ibid., W.L. Mackenzie King to W.M. Martin, September 5, 1919.

necessary to proceed slowly, and not get the opposition of the Grain Growers' organization. He told King a number of "strong Liberals" in the Province favored opposing the Grain Growers' Candidate, but

the majority of the men whom I consult feel that it would be far better ultimately to support the Grain Grower Candidate in some of the constituencies rather than get the Liberals in active opposition to the Grain Growers.³³

It was obvious that in Martin's mind, Assiniboia would be one of those constituencies.

Meanwhile, without encouragement from Premier Martin, a number of Liberals in Assiniboia had called a nominating convention for September 16, at Arcola. The constituency had long been a Liberal stronghold in Saskatchewan, represented until recently by J.G. Turriff, whose appointment to the Senate as a Unionist Liberal in 1918 had vacated the seat, and so there were a good many strong Liberals in the constituency who, like Motherwell, refused to be attracted by the third party scheme of the Grain Growers. On the other hand a number of prominent Liberals had already joined the new movement, while others were looking for an easy way out of avoiding a contest with the Grain Growers, especially the Liberal merchants of Arcola, Carlyle and Estevan, who depended on the business of the rural Grain Grower areas. At the meeting on the 16th, reports from the constituency's delegates to the National Convention in August at first generated some enthusiasm, but when discussion turned to nominating a candidate in the by-election now

³³ Ibid., W.M. Martin to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 8, 1919.

scheduled for October 27, a large group favored leaving the decision until after the Grain Growers' Convention, and a resolution was proposed to that effect. Although this resolution was defeated, the converse motion for immediate nomination of a candidate only passed by 65 votes to 64,³⁴ and the chairman ruled, with the general approval of all, that the margin of approval was too slim to be proceeded on. It was subsequently decided to adjourn for ten days and meet again after the Grain Growers convention.³⁵

Motherwell was, of course, greatly disappointed with the outcome of the meeting, although he readily understood the predicament in which local Liberals had found themselves due to the Premier's inaction. Motherwell later charged that Martin had done "his level best to prevent a Liberal running in Assiniboia", and had sent his party organizer, Jim Cameron, and two other "handymen" to Arcola to "stall it over for 10 days till after the Grain Growers [sic] Convention, with the idea that that wd kill it eventually".³⁶ Just how strongly Motherwell felt about Martin's refusal to present a "bold front" in Assiniboia was to become evident 10 days later when the Arcola meeting reconvened. In the meantime it was a letter from Mackenzie King which gave Motherwell the additional impetus he needed, to appear uninvited at that meeting and use his considerable influence to get a Liberal candidate into the field.

³⁴ This vote recorded in Manitoba Free Press, September 20, 1919.

³⁵ The report of this meeting is found in the Morning Leader, September 18, 1919.

³⁶ Scott Papers, W.R. Motherwell to Walter Scott, October (probably 4 or 5), 1919.

Mackenzie King's letter to Motherwell on September 23rd, was written after King had discussed the Provincial Government's view with Charles Dunning, in Ottawa for the National Industrial Conference,³⁷ and reflected a subtle change of opinion. Dunning had probably stressed co-operation with the Farmers as being necessary. Accordingly, King now cautioned Motherwell that while "he was completely in sympathy" with Motherwell's desire "to keep the star of Liberalism in the ascendant", nonetheless, King now felt "some measure of approach to effect a union between the Grain Growers and the Liberals ... may be advisable at this moment" in Assiniboia, which could in time "help us" in the coming general election. He hoped that this would be the outcome of the two conventions on the 25th and 26th. King's encouragement for Motherwell to accept a co-operative arrangement with the Grain Growers in Assiniboia was unmistakable, yet the letter concluded with a sentence that implied the Liberal leader was looking towards an "agreement" between Liberals and Grain Growers, not just a voluntary withdrawal by the Liberal party from the contest.

Unless the Grain Growers are equally disposed to unite with the Liberals in accomplishing the defeat of the present Administration, and furthering the policies which they have in common, I have no hesitancy in saying that in my opinion our friends should see that a stalwart Liberal is immediately placed in the field.³⁸

For Motherwell, this statement was his leader's approval to fight

³⁷ King Papers, W.M. Martin to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 8, 1919.

³⁸ Ibid., W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Motherwell, September 23, 1919.

the Farmers organization in Assiniboia, which by its very existence, if not its intention to nominate without reference to local Liberals, showed its disinclination to co-operate with federal Liberalism.

Premier Martin had indeed a good deal of reason to fear the activities and power of the Grain Growers, as the enthusiasm of the Carlyle convention on the 25th soon showed. Ever since the locals of the S.G.G.A. had in June overwhelmingly approved the suggestion of the February provincial convention to organize federally for political action, the Assiniboia Farmers had been active, realizing that a by-election might be called at any time. On August 17th, a Grain Growers' meeting at Creelman had laid plans to contest the by-election, and had collected \$458 from the 300 present to begin organization work.³⁹ On the 18th, a 18 member executive had met at Carlyle, and among other things, it had been agreed that the entire Grain Growers' campaign, run by a salaried organizer, would be paid for by the electors themselves, and so plans were made to solicit contributions. Throughout the constituency, for every 10 contributors, one delegate, elected at polling district meetings, would attend a nominating convention at Carlyle on September 25th. The young organization performed flawlessly, and on the appointed day some 480 delegates appeared, representing nearly 5,000 contributing electors. With an impressive 6,000 dollars in campaign funds secured, the delegates subsequently nominated

³⁹ Grain Growers' Guide, October 15, 1919. See Smith, "Politics and the Party System", pp. 64-66.

eighteen men, including the past president of the constituency Liberals, Robert Douglas. After five ballots a district farmer, O.R. Gould, was selected over Hugh Cairns, a former Conservative, who was then made chairman of the campaign organization.⁴⁰ The entire proceeding was an impressive display of Grain Grower enthusiasm, votes and cash, and it was against these formidable odds that Motherwell was to take the field on September 26th, much to the consternation of the Provincial Government, and even of his closest political friends.

The reconvened Liberal meeting in Arcola the next day was poorly attended, though the Morning Leader reporter blamed it on the fact that no one expected a nomination to come out of it.⁴¹ Among the forty present, however, a spirited debate was carried on over a resolution to contest the seat. John Stewart, M.L.A., and a man who Motherwell had thought would make an excellent candidate,⁴² immediately advised against running. The Farmers' platform was acceptable, and their forces well organized throughout the constituency. Let a Farmer go to Ottawa, he argued, and he would come back a good Liberal. Richard Forsythe, an ex-M.L.A., also advised letting the election go, since most of the polling district Liberal executives had gone over to the Grain Growers.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid., October 8, 1919; October 15, 1919.

⁴¹ Morning Leader, September 27, 1919.

⁴² King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, August 23, 1919.

⁴³ Morning Leader, September 27, 1919; Daily Post, September 29, 1919.

Most of the objectors counselled waiting until the federal general election, so that political fences could be mended. These voices of despair were soon seen to be in the minority, however, especially after W.R. Motherwell had spoken to the meeting.

Motherwell first explained that he came "unannounced and unexpected", but knowing that the decision of this meeting was so important to the future of the "Liberal party not only in Assiniboia constituency, but in the province and throughout Canada", he felt no invitation had been necessary. He went on to say that their duty as Liberals and citizens was to meet the Grain Growers' challenge, and with help already promised from Alberta and Manitoba, to fight for the new platform and leader. Motherwell's frustration with Martin's inaction in Assiniboia then became evident. Walter Scott, when Premier, he said, had also led the federal party in Saskatchewan, but Martin had shown no desire for such a dual role. Motherwell did not come to give advice, he told the meeting, as much as he came to seek it -- so that what had happened in Assiniboia as a result of Martin's inactivity, would be prevented from happening in the remaining constituencies in Saskatchewan.⁴⁴

Motherwell's strong speech yielded immediate results, as by a vote of 23 to 12,⁴⁵ the meeting defeated an amendment to wait

⁴⁴ Morning Leader, September 27, 1919; Daily Post, September 29, 1919.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

until the next general election to put a candidate in the field, approved the main resolution to nominate a candidate immediately, and then nominated Motherwell himself, unanimously.⁴⁶ Finally, in response to Motherwell's request for advice on some sort of federal planning, the meeting passed a resolution favoring the creation of a central provincial executive for federal purposes, and asked Motherwell to take charge, with a view of organizing conventions in the remaining 15 federal seats to create such an organization.⁴⁷ Motherwell returned home to Abernethy that evening as a candidate in the Assiniboia by-election, and, as viewed by some observers, if not a little by himself, as the leader of federal Liberal forces in Saskatchewan. The next day Motherwell wrote to Mackenzie King:

I've gone & done it -- of which you have doubtless learned by the Press dispatches e'er [sic] this. When the choice had to be made of letting Assiniboia go by default or accepting a unanimous nomination I had to accept the latter. Liberalism is declining daily here, for the want of a fight -- & a provincial leader in federal politics.⁴⁸

Motherwell's decision to enter the field was more than just a spur of the moment response to the small but enthusiastic meeting in Arcola. For some time he had been thinking of running for Parliament in his home constituency of Saltcoats, but he had been enjoying his new role, since the previous December, as a private

⁴⁶ Morning Leader, September 27, 1919.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 27, 1919.

member of the provincial Legislature, in which capacity he was as he described it, "a free untrammelled lance" on the political stage.⁴⁹ He first considered running in Assiniboia when on September 5th Mackenzie King had suggested that he might take up the cause there.⁵⁰ Although at first hesitant to comply without having Martin's approval,⁵¹ Motherwell's eventual acceptance of the nomination was undoubtedly due to this suggestion, and the constant encouragement Mackenzie King gave to his representations and views on the Assiniboia situation. He would not have entered the lists had the leader to whom loyalty was so important, not shown approbation of his actions.

Motherwell went into the battle fully realizing the odds ranged against him, since of the constituency's 10,200 eventual voters in the by-election, approximately 5,000 had already become contributors to the Grain Growers' campaign fund. "I am willing to fight anyhow & take all consequence" he wrote Mackenzie King, "rather than experience the humiliation of doing nothing in the first opportunity that presents itself, after our new Leader & platform had been selected".⁵² The sincerity of Motherwell's convictions cannot be denied, although his political sagacity was very much open

⁴⁹ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 11, 1919.

⁵⁰ Ibid., W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Motherwell, September 5, 1919; W.L. Mackenzie King to W.M. Martin, September 5, 1919.

⁵¹ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 11, 1919.

⁵² Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 27, 1919.

to question. It meant a good deal of sacrifice to Motherwell. His \$1,000 indemnity as a private member of the Legislature would be forfeited, and most of the costs of the campaign would have to come out of his own pocket.⁵³ Beyond that was the harm a loss would do to his reputation for future battles. "If I lose this fight for arousing & defending the cause of Liberalism", he wrote to King, "I simply cannot afford another with all attendant expense & uncertainties. But I feel the line must be held now and the future will have to take care of itself".⁵⁴ With conviction that his course would benefit Liberalism, and with the support of his leader, Motherwell felt there was no choice but to contest the seat. Mackenzie King's congratulations must have seemed to vindicate his action.

Am delighted to learn of your acceptance of Liberal nomination in Assiniboia. Shall seek to have our friends here give you all assistance possible ... Will be better able to say after visit to [Prince Edward] Island [for his own by-election] whether before contest over it will be possible for me to go West.⁵⁵

Despite the odds ranged against him, the fact that "hope springs eternal" somewhat lessened Motherwell's fears that he was in for a sound beating. He felt if Regina and Ottawa would put their weight in behind him, he could win.⁵⁶ While Motherwell had immediate

⁵³ Scott Papers, W.F.A. Turgeon to Walter Scott, October 3, 1919.

⁵⁴ King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 27, 1919.

⁵⁵ Ibid., (wire) W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Motherwell, September 28, 1919.

⁵⁶ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 27, 1919.

assurances that King would do all possible to help him out, Regina, on the other hand, was a very different question. Perhaps Motherwell had hoped that Martin would view his speech at Arcola on the 26th as a challenge to the Premier to take up his cross and give leadership to federal Liberal forces in Assiniboia and throughout Saskatchewan. In working for this end, Motherwell thought he would have the assistance of one or two close friends in the provincial Cabinet -- particularly W.F.A. Turgeon, who had agreed with Motherwell from the beginning on the significance of winning in Assiniboia, and in immediate action to achieve victory.⁵⁷ Archie McNab had also favored this course.⁵⁸ However, Motherwell soon found out that Martin had received his challenge more as an affront, and that W.F.A. Turgeon felt that Motherwell should not have accepted a Liberal nomination after the Grain Growers had put Gould into the field. The result was a concentrated effort by the Saskatchewan Government to persuade Motherwell to withdraw from the field.

Mackenzie King soon heard of the deep dissatisfaction in Regina over Motherwell's course -- one he had been instrumental in encouraging. Premier Martin's letter of September 30th was blunt and to the point.

I have no hesitation at all in saying that this is a most serious mistake. It is most embarrassing as it is contrary

⁵⁷ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, August 23, 1919.

⁵⁸ He had, in fact, suggested to King that Motherwell was possibly the best man to run there. Ibid., W.L. Mackenzie King to W.M. Martin, September 5, 1919.

entirely to what we think should be done and I do not think that Mr. Motherwell has any chance at all of being elected; in fact, from information we have, I am quite satisfied that he will be hopelessly defeated. You can readily understand what a serious effect this will have on the future of the Party in this Province.

There was no "attacking ground" against the Grain Growers' candidate, who had always supported the Provincial Government and had supported reciprocity in 1911.⁵⁹ It was the view of every member of the Government that the only course to pursue was to "use every endeavor to get Mr. Motherwell to retire from the field", and Martin felt that King should try immediately to do so. If Motherwell did withdraw, it was probable the Grain Growers would not oppose him in his home constituency at the next federal election.⁶⁰

Attempts by Martin to have Mackenzie King counsel withdrawal, were matched by efforts in Regina among Motherwell's friends. Motherwell had approached both Turgeon and George Langley on Saturday, the 27th of October, to get their aid. He had written King that Turgeon had agreed to help him "on the platform" and that he had given Langley, a prominent Grain Grower, until Monday to make up his mind.⁶¹ According to Turgeon however, Langley had expressed immediate disappointment with Motherwell's action and

⁵⁹ Turgeon told Walter Scott that Gould had been a Tory before 1911. Since then, he had worked for J.D. Stewart provincially in 1911, and "particularly hard" in 1917. It was understood he wanted to be a Liberal candidate in the next Provincial election, since Stewart was understood to be planning retirement. Scott Papers, W.F.A. Turgeon to Walter Scott, October 3, 1919.

⁶⁰ King Papers, W.M. Martin to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 30, 1919.

⁶¹ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 27, 1919.

had reasoned with him for some time on Saturday afternoon to withdraw, even telephoning Mrs. Motherwell in Abernethy for her help. Turgeon himself had done the same.⁶²

It was on Turgeon that the Government pinned its hopes to persuade Motherwell to retire from the field. Motherwell's nomination had come as "a bolt from the blue" to the Attorney General, and had filled him with absolute dismay, seeing that Motherwell was sure to lose, and "dig a gulf" between Liberals and Grain Growers at the same time.⁶⁵ He met with Motherwell again on the 29th -- alone, and with others -- to persuade him to withdraw. Finally, he, Archie McNab and W.E. Knowles, the Provincial Secretary, went to him as an official delegation from the Government, and tried to get Motherwell "to adopt a reasonable attitude", as Turgeon later told Walter Scott, but in vain. No argument -- danger to provincial liberalism, expense of the campaign, or personal sacrifice -- would deter Motherwell. Turgeon realized why when he visited Motherwell alone once more that evening. Motherwell, he wrote to Walter Scott,

... then for the first time showed me a letter from Mackenzie King, written Sept. 5th urging him to go to Assiniboia and capture the nomination in order to get into the fight at once: also a wire from King congratulating him on securing the nomination and promising to come West and give him some meetings if he can possibly arrange to do so ... In the face of all that I could⁶⁴ realize how he could hardly refuse to continue the fight.

⁶² Scott Papers, W.F.A. Turgeon to Walter Scott, October 3, 1919.

⁶³ Ibid...

⁶⁴ Ibid...

With Turgeon's failure to get withdrawal, Premier Martin was undecided about what to do. While a couple of the private members planned to openly support Motherwell, most, dependent on the Grain Growers for the bulk of their support, would refuse to get involved. As for the members of the Government, a good deal depended on the nomination of a Union candidate -- then the odds would be better for Motherwell and possibly some corporate support for him could be arranged. Even then, things would be difficult. Langley was openly sympathetic to the Farmers, and the danger was not remote that both he and C.A. Dunning might go into Assiniboia on Gould's behalf. Turgeon and McNab, on the other hand, once their attempts to deter Motherwell had failed, were ready to give him what help they could.⁶⁵ When Motherwell opened his campaign in Carlyle the evening of October 2nd, Martin had not yet made a statement. His cabinet was divided, and his attempts to secure withdrawal had failed. Fortunately there were still two men that might effect that end -- Walter Scott and Mackenzie King.

When he had first heard the news of Motherwell's candidature, Walter Scott had expressed his best wishes to his former colleague,⁶⁶ but when Turgeon's evaluation reached him,⁶⁷ his opinion completely changed. He had already agreed to travel from Victoria, B.C. ... where he was now living for health reasons, to Regina, to help

⁶⁵ Ibid...

⁶⁶ Ibid., (wire) W.R. Motherwell to Walter Scott, October 1, 1919; Walter Scott to W.R. Motherwell, October 4, 1919.

⁶⁷ Ibid., W.F.A. Turgeon to Walter Scott, October 3, 1919.

Motherwell. Now, the help he would give was to be of a different nature. In one of his usually blunt letters he explained his intentions to Mackenzie King and sought his help.

An unusually good man, Motherwell has less political sense than any other man of my acquaintance. Prior to 1905 he had run two elections and lost deposits both times. Another deposit lost by him and his usefulness to any party is nil.

I shall arrive in Regina on the 17th inst. -- to attempt to get Motherwell to do the sensible thing, ie. withdraw his candidature. If on receipt of this you will wire him advising withdrawal, I may have a bare chance in succeeding in the attempt. I am not sanguine; -- but he is too good a man to see sacrifice himself; and I shall make the attempt anyway.

As Scott was writing his letter, Mackenzie King was taking action of his own. Having just returned from Prince Edward Island, where he had been nominated for the constituency of Prince, he now read Martin's letter of the 30th, and alarmed by the Premier's reception of Motherwell's candidature, carefully re-evaluated the situation in Assiniboia and decided to send Sydney Fisher west for a conference with Motherwell, Martin, Turgeon and Langley on October 12th. He wired Motherwell of Fisher's coming, but did not define the reason for the visit. Scott, informed of these proceedings, immediately sent his encouragement to Fisher to do his best to get withdrawal. "Our candidate", he continued, "never possessed good judgment in election matters, yet is invaluable man".⁶⁹

Just what happened at the meeting in Regina is not clear, other

⁶⁸ King Papers, Walter Scott to W.L. Mackenzie King, October 8, 1919.

⁶⁹ Ibid., (wire) W.L. Mackenzie King to W.M. Martin, October 8, 1919; (wire) W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Motherwell, October 8, 1919. Scott Papers, (wire) Walter Scott to Sydney Fisher, October 11, 1919.

than it failed to deter Motherwell from continuing the campaign. Nonetheless, Fisher's correspondence with Mackenzie King includes the draft of an agreement to be made between the Grain Growers and Motherwell in Assiniboia. The Grain Growers' candidate was to declare his opposition to Union Government, and, if elected in Assiniboia, his intention to support in Parliament Liberal resolutions "on the tariff, on agriculture, on reciprocity, and on taxation". Motherwell was to declare that since defeat of the Union Government was the most important consideration at present, in order to eventually secure "adoption of those planks in the Liberal platform with respect to the tariff, agriculture, reciprocity and taxation", then he would withdraw, leaving the Grain Growers' candidate, as the first in the field, to contest the by-election against the Government. In view of Motherwell's retirement, the Grain Growers were to agree that he be allowed to contest Saltcoats for the low-tariff forces in the next federal election. Parties to the agreement were to be the Premier and members of the Provincial Government, and officers of the Grain Growers Association.⁷⁰ This draft agreement may have been carried by Fisher to the conference from Mackenzie King, who, his biographer has noted "did his best to avert disaster by trying to make a bargain with the Farmers" in Assiniboia. It was the kind of co-operation that King had implied in his letter to Motherwell on September 23rd.⁷¹

⁷⁰ King Papers, Untitled, undated copy of memo on visit to Regina, Fisher-Mackenzie King correspondence, 1919.

⁷¹ Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 315. King Papers, W.L. Mackenzie King, September 23, 1919.

However, the discussions in Regina never got to the point of negotiating an agreement with the Farmers, as Fisher found his efforts to persuade Motherwell to withdraw were "futile".⁷² Motherwell apparently believed then, and continued to believe thereafter, that Mackenzie King was still completely in sympathy with his course. In determining the causes for defeat on November 4th, Motherwell implied that he had not once doubted King's approbation of his course, nor thought King responsible for the moves to have him withdraw.

What hurt our cause probably as much as anything else, except Martin's opposition, was the persistent [sic] & extraordinary efforts that were made right up till nomination day to induce me to quit the field.

Regina made no secret of this & so it became common property with our opponents. I can quite appreciate an honest difference of opinion as to the wisdom or otherwise of my entering the field of battle. With everything conceivable except our Eastern friends against us ...⁷³

Nor could Motherwell quit once he had put his principles on the line publically in Assiniboia, even if defeat seemed imminent. "Once having put our hand to the plough", Motherwell wrote to King, "turning back in the middle of the fight was unthinkable and impossible".⁷⁴ Sydney Fisher was on his way back east by Tuesday the 14th. Having failed to change Motherwell's mind, he had promised Motherwell all the federal assistance that he could muster before election day two weeks away.

⁷² Scott Papers, (wire) Sydney Fisher to Walter Scott, October 18, 1919.

⁷³ King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, November 4, 1919.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Walter Scott was not satisfied. He believed his influence might still stop Motherwell before nomination day, October 20th. He arrived in Regina on the 17th, and wired Fisher for King's "authority to speak for him as well as for myself in pressing candidate to withdraw".⁷⁵ Despite all his efforts, he too realized Motherwell's obsession with continuing the fight, with Mrs. Motherwell appearing "even more determined" than her husband.⁷⁶ Admitting defeat, he kept to his original plans and threw his energy behind Motherwell's campaign.

Scott's failure on the 19th marked the end of attempts to get Motherwell to retire from the field. Their ineffectiveness was proof of Motherwell's sincerity of purpose and belief that he was doing the right thing to forward the Liberal cause. It took more than this, however, to win elections, and Motherwell's organization for the contest was virtually negligible, what there was of it being headed by Richard Forsythe who had put aside his reservations about running candidate in Assiniboia.⁷⁷ Funds too, were scarce, Motherwell in fact, had to supply most of the money for the campaign, although Turgeon reported to Scott that he, McNab and a few others were ready to donate \$100 each.⁷⁸ In shortest supply until the

⁷⁵ Scott Papers, (wire) Walter Scott to Sydney Fisher, October 17, 1919.

⁷⁶ Ibid., (wire) Walter Scott to Mrs. Scott, October 20, 1919; King Papers, Walter Scott to W.L. Mackenzie King, November 3, 1919.

⁷⁷ Scott Papers, W.R. Motherwell to Walter Scott, October (probably 4 or 5), 1919.

⁷⁸ Ibid., W.F.A. Turgeon to Walter Scott, October 3, 1919.

last week of the campaign was platform help, with Motherwell and his wife's efforts being complemented only by those of J.G. Gardiner and Jack Stewart, both Liberal M.L.A.'s.⁷⁹ Mrs. Motherwell was especially important during the campaign, helping organization work, as well as appearing on the platform with her husband, and holding her own meetings with the constituency's women voters.⁸⁰ Of course, the bulk of the campaigning fell on Motherwell, whose rough and tumble platform style was popular, and whose speaking ability was far better than that of his opponent, for which reason Gould avoided confronting Motherwell in town-house debate meetings, leaving that task to his more experienced supporters such as J.A. Maharg and E.A. Partridge. Motherwell's reputation and ability meant that his meetings were well attended, with his best ones usually occurring in Liberal dominated urban centers, such as Arcola and Estevan. It was the rural area, however that was crucial, and while Motherwell found that the farmers might come to listen, they seldom came to sympathize.

He began the campaign stressing two issues -- the unfitness of Union Government, and the futility and error of the Grain Growers' entrance into politics. As days passed and a Government candidate

⁷⁹ In a letter to King, Motherwell said there were only "two others" platform workers besides he and his wife. From press accounts they appear to have been Gardiner and Stewart. King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, November 4, 1919.

⁸⁰ Her favorite topic was damning the Senate, which had she said, on Borden's orders thrown out some prohibition legislation in the latter part of the war.

failed to appear, the latter issue became dominant. Time and time again Motherwell reviewed the history of North American third party movements, stressing their transitory and ineffective nature. On other occasions Motherwell defended the record of the Liberal party in representing the West, stressing that the Grain Growers were not only going to divide the low-tariff vote, but also that should Gould win, without the colleagues Motherwell as a Liberal would have in the House, he would be unable to make his representation of Assiniboia count for anything by way of legislation for the West. On October 22nd, Motherwell's wife best summarized her husband's position on the issue:

The conclusion of the whole matter would appear to be that the present contest in Assiniboia simply consists of a struggle between those in the Grain Growers' movement, who with the best intentions are contributing more to the cause of continued chaos, than political betterment, and those⁸¹ who desire the restoration of sane and stable government.

The campaign did not maintain its emphasis on reasoned arguments such as these, and a good deal of the blame for this development fell on Motherwell's blunt and colorful, but often too exuberant platform style, and his lingering dislike and distrust of Unionists. When the Union Government candidate failed to appear, Motherwell began playing on the fitness of Gould as a double for that candidate, demanding, unsuccessfully, for a statement from the Grain Grower on his present opinion of Union Government. It was

⁸¹ This survey of Motherwell's campaign against third party actions was gleaned from the pages of the Morning Leader, October 2nd, 60 27th, 1919. Final quotation from Ibid., October 24, 1919.

not difficult for Motherwell to suspect a sinister connection between Gould's Unionist background and the absence of a Unionist candidate, and he began implying that the Farmers had Government backing.⁸² Some of his campaign supporters went much farther, the Estevan Mercury, for instance, charging that the Grain Growers' political movement was a front for Unionists who plotted to divide the low-tariff vote.⁸³ The Grain Growers retorted by questioning Motherwell's patriotism in 1917, and initiating other attacks on Motherwell's record as a Minister of Agriculture, his extreme partisanship, and on one occasion charging that he attacked the Grain Growers politically because of personal bitterness over his having lost influence ten years before in the S.G.G.A..

During the last week of the contest, the Liberal campaign went into high gear with the arrival of the low-tariff eastern Liberal A.R. McMaster and another eastern M.P., I.E. Pedlow. From Edmonton came Motherwell's Laurier Liberal friend, Frank Oliver, and from Victoria, as we have seen, Walter Scott. McMaster and Pedlow spent their meetings comparing the Liberal and Farmers' platforms, endeavoring to show their likeness on tariff and agricultural matters. Walter Scott extolled Motherwell's record, but did not help the cause by referring to his personal disagreement with the candidate over contesting the seat,⁸⁴ and by speaking out

⁸² Gould's Unionist background, Motherwell later admitted, was a chief reason in his accepting the nomination. King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, November 4, 1919.

⁸³ Estevan Mercury, October 2, 1919, cited in Brown "Progressivism and the Press", p. 82.

⁸⁴

.. October 27, 1919.

against nationalization of the railways, which he apparently believed was a cover for a private takeover by friends of the Unionist administration.⁸⁵ Frank Oliver's presence confirmed the anti-Unionist tone of the campaign, with the warmest meeting of the contest featuring a Gould-Oliver encounter during which Gould deprecated the "dirty insinuations" made by Oliver that Gould was and would be manipulated by the Union Government.⁸⁶

The attitude of the press throughout the campaign heavily favored the Farmers' cause. The widely-read Grain Growers Guide hailed Gould as the first Farmers' standard bearer in Canada, and supported him throughout. The farm weekly also attacked Motherwell's candidature as a "repudiation" of Mackenzie King's conduct in Glengarry-Stormont, and condemned Motherwell's suggestion that the Union Government was behind the Grain Grower movement as a "most ridiculous absurd, and untruthful suggestion". Finally, it labelled Motherwell, whose "political scalp" would soon be hanging from the belts of the Farmers, as the embodiment of the party hack.

Mr. Motherwell, as the first president of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, should have been the first man to support the organized Farmers in their demand for political emancipation, instead of that he has become the

⁸⁵ Ibid., October 21, 1919; Manitoba Free Press, October 22, 1919. Editorial, "Railway Nationalization".

⁸⁶ Morning Leader, October 24, 1919.

first man to attempt to keep the farmers under the thumb of the old political party.⁸⁷

The Manitoba Free Press also kept its editorial pages full of advice for the electors in Assiniboia. Having recently broken with Union Government, it paid close attention to the Farmers' course in Assiniboia, and, while without appearing to definitely support Gould, still pointed out the enthusiasm of the Grain Growers' campaign, the Farmers' right to run as a third party, their democratic nature and method of financing. It made a good deal of fun of Motherwell entering the lists "armed cap-a-pie" in a contest he regarded as "abandoned by its proper champions", with McMaster and Pedlow's intervention being proof that Ottawa shared this view. Such a fact the paper asserted, would hasten the favorable process of divorcing the "federal and provincial politics" of Saskatchewan.⁸⁸

W.F. Herman's Regina Daily Post was far more obviously a supporter of the Farmers than the Free Press, and continually defended third party activity against Motherwell's charges. As for the Liberal candidate the paper thought him to be sincere and courageous in contesting Assiniboia, if somewhat foolish. Interestingly enough, the paper, like the Free Press, questioned the effect the election might have on the federal-provincial Liberal

⁸⁷ Grain Growers' Guide, October 15, 1919. Editorial, "Repudiating his Leader"; October 22, 1919. Editorial, "Motherwell's Assiniboia Campaign", also untitled editorial comment.

⁸⁸ Manitoba Free Press, September 29, 1919. Editorial, "The Situation in Assiniboia"; October 22, 1919. Editorial, "An Awkward Situation".

relations, and on September 29th interpreted Motherwell's remarks at Arcola as an attempt to "wrest" leadership of the federal Liberals in Saskatchewan away from Premier Martin.⁸⁹

While W.R. Motherwell met stiff opposition in the Guide, the Free Press, and Daily Post, he could not count on the outright support of the Regina Liberal press. Obviously fearing to alienate the Grain Growers, and sensitive to the provincial Cabinet's position in the contest, the Morning Leader made neither a direct appeal for support for Motherwell, nor a direct attack on the Farmers. Instead, its editorials during the by-election dwelt on the record of the Liberal party in fighting for the West, warned the Farmers of creeping Toryism in their ranks, and emphasized the need for unity of low-tariff forces within the Liberal party. Perhaps as a last measure of indirect support for Motherwell, the October 25th issue began a serialized version of Moorhouse's Deep Furrows, the first chapters of which described Motherwell's role in the organization of the Territorial Grain Growers' Association.⁹⁰

As the campaign drew to a close, the outlook was not bright for the Liberals. Motherwell had not been optimistic of his chances

⁸⁹ Daily Post, September 29, 1919. Editorial, "The Nomination of Mr. Motherwell"; October 4, Editorial, "Motherwell and Martin"; October 9, 1919. Editorial, "Motherwell is Courageous".

⁹⁰ Morning Leader, October 9, 1919. Editorial, "Saskatchewan and Dominion Toryism"; Brown, "Progressivism and the Press", p. 85. The only Liberal paper of any size supporting Motherwell was the Moose Jaw Times, but Motherwell even had trouble persuading its editor he had Mackenzie King's support. Scott Papers, W.R. Motherwell to Walter Scott, October 10, 1919.

at first, but had found, as days had passed, a growing sympathy among the Assiniboia electorate for his strong, if futile, stand.⁹¹ By the end of the first week in October he had even felt that victory might be within reach if King could come out West, and if Regina would support him. But neither had come to pass, and as we have seen, he told King that the attempts made to have him withdraw instead, did his campaign a great deal of harm. Finally, going into the last week of the campaign, Motherwell was no longer optimistic. In fact, he later confided to King, he had known then that the election was as good as over when news of the "landslide" win of the United Farmers of Ontario in that province's election, reached Assiniboia on October 22nd.⁹² No matter what Motherwell may have felt in private, in public he closed his campaign with a good deal of bravado, as well as a measure of bitterness.

... the last gun of the campaign has been fired. I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith and everyone will know that Liberalism lives in Saskatchewan because principles are eternal and cannot die. I have had to overcome a campaign of misrepresentation and insinuation not surpassed in the bitterest political battles of other days. Innumerable restrictions have been thrown about my path. I have had pitted against me an opponent who has refused to disclose his attitude towards a government, that has cast a cloud of autocratic mis-government like a pall over Canada, and to which I have declared on every platform that I was unalterably opposed. My position is unequivocal and I have every confidence it will be vindicated when the smoke of the battle is lifted and the result declared.⁹³

If vindication meant victory, Motherwell was greatly disappointed

⁹¹ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to Walter Scott, October (probably 4 or 5), 1919.

⁹² King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, November 4, 1919.

⁹³

October 27, 1919.

when returns came in on October 27th. Of eighty polls, he barely managed to win eight, one of them being the urban Liberal Arcola poll, and the other seven being in French districts.⁹⁴ When totals were final, Gould had accumulated 7,712 votes to Motherwell's 2,488 -- a majority of 5,224 votes in a traditionally Liberal seat. In fact, the Liberal candidate even lost his deposit.⁹⁵ The agrarian press was jubilant. " ... the old party idol has been smashed and from its ashes has arisen something new in Canadian politics", exclaimed the Grain Growers' Guide.⁹⁶ "Mr. Motherwell ... has more enthusiasm for the Liberal party than ability to win adherents to it", wrote the Free Press correspondent.⁹⁷ In Saskatchewan, the Morning Leader described the Liberal defeat in Assiniboia as one over methods, not principles, and took issue with both Farmers and Liberals who continued to criticize each other unduly.⁹⁸ The Herman Press was just as pleased as the Guide over the Farmers' win, and as for Motherwell, the Post had only one comment, "Mr.

⁹⁴ Manitoba Free Press, October 30, 1919; Grain Growers' Guide, November 5, 1919. The French polls were won by Motherwell's stand on the language issue in December of 1918, and due to Turgeon's influence with community leaders. Scott Papers, W.F.A. Turgeon to Walter Scott, October 3, 1919. The Free Press reported that priests had taken to their pulpits in support of Motherwell, October 30, 1919.

⁹⁵ C.A.R., 1919, p. 387.

⁹⁶ Grain Growers' Guide, November 12, 1919. Editorial, "By Their Fruits".

⁹⁷ Manitoba Free Press, October 30, 1919.

⁹⁸ Brown, "Progressivism and the Press", pp. 88-90; Morning Leader, October 30, 1919. Editorial, "The Assiniboia Result".

Motherwell is -- as usual after elections -- sadder and wiser".⁹⁹

W.R. Motherwell may well have been sadder, but he still believed he had pursued the correct course in Assiniboia. He put the blame for his defeat solidly on Premier Martin, whom he described as a member of the political school that believed "battle should only be given only when victory is a dead sure thing", and continued to believe that the Premier and J.A. Calder, who were "still as thick as pickpockets" had not wanted to oppose each other and so wanted the seat to go to the Farmers by acclamation. Dunning too, shared the responsibility, since he had strongly urged that the Liberals accept the Grain Grower candidate. For the future, Motherwell wrote King after the election, he hoped this performance by Martin and Dunning would be taken into consideration before the Liberal leader accepted their advice on the political situation in Saskatchewan, which was bound to be the reverse of what he would tender to King.¹⁰⁰ As for his own action in contesting Assiniboia, he assured King it had meant but little sacrifice compared with being successful in holding the line until "this third farmers party of obsession blew by".¹⁰¹ He must have felt this course vindicated when Mackenzie King wrote him after the by-election that no one appreciated more than he Motherwell's

⁹⁹ Brown, "Progressivism and the Press", p. 88; Daily Post, October 28, 1919. Editorial comment.

¹⁰⁰ King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, November 4, 1919.

¹⁰¹ Ibid..

"fine loyalty to the platform and to the Liberal party" as exhibited in Assiniboia. Though a regrettable loss, King still felt that the battle had been valuable in putting the recent platform before the west, and was sure Motherwell had been successful in furthering the cause of Liberalism.¹⁰²

Although Motherwell still had faith in his political judgement, his friend Walter Scott did not. He wrote to Motherwell quite bluntly, that as an administrator, with his superb record as Minister of Agriculture for the province, and with his "rugged and blunt honesty", he was the best asset the federal Liberals had in Saskatchewan. But, he went on,

it is equally true that you have never possessed, do not possess and never will possess the sagacity of a mosquito in relation to elections or political management.

It was not a great calamity, Scott added, but it was necessary to rely "on more sagacious advice than your own", if his real value to the Liberals was to be realized. That first bit of advice, Scott concluded was to bury his obvious antagonism for Premier Martin and C.A. Dunning much better than he had in the past.¹⁰³

Just what passed through Motherwell's mind during November after receiving this letter, is difficult to guess, but one thing is clear. When Motherwell visited Mackenzie King during December's

¹⁰² Ibid., W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Motherwell, November 1, 1919.

¹⁰³ Ibid., Walter Scott to W.R. Motherwell, November 3, 1919. Scott enclosed this letter in one to Mackenzie King in which he counselled King to get good advisors in the West, but not to rely on Motherwell's advice in political matters, such as he had been doing. Ibid., Walter Scott to W.L. Mackenzie King, November 3, 1919.

meeting of the National Liberal Organization Committee meeting in Ottawa, the Liberal leader noted quite a change from Motherwell's belligerent attitudes towards Premier Martin during and immediately after the Assiniboia campaign. Then, Motherwell had definitely given the impression he was assuming leadership of federal Liberalism in the province due to Martin's abdication. Now, Mackenzie King wired to Premier Martin on December 4th, Motherwell had agreed in conversation that in all matters relating to Saskatchewan politics the cabinet should be consulted first, and its opinions accepted, as long as it was willing to be consulted and give opinions.

In private conversation, Mr. Motherwell emphasized this attitude by saying he was most anxious you should not feel that he entertained, in feeling or otherwise, the least kind of opposition to yourself, or wished to be other than perfectly loyal. He spoke of Walter Scott having written him suggesting that, for a while at least, he should refrain from taking too active a part in public matters, and intimated that he had decided in this connection to follow the suggestions made to him by Mr. Scott.

Nothing could have been finer than the spirit Mr. Motherwell exhibited in everyway, and I am sure he has only to be met in the same way by your colleagues and yourself to have him meet your wishes in whatever may appear to be the best interests of the Party.¹⁰⁴

Scott could undoubtedly take some credit for Motherwell's change of tone, but other factors must have been considered. First of all, the size of the defeat itself, with time, may have sobered Motherwell's enthusiasm for flying in the face of even some of

¹⁰⁴ Motherwell would relay the business of the Committee meeting to Martin, but before Motherwell arrived in Regina with this news, Mackenzie King wanted Martin to know some of his former colleagues "attitudes". Ibid., W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Martin, December 4, 1919.

his friends' advice. More important, Mackenzie King himself probably impressed upon Motherwell the need for unity with Liberal forces in Saskatchewan if any kind of success were to result. With the meeting of National Liberal Organization Committee having just recommended that the party not be openly hostile to the Grain Growers, peaceful co-existence with the Premier would be easier.

The meeting in Ottawa effectively closed the Assiniboia issue as a divisive factor within Saskatchewan liberalism, although Martin's performance continued to be proof to Motherwell that the Premier was more a political opportunist, than a Liberal. The Assiniboia by-election remained in Motherwell's memory his greatest political battle for the principles of Liberalism, first of all as it related to the new political movement, which like Unionism in 1917, threatened to detach substantial segments of traditionally Liberal support, and secondly, as it affected the relationship between the party's provincial and federal segments. In the first case, he fought the Farmers as he had fought Unionism, seeing in both movements the same characteristics of opportunism; in the second, he maintained that Liberal principles knew no provincial-federal boundary, and that the fight for these principles in Assiniboia was not only his, but every Liberal's fight. Yet, if Assiniboia remained a stand for which Motherwell always sought vindication, it was also the last of a kind. Thereafter, W.R. Motherwell was to be less precipitate in his stands, more diplomatic in his relationships with those with whom he disagreed, and more likely to follow the advice of those whom he realized possessed more political acumen than he.

4. SEMI-RETIREMENT AND ELECTION IN REGINA

Motherwell often called the two years that followed his defeat in the Assiniboia by-election his "political convalescence".¹ No longer a member of the provincial Assembly, he retired to his farm in Abernethy, from which he seldom strayed, unless it was to attend meetings of the provincial committee of the federal liberal organization, or to set up constituency executives. They were not good years for the western farmer -- the high cost of living remained after the war, but wheat prices fell. For Motherwell, they were especially barren, as he also had to rescue himself from the expenses of Assiniboia.

Politically as well, the costs of Assiniboia had to be paid, and the two years provided an excellent period for the Saskatchewan electorate to forget about Motherwell's resounding defeat, as well as his uncompromising stand against the Grain Growers. Motherwell was able to help himself by making a change in his approach to the Farmers. While still adamant in his opposition to farmer political action, and still suspicious of the Tory and Unionist elements in the movement, he followed Mackenzie King's lead in these years in trying to effect some kind of co-operation with Saskatchewan Grain Growers for the upcoming federal election. Motherwell also followed the advice of his leader in another important respect. Whatever success the federal Liberals could secure in Saskatchewan depended on some sort of goodwill with the provincial Liberal

¹ Canada. Department of Agriculture. The Motherwell Story, Comp. by D.W. Kirk. (Regina: July, 1956), p. 11.

Government, even if only privately given. Frustrating as Martin's course in Assiniboia had been, Motherwell found it necessary to remain tolerant of the Premier's desertion of federal Liberalism. His apparent change of tone towards both the Grain Growers and Premier Martin was to pay dividends for him in the 1921 general election.

The year 1920 saw the consolidation of the Farmers' movement into a national party. On February 26th, in a caucus led by T.A. Crerar, who had resigned as Minister of Agriculture from the Unionist Government in June, 1919, eleven members of Parliament proclaimed themselves as the "National Progressive Party". While this growing enthusiasm for third party politics on the federal scene was cutting significantly into the support the Liberals had hoped to garner in the West once Union Government had discredited itself, the danger of farmers entering provincial politics on the prairies was preventing Liberal governments there from helping out their federal kinsmen. In Saskatchewan, the Grain Growers' Association very nearly put itself into provincial politics at its 1920 provincial convention. A resolution was proposed and passed asking the executive to prepare a provincial platform. When J.B. Musselman, secretary of the Association, refused to agree to it and threatened the gathering with the resignation of its executive, the motion was rescinded. The best the advocates of provincial action could achieve was a referral of the matter to the locals

for their opinions.² That few of the locals even responded to the request was due not only to the past efficiency of the provincial Liberal government, and its quick response in meeting farmers' demands, but also to the quick and effective action of the Premier in publicly dissociating himself from the federal Liberal party.

Premier Martin had been considering doing this since the Liberal Convention in August, 1919. That convention had approved a plan of organization that made the Liberal leader in each province, or his nominee, a vice-president of the National Liberal Organization Committee, and the head of his province's six man delegation to the National Committee's meetings. That delegation also doubled as the federal Liberal executive for each province.³ When Martin returned from Ottawa, he had taken the first opportunity to warn King that he wished to divest himself of these offices, but found it difficult to find a suitable replacement;⁴ and when King had wired that the first meeting of the National Liberal Organization Committee would be on December 1st and 2nd, Martin had replied that

² Smith, "Politics and the Party System", pp. 68-69. The by-election victory of a farmer candidate in the provincial constituency of Kindersley in December of 1919; and the success of organization work in federal constituencies, especially Assiniboia, prompted the advocates of provincial action to press their case at the 1920 S.G.G.A. convention. Morton, Progressive Party, p. 97.

³ Regenstrief, "The Liberal Party", pp. 131-32.

⁴ King Papers, W.M. Martin to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 3, 1919; W.M. Martin to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 29, 1919; W.M. Martin to W.L. Mackenzie King, October 15, 1919.

he would tell the rest of the Saskatchewan delegation, but would not go himself.⁵ Most important of all, as we have seen, Martin had refused to help Motherwell in Assiniboia; but even this, it soon appeared, had not satisfied the restless Grain Growers, who contested and won the Kindersley seat in a provincial by-election in December. As a result Martin had tendered his resignation as a vice-president of the National Organization, and as a result, as leader of federal Liberalism in Saskatchewan, on December 11th.⁶

Still, the February convention of the S.G.G.A. was a close call. By mid-April, Martin decided to make his severance from federal Liberalism crystal clear to the electorate. He chose May 5th, and in a speech at Preeceville, the first of a series through Saskatchewan, he emphasized his isolation from federal politics.

A question which is being discussed considerably at present is the relationship of federal and provincial politics. I have always held the view that there is no reason why a man who happens to occupy a position in the public life of a province would be, by virtue of the position, forced to take an active part in the organization of any federal political party.

.....

I have, therefore, decided that as long as I remain a member of the government of the province, I will devote my time and my best endeavors to the affairs of the province. I will not be responsible for the organization nor for the policies of any federal political party.

Since December, W.R. Motherwell had made little comment, even to King, on Martin's growing isolationism, other than to remark on Regina's continued disgust over the Assiniboia contest; and its

⁵ Ibid., W.L. Mackenzie King to W.M. Martin, November 12, 1919; W.M. Martin to W.L. Mackenzie King, November 17, 1919.

⁶ Ibid., W.M. Martin to W.L. Mackenzie King, December 11, 1919.

uneasiness at King's prospective tour of the West, then planned for late January.⁸ His strongest words were those reflecting his own attachment to party and principle, and the likeness of the present situation to 1917.

Politics today with a great many seems to consist in making as good a guess as possible on the coming winner & then pile in behind him. This is the spirit & character of the politics that brought the Union Gov. into existence & it is still with us, largely because loyalty to party & to principles seem to be taking an extended holiday.

Most of Motherwell's correspondence at this time dealt with the political situation in general. The Union Government was in trouble with the electorate and Motherwell felt that it probably would dissolve itself soon and reorganize as a Conservative party, with a policy of moderate protection, if not one of a tariff for revenue.-- which meant the Liberals would find themselves outmanoeuvred over their 1919 platform by both Tories and Farmers. Therefore, Motherwell advised Mackenzie King to "challenge the Government" just as quickly as possible after the Parliamentary session began, on its attitude on the tariff, in the same manner as did McMaster in 1919; but to do so before the Progressives had a chance to do it themselves.¹⁰

Motherwell's approach to the Progressive threat had undergone a

⁸ Motherwell made only a short reference to Martin's Preeceville speech in writing to King. In public he said nothing, a sharp contrast from his outburst at Arcola eight months before. It was a sign he was following Scott's and King's advice. King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, June 3, 1920.

⁹ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, February 20, 1920.

¹⁰ Ibid.

change since he had entered the lists in Assiniboia. He still believed that the threat was the greatest one the Liberals had to face, simply because the Progressive platform was so much like the Liberal one, meaning both groups were "bidding largely for the same vote".

Thus each though apparently friendly & imbued largely with the same views on the major public questions are, in reality, more dangerous rivals of each other for public favor, than the Tory party is of either. There cannot be two Kings in the next Parliament & the farmers are going to make Crerar King if they can.¹¹

The Liberals and the Progressives would be the real antagonists in the next campaign, especially since the Progressives were ready to fight anyone, even Liberals, just to get "political scalps".

While I think general co-operation & team play, between the Liberals & farmers party is practically impossible under such circumstances, still it would be good policy to make the attempt, if only to see how Crerar & his friends view the matter, although their professions of friendliness will require to be taken with business reserve.¹²

Motherwell recommended working out separate agreements in each province, for the coming election. While it was best to avoid three-cornered fights in the West, it might be advisable to promote them in Ontario, and so prevent the Farmers from repeating a Drury-like victory. A sweep in Ontario, "with their inevitable strong contingent from the West & a few from the Maritime provinces", would make the Progressives, not the Liberals, the largest group in Parliament. It was essential, thought Motherwell, that the "aggregate result" for all of Canada be kept in mind in making

¹¹ Ibid...

¹² Ibid...

these co-operative agreements.¹³ Careful political management was necessary; particularly so because of untrustworthy segments in the Progressive party. In May 1920, in a letter to Motherwell, Mackenzie King was pleased that during the 1920 session the Farmer group and the Liberals had drawn closer together than had been expected, which increased the chances of an electoral alliance being made.¹⁴ Motherwell immediately voiced strong reservations:

I note what you say in your last favor with respect to the friendly feeling existing in the House between Liberals & agrarians. This is good as far as it goes, but too much importance should not, I think, be attached to it in planning our campaign in the general election. Remember Drury & Dewart. Decadent Western Toryism has passed over almost bodily to the farmers party, as the only possible medium in sight to beat the Grits, & Crerar whatever his personal inclinations might be would not dare to merge with the Liberals or even have a mutually¹⁵ advantageous working & fighting arrangement with them.

Motherwell was touching on only part of the problem facing the federal Liberal party in the West in trying to make any kind of electoral arrangement with the Progressive party. It was not only necessary to overcome the hesitancy of its Tory membership, but it was also imperative to still the widespread dislike among its Unionist Liberal members of the Laurier Liberals that controlled the federal party.¹⁶ This had prevented there being any halt in the shift of the Liberal party's pre-war supporters to the Grain

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Motherwell, May 15, 1920.

¹⁵ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, June 3, 1920.

¹⁶ Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, pp. 322-23.

Growers' camp after the 1919 Convention, and in Assiniboia, had helped to defeat Motherwell, who had not helped himself by attacking the Unionist elements in his Grain Grower opposition. Conversely, the composition of the Grain Growers' membership attracted the dislike of men such as Motherwell and Gardiner, who saw the Progressives as composed of Tories, or worse still, of Unionist Liberals who now were betraying the Liberal party a second time, and so were loath to consider doing any business with them. Motherwell's reservations about co-operation arose from his strong partisanship, but that he entertained any thoughts about co-operation at all was a credit to Mackenzie King's influence.

Throughout the first session of the 1920 Parliament, Mackenzie King's men were careful to avoid conflict with the young Progressive group in the House, and "where opportunity has presented, have gone far to co-operate with the Farmer group in some of the matters in which they are vitally interested".¹⁷ It was obvious that the plans made by the Liberal meeting the past December in Ottawa to avoid hostility with the Farmers were being followed, and when King swung through the West late that fall, it was equally obvious that the strategy was being applied one step further outside the halls of debate -- to try to establish a co-operative relationship with the Progressives in the constituencies. From the 22nd of November until the 30th, the Liberal leader toured Saskatchewan, everywhere attacking the new Meighen government as representative of "Big

¹⁷ King Papers, W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Motherwell, May 15, 1920.

Interests", and as the common enemy of Farmers and Liberals alike. He encouraged unity of interest and action, and was everywhere friendly to the Progressives.¹⁸

Despite this brotherly tone towards the Farmers, Mackenzie King found little appreciation coming from the prairie Liberal Governments. While Premier Charles Stewart of Alberta was friendly during his tour, both Martin and Premier T.C. Norris of Manitoba were publicly cold, although both Premiers apparently appeared at meetings in Regina and Winnipeg respectively.¹⁹ Mackenzie King even went out of his way to appeal to them as past Unionists, but it did little good.²⁰ While King was understanding of Norris' remoteness, Dawson notes that he regarded "Martin's defection and capitulation to the Grain Growers' Association as little short of treachery".²¹ His only enthusiastic welcome in Saskatchewan had come from Motherwell and Gardiner, who motored to Regina to greet him.²²

¹⁸ C.A.R., 1920, pp. 431-35; Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, pp. 244-46; Smith, "Politics and the Party System", pp. 92-95.

¹⁹ C.A.R., 1920, pp. 434-35. The C.A.R. reports that Martin returned to the federal Liberal fold in 1920. It completely ignores the Preeceville speech.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 434. At a Moose Jaw Luncheon all but three present had voted Unionist in 1917. Smith, "Politics and the Party System", p. 92.

²¹ Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 345.

²² Gordon Unger says the Motherwell-Gardiner reception was the "official" one, but it would appear that Martin made an official, if reserved, welcome, since he and three other Cabinet Ministers were on the platform at King's Regina meeting. Motherwell also accompanied King to Saskatoon. Gordon Unger, "James G. Gardiner, The Premier as a Practical Politician, 1925-1929", Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1967. Also C.A.R., 1920, p. 434.

There were also few signs that the Progressives were going to be responsive and J.W. Dafoe felt that none would be forthcoming.

Mr. King was very discreet in his references to the political movements in the West which are outside the old party lines. He devoted his attack exclusively against the Government which, of course, was popular with Western audiences, and he gave his blessing, so to speak, to the Farmers' party and to the Labor movement and deplored that they were not co-operating with the Liberals in a common assault against the administration. He may have had hopes that some kind of an official alliance could be entered into by which there could be a division of constituencies in Western Canada, but, if so, he will by now have abandoned them if he has the faculty so necessary to a successful political career of seeing things as they are and refusing to follow phantoms.²³

Nonetheless, Mackenzie King intended to continue pursuing this "phantom", and with his blessing, the Saskatchewan Committee of the larger National Liberal Organization Committee turned to effecting some sort of agreement with the Progressives of that province in January, 1921.

This provincial committee had been named on September 29, 1919, by Premier Martin, who had earlier written to King about impossibility of following the directions given by the 1919 convention to have existing Provincial Liberal Associations do the appointing. The 1917 Saskatchewan organization, he had told King, was in "disarray".²⁴ W.R. Motherwell's inclusion among the Premier's other appointments was probably more in deference to the confidence that King appeared to be placing in Motherwell in Assiniboia,

²³ J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, November 20, 1920. Ramsey Cook (ed.), The Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, 1917-1929, Vol. II, Manitoba Record Society Publications (Altona, Manitoba: 1966). p. 34.

²⁴ King Papers - W.M. Martin to W.L. Mackenzie King,

than due to any preference Martin may have had for him. The rest were distinctly lesser Liberal lights in the province, with only one M.L.A., Murdo Cameron of Saskatoon, included.²⁵ Since the committee was also the delegation to the National Liberal Organization, Motherwell attended the Organization's first meeting in December of 1919, but was unable to attend further meetings in June, 1920 and January, 1921. The reason was not lack of enthusiasm, but lack of funds -- a problem that affected the entire Saskatchewan organization. There were "only three or four of us", Motherwell wrote King in January, 1921, carrying the expenses of the Saskatchewan committee; there was simply nothing left for trips East.²⁶ While this could only reflect an impoverished position with the electorate, the organization had been optimistic throughout 1920 that resuscitation was possible in certain constituencies at least, once Mackenzie King had made his tour, awakening Saskatchewan liberalism from its "semi-quiescent, semi-expectant state".²⁷ While Mackenzie King had shown up as a "capable platform speaker with pretty liberal and progressive ideas", J.W. Dafoe observed

²⁵ The nominations were as follows:
 W.M. Martin, as Vice-president, or his nominee
 E.S. Miller - Imperial Life Assurance Co. - Regina
 W.R. Motherwell - Abernethy
 Murdo Cameron - M.L.A. - Saskatoon
 G.K. McEwan - Swift Current (soon replaced by F.E. West,
 also of Swift Current)
 Major J.H. Lindsay - Prince Albert
Ibid. W.M. Martin to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 29, 1919.

²⁶ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, June 3, 1920;
 W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, January 17, 1921.

²⁷ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, June 3, 1920.

that so "far as putting the official Liberal party back upon the political map is concerned, the trip, if it was designed for this purpose, was a failure as I think Mr. King would freely acknowledge himself". Resuscitation could not come from its own strength, it appeared, but would have to come through constituency agreements with the Progressives.

In order to secure agreements, the help of the Provincial cabinet was important. At the beginning of January the Committee²⁸ held two meetings with almost all of the Provincial Liberal members except Premier Martin present, and on the whole, prospects looked better than they had for some time for securing their "friendly & active co-operation". Motherwell was just as happy that Martin had remained out of these meetings, and was planning to stay out of the coming Saskatchewan federal Liberal Conference planned for the last half of February, because his "intimacy" with Jim Calder made him untrustworthy. Within the Cabinet, Turgeon was doing his best to help the cause, Dunning was friendly, and only

²⁸ The membership of the committee had changed. Only Motherwell and Major Lindsay appeared to have remained on the Committee which now consisted of J.G. Gardiner, M.L.A., Burford Hooke, Editor of the Morning Leader, and Charles G. Locke of Saskatoon. There seems to have been no Vice-president of the organization after Martin resigned in December, 1919, but W.E. Knowles, Provincial Secretary, attended the January, 1921 meeting in Ottawa, and appears to have been considered nominal head. At the end of March, 1921, Knowles was suggested to Martin for appointment as Vice-President, and C.B. MacIntosh of North Battleford was added to the Committee on Motherwell's request, increasing the membership to seven. Ibid., Charles G. Locke to Andrew Haydon, April 4, 1921; "proposed" letter from Andrew Haydon to Burford Hooke, April 21, 1921.

Langley was antagonistic. Yet all Cabinet Ministers were "desperately afraid to do anything to antagonize the farmers who might decide any moment & on the least provocation to go into provincial politics".²⁹ While this precarious friendship with the Provincial government lasted, it was necessary to get to work immediately on a plan for meeting with the Progressive forces. This was the purpose of the upcoming Liberal Conference, when it was expected, Motherwell told King, that

steps will be taken to approach the Farmers political organization with a view to affecting some sort of friendly co-operation in the coming federal fight, that will avoid the two Progressive flags being unfurled in the [sic] one riding. If we fail in this it will [be] because the farmers wont [sic] listen to any such sensible & honorable arrangement in which case we will just have to go ahead & put Liberal candidates in such seats as are urban in character or still comparatively unaffected by the Farmers propaganda ... The Liberal desire here is not to put any candidates in the field until every effort is exhausted with the Farmers to come to a working understanding with them.³⁰

W.R. Motherwell took the opportunity in replying to a letter from J.E. Paynter published in the Morning Leader, to make public the upcoming campaign for a co-operative agreement between Liberals and Progressives. Paynter's letter had taken exception to what the writer felt was King's attempt to induce the Progressives to join him under the Liberal banner.³¹ Motherwell explained that the whole idea of one group absorbing the other could not work and was

²⁹ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, January 17, 1921.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Morning Leader, January 12, 1921.

not intended. Some other solution was needed to defeat the Government, and yet retain the entities of the progressive forces. Such a plan was to be worked out at the federal Liberal Conference in late February, and an honest attempt would be made by the Liberals to get it accepted by the Progressives.³²

The Liberal Conference never came to pass. It was deferred, Motherwell later wrote, because of the approach of a provincial election.³³ The Saskatchewan cabinet had probably prevailed upon their friends in the Liberal Committee to postpone the Conference, since any public federal Liberal gathering at which a number of Cabinet Ministers appeared, might be disastrous. Nonetheless, while deprived of the substantial advantage of having a public conference to indicate their willingness to co-operate, the federal Liberals still kept up their attempts to secure an agreement with Saskatchewan Progressives by trying to arrange a private round table meeting with the Provincial Committee of the New National Policy.

Some days before February 24th, W.R. Motherwell met with R.M. Johnson, Secretary of the New National Policy Political Association in Saskatchewan. At this conference Motherwell advanced the proposition of constituency co-operation in the coming federal

³² Ibid., January 24, 1921. In an attempt to show the likeness of the two forces, Motherwell said that even he had been tempted to join the Progressives after his resignation in December, 1918, but had felt he could hardly resign in protest of the apathy of Saskatchewan provincial liberalism, and then join another party.

³³ Ibid., Letter to the Editor from W.R. Motherwell, June 18, 1921.

election. In doing so, he stressed six guidelines that the Liberal committee wished to see observed. Charles Locke from Saskatoon, Secretary of the Liberal Committee, later summarized them as follows:

1. That the defeat of the present Federal Government and particularly what it stands for, should be the first consideration of all electors opposed to said Government.
2. That, in as far as it is humanly possible, all personal and even party ambitions should be subordinated to the best interests of the state.
3. That every effort should be made to avoid dividing the low tariff vote.
4. That no nominations be encouraged in rural seats by any Central anti-Government group until after redistribution, or until it is apparent that redistribution is not contemplated.
5. That, where opposition groups are, or appear to be, nearly equal in their respective aggregate strength, in any constituency, a joint convention for the selection of a suitable candidate should be encouraged.
6. That whereas Responsible government depends primarily upon the election of a member who represents the majority opinion in a constituency, and whereas it is undesirable that a Central Executive interfere in an undemocratic manner with the free choice of a candidate by the united low tariff forces of any constituency it is of the utmost importance that nothing be done by any³⁴ Central Executive to prevent the taking of such action.

This meeting was followed by an invitation on February 24th from Charles Locke to the Progressive committee for a round table conference to discuss the proposition more fully.³⁵ R.M. Johnson's

³⁴ King Papers, Charles G. Locke to R.M. Johnson, March 23, 1921. While there is no definite evidence that Motherwell advanced the guidelines exactly as quoted, such is intimated by the correspondence between Johnson and Locke. They were put "on paper" for the record, by Locke after attempts to get a round table meeting had failed.

³⁵ Ibid., Charles G. Locke to R.M. Johnson, February 24, 1921.

response to the invitation, however, was not encouraging. While he agreed that it was "folly" not to unite the low tariff and progressive forces of the province to prevent their opposition to each other in the election, he confessed that "I am not [sic] hopeful of any arrangement being made in line with the ideas Mr. Motherwell submitted to me the other day". The difficulties were two-fold. First of all, the Progressive party had been organized not only to combat the Conservatives, but also to bring about "a new order of things" away from the faults of the bi-party system. Secondly, the basis of discussion that had been suggested, constituency co-operation, while it might be approved by the Executive, could not be enforced upon the constituencies, and might only divide the progressive vote into more groups. Nonetheless, Johnson said that he had informed the executive of his conference with Motherwell, and would bring Locke's letter to the attention of an executive meeting scheduled for March 11th. If it approved the proposition for a round table meeting (Johnson personally felt more could be achieved by two or three, than a dozen), it could be held that same day.³⁶ Unfortunately, the results of the March 11th meeting confirmed Johnson's apprehensions. It passed a resolution to the effect that since constituency autonomy was a "basic principle" of the organization,

³⁶ Ibid., R.M. Johnson to Charles G. Locke, March 2, 1921; R.M. Johnson to Charles G. Locke, March 7, 1921, Morning Leader, September 10, 1921.

and as the executive has no over-ruling authority over the constituencies, it is of the opinion that it is outside its province to discuss the affairs of the N.N.P.P.A. with the official body of any other political organization.³⁷

The Liberal Committee regretted the decision of the Progressives and sought to overcome their hesitancy by placing before them again the six points that Motherwell had covered in his earlier meeting with Johnson. In his letter to Johnson, Locke specifically drew attention to the 6th point as designed to deal with the Progressive's objection about constituency autonomy -- in fact, constituency autonomy was a necessary pre-requisite for co-operation, and a strong point of agreement between the two groups. "The above are the six most important points that the Liberal committee would have liked to discuss with you and probably so modify as to make them acceptable to both", Locke concluded,

but apparently we are still too far from the approaching significant political struggle, the result of which will mean much to Canada, especially to western Canada, for all opponents of protection and privilege to band themselves together for offensive and defensive purposes.³⁸

Even if nothing came of this final appeal, the Liberal Committee wanted their stand on record. Johnson's reply indicated that all talk of interparty co-operation was at an end.

The problems of social and economic reconstruction in Canada are big enough to require the intelligent thought and active co-operation of all the people of the Dominion. After a careful perusal of your letter, especially the six points

³⁷ King Papers, R.M. Johnson to Charles G. Locke, March 11, 1921.

³⁸ Locke's reference to constituency autonomy reflected the Liberal suspicion that it was the leaders, not the rank and file of the Progressive movement, who wished to avoid agreement with the Liberals. Ibid., Charles G. Locke to R.M. Johnson, March 23, 1921.

referred to, I wonder if we have managed to convey to you a proper conception of what this Institution, of which I am Secretary, really is. It was organized and is maintained for the very great get-together idea which you advocate, that all who found the old party Institutions inadequate to express their views, might find facilities for so doing. It would be hard to conceive of a more truly co-operative plan than that under which we are operating,³⁹ but it is a co-operation of individuals, not of parties.

The Progressive leaders were far too enthusiastic and confident to be susceptible to appeals of co-operation from the Liberal party.

The new party's explosive growth, and impressive victories had generated a faith in its means that its membership longed to put to the test in a federal election.⁴⁰ When one was winning, why compromise? The appeals by Saskatchewan Liberalism only served notice to the provincial Progressives that the traditional federal party of the West was running scared.

The provincial Liberals, meanwhile, had fears of their own. In an attempt to out-manoeuver those in the Grain Growers' movement who preferred to enter provincial politics, Premier Martin called an election for mid-June. At the provincial Liberal convention on May 14th he repeated his intention to keep federal and provincial politics separate, and on May 23rd, he made J.A. Maharg, President of the S.G.G.A., Minister of Agriculture. With these precautions, his government was returned to power, but the situation had been so precarious at the time that W.L. Morton feels that even "a month's hesitation might have meant defeat".⁴¹

³⁹ Ibid., R.M. Johnson to Charles G. Locke, April 4, 1921.

⁴⁰ Morton, Progressive Party, p. 106.

⁴¹ This - 110

Martin's emphasis on provincial Liberal independence during the provincial election ended Motherwell's earlier hopes of getting co-operation from the Saskatchewan cabinet in approaching the Progressives. Motherwell showed a good deal of personal pique when he wrote to King on July 1st.

Just a word or two to let you know we are still on the map as Liberals in Sask.. In spite of Martin's throw down of federal Liberalism, we practically all supported him at the recent Provincial elections & without which support his gov. would have been defeated ... Martin will continue pussy footing until he is quite convinced which of the two opposition parties are going to have the ascendancy in Canada.⁴²

With the provincial election out of the way, Motherwell made another attempt to persuade the Progressives of the province to work with the Liberals in the eventual Federal election. On June 14th, in a letter sent to all the main Saskatchewan dailies -- the Morning Leader, the Saskatoon Star, the Moose Jaw Times, and the Prince Albert Herald -- and through J.B. Musselman, to the Grain Growers' Guide, he re-introduced the question. Motherwell explained to Musselman why he was making another appeal to the Progressive party.

There are two outstanding claimants in Canada especially in Western Canada for the anti-gov. vote in the federal arena. One -- the farmers -- are young & well organized. The other -- the Liberals -- are an old but, in the West, much disorganized party. But they are both there & have to be reckoned with in the pending struggle. I did my best to keep the farmers out of politics, but failing, I am now desirous of minimizing as much as possible, the distinct advantage that such a step is bound to give the present gov.

⁴² King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, July 1, 1921.

whose only hope of winning, as I see it, is in the division of its opponents.⁴²

The general tenor of the letter to the press was to encourage co-operation between Grain Growers and Liberals as natural allies, since the Government, with the inside-track in the coming election would be doubly dangerous if three-cornered fights were allowed. Each provincial executive, he said, should make pronouncements approving constituencies that acted to prevent this type of fight. If either group stood away from a possible compact, it would have to take the responsibility for defeat. Once low-tariff forces had received the majority of seats by pulling together in the election, chances were excellent that they could also work together in forming a strong Government. Motherwell encouraged both groups to get busy in every rural riding to make sure of the job. The guidelines were five-fold: to defeat the Government; to subvert party interests to those of state; to keep in mind possible re-distribution; to secure candidates that would stick by the co-operative spirit once elected; and ultimately to unite all progressive forces across Canada. The methods were three: joint conventions; joint executive meetings; or endorsements of the other's candidate by one convention. Unless the two low-tariff western forces were united, Motherwell concluded, the advent of farmers into politics would mean the defeat of both.⁴⁴

⁴³ Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.B. Musselman, June 15, 1921.

⁴⁴ Morning Leader, June 18, 1921.

Mackenzie King was immediately pleased with Motherwell's action.

you, of course know my views concerning the folly of division and the wisdom of union of Progressive and Liberal Forces in the face of a common enemy holding political power and backed by great wealth. They are so much in accord with your own that, as respects the great part of your article into [sic] the "Times", my signature might as well have been attached to the article as your own, so far as indicating an expression of personal opinion.

He also agreed with the guidelines and methods suggested in Motherwell's letter and said he was bringing it to Haydon's attention for use in other areas.⁴⁵

The New National Policy Political Association responded to the appeal in June, as it had responded since the beginning of 1920. Neither the persuasive techniques of provincial liberals such as Turgeon, Dunning and Langley, nor the printed blandishments of the Morning Leader had been successful in hitching "the farmers' movement in Western Canada to the Liberal chariot".⁴⁶ No more successful had been King's appeals during his Western tour, or the attempts in the spring of 1921 of the National Liberal Organization Committee of Saskatchewan. It was hardly possible that Motherwell's appeal would find any more favor, especially with the Farmers' win in Medicine Hat by-election by an unparalleled majority of 9,765 on June 27th. The same reason applied in all cases -- there was no stopping the movement once it had gained momentum and some success. J.B. Musselman, Secretary of the S.G.G.A., had always been wary of

⁴⁵ King Papers, W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Motherwell, July 13, 1921.

⁴⁶ J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, November 10, 1920; J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, December 7, 1920. Cook, Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, pp. 35, 48-49.

the movement going too far too quickly. He wrote to Motherwell explaining his own attitude, and the additional odds that existed against persuading the progressive leaders to co-operate with the Liberals. It undoubtedly re-enforced Motherwell's view that it was the Tory and Unionist make-up of the leadership of the Grain Growers' political movement, and not the rank and file, who were making agreement with the Liberals impossible.

In your effort to prevent a clash between the old party Liberals of this province and the N.N.P. organization, you can depend upon my sympathetic co-operation. I have done vastly more in this direction than you or the general public have any idea of. I have argued and argued this point with Mr. Johnson and other leaders of the N.N.P. organization during more than eighteen months and I am free to state that there has been some slight measure of abatement amongst these parties of the original antagonism which they seemed to manifest more freely towards the Liberal organization than towards the government party. Indeed I have several times heard one of the leading officers of the N.N.P. say that he would rather see the present government go back to power than see the Liberal party win.

Despite Musselman's pessimism, Motherwell was still confident that in the coming election some measure of co-operation would be made. He saw indications that Moose Jaw, Saskatoon and Regina would be left by the Progressives to the Liberals, although farmers in Moose Jaw constituency disliked W.E. Knowles, the Liberal candidate. He felt that most Saskatchewan voters were waiting to see which of the two leaders, King or Crerar, was likely to have the largest following after the next election. As a result, it would be a good idea, he thought, to show optimism about Liberal

prospects in the East, which not only would encourage Western Liberals to dig in, but also would draw this "band-wagon" vote.

In mid-July, however, Mackenzie King was no longer seriously considering the probability of a fall election, though he indicated he thought Motherwell's idea to emphasize Liberal strength in the East a good one. It was scarcely probable, he wrote to Motherwell, that Meighen would dissolve Parliament until next year, when re-distribution would be put through.⁴⁹ Such was not to be the case. Meighen was alarmed by recent government defeats in the Medicine Hat, Peterborough and Yamaska by-elections, and Farmer victories in provincial elections in Manitoba and Alberta during the summer. Not only did he feel obliged to go to the polls as a result, but he saw that the earlier an election was held, the better would be his chances.⁵⁰ Motherwell and the Saskatchewan Liberal Organization were thus unprepared when he announced on September 1st an election date of December 17th.

Since the provincial election, the Saskatchewan Liberal committee had apparently been working hard to effect "wholesale" organization

⁴⁹ King Papers, W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Motherwell, July 13, 1921.

⁵⁰ Morton, Progressive Party, p. 113. Roger Graham, Arthur Meighen, Vol. II, And Fortune Fled (Toronto: 1963), p. 113.

of Liberalism throughout the province.⁵¹ It had been no easy task to rejuvenate constituency organizations that had suffered two disruptions in four years -- first to the Unionist and then to the Farmers; but with the calling of an earlier election than expected, Motherwell and J.G. Gardiner, who had been bearing the brunt of the work, abandoned the attempt. They decided to work by districts, a less thorough, but speedier manner, and immediately moved into the East Central district with Yorkton as centre. Battleford, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon were to follow before they turned south.⁵² Only the most promising constituencies could be given even cursory attention, and Gardiner told Mackenzie King that there was an easy criterion for deciding which constituencies these were.

The experience of 1917 goes to show that where Liberal sentiment is put aside in order that some preconceived idea of what is best might ride triumphantly over everything else, it is almost impossible to rally the forces for a future fight. In every constituency where there was a contest in 1917 we can have a candidate in the field inside of two weeks whereas it is almost impossible to get any response from other constituencies.⁵³

⁵¹ In a "proposed" letter to Burford Hooke, Andrew Haydon suggested pushing ahead with riding organizations, especially where there was a chance of victory. Next, he encouraged nominating the strongest men in these constituencies. In both cases, he suggested waiting until the provincial election had passed, and then not to be afraid to use provincial material as candidates, but to be careful not to appear to be "invading" the provincial arena. Finally, Haydon asked for a contribution of \$4,000 to the National Committee. King Papers, Andrew Haydon to Burford Hooke, April 21, 1921.

⁵² Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 5, 1921.

⁵³ Ibid., This was the justification that men such as Motherwell and Gardiner saw in fighting even a losing cause (as in 1917, and in Assiniboia). The Liberal party was always kept before the people, ready for the moment when victory looked closer.

The Liberal Committee definitely planned to contest eight seats in the election -- Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Battleford, Mackenzie, Humboldt and Saltcoats. All had seen Laurier Liberal campaigns in 1917, but equally as important, all had substantial urban sections where Liberal support was bound to be greater.

While speculation was going on about constituencies and candidates, the Liberal Committee members met in Saskatoon on September 8th, and issued a statement to the press defining their position in the coming contest. "Since February last, we have striven, in season and out to consolidate the Federal opposition", it began, and to illustrate this point, copies of the correspondence that had passed between the provincial Liberal and Progressive Committees earlier that year were appended to the press statement. Co-operation was still possible, the statement read, and the Liberal committee was "exhausting all possible means of agreement"; the press statement specifically appealed to the anti-government parties in each local constituency to avoid "political civil war" among "electors holding similar ideals and aims". Yet the statement left no doubt that the Liberals were fed up with making offers that went unanswered. The correspondence was meant to show that they, at least, had shown a willingness to unite with the other party. In the coming election, if the Progressives continued uncompromising belligerency, they would meet the Liberals head-on, despite the danger of Tory wins.

We do not believe that the flag of Liberalism should be hauled down, but, on the contrary, think that the Liberal principles deserve our confidence as of yore.

We realize that the present situation is one of real gravity and we recognize that any lack of co-operation among the low tariff forces will result in benefit and comfort to our common enemy, and in hope of avoiding this, we still hold out the olive branch but at the same time we are firmly convinced that Liberalism must not disappear from the Province of Saskatchewan.⁵⁴

The Liberals subsequently contested 11 seats in Saskatchewan, adding Assiniboia, North Battleford and Swift Current to their original eight. Michael Clark was an important acquisition in McKenzie, when he defected to the Liberals after failing to get the Progressive nomination in his old constituency of Red Deer.⁵⁵ Saskatoon constituency was late in nominating because of the tendency there to back the Progressive candidate in order to defeat the Conservative candidate, J.R. Wilson, a newly appointed Cabinet minister.⁵⁶ Just as the Liberal meeting had suspected, the Progressives were in no mood for making electoral arrangements. With failures to work out any local agreements, the Committee was true to its word and went out to meet its fiscal brothers face to face

⁵⁴ Morning Leader, September 10, 1919, p. 1. The meeting also sent Knowles to Ottawa for a national organization meeting set for September 12th. Motherwell wanted to go on his own accord, but decided his presence was needed more in Saskatchewan. King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 10, 1921.

⁵⁵ Clark's chances were increased due to the rejection of a very capable Progressive M.P., John Read, whom Dafoe regarded as second only to Crerar in ability, by his nominating convention. J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, November 5, 1921. Cook, Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, pp. 89-90.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 89.

in battle. They had the small advantage of getting their candidates into the field first, and so could claim the Progressives were splitting the low-tariff vote.⁵⁷ In no time at all, a "real feud" had developed between the two groups,⁵⁸ with nine of the eleven constituencies involved featuring the feared three-cornered contests. Two weeks before nomination day, November 22nd, Motherwell felt that the Liberals could possibly deliver five seats. Two victories at least were assured -- Dr. Michael Clark's in McKenzie and his own in Regina.⁵⁹

Motherwell was the first offered the Regina nomination by a group of Liberals from that city on September 23rd.⁶⁰ He promised at that time to give the matter consideration, and on September 30th was nominated unanimously by the constituency's Liberals.⁶¹ Motherwell's return to political life was no surprise to anyone, and that he had been merely biding his time since his defeat in Assiniboia, had been clear as early as the start of 1920 when he had turned down Martin's

⁵⁷ This was due to the decision of the provincial New National Policy Political Association to hold primary elections in the constituencies to aid in choosing their candidates. This abundance of pre-election machinery created, according to Dafoe, "an army of aspirants", the danger of factional fights, and above all, delayed the nomination conventions. In mid-October this was particularly bad in three or four seats. J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, October 14, 1921, Ibid., pp. 79-80.

⁵⁸ J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, November 5, 1921. Ibid., p. 89.

⁵⁹ King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, November 7, 1921.

⁶⁰ Morning Leader, September 24, 1921.

⁶¹ Ibid., October 1, 1921.

offer of the chairmanship of the Temperance Commission set up by the Provincial Government in that year. It had not been a difficult position, and the cause had always been close to Motherwell's heart -- not to mention the \$6,000 per annum that had gone with it.⁶² Politics, however, had been Motherwell's life, and though he was sixty-one, he tackled the organization work and campaigning in 1921 with the zeal and energy of a man half his age. Motherwell would not quit while the ghost of Assiniboia still haunted him. Only in eventual victory over Progressivism despite all his talk of co-operation, would he find vindication for his sacrifice in 1919.

Both Motherwell and Gardiner had originally felt that the former provincial minister could run in his home constituency of Saltcoats, as the sole low-tariff candidate.⁶³ The talked-about co-operation, as in all constituencies, had not come about, and with a former Liberal, Thomas Sales, making an excellent Progressive candidate, there was little chance that Motherwell would fare any better than he did in Assiniboia. Regina, on the other hand, was a seat where victory seemed possible. The large urban population dominated the rural areas, and a large civil service vote was sure to swing the city Liberal rather than Conservative. The deciding factor in Motherwell's decision to contest Regina however, probably had to do with the decision of Premier Martin and Provincial Treasurer Dunning to support him if he should run.

⁶² King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, February 20, 1920.

⁶³ Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 5, 1921. W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 10, 1921.

There is no evidence as to what arrangements of this type may have preceded Motherwell's nomination, but, nonetheless, the presence and speeches of Martin and Dunning at his nominating convention indicate that some planning took place behind the scenes. Both men probably felt it was important to secure the election of at least one good candidate in Saskatchewan, for if the Liberals won, a Cabinet post for the Province was essential, and now that the June provincial election had secured the Martin Government for a few years from the threat of the Grain Growers' entering provincial politics, it seemed safe for the Premier, if only as an individual, to make some attempts to help the Liberal cause in Saskatchewan. This would secure not only Mackenzie King's pleasure, but also the control of federal patronage in Saskatchewan. It was certainly preferable for Martin to take a chance in the election, than to let the granting of political favors fall to other Liberals, especially Laurier Liberals, over whom he had no influence. With a strong candidate, such as Motherwell in Regina, the seat of the provincial Government, and with Martin and Dunning backing him, victory could be almost certain.

The co-operation of the two men, surprising after their coolness during the Provincial election, was of a special nature. As Premier, W.M. Martin was in an especially difficult position because two cabinet Ministers -- George Langley and J.A. Maharg -- were strong Grain Growers. On September 29th, Martin defined the Cabinet's relation to the battle.

Insofar as the Federal election is concerned, the Provincial Government, as a Government, will not support any Federal political party. Every member of the Saskatchewan Government and every member of the legislature is entirely free to support any candidate he may chose. As for myself, I am a citizen of this constituency and I must discharge my duty as such. I propose to support the candidate nominated by this convention and will give Mr. Motherwell my wholehearted assistance.

While he still held to his May, 1920 position, that he would take no responsibility for federal Liberal organization in the province, he added that there were issues in this campaign that no public man could ignore -- natural resources, railway branchlines, the tariff. He had every sympathy with the Farmers in seeking to express true liberalism, but felt in all constituencies they should make efforts to agree with the Liberals on the nomination of one candidate. In the constituency of Regina, the one candidate, who in reputation, ability and experience, deserved everyone's support, was W.R. Motherwell, and as a citizen in that constituency he intended to support his former colleague.⁶⁴

Dunning defined his position more precisely. He was taking advantage, he said, of the liberty that Premier Martin had just mentioned with regard to the provincial Cabinet. He deprecated the division between the Progressives and Liberals in Saskatchewan, and the arguments on each side that one was a class party and the other a party of protection -- though in other provinces both charges might be true. In this election, he said,

⁶⁴ Morning Leader, October 1, 1921.

I hope to have the opportunity of helping the Liberals in straight fights against Meighen Government candidates. I hope I may have the opportunity of helping Progressives in straight fights in Saskatchewan against Meighen Government candidates.

In Regina, the Liberal organization was better able to fight the Government, though in a vast number of other constituencies the opposite was true, and so here, he felt, Progressives should get behind the Liberal candidate. Dunning was not going to support Motherwell just because he was a Liberal,

but because of all the men in this constituency who could be nominated by Liberals or Progressives I know of no man better qualified by conviction, experience or sincerity to advocate those principles which Liberals and Progressives in this constituency hold in common than W.R. Motherwell.⁶⁵

The reference in Dunning's speech to supporting Grain Growers' candidates in other constituencies may have been an offer to the Progressives as part of a larger plan. One observer, J.W. Dafoe, felt that this was the case, when on October 14th he wrote the following to Clifford Sifton:

From what I can hear Martin and Dunning are trying to make a bargain with the Progressive organization by which they will throw their weight behind the Progressive movement elsewhere in the Province in return for this consideration [no Progressive candidate] for Mr. Motherwell. On personal grounds, of course, Motherwell is fairly satisfactory to the Progressives and I shall not be surprised if an arrangement of this sort were made.⁶⁶

While there is not direct evidence of negotiations of this sort going on, they may very well have been the cause of the hesitancy

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, October 14, 1921. Cook, Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence. p.80.

among the Progressive delegates when that party held its nominating convention on October 21st. Fully one-third of them objected to the nomination of any Progressive candidate at all.⁶⁷ After some spirited debate, nonetheless, Hugh McLean, a Regina doctor, was chosen as the party's standardbearer.

Meanwhile, the Liberal forces in Regina were going all out to secure Motherwell's election.⁶⁸ The seat became three-cornered on October 28th, with the nomination of the young and able Major M.A. McPherson as the Conservative candidate. Still, the Liberals were favored to win, helped by the fact that of all the candidates, only Motherwell had anything in common with the rural electors of Regina; and that he was constantly rumored to be a prospective Minister of Agriculture should Mackenzie King win on December 6th. There was no shortage of money and enthusiasm in the Liberal organization, such as characterized the Assiniboia campaign, and the local organization, chiefly under the direction of the provincial Liberal committee, ran the campaign efficiently and smoothly.

Unlike Assiniboia as well, Motherwell had the strong support of the Liberal Morning Leader. In the face of constant attack from the Herman's Daily Post, and the influential Grain Growers'

⁶⁷ As well, T.A. Crerar, George Langley told the convention, did not wish to nominate in Regina. This may have meant he had been consulted by Martin, or that he just simply approved of Motherwell's election. Morning Leader, October 22, 1921.

⁶⁸ King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, November 7, 1921.

Guide, the Leader's constant defence of Motherwell and the Liberal cause, became a crucial factor in Motherwell's eventual victory, though its exuberance over the Wheat Board issue later became a problem. The paper had welcomed Motherwell's nomination with a lengthy recital of his experience and capabilities. It concluded with the following:

With all his other qualifications to represent this riding in the Commons he combines an uncompromising devotion to the principles for which the great majority of people in this province have always stood and still stand -- whatever they call themselves politically. The times demand strength of character as well as ingenuity in debate in the country's legislators and this the Hon. W.R. Motherwell's bitterest⁶⁹ political enemy will not deny he possesses in abundance.

Until the Progressives nominated a candidate, the Leader concentrated on deterring the Farmers from the course. Would they choose a man qualified "to interpret political aspirations of this province as unswervable champion", it asked, or would "they insist on turning down a man every whit as progressive as themselves, simply because he has elected to carry on the fight for justice to Western Canada under the colors under which he waged it for decades"?⁷⁰ Once the nomination had been made, however, the Leader ridiculed the convention as an exhibition of "machine politics", in which a militant minority of Progressives in the constituency had manoeuvred the convention against the wishes of the majority of Progressive voters

⁶⁹ Morning Leader, October 1, 1921. Editorial, "The Liberal Candidate".

⁷⁰ Ibid., October 18, 1921. Editorial, "The Progressive's Choice".

in the constituency.⁷¹ The Leader soon had a bitter battle going with the Progressive candidate McLean. In contrast, it paid virtually no personal attention to the Government candidate McPherson, except to compliment his strength and ability -- all the more reason for low-tariff forces to swing in behind Motherwell -- but it did concentrate on hitting the Government with all its editorial might. Motherwell certainly had little reason to complain about the Leader's campaign, which attacked his opponents with the same zeal that it emphasized his record and ability, ignored his strong partisanship, and backed up his approach to campaign issues.

Motherwell's campaign in Regina differed significantly from the one he had waged in 1919. He had to make himself presentable to the Progressive voters of Regina, as the best low-tariff candidate to send to Ottawa, in which case the belligerent, head-on tactics in Assiniboia could not work. His first move was to portray himself as being almost an "independent" supporter of Mackenzie King, to counter the Progressive's claim that he was attached, willy-nilly, to the protectionist Eastern wing of the party. Should no single party be able to form a government after December 6th, he told his nominating convention, he would not be part of any attempt to form a protectionist government.

Under such circumstances, I must hold myself free to support any combination which will, in my judgment, best give effect

⁷¹ Ibid., October 24, 1921. Editorial, "The Machine Revealed"; October 27, 1921, Editorial, "A Complete Answer".

to those fundamental principles which Liberals and other Progressives⁷² in this province and this constituency hold in common.

Secondly, Motherwell tried to play down his partisanship. There was no mention of the traditional role of Liberalism, nor the usurpation of this role by the Progressives. Instead, Motherwell put his claim to election from an agrarian community on the basis of his own abilities, and his past record as the champion of western agriculture. When he went to the attack, it was an attack on the "common enemy", the Government of "Big Interests" and "Special Privilege", the Administration of Arthur Meighen.

Playing down Liberalism was carried to the point of almost neglecting the Liberal platform of 1919. Motherwell concentrated instead on presenting his own stand on specific issues of grievance in the West -- vote-getting issues. Of first importance was the tariff, and here Motherwell made no mistake in demanding the elimination of the protective element from Canadian fiscal policy, though he did not advocate free trade, at least for the immediate future. If infant industries had to be assisted, he said, it could be done by loans or other inventives, but not by a tariff that taxed the common people for the benefit of the capitalist and manufacturer.⁷³ The question of ownership of Saskatchewan's natural resources was also a prime issue, and Motherwell was

⁷² Ibid., October 1, 1921. Motherwell, nonetheless, objected to being advertised as an "Independent" Liberal and "raised 'Ned'" to Burford Hooke when it appeared once in the Leader. Motherwell Papers, W.R. Motherwell to Charles G. Locke, May 31, 1922.

⁷³ Morning Leader, October 1, 1921.

uncompromising in his demand for their immediate return to Saskatchewan, in which case he foresaw a good deal of satisfaction in being "the intermediary" between the federal and provincial governments.⁷⁴ As for railway nationalization, Motherwell agreed with its propriety, but felt it had been mismanaged, and demanded the resignation of the Chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners, Frank Carvell. On other problems, Motherwell campaigned for the lowering of freight rates on rail and water, and the promotion and careful management of immigration and soldier settlement.⁷⁵

Of all the issues of the campaign, however, probably none was of more immediate interest than the demand for the restoration of the compulsory Wheat Board of 1919. In his nomination speech, Motherwell made it clear that Meighen's plan for a voluntary wheat pool was merely the "carrying out of a Liberal policy with respect to grain that the Saskatchewan Government inaugurated with respect to butter, wool and poultry, and other farm produce many years ago".⁷⁶ Throughout the campaign he was explicit in his opposition to compulsory wheat marketing, a position identical to that of T.A. Crerar, but one with which the majority of farmers

⁷⁴ Ibid., December 2, 1921. Motherwell recommended to King that he have a natural resources policy ready for his Western tour, and recommended one that granted the natural resources immediately to the provinces concerned, and left financial adjustments with the rest of the provinces until later. King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, November 7, 1921.

⁷⁵ Morning Leader, October 1, 1921; October 26, 1921; December 2, 1921.

⁷⁶ Motherwell Papers, (wire) W.R. Motherwell to D.A. McNiven, May 16, 1922.

disagreed. During November, however, the Morning Leader began featuring banner advertisements which read "Vote for Motherwell and the Wheat Board", giving the electors the impression that Motherwell favored a compulsory Wheat Board. This impression was deepened by the Morning Leader's printing editorials favoring a compulsory board right alongside others extolling Motherwell as a candidate. On one occasion the Leader skilfully managed to "defend" Motherwell against charges in the Manitoba Free Press that Motherwell was deliberately misleading the electorate by these ads on the Wheat Board.⁷⁷ While Motherwell could only respect the editorial opinion of the Leader, he was genuinely worried about the effect of the advertising, which, he found out, was not the doing of his organization, but of the Leader itself. Motherwell's honesty was such that he objected to these advertisements, but found out that when one did not pay for them, one could hardly control their wording.⁷⁸ Charles Locke also objected, and found out that the Leader had specific, and not exactly honorable, reasons for pursuing that course.

With regard to the Regina Leader, I am of the opinion that these fellows were the ones that tacked the Wheat Board unto you. When I was in Regina while the campaign was going on, I spoke to Mr. Hook [sic] about using the Wheat Board, and I told him I did not believe it was good business. I told him that I did not think that Mr. King was in favor of a

⁷⁷ Morning Leader, November 29, 1921. Editorial, "Opposing the Wheat Board"; Manitoba Free Press, November 25, 1921. Editorial, "Trying to Humbug Saskatchewan Farmers".

⁷⁸ Archives of Saskatchewan, J.G. Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, May 22, 1922; Motherwell Papers, W.R. Motherwell to Charles G. Locke, May 31, 1922.

Wheat Board such as constituted by Messrs. Riddle [sic] and Stewart, but that he was in favor of some kind of cooperative control but he did not know just exactly what system would be best, but believed that a party of experts could possibly decide.

I told him at that time I did not think he ought to use the Wheat Board so much, and I told him also that in any advertising that I asked for I did not want the Wheat Board mentioned.

He told me at the time that he was quite aware of the facts as stated by me, but that it meant a lot of votes in that constituency and he was going ahead. I was very careful, however, not to have any Wheat Board mentioned in any of my advertising for the National Committee.

If the Leader was responsible for the constituency-wide impression that Motherwell favoured a compulsory Wheat Board, the Liberal candidate was its unintentional accomplice. It became clear, as the day for the start of King's campaign swing West came nearer, that the Liberal leader did not want to have to announce any definite policy on wheat marketing. Instead, he publicly favoured holding a thorough investigation of the problem once in power. Motherwell seems to have not wanted to jeopardize this stand, and so made fewer pronouncements favoring a voluntary Wheat Board, or co-operative marketing, and began saying that he would like to see instituted "some form of national marketing".⁸⁰ Lack of definition as to what form of national marketing he meant only added to the

⁷⁹ Ibid., Charles G. Locke to W.R. Motherwell, May 26, 1922.

⁸⁰ Motherwell had originally suggested to King that it would be not "wise to tie yourself down to any particular scheme but merely favor the principle of national marketing and be governed by your supporters in the West as to details". This would have allowed Motherwell to maintain his own attitude more openly. King, however, only took the suggestion as it related to favoring no particular scheme. King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, November 7, 1921.

belief among the electorate that he would support a compulsory system. While the Wheat Board issue, as Hooke foresaw, was an important vote-getter in the election, the Leader's enthusiasm for votes, and Motherwell's vagueness was to get the Liberal candidate into a good deal of trouble in his constituency, and indeed throughout the West, in the spring of 1922.

On November 16th, Mackenzie King appeared at a large meeting in Regina in support of W.R. Motherwell. The Liberal leader had, previous to his Western tour, been encouraging co-operation between Liberals and Progressive groups, especially in Ontario, a course, which, W.L. Morton asserts, was to keep the possibility of post-electoral coalition open.⁸¹ Since King had made his first western speech at Melville on November 11th, however, he had become extremely critical of the Progressive party, especially of its class character. This new approach was repeated across Saskatchewan, and in Regina. The farmers were seeking to destroy the Liberal party, he said, so they could hardly expect to be offered the chances of a coalition after the election. Vote Liberal, or isolate the West.⁸² King's patience with the Progressive's uncompromising and unco-operative activities, had obviously come to an end, as had that of the Liberals in Saskatchewan in September. With the improved chances of a Liberal victory, the Liberal leader saw less reason to hide his exasperation over the "irresponsible actions of a group of naive

⁸¹ Morton, Progressive Party, p. 126.

⁸² Morning Leader, November 17, 1921; C.A.R., 1921, pp. 461-63.

reformers".⁸³ In Regina constituency, the man who reflected this trend most, was Premier Martin.

Since the opening day of the campaign, Martin had made no secret of his personal support for Motherwell in Regina, even appearing with Mackenzie King in the campaign, although not speaking.⁸⁴ He did speak, however, at Motherwell's last large meeting on December 1st, and as he did, his own resentment at persistent unfriendliness in the Progressive ranks came to the surface -- especially as it may have related to his earlier attempts to keep Motherwell unopposed by a Progressive candidate. He began his speech by claiming that not only were the Liberals more progressive than the Progressives, but were also an experienced, strong and virile party with a national base. He announced that the Liberal party would "not be turned aside from its course by any new movement, nor ... adopt the fads that are suggested from time to time as improvements in our system of government". He attacked the Progressive platform, especially its call for taxes on unimproved land, and demands for the Dominion to enter the succession duty field. The Progressives stood for good in public life, he concluded, but they were only human, and when in power would be no better than anyone else; in fact, lacking the experience or qualifications, they would be far worse.⁸⁵

⁸³ Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, pp. 355-56; Morton, Progressive Party, p. 126.

⁸⁴ King welcomed this development with a strong note of thanks, as well as the wish "that the day is not distant when no embarrassment will be experienced through our appearance together on a Liberal platform in any part of the Dominion". King Papers. W.L. Mackenzie King to W.M. Martin, November 23, 1921.

This outburst was much different than the speech on September 29th. It was so different, that his Minister of Agriculture, J.A. Maharg, told the press on December 5th, that he was resigning from the Cabinet. In a speech at Moose Jaw that evening, he said that Martin had broken a pledge, made to him when he had entered the Cabinet in May, that the Premier would be friendly to the Progressives federally, though subsequent correspondence between the two men published in the Morning Leader showed the case was not so clear cut.⁸⁶ Maharg's unusual procedure of announcing his resignation before even speaking to Martin, or sending him a letter of resignation, was designed to catch the press in time for election day reading. It appeared that Maharg, after analysing the effect Martin's speech might have been having on the Regina electorate, made a last-ditch effort to discredit the Premier, and with it his appeal to the voters. More important for Martin in the long run, his support of Motherwell, and especially his December 1st speech, angered the Grain Growers of the province; so much so that he admitted a short time later that he had "cooked his goose", and would have to turn the Premiership over to Dunning who might be able to placate the Government's grain grower following.⁸⁷ In early 1922, he was to do just that.

As election returns came in on the evening of December 6th, Motherwell soon built up a commanding lead in the city polls, as

⁸⁶ Ibid., December 6, 1921; December 13, 1921.

⁸⁷ J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, December 31, 1921. Cook, Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, p. 108.

had been expected; but when the rural polls began coming in, the Progressive candidate did not raise his total in the proportions the Progressive organization had hoped. In the final totals, McLean even trailed the Conservative candidate by 2,500 votes, while Motherwell's plurality over McPherson was 1,778 votes, and an impressive 44% of the total vote cast.⁸⁸ The Liberals had been successful in persuading voters that Motherwell was the outstanding low-tariff candidate,⁸⁹ but the strong second of the Conservative McPherson was an omen of what might have happened.⁹⁰ As for the various components of the Liberal vote, Motherwell later analyzed his victory in these terms:

Of course, those of us who were on hand in Regina know there was a peculiar combination here behind the Liberal candidate that made victory almost certain -- beginning with almost a solid Civil Service staff, assisted for once by practically the entire Church body, the temperance and social service forces, the non-English, a large portion of the railway and labour vote, and even a fair sprinkling of those who could not strictly be called "temperance men" -- all combined to make an aggregation that was hard to beat. On top of this came the unquestionable personal strength that Premier Martin brought with him, as doubtless many voted Liberal because he

⁸⁸ Scarrow Canada Votes, p. 43. Final returns were:

Motherwell (Liberal)	- 7,786
McPherson (Conservative)	- 6,008
McLean (Progressive)	- 3,547

⁸⁹ They convinced E.A. Partridge, who threw his considerable reputation behind Motherwell on December 3rd, but apparently under the mistaken impression that Motherwell favored a compulsory Wheat Board. Morning Leader, December 5, 1921.

⁹⁰ There were rumours that the Conservatives, in charge of the polling stations were planning to block the Liberal East and Regina vote. A.L. Geddy, Deputy Attorney General, had criminal charges already drawn up in case it happened. King Papers, A.L. Geddy to W.L. Moyer [sic] n.d..

did. Then, again, there were "The Boys" everyone of whom worked his head off.⁹¹

There were others ~~who~~ held a different view. J.W. Dafoe believed that Motherwell's victory had been due partly at least to a meeting in Montreal during the last part of the campaign between the Unionist Liberal Senator J.A. Calder of Saskatchewan and the Conservative Senator, W.B. Ross. Dafoe felt this meeting tied in with Mackenzie King's "change of tone" towards the Progressives when he reached the West. The meeting had resulted, Dafoe felt, in a concerted Liberal-Tory effort to "drift the Progressives" in Ontario and Saskatchewan.

This was the signal for a very bitter and intensive campaign against the Progressives throughout the province of Saskatchewan. All the Martin Government's election machinery and their officials were put into the fight in every constituency where the Liberals were thought to have a chance of election. It is surmised that the arrangement was that the Government was to throw its strength in Saskatchewan to the Liberals in the hope that they would carry a sufficient number of seats to put a crimp in Mr. Crerar's expectations ... In all three Saskatchewan cities, Regina, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon, the Liberals got heavy votes at the expense of their Conservative rivals. This is only explainable on the theory that the Conservative vote were it could be controlled, was switched to the Liberals. In Regina the tactics were successful, Mr. Motherwell going out of the city with a majority so large that the Progressives could not overcome it in the rural polls.⁹²

While third places finishes were weak in Moose Jaw and Saskatoon, and so might vindicate this interpretation of events, the Regina vote showed that Dafoe's surmise might be suspect, since the

⁹¹ Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, January 5, 1922.

⁹² J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, December 7, 1921. Cook, Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, p.95; Also Morton, Progressive Party, 122-23

Conservative was a very strong second, and Motherwell's chief opponent. However, considering the friendship that existed between Calder and Martin, such an arrangement was possible and might help account for Martin's more active participation later in the campaign.

Whatever the strength of this interpretation of events, the results in Regina were not repeated elsewhere in Saskatchewan, and if any concerted attempt by the old parties existed to "drift" the Progressives, it fell flat. With the help of fifteen Progressives from Saskatchewan, that party's total in the new Parliament reached 65 seats; and while Mackenzie King, with the largest group of 116 seats, would be called upon to form a Government, there was no doubt that the Progressives numbers made them a factor to be reckoned with. With this in mind, Motherwell's claim to a Cabinet post as the sole Liberal elected from Saskatchewan might very well have appeared to depend on whether the Progressives were included or not in the Ministry. In the complex negotiations that followed King's decision to approach the Progressive party, however, it appears that King was insistent that Motherwell was to be included in the new Cabinet, even if Progressives did enter. He was on the list drawn up two days after the election, as a tentative Minister of Agriculture,⁹³ and when negotiations were in progress, Mackenzie King kept Motherwell on the list as one of the three Ministers from

⁹³ Although Duncan Marshall was also a possibility for this post, he had lost his election in Alberta, and a new seat would have to be found for him. Like Motherwell, he was also an ex-Minister of Agriculture for a provincial government.

the prairies.⁹⁴ Undoubtedly, King meant to give the Saskatchewan Liberals the recognition they deserved for fighting a tough and frustrating campaign, and in particular, Motherwell had certainly earned a reward for his past performance as a loyal and hard-working Liberal. He was also known to be an excellent administrator, and had a fine reputation in agrarian circles for his performance as Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan. When negotiations with the Progressives failed, King named an all-Liberal cabinet on December 29th which included W.R. Motherwell as Minister of Agriculture. King took the "unusual step" of getting an agreement from Motherwell and four other Ministers, that "should it appear to you [King] to be in the public interests at any time, that this portfolio be exchanged for some other, or surrendered, I am quite agreeable to such adjustment".⁹⁵ Even though a good administrator, Motherwell's age, his strong partisanship, and his reputation for being much less than astute politician -- plus the fact that Cabinet adjustments might be necessary in the future to attract Progressives -- made Motherwell expendable, if not a future liability, within the Cabinet.

In Regina, however, no such thoughts passed through the electors' minds. A huge complimentary banquet was tendered the new

⁹⁴ Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 361; Smith, "Politics and the Party System", p. 105.

⁹⁵ King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, December 29, 1921. Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 373. The others were D.D. Mackenzie, A.Copp, James A. Robb, George P. Graham.

Minister on January 18th, noteworthy for its lack of partisanship.⁹⁶ The Progressives in the constituency had at first planned to contest the necessary by-election that had to follow Motherwell's appointment, but the idea was soon dropped, once the extent of the popularity of his appointment, even among the provincial Progressive leaders,⁹⁷ became clear. The Morning Leader was, of course, the most enthusiastic of the Regina press. On the morning of the banquet to be given Motherwell, the paper said that of all the honors confided to Regina by way of Motherwell's new position,

The greatest honor of all is to be represented by a man of the Hon. Mr. Motherwell's type and caliber, which were always recognized and are now admitted and lauded by those who for party reasons opposed his election. Surely the federal constituency of Regina has good cause for feeling highly satisfied with its action on December 6th; and if its spokesman tell the Hon. Mr. Motherwell so tonight, they will not be speaking more than the truth.⁹⁸

The weekly Grain Growers' Guide was not so sanguine. A cartoon in the January 11th issue featured "King's Glee Club", with Motherwell, and Charles Stewart, new Minister of the Interior from Alberta, singing "low tariff", with D.D. McKenzie and Sir Lomer

⁹⁶ Morning Leader, January 19, 1922. See also Free Press, December 30, 1921, for a news story on the reception of Motherwell's appointment in Regina.

⁹⁷ J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, December 31, ¹⁹²¹ Cook, Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, p. 108. Dafoe heard that the Progressives and Tories planned to work together to defeat Motherwell in his by-election. Motherwell Papers, T.H. McConica, M.P. to W.R. Motherwell, January 17, 1922; and W.R. Motherwell to T.H. McConica, January 24, 1922.

⁹⁸ Morning Leader, January 18, 1922. Editorial, "Hon. W.R. Motherwell".

Gouin bellowing out the opposite.⁹⁹ The attitude of the Free Press, was somewhat surprising. It felt that Motherwell and Stewart would ably and accurately voice the opinions of Western Canada on the tariff, railway matters, natural resources and immigration; and if their views prevailed in the Government, there would be no question about Progressive support, even if Motherwell's relations with them were not all that friendly, "for which Mr. Motherwell himself is largely responsible". If the two Ministers' views were flouted, however, the Free Press hoped "they will know what to do".

These two men play a very important role in the next two or three years. They may be instrumental in keeping the Liberal government to its duty in which event a coalition or even a fusion between Progressives and Liberals will be easily possible.¹⁰⁰

To Motherwell, his victory and new office were especially satisfying and significant. It was an impressive political comeback, all the more so because this was the year of massive Progressive victories in the West. It had been made possible by a withdrawal from politics, a noticeable softening of his public reaction to the Progressive movement, and a burial of his antagonism to Martin and Dunning, despite the many opportunities that they provided in 1920 and 1921 for frustration over their desertion of federal liberalism. In Regina, it all paid off. He undoubtedly had attracted a good number of probable Progressive votes,

⁹⁹ Grain Growers' Guide, January 11, 1922.

¹⁰⁰ Manitoba Free Press, December 30, 1922. Editorial, "The New Government".

and had gained the invaluable support of the Premier. In Motherwell's mind, however, the importance of these developments paled before the significance of the victory itself. On January 5, he wrote the following in reply to James G. Gardiner's words of congratulation:

I note what you say with respect to the satisfactory result that followed "standing by our guns" whether the prospects in sight were defeat or victory. The little Company that joined together to hold the line in Assiniboia has certainly been vindicated. Not only in the West but all through Canada, and especially around Ottawa, they regard the whole episode culminating with the victory in Regina, as a wonderful tribute to the stick-to-itiveness of the Liberal remnant in Saskatchewan. To have stood under the tremendous impact of the Progressive steam roller, that crushed everything in its course, was something to many almost inexplainable. It recalls to their minds the famous victory of the first battle of the Marne, that military strategists even yet fail to quite understand.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, January 5, 1922.

5. IN THE KING CABINET, 1922-23

When W.R. Motherwell took his seat in the House of Commons on March 8th, 1922, he began, at almost 62 years of age, a second political career that would last for nineteen more years. During this time, his substantial size and neatly trimmed goatee were to become a common sight about Parliament Hill. As a debator, he was to fall far short of the logic and precise expertise of Meighen, or the smooth, evasive style of Mackenzie King. He was already known to be a genial, entertaining and loquacious speaker; but his love for occasional rough and tumble exchanges was to attract the baiting of Meighen and his followers.¹ Outside the Chamber, in spite of his strong opinions and stubborn devotion to causes, he was almost universally well-liked, even by his opponents, for his quiet, courteous and affable manner.²

For just over eight years of this time in Ottawa, Motherwell was to be Minister of Agriculture. During that time, he would initiate and oversee some of the most important administrative and technological advances in Canadian agriculture since Confederation -- such as the Accredited Herd System, to eliminate tuberculosis from Canadian cattle; the standardization and grading of all forms of agricultural produce, so that quality would be emphasized as much as quantity; and most important, the development of rust-

¹ Graham, Arthur Meighen, II, 200. One reporter wrote that Meighen finally lost a round to Motherwell in 1923, and left the Minister alone thereafter. Motherwell Papers. Clipping. "Motherwell Great Minister and Companionable Man", London Advertiser, December 9, 1929.

² Ibid... Also Grant Dexter, "From Ox-cart to Cabinet Minister", Maclean's Magazine, March 15, 1930.

resistant varieties of wheat at the Dominion Rust Research Laboratory at Winnipeg, built in 1925 and 1926. So great was his contribution to be during these years, that, combined with his excellent record in the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture from 1905 to 1918, he was to be given the title of "the grand old man of Canadian Agriculture".³ These achievements were far in the future, however, when W.R. Motherwell was appointed to the Cabinet in December, 1921. Mackenzie King was far more concerned at the time with the political contributions Motherwell might make -- contributions to strengthen and revitalize the federal Liberal party in the West, particularly in Saskatchewan.

General supervision of federal Liberal political positions throughout the West was given to the Minister of the Interior, Charles Stewart, former Premier of Alberta, and a more astute politician than Motherwell.⁴ But the new Minister of Agriculture soon found his own political responsibilities in Saskatchewan were easily enough to tax the capacity of his office.⁵ There

³ No study has ever been done on Motherwell's work with the Federal Department during the 1920's. It has been dealt with summarily by F.J. Workman, "Dr. Motherwell's 60 years -- cavalcade of Agriculture", Leader-Post (Regina, July 22-29, 1940. Also Canada, Department of Agriculture, The Motherwell Story. Comp. by D.W. Kirk, (Regina: 1957).

⁴ "Mr. Stewart is the one to whose judgement in reference to matters concerning the West I naturally look, and who shares a corresponding responsibility".
King Papers, W.L. Mackenzie King to J.G. Turgeon, January 24, 1924.

⁵ His best asset through his years with the Department of Agriculture was his former secretary from Regina, Miss Isabel Cummings. She was a hard worker, and exhibited a good deal of her chief's political temperament.

was, first of all, patronage to be dispensed, and while he had specific rights to patronage in only three Saskatchewan constituencies,⁶ the defeated candidates who controlled it in the remaining constituencies, maintained their contact with the Government through him, as did the provincial section of the 1919 National Liberal Organization Committee, and later, the provincial Liberal organization. Secondly, whenever municipal councils, Boards of Trade, town councils, S.G.G.A. locals, or any other organizations in Saskatchewan made representations to the Government for specific action on the Wheat Board, the Hudson Bay Railway, railway branch lines, or the tariff, these representations invariably went through the Minister of Agriculture's office. One example was a telegram Motherwell received from the Nipawin, Saskatchewan, On-to-the-Bay Association on June 5, 1924:

People of Nipawin expect you as Saskatchewan's Representative in the Government to keep the importance of the Hudson Bay Railway before your colleagues and to press for its immediate completion and see that the Government include [sic] in the Supplementary estimate sufficient moneys to do all the work possible thereon this season.⁷

⁶ They were Assiniboia, Qu'Appelle and Regina. King Papers, A. Haydon to F.A. McGregor, October 25, 1922.

⁷ Motherwell Papers, (wire) C.W.S. Bell to W.R. Motherwell, June 5, 1924. Motherwell also received a good deal of correspondence from outside Saskatchewan. As he wrote to one correspondent: "I do not think many of my Western friends realize what it means to have just one Liberal member to write to, in all that vast and important territory between Winnipeg and the Rocky Mountains. Under such conditions you can easily imagine what my correspondence must be like -- and yet I do my best to be faithful to it, but I feel that I must apologize to you for my seeming delay in acknowledging your communication". Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to Mrs. Mark E. Young, June 25, 1925.

The most important of Motherwell's political tasks was serving as Mackenzie King's liaison officer with the Provincial Liberal Government in Regina, carrying its opinions and representations of federal policy into Council on one hand, and maintaining and strengthening the tenuous bonds of political co-operation with it on the other. During the first year and a half Motherwell was particularly busy performing the first task, but representations from Regina through him declined in number in 1924 and 1925, when Premier Dunning and Mackenzie King became closer. In matters of political co-operation and organization Motherwell worked largely through J.G. Gardiner, especially after 1924 when Gardiner took over control of the provincial Liberal organization and began working on the close federal-provincial relationship Motherwell had always desired. Taken altogether, Motherwell's first term as Minister of Agriculture was a busy one in terms of political responsibility. Premier Dunning sympathized with Motherwell, when in September of 1922, he wrote for the Minister's help in getting the Federal Government to pay the promised "Coupon Interest" of certain debentures on the Grand Trunk Pacific branch lines.

I hate to bother you about it, because it really has not anything to do with the Department of Agriculture, and I know you have troubles of your own, but being the only Saskatchewan Minister I am afraid that you have to bear the burdens of all your colleagues in regard to matters of this kind.

The first task confronting Motherwell in 1922 was the processing of the inevitable post-election applications for patronage

⁸ Douglas Library Archives, Queen's University, C.A. Dunning Papers, C.A. Dunning to W.R. Motherwell, September 28, 1922.

positions in the federal civil service; but Motherwell, as well as other members of the new Government, found an obstacle in the path of rewarding the party faithful that had not existed for previous new Ministries. In 1917, a Civil Service Commission had been set up to introduce some standards of merit in the appointment of civil servants outside Ottawa. Motherwell did not dispute the concept of merit, but in staffing his own Department, he felt he needed much more control over appointments. In the House of Commons, the new Minister used part of his budget speech to criticize the workings of the Commission. He denied that he wanted the return of "wicked patronage", but if Ministers were to be responsible for the work of their departments, they had to have the right to choose the personnel in whom they had most confidence. The Commission, he charged, was a bureaucratic and time-consuming body which only delayed important appointments for the new programmes he had in mind for the Department of Agriculture. "I think that a Civil Service Commission is only possible", he concluded, "when that commission is friendly to the government. I am of the opinion that the members of the Civil Service Commission should go out of office with the government that appointed them".⁹

Privately, Motherwell was more precise in his opinions, revealing the value he placed on patronage not only as a political, but also as a successful governmental tool. On May 26th, Charles Locke, acting secretary of the Saskatchewan section of the National Liberal Organization Committee, asked Motherwell if there was any

⁹ Canada. House of Commons Debates, June 6, 1922, pp. 2556-60.

news on the future of the Commission which was delaying political appointments.

I would like to know if you have made any move or are doing anything with regard to the Civil Service Commission. That is the big bugbear here at present. I do not like to think of the time I am having taken up by men who believe they have a right to expect something from the party, and who are trying to impress me with their claims, particularly old civil servants who were released when the Government changed in 1911 and feel that we ought to do the same thing with regard to men who were put in under the Conservative Government. If you can let me know anything about how you are coming along with this matter, I shall be greatly obliged. Of course, it is not for publication to the applicants for position, but just for my own information.¹⁰

Motherwell needed no reminder of the problem posed by the Commission. It was a "Tory Body ... more interested in sending us poor appointees than good ones, as such a course will all the sooner discredit us throughout the country", he wrote Locke. Unfortunately, in "one of the first bad fruits of 'groups' in Parliament", the Progressives were too unreliable for the Government to bring a solution to the problem into the Commons, and the Conservatives would naturally be overwhelmingly opposed. With this state of affairs, and the Press under the impression that a revision in the Civil Service Act would be an outright reversion to the system of patronage, there was nothing to do but bide time and hope that the "truth" filtered to the public.

During the coming summer I hope to hold a number of meetings throughout Saskatchewan, and farther West, and will certainly avail myself of the opportunity to show exactly what the Civil Service Commission means. Under present conditions, we have in the hands of an irresponsible and extraneous body authority and power that should belong to the Ministers of the Crown and their deputies who have been given the

¹⁰ Motherwell Papers, Charles G. Locke to W.R. Motherwell, May 26, 1922.

responsibility of government. In other words, we maintain that we should have the right to man our own ships, if a safe and successful voyage is to be ensured.¹¹

Motherwell's comments were a reflection of his belief that good government was party government; that the best government resulted when the Administration, from top to bottom, was made into a compact group of individuals of one political cast. The Civil Service Commission was also "undemocratic"¹² because it discouraged large numbers of Canadians from political participation, and because men and women in the civil service, whose jobs were not on the line with each election, would be less responsive to both public demand and the directives of the people's elected representatives in the Government. To Motherwell, the problems posed by the Commission were more than a hindrance to the maintenance of Liberal power, it was in direct contradiction to his philosophy of government.

Unfortunately, the problem of the Civil Service Commission, remained unsolved, and as we shall see, presented difficulties in 1924 and 1925 when Motherwell and J.G. Gardiner became concerned about the unfriendly make-up of the federal civil service in Saskatchewan as election time drew closer. For the time being, in 1922 and 1923, Motherwell became embroiled in difficulties of a different sort in effectively representing in the Cabinet and in the Commons, the wishes of the West on two issues which it held dear -- the Wheat Board and the tariff. Motherwell's part in the Wheat Board investigations of 1922 revealed a good deal about his approach to

¹¹ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to Charles G. Locke, May 31, 1922.

¹² Ibid..

political morality and responsibility; while his role in the formation of, and debate on, the "stand-pat" tariff in the 1923 Budget, showed the difficulties the Saskatchewan Minister faced in getting Western policies accepted by an eastern-orientated Cabinet and party. Both issues left Motherwell, and the Liberal party, considerably lower in the estimation of Western Canadian voters.

Most of the difficulty Motherwell experienced in 1922 over the Wheat Board issue was due to the mistaken impression of most of his constituents, as we have seen, that Motherwell favored a compulsory Wheat Board. Between the time of his election and March 27th, when the whole marketing question was sent to the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization on a motion by Motherwell, the new Minister had kept silent as to his own views, only once reiterating his stand for voluntary marketing in mid-January at his congratulatory banquet in Regina. Once the question had gone to Committee, Motherwell remained silent, although swamped with petitions supporting a compulsory Board from Grain Growers' locals, Saskatchewan Boards of Trade, and Municipal and Urban councils, and demands that he make his position clear. One correspondent, Douglas Hill of Gilbert Plains, Manitoba, was particularly blunt.

We have been waiting, with considerable interest to hear your pronouncement in connection with the Wheat Board.

It has appeared in some papers in the West, so I am informed, that you are opposed to this measure. I would hesitate to credit such a statement. I have recently re-read "Deep Furrows" and it is impossible to conceive of "Bill Motherwell" as opposed to a measure of this nature. Coming to more recent times, is it not right to believe that you won your

Election largely on the strength of your favouring the re-establishment of the Wheat Board? Surely we are not to be obliged to come to the conclusion that the very Founder of the United Farmer Movement has gone back on his friends?¹³

Motherwell wasted little time in putting Hill right as to his attitude. "I never have been at any time in my career", he wrote, "except in 1919, in favour of a compulsory Wheat Board by the Dominion".¹⁴

In a letter to another farmer who had sarcastically thanked him for supporting the compulsory Board, Motherwell explained that his present silence indicated he was, as a member of the Government, remaining open to the recommendations of the Agriculture Committee.

I am rather inclined to think that you sent your letter off without due consideration of all the facts. As for me to make any pronouncement of my attitude on the question at this particular time, would be equivalent to a Judge or a Magistrate giving a decision on a question before all the evidence was submitted.

As you know, the Agricultural Committee is now holding its session and as a member of that Committee, my duty as I see it is more or less a jurymen to listen to the evidence, and after all of it is submitted, to discuss the various phases and then arrive at a decision.¹⁵

Behind the scenes, however, Motherwell was ready to effect some form of marketing system for Wheat in Canada. Despite his opposition in principle to the compulsory Board, he was nonetheless prepared to show the Agricultural Committee, which was heavily weighted with Progressive Members, how one might be achieved. Since he, and many others, felt it would be outside Dominion powers to

¹³ Ibid., Douglas Hill to W.R. Motherwell, April 8, 1922.

¹⁴ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to Douglas Hill, April 25, 1922.

¹⁵ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.G. Martin, April 25, 1922.

implement during peacetime, in mid-March he had found that the Australian system, a compulsory marketing arrangement set up by joint federal-state legislation, might be applicable to Canada,¹⁶ and when on April 19th, the Law Officers of the Crown confirmed his suspicions that setting up a compulsory Board was outside the constitutional powers of the federal parliament, Motherwell brought into Committee two volumes of the State Acts of New South Wales and South Australia, "showing the Committee that if they insisted on a Compulsory Board they would find the way to get it under these respective Australian Acts". After the Easter recess which followed, R.M. Johnson, the prominent Saskatchewan Progressive representing Moose Jaw, took Motherwell's suggestion and placed it in a resolution for the Committee to approve as its sole recommendation for Government action.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., (wire) James Stewart to W.R. Motherwell, March 18, 1922; W.R. Motherwell to James Stewart, March 20, 1922.

¹⁷ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning, May 18, 1922. Motherwell later wrote that "Against my own judgment then, I actually put the Farmers in the House in touch with the system that was subsequently taken up by Mr. R.M. Johnson, and was finally made the basis of legislation that was passed". He did not advocate it himself, he wrote, but just to show the Farmers the only way they could get what they wanted. Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to Lewis Gabriel, October 9, 1922.

¹⁸ The Resolution was as follows:

1. It is desirable in the national interests that the Government immediately create a national wheat marketing agency similar to the Canada Wheat Board of 1919, for the marketing of the wheat crop of 1922, and that,
2. This agency be given all the powers of the Wheat Board of 1919 as are within the jurisdiction of Parliament to grant, and that,
3. An Act be passed, based on this resolution, to become effective by proclamation as soon as two or more of the provinces have conferred upon this agency such powers possessed by the Wheat Board of 1919 as coming within provincial jurisdiction.

Ibid., Draft Report of the Select Standing Committee of Agriculture and Colonization.

Motherwell immediately broke his long silence on the Wheat Board issue. The strength of his own conviction against compulsory marketing apparently would not let him remain quiet while the Committee recommended this course of action only, although he had been instrumental in proposing it. Motherwell saw three alternatives for present marketing legislation: a compulsory Wheat Board enacted by the Provinces; a compulsory Wheat Board enacted by the Provinces in connection with the Dominion; or a voluntary Wheat Board enacted by the federal Parliament. Of these solutions, he naturally favored the last, which was also the only agency that could be established in time to market the 1922 crop. From May 11th on, then, in Committee and out, he tried to get Johnson to withdraw his resolution and substitute for it one which still recommended the Australian system, but only as a last resort, to be enacted only after two or more Provinces had made specific requests for its implementation and had passed their share of the necessary legislation. In the meantime, the resolution would recommend a voluntary board be immediately set up by the dominion in time to handle the 1922 wheat crop.¹⁹ Motherwell's efforts were in vain, however. The Committee majority insisted on a compulsory Board or nothing; and Motherwell's attempts to achieve at least voluntary marketing, with the option of future compulsory marketing legislation, failed.²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid., Motherwell's working papers on suggested changes to the Draft Report, n.d.; Also "Notes for Mr. Motherwell's Information", May 16th meeting of Select Standing Committee.

²⁰ According to Motherwell, Johnson "came within an ace" of agreeing with Motherwell's changes, but the other Progressives would not support him, so he went back to his former resolution position. Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, May 12, 1922.

In his campaign to alter the recommendations of the Committee, Motherwell's opinions provoked wide-spread anger in the West at his "betrayal" of the farmer, and at his supposed breaking of election promises. Causing particular dismay was a statement Motherwell made at the Committee meeting May 12th, to the effect that if a compulsory Board were instituted, as Johnson's resolution suggested, the additional money that would go to the farmer as a result, which Henry W. Wood had estimated before the Committee to be twenty-five million dollars, would, "according to all the rules of commerce", come out of the pockets of the ultimate consumer.²¹ Although he later tried to justify this statement to one angry farmer as intending to secure the support of Members from the East and from British Columbia for the compulsory board by "stating the facts rather than concealing them",²² there was little doubt that Motherwell was really trying to make a case against a compulsory board. Some Progressive members of the Committee put this speech into a letter that they sent to their own, as well as the Agriculture Minister's constituents. It exaggerated Motherwell's intent and even made up quotations, but it served the purpose of stirring up Western hostility to the Liberal Minister.

At the meeting of the Agricultural Committee this morning, Hon W.R. Motherwell strongly attacked the Wheat Board. His speech was directed forcefully to the representatives of British Columbia and the eastern provinces with the

²¹ There was no written record kept of the meeting's evidence. Motherwell later admitted making this statement. Motherwell Papers, W.R. Motherwell to William Hewson, June 24, 1922; Unaddressed circular letter regarding Motherwell's remarks in Committee, May 12, 1922.

²² Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to William Hewson, June 24, 1922.

Intention of giving them the impression that the extra amount the farmers of the Prairie Provinces expected to realize for their grain through a Wheat Board would be largely at their expense.

"'Is it fair'", the letter quoted Motherwell as saying, "'Is it human for the farmers to get the rest of the world by the throat and make them pay the price or starve?'"²³

The political damage caused by this letter was augmented considerably by an editorial that appeared in the Regina Morning Leader on May 15th, taking exception to Motherwell's stand before the Committee and blaming him for deliberately letting Regina voters think during the 1921 election that he favored a compulsory Wheat Board -- a surprising charge, considering that it was the Leader, not Motherwell, which was largely to blame for such a mistaken impression. Under the title "Vote for Motherwell and the Wheat Board", the editorial said that Motherwell had been given plenty of opportunities during the campaign to make his position clear against compulsory marketing, but had not and so was guilty of winning his seat by "false pretences". While entitled to his own views, he was still compelled to represent the views of the majority that had elected him. This he had not done so far, and his actions in the near future would supply additional evidence as to "whether or not the pledge implied in Vote for Motherwell and the Wheat Board" was accepted by him honestly with the

²³ Ibid., Unaddressed letter regarding Motherwell's remarks in Committee, May 12, 1922. Motherwell challenged the implications and exaggerations, paragraph by paragraph in his letter to William Hewson, June 24, 1922.

intention of carrying it out".²⁴

Motherwell's first response to the Leader editorial was naturally one of surprise. He felt he had been completely justified in following the course he had taken, which had not broken any election promises. He could not see the reason for the editorial outburst, but was disturbed at the unfortunate political results that could occur. He wrote to the Premier of Saskatchewan on May 18th.

What in the world has happened, Mr. Dunning. I have been silent here nearly all winter, regarding this Wheat Board proposition, as I could not do otherwise so long as I was acting in the capacity of juryman, and listening to evidence. As soon as that process was over, though, I had to take my stand, as the evidence put in did not warrant any change in the position I took last Fall during the election contest.

Motherwell apparently felt there had been no misunderstanding among the voters over his election stand on the Wheat Board, and quoted to Dunning news extracts from the Leader itself to prove he had misled no one on the issue. As to the cause of the editorial, Motherwell suspected provincial political conditions were to blame.

It has occurred to me that possibly it has been deemed advisable, by the Leader, to take the attitude referred to in the Leader's editorial in question because of the pending bye-elections in Saskatchewan. If that be so, I shall not take much exception to it -- only it would have been more courteous, I think, if I had had some notification.

If it were in the interests of the by-elections, Motherwell added, he would let the Leader's attack remain as it was, though he reserved the right to protect himself "from this end", where the editorial had been sent to the Prime Minister, his colleagues and

²⁴ Morning Leader, May 15, 1922. Editorial, "Vote for Motherwell and the Wheat Board".

the conservative Opposition.²⁵

Dunning immediately let Motherwell know that the editorial had received no inspiration from the Saskatchewan Cabinet,²⁶ and so the Minister set to work to refute the Leader's charge that he had deliberately deceived the Regina electorate during the 1921 election. He prepared a circular letter for his constituents giving dates and details of speeches in the elction when he had featured his stand on wheat marketing, plus an excerpt from his banquet speech in Regina on January 18th.²⁷ On the suggestions of political friends in Saskatchewan, including Dunning and J.G. Gardiner, Motherwell explained his campaign stand fully in the Commons on June 15th, and backed it up again with quotations from his speeches.²⁸

While Motherwell was able to successfully vindicate himself in Ottawa circles,²⁹ on May 22nd, Dunning wrote Motherwell that "public opinion generally" in Saskatchewan was against him on account of his declarations before the committee. As for Regina constituency,

²⁵ Motherwell Papers, W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning, May 18, 1922.

²⁶ Dunning Papers, C.A. Dunning to W.R. Motherwell, May 22, 1922.

²⁷ Motherwell Papers, Circular letter to "friends" on Leader editorial, May, 1922.

²⁸ Dunning Papers, C.A. Dunning to W.R. Motherwell, May 22, 1922; Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, May 30, 1922.

²⁹ "I am glad to say that Mr. Motherwell re-established himself very successfully in the opinion of the House. He showed conclusively that he had never favored the idea of a permanent compulsory Wheat Board ... He drew quite a good deal of fire but has been pretty well able to take care of himself". Dunning Papers, T.H. McConica to C.A. Dunning, June 27, 1922.

A number of your strong supporters in the campaign in the rural districts are certainly under the impression that you have switched on this question and there is no doubt that at the present time your reputation has suffered. I know you desire me to write frankly on this matter and to inform you of things as they are rather than as I would like them to be.

Dunning went on to say that though he had been away in British Columbia for most of the campaign, neither he nor Motherwell's close political friends, had held any doubts as to Motherwell's position. Yet, there was "no question" about the "feeling being very strong out here about this whole matter", and that it had even seriously endangered the Provincial Government's chances in the coming by-elections, especially in the case of the new Highways Minister, J.G. Gardiner. On one hand, Dunning wrote, he did not want to worry Motherwell needlessly over the effects of Motherwell's actions, nor give the impression that he was obsessed with local conditions; but he felt, on the other hand, that Motherwell was too far away from Regina to get "at all times an accurate conception of how things stand here",³⁰ implying Motherwell might pay more attention to the local political climate in the future before acting.

J.G. Gardiner agreed pretty well with Dunning's assessment of the political effects in Saskatchewan, though he did feel that in Regina the rural voters had been "fairly well" aware of what Motherwell's position had been at election time. Nonetheless,

³⁰ Ibid., C.A. Dunning to W.R. Motherwell, May 22, 1922. Charles Locke also wrote to Motherwell that the Minister was the brunt of "a good deal of criticism" in Saskatchewan over his handling of the issue. Motherwell Papers, Charles G. Locke to W.R. Motherwell, May 26, 1922.

Progressive voters in the Province were considering it as an "indication of what a party politician is likely to do", and so Motherwell definitely owed it to himself and to his party to make his past and present position on the Wheat Board clear. The Leader editorial had definitely harmed the Provincial Government's chances in its by-elections, and, Gardiner concluded, the only thing that would offset the bad effect in his North Qu'Appelle constituency would be a full explanation from Motherwell to the local people.³¹

There was little doubt that Motherwell's stand over the Wheat Board had harmed the Liberal cause in the province, as well as himself, at the very moment when the party needed most to outmanoeuvre and discredit the Progressives in the House. His first mistake had really occurred during his election campaign, since ultimately, any fault for misconceptions among the voting public about his position on such a prominent issue as the Wheat Board, had to be his. Still, this need never have become an issue had he remained silent and let the headstrong Progressives go their own way and take full responsibility for a compulsory wheat marketing plan that was likely to fail. By attempting to change the Johnson resolution, Motherwell only enhanced the fighting image

³¹ Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, May 30, 1922. On June 6th Motherwell sent copies of his circular letter to prominent Liberals and Grain Growers in North Qu'Appelle, where a Farmer candidate had suddenly appeared against the previously unopposed Gardiner. Motherwell's action was unnecessary, as the Farmer withdrew on the same day, leaving Gardiner the seat by acclamation. Motherwell Papers, Series of Letters from W.R. Motherwell to Gardiner's constituents, June 6, 1922.

of the Progressives, and brought attention to his own unpopular views, subsequently leading to the Leader editorial and charges he had misled the electorate in 1921. C.A. Dunning also felt Motherwell had erred in making the kind of statements in Committee that he did, for a voluntary board. "It had the effect" the Premier wrote Motherwell,

of pulling Crerar's chestnuts out of the fire. There is no doubt in the mind of any of us here that Crerar was in a most awkward position. He does not want any kind of national marketing and appears now to be in the position of having you doing his fighting for him and taking all the resultant unpopularity in the West.³²

Political mistakes such as this often tended to make Motherwell a political liability, but even his strongest opponents had to admit they were made only by his practise of sincere public honesty in advocating what he believed were correct policies. He later wrote about the Wheat Board issue:

To oppose this principle [of monopoly marketing] all my life, with one hand, and then attempt, at my time in life, to build up another kind of monopoly, with the other hand, would look to me inconsistent, illogical and fundamentally wrong and unsound.³³

As late as the end of June, Motherwell was still trying to get the creation of at least a voluntary board should the planned Australian system fail to materialize -- but this time in the more private confines of Council.³⁴

³² Dunning Papers, C.A. Dunning to W.R. Motherwell, May 22, 1922.

³³ Motherwell Papers, W.R. Motherwell to Lewis Gabriel, October 9, 1922.

³⁴ Ibid., Recommendations for Council, June 20, 1922.

Another problem caused by Motherwell's actions in harming the political standing of the Minister and federal Liberalism in Saskatchewan, was that of the inter-party dissension caused by the Leader editorial. The paper's reasons for printing the editorial were never quite clear, but probably resulted from its opposition to Motherwell's opinions in Committee, and from some pique over a remark Motherwell had made in the Commons a few days before May 15th. In answer to a remark by T.A. Crerar noting the differences over the Wheat Board issue that had appeared to exist during the 1921 election between the Agriculture Minister and some of his campaign material, "you were reported to have stated", Gardiner told Motherwell,

That you could not always control your supporters. I would suppose that the Leader took this remark as a direct reference to themselves, and that for that reason they wrote the editorial in the tone in which it was written.³⁵

Motherwell felt there were other reasons as well. He speculated at first that it might have been an "accident", written by a new man jumping "at the opportunity to play the big fellow" while Burford Hooke was out of town.³⁶ However, he strongly suspected, as we have seen, that it had been occasioned by some provincial Liberals in order to help the Government in its coming by-elections to re-elect its new Cabinet Ministers. Although the Premier had denied that either he or members of his Government had had any

³⁵ Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, May 30, 1922.

³⁶ He also suspected George Langley, or even R.M. Johnson, may have had something to do with it. Motherwell Papers, W.R. Motherwell to Thomas Miller, June 1, 1922.

previous knowledge of its going to press, and personally felt it had been done to "put the paper right in the minds of its readers" on the issue.³⁷ Motherwell's experience with provincial Liberalism's past tendencies to make a "goat" if necessary of the federal party apparently led him to continue to harbor these suspicions. In mid-June he wrote one correspondent that the Leader attack, meant to help the Provincial Liberals, had instead harmed them; and in July he told Dunning that some quarters in Ottawa still felt Dunning and Martin to blame for the editorial. Motherwell must have been trying to give his own interpretation some backing that did not exist, for Mackenzie King, hearing of Motherwell's words to Dunning, wrote the Premier that he did not mind if Dunning told Motherwell for the Prime Minister that he was "mistaken in entertaining any such impression".³⁸

No matter what had been the cause of the May 15th editorial, Motherwell realized it was important that harmony be restored between himself and the Leader. As a result, he had made no counter-charges against the Leader's accusations; but instead, hoped that the "Little Tempest in a Teapot" would blow over in a voluntary move by the Leader itself to make amends once the evidence that he compiled had made it clear he had not misled the Verina

³⁷ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning, May 18, 1922. Dunning Papers, C.A. Dunning to W.R. Motherwell, May 22, 1922.

³⁸ Motherwell Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.G. McKay, June 13, 1922. Dunning Papers, C.A. Dunning to W.L. Mackenzie King, July 18, 1922; W.L. Mackenzie King to C.A. Dunning, July 21, 1922.

electorate.³⁹ But as time passed and nothing of this nature came from the Morning Leader, Motherwell found it increasingly difficult to keep his patience. "If the Leader doesn't tell these facts", he wrote the Saskatchewan Deputy Minister of Highways, J.G. McKay on June 13th,

as set forth in the enclosed extracts, and in the evidence I have submitted to you and others, then I will be obliged to tell them. It is up to Hooke to say which it will be.

Nonetheless, Motherwell still realized the seriousness of the situation.

Before doing anything, however, I want to have a meeting of the Liberal Executive in Regina, so that I may take counsel with them and know how to deal with one of the most awkward situations for the Liberal Party locally that could have arisen. Here is a paper, that probably did more to elect me than any other one medium, without warrant and absolutely fallaciously [sic] making me take an attitude⁴⁰ on the Wheat Board that they themselves took -- and not I.

By June 29th there was still no response from the Leader -- a full two weeks after copies of his Commons speech had been sent to the paper. Motherwell finally wrote Burford Hooke a long letter. He said he now expected some explanation for the May 15th editorial, preferably before he returned to the West for the summer, when, he added in a threatening note, he would give the entire subject attention in his speaking tour. Motherwell left Hooke with no doubts,

³⁹ Motherwell Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.J. Stevenson, May 22, 1922. In his circular letter, Motherwell played down the difference with the Leader, and acknowledged its valuable assistance during the election. While he said he completely respected the Leader's advocacy of a compulsory Board, he felt it had "unfairly" treated him on May 15th. Ibid., Circular Letter to "friends" on Liberal editorial, May, 1922.

⁴⁰ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.G. McKay, June 13, 1922.

that, to him, the editorial had raised an extremely important question.

Among my few political assets, loyalty and devotion to a purpose and a cause, I think I may be permitted to suggest, is one of them. If this leader editorial were true, and based upon anything resembling facts, even this one political asset would be in danger of being swept away completely.

Nonetheless, Motherwell was ready to give the paper an easy way out of its predicament. He told Hooke that since the paper had been his leading supporter in 1921, he wanted to look at the editorial as an oversight, with George Bell and possibly Hooke himself out of town at the time. He looked for an apologetic communication to that effect in the near future.⁴¹

Burford Hooke and the Morning Leader remained silent. Motherwell went to Regina during the first week in July, and, true to his word, met with local Liberals and the provincial cabinet to discuss the problem. There is no evidence as to what took place at these meetings, though rumors circulated in the eastern Press that Motherwell played it tough with the Leader and threatened public meetings on the Wheat Board issue unless retraction was printed. King heard of these rumors and wired Motherwell on July 17th that since the Leader was "most important" to the Liberal party in the West, he wanted it to feel "it had the entire confidence and goodwill" of the Government.⁴² Motherwell assured Mackenzie King the next day that this

⁴¹ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to Burford Hooke, June 28, 1922.

⁴² King Papers, (wire) W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Motherwell, July 17, 1922.

had already been done on the 11th of July.⁴³ Obviously some form of rapprochement had been effected. The Leader published Motherwell's speech in Hansard on the twelfth, and on the thirteenth gave sympathetic coverage to Motherwell's Regina meeting at City Hall which included a resumé of his Wheat Board position during and since the election. Whatever the agreement made on the 11th, the important thing was, as Dunning wrote King, that the "misunderstanding" between W.R. Motherwell and the Regina Morning Leader had been "straightened out satisfactorily from the point of view of the party".⁴⁴

The Wheat Board issue left federal politics once the Commons approved the Australian compulsory Wheat Board system in June, 1922. The scene of action switched to the prairie provincial capitals where necessary complementary legislation had now to be passed. While it had been before the Federal parliament however, the wheat marketing problem had caused a good deal of trouble for W.R. Motherwell. His own convictions against compulsory marketing had led him to make an unpopular stand in the Agriculture Committee, which in turn had drawn an unfair attack from the Liberal Morning Leader, arousing electorate indignation that he may have indeed misled it during the 1921 election over the Wheat Board issue. It was a bad beginning for the Liberal Minister from Saskatchewan if he hoped to attract Progressive voters and discredit Progressive M.P.'s. He had done everything to indicate his opposition to a policy on which Western voters were almost

⁴³ Ibid., (wire) W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, July 18, 1922.

⁴⁴ Morning Leader, July 12 and 13, 1922. Dunning Papers, C.A. Dunning to W.L. Mackenzie King, July 18, 1922.

unanimously favored, and had weakened Liberal unity over a difference with the Morning Leader.

The perennial tariff problem also caused Motherwell and the Liberal party difficulty in the West during 1922 and 1923. In contrast to the Wheat Board issue, Motherwell agreed with the vast majority of Westerners on tariff policy -- the end of the protective tariff, the increase of the British Preference, and eventually free trade in many manufactured articles for farm consumption, such as implements. Nonetheless, due to the predominant influence of eastern protectionists such as Sir Lomer Gouin and W.S. Fielding within Mackenzie King's cabinet, and the fear of splitting the party in the House over the issue,⁴⁵ Motherwell and other low-tariff Ministers, such as Charles Stewart of Alberta, were unable to secure many changes in the tariff, even towards a revenue status. Downward revision was minimal in 1922, and almost non-existent in 1923, with the Budget speech of that year featuring a statement by the Minister of Finance, Fielding,^{that} the businessman had to be given a "reasonable assurance of tariff stability" in order to develop the nations resources.⁴⁶ Since Motherwell was a member of the Government, he was in the awkward position of having to justify this disappointing performance to the West, though he tried to appear sufficiently independent of the protectionist wing of his party to refute the charges from Progressives that he, like all "party politicians" from the West, had sold out to the high-tariff

⁴⁵ Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 392.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 441. Dunning Papers, (wire) W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning, May 12, 1923.

easterners. In the Commons he defended the tariff provisions of the 1922 and 1923 Budget's as steps in the right direction. "It is not fair of the Hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Crear) to say that this is a protectionist budget", he charged in 1922,

It has protectionist features, but every change the Minister of Finance has made was a direct and deliberate step away from protection. Is there not hope in that?

The tariff reductions, he concluded, were the most any government had ever made in its first meeting with Parliament.⁴⁷ The task in 1923 was much tougher, but he still managed to claim that what changes there were, were at least in a "downward direction".⁴⁸ But Motherwell also made it clear that he was somewhat of an outsider when it came to making Government tariff policy. In 1922, he disagreed with Fielding's statement in the House that the last word on Liberal tariff measures was a 1921 Liberal Opposition resolution favoring moderate protection. Instead, he said, he was bound by the provisions of the tariff plank in the 1919 Liberal platform, as the proper goal for a Liberal Government.⁴⁹ In both 1922 and 1923 he advocated the excise system as "the only way to take protection out of any tariff".⁵⁰ In 1923 there was little doubt Motherwell found it difficult to stand by the Liberal tariff measures. He denied that Fielding's statement in the House on

⁴⁷ Canada. House of Commons Debates, June 6, 1922, pp. 2552-55.

⁴⁸ Ibid., May 15, 1923, pp. 2776-80.

⁴⁹ Ibid., June 6, 1922, p. 2553.

⁵⁰ Ibid., June 6, 1922, p. 2554; May 15, 1923, p. 2779.

tariff "stability" meant "finality", since Parliament could easily undo later what it did today. He attacked the Progressives for opposing every Liberal tariff cut, when they would be more effective helping him fight for lower tariffs in the Liberal caucus. Finally, when asked if he was satisfied with the 1923 budget, Motherwell evaded a direct answer, but implied he was not.

I am never satisfied with anything in this progressive world; I am always on the lookout for better things. Did the hon. gentleman ever see a Liberal who was satisfied to stay in one place?⁵¹

The Opposition could not fail to notice Motherwell's embarrassing position during 1922 and 1923. Meighen was especially cruel in his assessment of the Minister's position within the Cabinet, and in Motherwell's faithfulness to the wishes of Western voters. "The Minister of Agriculture" he said in the Commons on May 22, 1922,

will be encouraged to carry on his pillow fight and to dangle hopes before the western farmer, but from our experience of the past I do not think we will put the influence of the Minister of Agriculture against the influence of the Minister of Finance.

Motherwell, Meighen insisted, had possessed "all the cards", right from the 1919 Liberal Platform to the past statements of Liberal Cabinet Ministers, for use against the protectionists in the Cabinet; but with the Minister of the Interior, Charles Stewart, he "did not win a single skirmish".

⁵¹ Ibid., May 15, 1923, pp. 2772; 2779-80.

Why, the Minister of Agriculture only makes a laughing stock of his friends. The Minister of Agriculture is an assstate to everything he has declared for in western Canada.⁵²

Nothing could have been further from the truth. Motherwell constantly pressed the Government to meet Western demands for a lower tariff, as well as lower freight rates on land and water, and increased expenditures for branch lines; but in the tariff issue, as with the others, Motherwell was part of a distinct minority in the Cabinet.⁵³ It was even worse in the Liberal caucus, where he was the only Liberal member from a constituency between Winnipeg and British Columbia. "We must remember", he wrote J.G. Gardiner, in reply to his friend's disappointment over the small reductions of 1922,

that caucus here means that the Cabinet goes there to listen rather than impose their views on caucus, and that the private Members do the talking. Under such circumstances, it leaves not one single soul from the Prairies to talk up in caucus a low tariff, or the implementing of the Liberal Platform -- not one from the entire rural prairie region.⁵⁴

Against odds such as this, even with the Prime Minister sympathetic, it was impossible to secure the desired revisions quickly. No matter how fruitless it appeared, slow downward revision was better than none at all, and the presence of even one Western Liberal in the Cabinet, he felt, was more effective than the

⁵² Ibid., May 22, 1923, p. 2996.

⁵³ The only low-tariff men were Motherwell, Stewart, and Mackenzie King, although others had "low-tariff tendencies". Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 372.

⁵⁴ Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, June 17, 1922.

efforts of the three dozen western M.P.s who chose to stand separate in the Progressive party. Despite the fact that Western disappointment over the "stand pat" budget of 1923 could not help but detrimentally affect Motherwell's standing in the West as a member of the Government, resignation in protest to the Government's inaction would only serve to make him less valuable to the West, and only result in a longer delay before solutions were found for Western problems.

Motherwell's feelings in this regard were evident when the Government's second Budget was brought down in May 1923. In the months before, Motherwell had presented his recommendations forcefully to both Fielding and Mackenzie King for an increase in the British Preference to 50%. He had found that not only was the Finance Minister loath to increase the Preference for fear it might jeopardize the signing of a recently negotiated trade treaty with France,⁵⁵ but also that as days passed opposition hardened, in and out of the Cabinet, to any changes at all in the tariff.⁵⁶ Dawson has written that when this opposition increased, Motherwell and Stewart were not willing to make "determined" stands for their beliefs.⁵⁷ Motherwell, however, was in Moose Jaw campaigning in a by-election from the last week in March until the second week in

⁵⁵ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, February 14, 1923; King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.S. Fielding, March 29, 1923; W.R. Motherwell to M.L. Mackenzie King, March 29, 1923.

⁵⁶ Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 443.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 444.

April, when most of the hard bargaining took place in the Cabinet, and so was unable to make his influence felt effectively in Council. By the time he returned in mid-April all chances of decreasing the tariff in 1923 had virtually disappeared.

There is no evidence to suggest Premier Dunning was dissatisfied with Motherwell's performance up to this time, but alarmed by the defeat of federal Liberal forces aided by his own organization in Moose Jaw, he did wire Mackenzie King on April 24th that unless action were taken in the budget to make a definite step to the 1919 Liberal tariff plank, then there was no chance for the success of a federal Liberal organization on the prairies.⁵⁸ As a result he was naturally disappointed when the Budget came down in mid-May, but W.S. Fielding's speech advocating tariff "stability" was too serious an affront to the West for him to remain silent. He issued a press statement to the effect that while the last two budgets might be termed "steps" in the right direction, Fielding had no right to define Liberal tariff goals on any other basis than that of the 1919 platform; and he wired Motherwell on the 12th that the Minister would have the Saskatchewan Government's support if he chose to resign in protest. Motherwell, for the reason we have seen, made no move to resign, but chose rather to try and explain away the Fielding remark as not implying "finality". Privately, he said Fielding had only "over-worked" the expression in order to promote capital investment in Canada, and "allay fears" in the East that

⁵⁸ Dunning Papers, (wire) C.A. Dunning to W.L. Mackenzie King, April 24, 1923.

the budget pleased the West more than the East. On the 16th Dunning sent another wire to Motherwell, saying it was no use to "explain what cannot be explained" and that the choice was between definitely repudiating Fielding, or destroying the Liberal party in the West. In a telegram of the same date that had been prepared, but not sent, Dunning left no question as to his own feelings.

Regarding your personal situation it will not be pleasing to you to learn that Liberals are already asking: Is Motherwell going same way Sifton and Calder.⁵⁹

Clearly, Dunning believed that Motherwell should have paid closer attention to Western sentiment and resigned. He may have thought that Motherwell could be encouraged to repeat his action in 1918 when he had differed from a number of his colleagues in the Provincial Cabinet. But in 1923, the question of loyalty to the Liberal party, its leader and methods through the two party system dictated against resignation. Leaving his Cabinet post would only prove the Progressives right that the Liberal party was an ineffective vehicle for realizing Western demands. Instead, Motherwell meant to turn the argument around by illustrating that the West needed more representation in the future within the Liberal party.

Dunning's disappointment with W.R. Motherwell was soon reflected in a falling off of correspondence with the Agriculture Minister on

⁵⁹ Ibid., Dunning's Press Statement, May 14, 1923; (wire) C.A. Dunning to W.R. Motherwell, May 12, 1923; (wire) W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning; W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning, May 18, 1923; (wire) C.A. Dunning to W.R. Motherwell, May 16, 1923; (wire not sent) C.A. Dunning to W.R. Motherwell, May 16, 1923.

both political and policy matters. This new coolness that seemed to have grown between the two men was matched on a larger scale by relations between provincial and federal Liberal parties. The Speaker of the Saskatchewan Assembly expressed the indignation that many provincial Liberals felt over the tariff provisions in the 1923 budget:

Tell Mackenzie King from me that it is now all off in Saskatchewan. We proved we were ready to fight in Moose Jaw. He fell down, consequently he won't get a seat in Saskatchewan at all. Third parties are a ⁶⁰— nuisance, but, by heavens! we won't be trifled with.

Until the Liberal Government proved its sincerity in implementing the tariff proposals of its 1919 Platform, Dunning told Mackenzie King shortly thereafter, the provincial Liberal party, by political necessity, would have to remain publicly remote from its federal counterpart.⁶¹

The whole problem of provincial-federal Liberal relations had concerned Motherwell since 1917. He had always held that close co-operation between the two branches of the Party was not only natural but also a necessary pre-requisite for any federal Liberal success in Saskatchewan. Remembering the vacillation of Premier Martin in this regard, and especially his personal friendship with J.A. Calder, Motherwell welcomed the change in Premiership that took place in Saskatchewan in 1922. He was especially pleased with the announcement of the new Premier, C.A. Dunning, that his Government would

⁶⁰ G.A. Scott in J.F. Johnston to W.L. Mackenzie King, July 1, 1923, in Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 442.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 442. King Papers, C.A. Dunning to W.L. Mackenzie King, July 27, 1923.

be at all times a "Liberal" one.⁶² "The New Saskatchewan Government suits me to a dot", Motherwell wrote F.H. Auld, Deputy Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan.

It is refreshing to know now, without the use of an X-ray, that we have a real Liberal Government once more installed in the Queen City of the plains.⁶³

Later in the year Motherwell welcomed the six by-election victories of the new Government, four by acclamation, as evidence that what Western Liberalism had always needed "was someone who would show a little more fight for their convictions and a little less pal-avering to new parties on the horizon".⁶⁴

As the only Federal Minister from Saskatchewan, Motherwell could now do more than before in fostering close federal-provincial Liberal relations, and he began almost immediately to re-build organizational ties behind the scenes. In matters of patronage he frequently consulted provincial authorities,⁶⁵ and he conscientiously kept watch

⁶² William J. Brennan, "C.A. Dunning and the Challenge of the Progressives: 1922-1925", Saskatchewan History, Vol XXII, No. 1. Winter, 1969. p. 3.

⁶³ Motherwell Papers, W.R. Motherwell to F.H. Auld, April 10, 1922. W.M. Martin found that his support of W.R. Motherwell in the 1921 election had so upset provincial Grain Growers, that his presence as head of the Government endangered its political future. He resigned as Premier and became Chief Justice of the Saskatchewan Supreme Court during the summer of 1922.

⁶⁴ Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, September 30, 1922.

⁶⁵ Only on the matter of judgeships does there appear to have been a lack of consultation. In 1925, in answer to a number of applicants for these positions, Dunning wrote that in recent years his recommendations had carried little weight in Ottawa, and he did not think it was a "good thing for the Leader of the Provincial Party in this Province to be in position of having his representations ignored", and so, in most cases, refused to give these applicants his support. Dunning Papers, C.A. Dunning to A. Buhr, April 8, 1925; C.A. Dunning to R.T. Graham, June 19, 1925; C.A. Dunning to N. Hoffman, April 1, 1925.

for the Saskatchewan Government that nothing detrimental to its interests occurred in Council.⁶⁶ In the important matter of Redistribution he was particularly careful to consult the Provincial organization. In September of 1922 he asked J.G. Gardiner for a rough draft map of twenty-one ridings, and thereafter worked closely with the Highways Minister and the Premier, eventually accepting, at the last moment, a new map that Gardiner thought was a considerable improvement. Though the Agriculture Minister felt it would be a good deal harder to defend in the House due to controversial population changes, Motherwell's secretary told Gardiner he was "prepared to fight for your wishes as outlined".⁶⁷ There is no doubt that a good deal of Motherwell's willingness and success in building up ties with Regina was due to the presence of Gardiner as the then unofficial head of the Saskatchewan Liberal organization.

The most interesting indication that Ottawa's ties with Regina were growing, was the move to eliminate the provincial committee of the old National Liberal Organization Committee from consultation on patronage and over the issue of Redistribution. For example, when Gardiner asked that requests for information about postmaster vacancies in the province be directed to J.J. Stevenson, instead of George Bell (a close associate of Burford Hooke),

⁶⁶ The Dunning papers include a good many representations of this type during 1922 and early 1923, on such topics as National resources, lignite coal, Grand Trunk railway coupons, Liquor export houses.

⁶⁷ Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, September 30, 1922; J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, February 19, 1923; I Cummings to J.G. Gardiner, March 1, 1923.

Motherwell complied.⁶⁸ On Redistribution, the Liberal committee was not consulted at all, and Motherwell suggested in December of 1922 that Gardiner see Charles Locke, the acting secretary, and pretend to secure his co-operation in plans that had already been made, so "as to remove any possible disappointment that might be felt if he found out accidentally that action had already been taken". Gardiner even objected to this course, and the sensitivities of the old organization were eventually ignored entirely.⁶⁹

With this basis of co-operation being built up behind the scenes, Motherwell hoped that a more open form of working arrangement might be made between the two branches of the party in contesting a by-election in Moose Jaw sometime in 1923. The by-election was made necessary by the unseating of R.M. Johnson, the prominent Progressive Member, for violation of certain sections of the Elections Act that called for disclosures of campaign fund sources. Motherwell had not expected the judgement of the King's Bench court to go as it did, but when it happened he could not have been more delighted. He felt the unseating would have far-reaching effects on the future of the Progressive movement, the most important of which would be to show that the talk about purifying elections and the "new dawn" in public life was "all bunkum". "Now", he wrote Dunning on October 7, 1922,

⁶⁸ Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, November 9, 1922; W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, November 14, 1922.

⁶⁹ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, December 7, 1922; (wire) J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, December 13, 1922; (wire) W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, December 13, 1922.

that the chief push connected with the organization of the Saskatchewan portion of the movement has himself been unseated for corrupt practices, a few more of the scales from the eyes of the deluded electors may possibly drop ... by the time a few more jolts like these arrive, I think the usual discerning vision of the average elector will be finally restored.⁷⁰

Motherwell's opinions of the Progressive movement had certainly not changed since 1919. He continued to see the farmers in politics as bad for themselves and for the country. While he admitted there was ample room for improving political methods in Canada, it could "never be done by taking a number of malcontents and misguided enthusiasts from each of the old political parties and passing them off as something else."⁷¹ Nonetheless, Motherwell felt that all through 1922 the Progressives had been losing their appeal with the electorate, and he had noticed during 1922 that the Saskatchewan Progressives, Thomas Sales, T.H. McConica and Fred Johnston, had shown signs they were more than ready to follow T.A. Crerar if the Progressive Leader should join the Government. To this Motherwell took no exception, since their coming would be on Liberal terms, and welcomed among Eastern Liberals a lessening in their distrust of the Progressives.⁷² Still, the "fusion movement" as it was called, only verified his impression that the whole Progressive phenomenon had been one of political opportunism.

⁷⁰ Dunning Papers, W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning, October 7, 1922.

⁷¹ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning, October 16, 1922.

⁷² Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, September 30, 1922; W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, October 26, 1922.

It is just the old story over again, repeating the experience of the "Union" stunt. The Progressives that gravitated from the Union Party started on their trek when the institution began to weaken, and they are prepared to take the same attitude towards their party as they find it beginning to weaken and the Liberals getting stronger. It is a great game these days for some people to keep their equilibrium and incidentally keep their seats.⁷³

For Moose Jaw, the tendency among a number of Progressives towards friendliness with the Liberals meant one thing. It was an indication the Progressives were losing conviction, in which case a sound defeat, and not the olive branch, was the best way to hasten the third party's disintegration should it refuse, as in 1921, to back the Liberal candidate. In late 1922, however, the prospect of an early by-election worried Motherwell, as he feared the Progressives might successfully make Johnson out as a martyr to the third party cause so close to his unseating. As a result Motherwell welcomed the delay in calling the by-election occasioned by Johnson's appeal of the lower court's ruling to the Supreme Court, in mid-October. In addition, Motherwell felt the Progressives' financing of Johnson's appeal would give the electorate the impression they were supporting Johnson in violation of the law. "In the meantime", Motherwell wrote Premier Dunning,

the Fall and Winter can be devoted to putting Moose Jaw constituency in as good shape⁷⁴ as possible for the Progressives when the axe does fall.

C.A. Dunning was not in agreement with Motherwell on the tactics

⁷³ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, February 14, 1923.

⁷⁴ Dunning Papers, W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning, October 7, 1922; W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning, October 16, 1922.

the Liberals should take in Moose Jaw. In answering Motherwell's inquiry as to his assessment of the situation, Dunning made it quite clear that he preferred working out an agreement with the Progressives if at all possible. The chief difficulty in effecting any such agreement, however, was in the person of W.E. Knowles who considered it his right to run as the Liberal candidate, but who also was a person non grata to the Progressives. Sympathy in the riding for Johnson made impossible a victory for Knowles at the present time, and it was unlikely he could be persuaded to step down. Even if another candidate were endorsed by the Liberals and Progressives together, Knowles would probably still run as an Independent, with a good number of local Liberals backing him. As a result, Dunning too welcomed the delay, but for a different reason than did Motherwell. If an election were called in the near future, he wrote to the Agriculture Minister, "it would tend to widen the breach between Liberals and Progressives".⁷⁵

The Supreme Court upheld Johnson's unseating in February, 1923, and a by-election was called for April 10th in Moose Jaw. The federal Liberals, as expected, nominated W.E. Knowles, and so made any agreement with the Progressive forces impossible. Given this state of affairs, Dunning was hesitant over what course his Government should take in the battle. On March 19th, the question had still not been decided, and Motherwell wrote letters to both Dunning and Gardiner meant to encourage the Saskatchewan Government's

⁷⁵ Ibid., C.A. Dunning to W.R. Motherwell, October 11, 1922.

entrance into the campaign with the federal Liberals. He had been cheered, he wrote, by the news that some private Liberal M.L.A.s had decided to "pile in", and help the federal cause. "This is a healthy sign of the times", he told Gardiner, "as there certainly was not much disposition of this nature to be observed in 1917 and 1921".⁷⁶ Nonetheless, Motherwell felt the Saskatchewan Liberals could do more. Since J.A. Maharg and other Opposition members of the Saskatchewan legislature had drawn in behind A.E. Hopkins, the Progressive candidate, Motherwell was of the opinion that all provincial Liberals could, without criticism, now enter a federal contest on behalf of all Liberalism. While he disliked the idea of a Liberal-Progressive fight, it was time "this chaotic political situation is properly cleaned up"; and any "compunction of conscience" among provincial Liberals would surely be eased by the fact that Hopkins was an old Tory. A win in Moose Jaw, and a strong provincial Liberal Government in Saskatchewan would be "a very favourable setting for the next general Federal election", he told Dunning, and,

inasmuch as the Liberal cause is one and cannot be subdivided into Provincial and Federal Liberalism, I am in hopes when I join the fray myself ... I will find a united arm on the march to victory.⁷⁷

On March 26th Gardiner wired Motherwell that the Saskatchewan

⁷⁶ Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, March 19, 1923.

⁷⁷ Dunning Papers, W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning, March 19, 1923.

Government was going into the contest.⁷⁸ Dunning, after the by-election successes of his own Government felt it was at last safe to openly re-establish the federal-provincial political ties,⁷⁹ though he lessened the impact of the reunion on the provincial electorate by retiring to the Coast during the campaign. He told Motherwell he was going on the advice of "friends" who feared he would deliver a "characteristic fighting speech" against the Tories and so ruin Liberal chances of attracting Conservative votes.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, J.G. Gardiner took control of the campaign, in which five of seven Cabinet Ministers and seven Liberal M.L.A.'s participated. Gardiner was reported to have stated during the campaign, though he later denied it, that the Provincial Cabinet had decided it was time for a showdown with the farmers.⁸¹ Motherwell joined the skirmish on March 29th, but despite his plea to Mackenzie King for further Cabinet help, especially the low-tariff men Murdock and Stewart, only D.D. McKenzie, and he a high-tariff Liberal, could be spared from the hectic budget making activities.⁸² It was rumored before the election that should Johnson have been re-nominated,

⁷⁸ Gardiner Papers, (wire) J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, March 26, 1923.

⁷⁹ Brennan, "C.A. Dunning and the Challenge of the Progressives: 1922-1925", p. 5.

⁸⁰ Dunning Papers, C.A. Dunning to W.R. Motherwell, March 24, 1923.

⁸¹ Brennan, "C.A. Dunning and the Challenge of the Progressives: 1922-1925", pp. 5-6.

⁸² King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, March 29, 1923; (wire) W.L. Mackenzie King to W.R. Motherwell, March 29, 1923; (wire) F.A. McGregor to W.R. Motherwell, March 30, 1923.

a concerted Liberal-Conservative-C.P.R. drive would have been organized against him, but the nomination of the former Conservative, Hopkins, as the Progressive candidate resulted in an unequal contest between the two forces to attract the Conservative town vote.⁸³ As Dunning had earlier suspected, it was difficult for Liberals to "soft-pedal" to the Tory voters, and the campaign featured strong attacks by the Liberals, and especially by the Liberal press, against the Tory background of the Progressive candidate,⁸⁴ which virtually decided the election.

The results of the by-election gave Hopkins a victory of 8,960 votes to Knowle's 7,362, showing that the Progressive movement was far from waning, as Motherwell thought, and that the performance of the Federal Liberal Government to date had given little satisfaction to the West. Most important, it also shattered Dunning's confidence that he could successfully retie his provincial organization to the federal party. Combined with the dissatisfaction in the West over the 1923 budget, as we have seen, he told Mackenzie King that "publicly emphasizing a close connection between the Federal and Provincial authorities would at this time mean our defeat provincially". He apparently had no objection to the

⁸³ J.W. Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton, March 12, 1923. Cook-Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence p. 164.

⁸⁴ Dunning Papers, C.A. Dunning to W.R. Motherwell, March 24, 1923. Brown, "Progressivism and the Press", pp. 177-78. Motherwell personally favored an attack on the Progressives' performance in the House -- their opposition to the 1922 tariff revisions and the restoration of the ban on the import and manufacture of oleomargarine. Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, March 19, 1923.

private ties continuing, but there was no mistaking that he blamed defeat in Moose Jaw on the weight given to Motherwell's over his own advice on the federal political situation in the province. He told Mackenzie King that he had disliked the idea of holding the election so soon. Though called anyway, without reference to him, he had gone into the battle, and now shared "the stigma of defeat". If any open co-operation was going to place in the future, Dunning suggested that greater attention be given to his own views, and that he be kept better informed.

To my mind it is imperative that, if we are to co-operate as we should, we be kept fully and continuously advised of everything that is planned in relation to this part of the country; and also that the considered judgment of the members of this Governments and local leaders of Liberalism acting together should guide to a larger extent the Federal party in relation to matters affecting the West.⁸⁶

As Motherwell toured the West with the Cabinet colleagues Ernest Lapointe and T.A. Low during October of 1923, he must have sensed the disfavor with which the Western voter regarded Mackenzie King's Liberal Government, which after almost two years in office had given the West little about which to rejoice outside of a few tariff reductions in 1922, and restoration of flour and wheat freight rates under the Crows Nest Pass schedule. There was even talk among Manitoba Progressives and some of their Western Liberal sympathizers, such as J.W. Dafoe, of forming a revitalized Western

⁸⁵ C.A.R., 1923, p. 713.

⁸⁶ King Papers, C.A. Dunning to W.L. Mackenzie King, July 27, 1923; W.L. Mackenzie King to C.A. Dunning, August 1, 1923.

Liberal party under a Western leader, such as C.A. Dunning.⁸⁷

Motherwell's own position was scarcely better, though he had fought in Council for the realization of Western demands. The Government's unpopularity in the West, especially over the 1923 budget, was his own as well, and came on top of the dismay and disappointment with which most Saskatchewan farmers had regarded his Wheat Board stand a year earlier. In December, 1923, J.W. Dafoe wrote Sir Clifford Sifton that "Bill Motherwell ... would be beaten out of his boots in Regina if he were to contest the seat today".⁸⁸

While political contacts with the provincial Liberal organization continued to grow behind the scenes, open co-operation, vital to the success of federal Liberalism in Saskatchewan, had suffered a serious setback after a promising start in Moose Jaw. The Government's defeat in that by-election, and the unpopular 1923 budget had forced C.A. Dunning to assume once again a distinctly cool attitude in public towards Ottawa, and, it seems, in private towards Motherwell as well. If the federal party hoped to regain the confidence and support of the provincial Liberals in the next election campaign, a distinctly more attractive programme would have to be devised in the coming two years for the Western voter. Only

⁸⁷ T.A. Crerar to A.K. Cameron, October 12, 1923, from Peter S. Regenstreif, "A Threat to Leadership: C.A. Dunning and Mackenzie King", Dalhousie Review, Vol. XLIV, No. 3, Autumn, 1964. p. 274; J.W. Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton, December 27, 1923. Cook, Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, p. 176.

⁸⁸ J.W. Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton, December 27, 1923. Cook, Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, p. 176.

with popular policies and political divisions healed could the federal Liberal party hope to regain the prominence it had once held in Saskatchewan.

6. MOTHERWELL AND THE FEDERAL LIBERAL COMEBACK, 1924-1926

Not only was Mackenzie King's Government in serious trouble throughout the West at the end of 1923, but with two by-election losses in the Maritimes in December, its political bankruptcy was evident elsewhere in Canada. In analysing the situation across Canada, Mackenzie King and his close advisor, Andrew Haydon¹ decided that victory in the next election depended on a successful campaign to regain lost favor in the West. W.R. Motherwell and other Western Ministers and supporters naturally encouraged this trend, and brought Mackenzie King's attention to the policies that the West most wanted.² The Prime Minister, putting men before policies, however, made another attempt to strengthen Western representation in the Cabinet. In early January he called T.A. Crerar to Ottawa to discuss Progressive entry, but Crerar told King that he would not enter the Government unless Motherwell, whose antagonism to - wards the Progressives he well knew, were replaced by Dunning. The

¹ Andrew Haydon wrote Mackenzie King on January 9th that he must "get the best men from the West", and complement it by a bold policy that would "tend to stir up public imagination" in the prairies. "As the situation stands", Haydon concluded, "the Liberal Party would be hopelessly beaten in the Country today". King Papers, Memorandum from A. Haydon to W.L. Mackenzie King, January 9, 1924.

² Motherwell, Stewart and McMurray all wanted significant tariff reductions, restoration of the balance of Crows Nest Pass rates on Eastern commodities moving West for the farmer, and Bank Act revisions to provide insurance on all deposits in Chartered Banks. Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, December 29, 1923. J.G. Gardiner also counselled Mackenzie King that "self-preservation, if nothing else, should now dictate a policy favorable to the West". Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.L. Mackenzie King, December 18, 1923.

Saskatchewan Premier, however, who had also been asked to Ottawa to discuss a possible Cabinet position, was unwilling to enter federal politics just yet. As an alternative though, he suggested that a progressive and imaginative legislative program would suffice to bring Progressive support, and keep the credit in the Liberal party.³

King followed Dunning's advice. The Progressive voter was to be wooed into forsaking the third party method in politics, and the direct attack on the party's representatives. was, for the present, put aside. The legislative session was not nearly so "imaginative" as had been intended, but the 1924 Budget featured long desired downward revisions in the tariff, especially in farm implements, a number of branch line construction bills managed to make it past the Senate, and the Government allowed the entire schedule of Crows Nest Pass rates to come into effect on July 7th. As King swung through the West that fall, he explained that the credit for these measures belonged to the Liberal party alone; and had more Liberals been elected from the West in 1921, the progress in meeting Western demands would have been much greater.⁴

At the end of the year, however, the prairies outwardly did not appear any closer to the Liberal camp than they had at the beginning.

³ Blair Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King; 1924-1932: The Lonely Nights (Toronto: 1963), pp. 15-16.

⁴ Ibid., p. 27. In Manitoba he stressed co-operation of the two parties, but in Saskatchewan, he emphasized that the Progressive forces would find their true home within the Liberal party. See also, C.A.R., 1925, pp. 206-08.

Although the tariff grievance had been partly met, many Western problems remained unsolved. During King's Western tour, the railway Commission had suspended the Crows Nest Rates, and King had tried to evade the responsibility of nullifying its decision, by sending the whole question to the Supreme Court. The greatest disappointment for King was Dunning's continued public remoteness, even though King had attempted to do as the Premier had suggested. While Dunning privately told King he might come into the Cabinet if he could find a replacement, the Premier nonetheless avoided appearing on the platform at King's meeting in Regina, and let the city organize a civic reception, although the other two prairie Government's had held receptions in King's honor at their respective Legislative Buildings.⁵ Neatby notes that "by the end of the year, Mackenzie King might well have begun to question this broad strategy".⁶ Nonetheless, if the Government's performance had not been spectacular, at least it had been a significant attempt to approach the Western voter for support. With an election in the offing in one or two years, it could provide an important base on which to wage a campaign geared to King's arguments during his 1924 tour, that a larger Liberal representation would mean a more extensive

⁵ Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 28. When Regina Liberals told Motherwell that they were planning a civic reception, the Minister, who was in charge of Saskatchewan arrangements for the tour, gave Dunning first chance to give King a reception. He added in his letter that the other prairie Governments, who were not Liberal, were giving receptions. Motherwell Papers, W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning, September 22, 1924.

⁶ Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 28.

legislative programme for the benefit of the West.

During 1924, the Minister of Agriculture worked to improve his own political standing in the West. He took strong stands in the Commons and during a Saskatchewan speaking tour in the summer, for reduced tariff and freight rate schedules, and emphasized the progress his own Department was making, especially in promoting quality marketing. In the past he had been only lukewarm toward the projected Hudson Bay Railway, favoring expenditures on branch lines instead, but in August of 1924, he journeyed up the finished sections of the Railway as far as Kettle Rapids, and announced on his return that he was a convert to the Bay route.⁷ While he undoubtedly overcame a good deal of his unpopularity in the West in this manner during 1924, his attentions were also directed during this year and into the next, towards the important matters of patronage and political organization in Saskatchewan in preparation for the next general election.

Federal political organization in the West had been languishing since the 1921 election -- so much so that one disappointed Liberal felt the party was losing even those who had stood "firm" in 1921.⁸ J.W. Dafoe believed that what little organization did exist for dispensing patronage had been put into the hands of Laurier

⁷ Ibid., Clipping from Morning Leader, August 11, 1924. Howard A. Fleming, Canada's Arctic Outlet: A History of the Hudson Bay Railway (Los Angeles, 1957), p. 82. Motherwell wrote a long letter to King early in 1925 with details of his trip and outlining his recommendations to complete the route. King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, January 30, 1925.

⁸ Ibid., J.G. Turgeon to W.L. Mackenzie King, December 11, 1923.

Liberals who thought "the Unionist Liberals would flock back into the party, eat humble pie and ask forgiveness".⁹ Although this observation did not apply in Alberta where Charles Stewart, a former Unionist, controlled patronage, it certainly applied in Manitoba, where E.J. McMurray, the recently appointed Solicitor General, kept "alive the old feud between the Laurier and Unionist Liberals".¹⁰ In Saskatchewan Motherwell's strong partisanship, and lingering anti-Unionist sentiments, were bound to effect choices on patronage, but there was no deliberate attempt to keep the Unionist Liberals at arm's length, especially since Motherwell was trying to build a basis for co-operation and consultation with the provincial Liberals, many of whom had been strong Unionists. Despite Dunning's declaration in July, 1923, against public association between the two branches of the party, the private bonds begun in 1922 continued to flourish into 1924 and 1925, chiefly between Motherwell and Gardiner, who became official head of the provincial Liberal organization during 1924. Consultation on federal constituency boundaries ended with the passing of the Redistribution Bill through the House during the 1924 spring session, but other matters of patronage continued to call for Motherwell's attention, often causing more than a few political headaches for the Minister, and charges, on occasion, from unsuccessful candidates, that he was not firm enough in representing their claims to the

⁹ J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, December 27, 1923. Cook, Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, p. 176.

¹⁰ Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 450.

Government.

One such candidate was Sid Porter, who had been a valuable party worker for federal and provincial Liberals in Saskatchewan from 1900 to 1912, and who, Senator J.G. Turriff explained, carried "many political burdens discretely [sic] and helped to make Saskatchewan a Liberal stronghold".¹¹ Since early 1922, C.A. Dunning and Walter Scott had asked Motherwell to get some sort of appointment for Porter, who had recently fallen on very bad times, and the Minister had tried unsuccessfully to get Porter a job with the C.N.R.. He blamed his failure on Porter's formerly close relationship with Calder, that seemed "to have taken him downgrade with our former esteemed friend and colleague, Senator Jim".¹² Senator J.G. Turriff felt that Motherwell could have done better. He commented on Porter's case in particular and Liberal patronage in general in a letter to C.A. Dunning, in February, 1924.

I am so damned mad that I hardly know how to write. Here Sid Porter has been for the past two months doing everything in his power to secure a position, had the promise of Stewart, Motherwell and McMurray, the only Liberal representatives from the Prairie Provinces, and all cabinet Ministers, that they would do everything possible for him. They have all fallen down simply because none of them have the nerve of a jack-rabbit to say that they want him appointed and that he must be appointed.

.....

That is just about the way everything is done, and I wonder

¹¹ Dunning Papers, Senator J.G. Turriff to C.A. Dunning, February 9, 1924.

¹² Ibid., C.A. Dunning to W.R. Motherwell, April 23, 1923; W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning, May 4, 1923.

if they think the West is going to rally to them if that is the treatment served out to old friends ... When I think of three men representing two million people on the praries [sic] not having enough¹³ courage to stand by an old friend it makes me rebellious.

Judicial appointments roused the most resentment. As the real prizes of political service, they attracted many applications from both well-qualified and mediocre men -- all of whom felt slighted if passed by. Since these appointments were so important, it required special care to make sure each one brought the greatest benefit to the party, and offended as few people as possible. The residency and qualifications of the applicants, the date the judgeship had been vacated, and even the make-up of the vacant district's population, had to be considered. A case in point was the busy North Battleford district in 1925 and 1926. While North Battleford Liberals felt that a local man should be appointed, Motherwell and the Premier, C.A. Dunning, had a non-resident in mind, D. Buckles of Swift Current, who had not only been promised a judgeship before, but was also Roman Catholic, whose appointment would please Catholics in North Battleford and throughout Saskatchewan.¹⁴ Complicating matters further, Motherwell felt obliged to fill two previously vacated districts first, but could not find suitable men for either position. The delay it occasioned for North Battleford not only

¹³ Ibid., Senator J.G. Turriff to C.A. Dunning, February 9, 1924.

¹⁴ Ibid., F.G. Atkinson to C.A. Dunning, July 30, 1925, July 28, 1925; C.A. Dunning to F.G. Atkinson, September 25, 1925; D. Buckles to C.A. Dunning, July 8, 1925, July 10, 1925, August 6, 1925, September 24, 1925; C.A. Dunning to D. Buckles, July 8, 1925, August 21, 1925; C.A. Dunning to J.G. Gardiner, July 9, 1925.

brought the anger of local people, but also that of Buckles, who questioned Motherwell's sincerity in promising him the position. On September 25, 1925, he asked Dunning for aid in securing him the appointment before the federal election at the end of October.

I realize that the time is short for doing anything, but we would have to see something definite as most of my S.C. [Swift Current] friends are of the same opinion as myself, that the old man is fooling me and his word is not to be relied on.¹⁵

Motherwell's only comment on the situation, if not on all patronage problems, was appropriate. "Obviously", he wrote to North Battleford Liberals, "I cannot please everybody".¹⁶

Meeting the persistent claims to patronage of Liberal "friends" from Saskatchewan was only one of the problems facing Motherwell. During 1924 and 1925 the possibility of a federal Liberal comeback in Saskatchewan was threatened by the continued existence of an unfriendly federal civil service in the province. "A Conservative generally throughout the Civil Service has altogether too much influence in this province", J.G. Gardiner protested to Motherwell in February of 1924. As long as this persisted, Gardiner continued, it would be

impossible for us to get anywhere, as these people are offsetting every move that is made to tend to place the Liberal party in better standing in different communities.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid., D. Buckles to C.A. Dunning, September 24, 1925.

¹⁶ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to A. Buhr, n.d., enclosed in A. Buhr to C.A. Dunning, September 22, 1925.

¹⁷ Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, February 25, 1924.

The problem was especially troublesome in the R.C.M.P., where good friends of the Liberal party were released from service for "slight physical ailments", and Conservatives promoted at every opportunity.¹⁸ In Gardiner's constituency, the friendly Balcarres detachment was closed, while close by, the Fort Qu'Appelle detachment, under the control of a local Conservative, D.H. McDonald, continued to "keep the people in the district who are friendly to us continuously upset over their operations". Unless something was done about these R.C.M.P. matters, Gardiner told Motherwell, he did not see how the Liberals could expect "to get anywhere politically" in Saskatchewan.¹⁹ Motherwell also received complaints about the activities of one Mr. Graham, in charge of Indian administration for Saskatchewan. In one case, Graham appointed without consultation with Motherwell or Gardiner, a number of instructors of decided Conservative leanings for an Indian Industrial School at Fort Qu'Appelle, and in another, refused to give the branch's local accounts to Liberal businessmen.²⁰ Finally, Motherwell heard that the supervisor of the Soldier Settlement offices at Prince Albert was travelling over the northern part of the province promoting the Conservative cause, and using his influence to have Liberals removed from the Government service. He was even said to be considering running as the local Conservative candidate in the next federal

¹⁸ Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, May 20, 1924.

¹⁹ Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, February 28, 1924.

²⁰ Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, May 30, 1924.

election.²¹ The best Motherwell could do in all these cases was to persuade the respective Ministers to issue countermanding instructions to their Departments' employees, or to transfer unfriendly personnel to areas where they would do the least damage. With the continued existence of the Public Service Commission, outright changes in the Conservative complexion of the civil service were difficult to achieve.

Until mid-1924, co-operation between Ottawa and Regina had been of a make-shift kind, much of it motivated by the similar ideas of Motherwell and Gardiner on national organization. Although consultation over redistribution and patronage laid the groundwork for more extensive behind-the-scenes co-operation, as yet there had been no concerted effort to build a common Liberal organization or election machine. On June 2nd, Motherwell wrote to Mackenzie King that he believed once the session had ended, and the Redistribution Bill had been passed, he should spend the summer re-organizing the old federal ridings in Saskatchewan and setting up local executives in the new, in preparation for nominating candidates. He could use the organization meetings to advertise the Government's work since 1921, and outline its plans for the future.²² These plans were apparently dropped, however, and instead some sort of working arrangement was made during the summer and fall

²¹ Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, September 12, 1924; W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, September 27, 1924; J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, November 6, 1924.

²² King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, June 2, 1924.

between Motherwell and Haydon for the federal party, and Gardiner and Dunning, for the provincial Liberals.²³ The first development was important: one Liberal organization would be build in the province for both provincial and federal politics.²⁴ It was something Motherwell had always advocated, and there could be little doubt that he and Gardiner had much to do with it. The second part of the arrangement was probably of Dunning's making. It was decided, that until the provincial election planned for 1925 was over, the knowledge that one Liberal organization was being created for the province would not become public. In addition, Motherwell and the federal Liberals agreed to curtail all federal organization to avoid embarrassing the provincial Liberals. "I quite agree with you", Motherwell told Gardiner in March, 1925,

That Federal politics should be as dead as the proverbial door-nail, in Saskatchewan, while your election is pending. I have co-operated from this end, in that direction, ever since last summer. I invariably point out that until we know whether or not we are going to have another session after this one, nothing should be done looking towards Federal Liberal Conventions, or lining up for the fray.²⁵

As a further sign of federal co-operation, Motherwell took special care during the provincial campaign to see that neither federal civil service personnel, nor changes in local administration of

²³ There is no direct evidence of a specific agreement having been made, but the Gardiner-Motherwell correspondence indicates that certain lines of action were deliberately being taken, suggesting a "working arrangement" did exist.

²⁴ Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, February 9, 1925.

²⁵ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, March 23, 1925.

federal departments, harmed provincial Liberal chances,²⁶ and Gardiner in turn assured Motherwell, that although nothing was being done about federal organization during the provincial election campaign, it would "be understood by everyone that only one Liberal organization does exist in the province, and that a Liberal is always a Liberal".²⁷

The activities of Charles Locke, who jealously guarded what he believed was the natural right of the province's federal Liberal committee of 1919 to re-mobilize the Liberal forces in the province for the upcoming federal election, threatened to interfere with this working arrangement. Locke protested strongly to Motherwell in January of 1925 about the growing influence that Regina appeared to be wielding over federal patronage and organization, and recommended as a solution, the setting up of separate Southern and Northern spheres of influence. Up to then, Locke had been working in the Northern constituencies promoting Progressive-Liberal friendship.²⁸

Motherwell had been trying to gradually take influence and

²⁶ For example, in February, 1925, Motherwell arranged the transfer of a Dr. Baby, a veterinary surgeon who was making trouble for Dr. Uhlrich, a provincial Cabinet Minister. Motherwell also held back the closing of Soldier Settlement Offices in Prince Albert, where Gardiner felt anything of this kind would seriously upset what was at present a tender political situation. Ibid., Various letters between Gardiner and Motherwell in February and March 1925.

²⁷ Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, February 9, 1925.

²⁸ The contents of Locke's letter are implied in Motherwell's reply, Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to Charles G. Locke, January 26, 1925.

responsibility from the old provincial committee since 1921. In the fall of 1924, Haydon had made it clear to Gardiner that as far as the Government was concerned, this committee had stopped being the official representative of federal Liberalism in Saskatchewan, with the 1921 federal election.²⁹ As a result both Motherwell and Gardiner looked on Locke's attitude and activities with some concern. In reply to Locke's protest, Motherwell urged the former secretary of the provincial committee to avoid any North-South friction, and work for the common good. Since he could not tell Locke bluntly that all federal organization was passing over to the provincial organization once the Saskatchewan provincial election was over, Motherwell, on Gardiner's suggestion, cautiously approved of Locke's promoting Progressive-Liberal friendship, but added that the Liberals should not get too "chummy" with the Progressives just yet, and implied that he might make better use of his time setting up Liberal executives in the new ridings.³⁰

Locke was not to be deterred. In early February he showed up in Ottawa with a delegation from Saskatoon to urge the Government to purchase a certain building in Saskatoon for a Post Office, which, acting on Gardiner's advice, Motherwell turned down.³¹ When Locke

²⁹ Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, February 8, 1925.

³⁰ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to Charles G. Locke, January 26, 1925; W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, March 30, 1925.

³¹ Ibid., (wire) J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, February 9, 1925; (wire) W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, February 10, 1925. Locke had tried to get the Government to buy a building belonging to a Mr. McMillan. His judgment is certainly questionable since this same McMillan became the federal Conservative candidate in Saskatoon in the 1925 election.

returned to Saskatchewan, however, he carried with him a story that he had been authorized to work with Fred Johnston and T.H. McConica to secure nominations of Progressive candidates satisfactory to the Liberals for the next federal election. Gardiner was naturally alarmed when he heard the news,³² but Motherwell assured him that Locke had received no such authority while in Ottawa, his claim being nothing more than "pure fiction", and probably due to his anger at getting nowhere with his representations in the capital.³³ While Gardiner thought the whole idea was "too ridiculous to be even commented upon", he was worried about the effect that Locke's talking about the federal situation might have on the provincial electorate,³⁴ but Locke's pretensions, without a show of official sanction from Ottawa, must have come to nothing, since he ceased to be a subject in Gardiner's correspondence with Motherwell.

The topic of the discussions Locke wished to initiate, however -- Liberal-Progressive relations in the coming federal election -- could not be so easily put aside; if in the exigencies of the provincial election the question was avoided, it was one that eventually had to be answered. Motherwell felt that the tactics of 1924 in wooing the Progressives into the Liberal camp by progressive policies, had succeeded in establishing congenial relations

³² Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, February 9, 1925.

³³ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, March 23, 1925.

³⁴ Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, March 16, 1925.

between the two groups in the House, and would have to continue throughout 1925 if any further success with a forward looking programme were to be realized. Outside the House, however, Motherwell continued to keep the Progressive's "at arm's length as much as possible, while not inviting actual hostilities." He was still opposed to political peacetime "chumming" with the group he continued to regard as Liberalism's real enemy, and he saw the recent bitter experiences of Liberal parties in the Ontario election of 1923, and the British election of 1924, as evidence that the "traditional" party that snuggled "too closely" to the third or "freak" party, usually got hurt the worst of the two older parties when the third party went down to defeat.³⁵

Nevertheless when an election came, he remained open to the possibility of electoral arrangement, following the strategy favored by Mackenzie King. While his own reservations would not allow him to believe it was possible to make "hard and fast" understandings, it might be possible, he admitted, for a few constituencies to hold joint Conventions after agreements between local Liberal and Progressive executives. As in 1921, he favored this course in ridings where Progressive candidates would be strong and where Liberals might only cause a Tory victory in a three-cornered contest.³⁶ But in urban seats -- Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina and Moose Jaw --

³⁵ Ibid., W.R. Motherwell to Charles G. Locke, January 25, 1925.

³⁶ Such as the North Battleford and Kindersley constituencies, where Davies and Carmichael respectively, appeared easily in control. Ibid.

he felt the Progressives had no claim to Liberal support.³⁷ It was essentially a belligerent attitude. One fought the Progressives where Liberals ought to be elected or had a good chance of being elected, and left the door open in the remaining constituencies for arrangements with the Progressives. If they were as uncompromising as they had been in 1921, when approached by the Liberals, he recommended hitting them with every political weapon the Liberals possessed.

At the end of 1924, Gardiner had shown dissatisfaction with the "soft" attitude King had taken towards the Progressives during that year, and had written the Prime Minister that Saskatchewan was ready to fall into Liberal hands, if the Party would "strike out" and win it from the Progressives.³⁸ Still, he, like Motherwell, followed the strategy favored by his own leader, Dunning, as well as by Mackenzie King, and in his letters to the Agriculture Minister he indicated that he too felt that possibilities existed for constituency co-operation. In the last analysis its success depended on the "kind of campaign" waged provincially between provincial Progressives and Liberals.³⁹

The provincial campaign, as it turned out, was a hard fought one.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 29.

³⁹ Gardiner was probably meaning that if it were a tough battle between the two groups, then the provincial organization would feel less willing to work with their former foes in a federal campaign. This would be especially true if federal Progressive Members of Parliament helped their provincial brothers against the Dunning Government. Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, March 16, 1925.

There were only three Liberal acclamation victories, compared with seventeen in 1921, and the Government got most of its opposition from a tenacious core of Progressive candidates who stressed Dunning's patronage connections with Ottawa, and attacked the Government's record, calling for more economy.⁴⁰ It was certainly no indication of the results however, as the Liberals swept 52 of the 63 seats.⁴¹ The ease of the victory soon became more significant than the animosity stirred up in the Liberal camp by the Progressives' tough campaign. Gardiner, for one, was now confident of federal Liberal chances, and told Motherwell that "speaking for Saskatchewan only", he favored a late October election, "having regard to the favorable condition of the organization to glide quickly and effectively into a new contest after the incentive begotten of the recent victory".⁴² On a trip west after the provincial election, Motherwell also found the other provincial "friends" in "good fighting fettle", though most, including Dunning, favored another session to make victory absolutely certain.⁴³

Although Motherwell too favored a later election, there was no mistaking^{that} he shared Gardiner's confidence for strong Liberal returns in Saskatchewan. The Liberal provincial victory certainly strengthened his resolve that the federal Liberals should not tuck in too

⁴⁰ Brennan, "C.A. Dunning and the Challenge of the Progressives", pp. 9-11.

⁴¹ Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 61.

⁴² King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, July 14, 1925.

⁴³ Ibid.

much to the Progressives. He advised Mackenzie King that Western Liberals were afraid he might take Progressives into the Cabinet before the election, ~~at a time~~ when many in the third party, influenced by the legislation the Liberals had gained for the West, and sobered by the recent show of provincial Liberal strength in Saskatchewan, were "almost prepared to come across as liberals [sic] " anyway. To pick someone "out of the ranks of the western liberals' chief opponents", Motherwell counselled further, "would have the bad effect on the morale of our fighting liberal forces who have always been on the job both in foul weather as well as fair".⁴⁴

Just what did happen in Saskatchewan between the Progressives and Liberals in preparation for the federal election is unclear. Neatby claims that the Liberals "for months" tried to avoid three-cornered battles with the Progressives in all provinces, but, as in 1921, met with a "cold response" from the prairies, due to the "sacred autonomy" of Progressive constituency organizations. Morton agrees, adding that this appeal was especially strong in Saskatchewan.⁴⁵ Finally, J.W. Dafoe noted on June 30, that a talk with Dunning had revealed that the Saskatchewan Premier strongly favored some sort of Progressive-Liberal alliance, and liked the start that had been made in Manitoba.⁴⁶ The Liberals then, appear to have

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 72; Morton, Progressive Party, p. 243.

⁴⁶ J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, June 30, 1925. Cook, Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, p. 220.

been ready and willing to make constituency arrangements, and the Progressives to blame for the failure to achieve them. It seems difficult to accept this interpretation completely, however, considering the belligerent temperaments of Motherwell and of Gardiner, in control of the Liberal machine, and the ease of the Liberal victory in June. Their influence in many constituencies must have made any Liberal approaches to local Progressives somewhat less than wholehearted. Even before the Saskatchewan victory, J.W. Dafoe had doubted that any kind of fusion was possible before a federal election, one of the chief reasons being the "die-hard sentiment" of Liberals in charge of Western organization who,

are dreaming of Progressive disintegration, the election of true blue grits and are smacking their lips over the prospect of certain revenges on Liberals whom they regard as renegades.⁴⁷

Even if it suggests Dunning was not as much in control of the situation as he may have believed, the attitudes of Motherwell and Gardiner must share some of the responsibility for the failure to achieve any degree of Progressive-Liberal constituency co-operation in Saskatchewan.⁴⁸

With a federal election on its way in late 1925 or early 1926, Gardiner, as promised, swung the provincial organization into action to mobilize federal constituencies, and gather the names

⁴⁷ J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, April 3, 1925.
Ibid., p. 214.

⁴⁸ Evidence suggests that Dunning was playing a double game. While flirting with King on possible entry into the federal Cabinet, he was also considering his chances as a leader of a Western party. See Ibid., also, P.S. Regenstreif, "A Challenge to Leadership".

of prospective candidates.⁴⁹ The most pressing problem was deciding where Motherwell should seek re-election. This had been a topic of discussion when Motherwell had visited Gardiner in Banff during the first week of July, when they had apparently agreed that Motherwell should not contest Regina again. The reasons are not clear, but probably had to do with the possibility of Dunning eventually entering the federal arena, in which case it was best that the capital city be available. On the other hand, Northern Saskatchewan had long felt neglected by the Government in the way of Senate and judicial appointments, and Motherwell was known to have felt Cabinet representation from this area of Saskatchewan would be politically rewarding for the Liberals. As a result, at the end of July, Motherwell was seriously considering contesting Prince Albert.⁵⁰ By the end of August, however, while Prince Albert was still available, Gardiner had succeeded in getting the prospective Liberal nominee in Motherwell's home riding of Melville, N.B. Williams, to throw his support behind Motherwell, should the Minister want the nomination. Motherwell soon indicated that he did, and on September 17 was nominated in Melville from a field of five Liberals. In an interesting development that followed, the

⁴⁹ One interesting development was George Langley's return to the Liberal fold. He wanted to contest a federal constituency for the party, but could not find a riding where Liberals would have anything to do with him. Motherwell sympathized, and felt the "Honorable George" could still make the "fur fly" if he were turned loose in the Commons. Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, August 19, 1925.

⁵⁰ Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, July 15, 1925; W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, July 28, 1925.

Progressive incumbent, Thomas Sales, resigned his nomination when he heard Motherwell was in the running. A former Liberal and one of those Saskatchewan Progressives in Ottawa who had flirted with the Liberals since 1922, Sales probably withdrew in respect for the Minister. J.G. Gardiner, however, set the tone of the campaign when he announced at a Liberal nominating convention in Regina that Motherwell had already "taken the first Progressive scalp in driving Thos. Sales from the field". Shortly thereafter, some Melville Progressives, determined to fight Motherwell, held another convention and selected W.J. Hepburn as their candidate. Contesting the seat for the Conservatives was J.R. Dinnin.⁵¹

At one point during the summer, it had appeared that Motherwell might not contest the election at all. In late July, without Motherwell's knowledge, Mackenzie King approached Dunning with an invitation to join the federal Cabinet before the next election was called. Although Dunning called Motherwell to Ottawa for a conference while there talking the matter over with King, it was apparently King who first told Motherwell about his part in the possible Cabinet changes, in which eventuality "Motherwell intimated his entire willingness to accept the Lieutenant Governorship of Saskatchewan", and allow Dunning to have his seat "at any time that this might be deemed advisable". The Saskatchewan Premier opted for a "safety first" policy, however, knowing if Mackenzie King

⁵¹ Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, August 27, 1925; J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, August 27, 1925 (second letter); Motherwell Papers, I. Cummings to W.A. Wilson, September 21, 1925; Morning Leader, September 18, 1925, September 22, 1925; C.A.R., 1925-26, p. 40.

lost, he would still be Premier of Saskatchewan, and might even be a candidate for the federal Liberal leadership. On August 22nd, he let the Prime Minister know that he could not make the necessary "arrangments" to go, but would throw his support behind the federal Liberals in the next election. King regretted the decision, but named the Premier, "his chief lieutenant in the West with respect to the campaign generally".⁵²

The campaign began in early September with October 29th named as election day. Dunning, true to his word, campaigned in the West, and even went East for the Liberals, while at home J.G. Gardiner put the powerful provincial Liberal organization into the fray, as had been decided upon sometime before. In Saskatchewan, with the third party refusing to join forces in any constituency, the campaign became essentially an attack on the record and methods of the Progressives, and as such, revealed the aggressive nature of its more immediate organizers, Motherwell and Gardiner, with the Minister of Agriculture apparently going "out of his way during the ... campaign to abuse" the Progressive enemy.⁵³ It was so aggressive, in fact, that Dunning's formerly good stock with the Progressives suffered considerably, merely through his association with the campaign in

⁵² Dunning Papers, (wire) W.L. Mackenzie King to C.A. Dunning, July 28, 1925; (wire) W.L. Mackenzie King to C.A. Dunning, August 1, 1925; C.A. Dunning to W.L. Mackenzie King, August 22, 1925; W.L. Mackenzie King to C.A. Dunning, August 25, 1925; King Papers, W.L. Mackenzie King to C.A. Dunning, December 19, 1925; Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 65.

⁵³ J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, November 20, 1925. Cook, Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, p. 223.

his province.⁵⁴ In only two seats did the Liberals not run a candidate, one being Long Lake, where Fred Johnston, the Progressive candidate, was really a "crypto-Liberal", who had voted with the Government on the 1925 budget against his caucus' decision, and who was destined to become Liberal deputy speaker of the House, and eventually a Liberal Senator.⁵⁵ King himself was partly responsible for the toughness of the Liberal campaign, and he stated "frankly that if the prairies wanted to get things done they should send a strong Liberal contingent to Ottawa". Speaking in Regina, he denied that the Progressives were any use as representatives, since they stood apart from policy making.

When the Progressives take the attitude that they will support us when we do what they want and we⁵⁶ can go to blazes when we do not, you cannot get very far.

When King spoke of "merging" of Progressive and Liberal forces, he meant the "merging" of Progressive voters into the Liberal camp. It could only be done by offering an attractive Liberal programme on one hand, and attacking the Progressive method and record on the other.

The results in Saskatchewan on October 29th showed that provincial electors once more felt they could achieve more for the West

⁵⁴ J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, November 21, 1925.
Ibid., p. 224.

⁵⁵ Morton, Progressive Party, pp. 206-07. The other seat was Qu'Appelle, where John Millar ran, also friendly to the Liberals, and a good friend of Motherwell since they had worked together in forming the T.G.G.A. in 1901.

⁵⁶ Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 70. Morning Leader, September 30, 1925.

in the House of Commons by returning Liberals. The Progressive campaign had lost its enthusiasm of 1921, and economic action through the Wheat Pool now fired the farmers' imaginations. The Liberal record in 1924 and 1925 had been a sign that the Government wished to respond to Western desires, and Liberal candidates had promised lower tariffs and the completion of the Hudson Bay Railway should they be elected. Unlike 1921, there was no daily press to support the Progressives since the Herman press had sold out to the Leader-Phoenix interests in 1923. Its supposed successor, the Western Producer, had remained ~~mainly~~ neutral throughout the contest.⁵⁷ Most important in the outcome had been Dunning's influence and prestige -- an effect enhanced by King's announcement in Regina that the Premier was his choice as a second Cabinet minister for Saskatchewan -- and the political expertise of the Saskatchewan Liberal organization under Gardiner.⁵⁸ In a province where only one Liberal had been elected in 1921, fifteen now topped the polls, with only six seats going to the Progressives, and two of those with Liberal backing. The popular vote showed just how much the Progressive popularity had declined, and the Liberal fortunes had recovered. This time the Farmers secured only 31.8% of the vote compared with 61% in 1921, while the Liberal votes climbed from 20.7% to 41.9% of the total.⁵⁹ If this percentage

⁵⁷ Brown, "Progressivism and the Press", pp. 204-10.

⁵⁸ Morton, Progressive Party, p. 245.

⁵⁹ Scarrow, Canada Votes, pp. 34, 48.

was below the 56% garnered in the 1910 election, there was no doubt that the Liberal party was again dominant in the province, and that the dual Quebec-Saskatchewan base of the party had been restored.

W.R. Motherwell easily won the Melville seat, polling 57% of the popular vote in that constituency.⁶⁰ This was a far cry from his standing with the Saskatchewan electorate at the end of 1923. Since then, the Government's pluses in the West had been his own, which he had complemented by his own performance in the Department of Agriculture, and his speeches during 1924 and 1925 advocating still lower tariffs, the maintenance of low freight rates and the completion of the Hudson Bay railway.⁶¹ Still, the battle had been tough in Melville. One of the Liberals who had opposed him at the nominating convention, A. Lopston, worked against him, and one worker complained that the influence of the Manitoba Free Press in the constituency had been detrimental to the success of the campaign. Perhaps the most difficult obstacle that Motherwell had overcome,

⁶⁰ In Melville, the final figures were:
 Motherwell (Liberal) - 5,305
 Hepburn (Progressive) - 2,302
 Dinnin (Conservative) - 1,692

Ibid., p. 57; C.A.R. 1925-26, p. 40.

⁶¹ Motherwell's sincerity in working for the West cannot be doubted for one moment. With an election pending, Motherwell on August 25th, wrote out a long list of changes he felt should be included in the next sessional program or an election Manifesto. It included reducing the income tax (abolishing it entirely for farmers), a commitment to build the Hudson Bay railway, speeded immigration with a Western Immigration Minister, changes in the Civil Service Act to make appointments easier, reductions in ocean rates and maintenance of the Crows Nest Pass rates on wheat and flour, and finally, reform of the Senate. King Papers, W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, August 25, 1925. Enclosing Memorandum.

was the propaganda worked up against his blunt stand in the Commons in April, 1925 against the suitability of Nelson as the proposed terminus of the Hudson Bay Railway. The Progressives had claimed his action was a Liberal plot to stall the construction of the railway by re-introducing the terminal issue, which had been settled some years before.⁶² Despite these difficulties, and the fact that Motherwell was absent much of the time campaigning outside his own constituency, and also travelling with Mackenzie King during the Prime Minister's Saskatchewan stops, Motherwell virtually ran away with the contest -- the first of a series of easy victories in Melville, that were a far cry from his provincial days when he was frequently in quest of new ridings.

⁶² Dunning Papers, G.W. Sahlmark to C.A. Dunning, October 24, 1925; Gardiner Papers, G.W. Sahlmark to J.G. Gardiner, November 2, 1925.

After his trip up the completed line of the Hudson Bay Railway in August, 1924, Motherwell soon digested all the technical material connected with the railway. His investigations convinced him that Nelson, while providing a wide river mouth, was too sandy and shallow to make the expense of developing it as a port feasible. He publically called for the development of Churchill instead, in his usual blunt, often impolitic manner. An investigation was subsequently undertaken and in 1927, an English Engineer, Frederick Palmer issued a report completely vindicating Motherwell's opinions. As a witness to Motherwell's tenacity in matters of this kind, George P. Graham, now a Senator, congratulated Motherwell. "So far I fail to recollect any real thing on which you have set your mind that has escaped you". A Saskatchewan supporter also wrote:

It required considerable courage to take the position you did in face of popular agitation to the contrary. But your friends have never doubted at anytime that you were not lacking in that quality.

Motherwell Papers, Hudson Bay Railway: Church vs. Nelson File; also George P. Graham to W.R. Motherwell, August 31, 1927; J.E. Doerr to W.R. Motherwell, August 17, 1927.

The tremendous federal Liberal success in Saskatchewan in 1925 virtually brought to an end the political drought that had plagued the party in the province since the Union issue had destroyed its Saskatchewan base in 1917. Throughout these years Motherwell had stuck first with Laurier and then with Mackenzie King to fight both the Unionist and Progressive forces that were able to temporarily overwhelm the party in Saskatchewan. In October, 1925, with the lean years behind, Motherwell might well have looked forward to a much easier political future within Mackenzie King's Cabinet, devoting his energies to forwarding the work of Canadian agriculture, a profession he often called second only to the Christian ministry in its benefit to mankind and personal reward. However, certain events following the 1925 election put Motherwell's continued presence within the Cabinet in jeopardy, providing a short political epilogue to the eight years he had spent fighting for federal Liberalism in Saskatchewan.

In comparison with the fine showings of Motherwell and the federal Liberals in Saskatchewan, the fortunes of the Liberal party elsewhere in 1925 were dismal. Total returns dropped the number of Liberal seats from 116 to 101, with the Conservatives recovering dramatically from the 1921 position, with a total of 116 seats. Ironically, the largest losses went to the Progressives, yet they gained the most. While their representation fell from 64 to 24 seats, their hold on the balance of power in the resulting minority Government situation increased their power in Parliament immeasurably. If King were to stay in office, even

without having the largest group in the House, it depended upon the support of almost all this group.

Mackenzie King decided on November 2nd to remain, with almost the unanimous support of the Cabinet, including Motherwell, representing the consensus of opinion of most Saskatchewan Liberals.⁶³ In a few days King was relieved to receive word through Motherwell that in Saskatchewan, the two Progressives unopposed by Liberals in the election, Fred Johnson and John Millar, might even sit with the Government, while two if not four of the remaining Progressives from the province would support the Ministry.⁶⁴ He soon heard as well that all the Manitoba Progressives sympathized with him, and while the Alberta section of the Progressives was predictably "independent", the alternative of a Conservative Government was a sobering fact likely to keep even them co-operative for a time.⁶⁵

The most immediate problem, once these assurances had been received was what to do with a Cabinet that had lost eight Ministers. The vacancies in the Cabinet offered an opportunity to give the West, and Saskatchewan in particular, the greater weight in Council which election returns had shown it deserved. This state of affairs immediately brought up the question of Motherwell's continued presence in the Ministry.

The possibility of Motherwell's resigning from the Cabinet, or

⁶³ King Papers, (wire) W.R. Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, October 30, 1925.

⁶⁴ Gardiner Papers, (wire) J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, November 4, 1925.

⁶⁵ Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, pp. 89-90.

even retiring from political life, had existed from the moment he had been sworn in as Minister of Agriculture in December, 1921. He had been entitled to a portfolio as the sole representative of the party from Saskatchewan, but he was nevertheless dispensable, should the party's interests dictate the replacement of this elderly and not too politically astute Minister by a younger and better politician such as C.A. Dunning, or by a Progressive from Saskatchewan, should Crerar and his friends choose to enter the Administration. Although T.A. Crerar had often been approached about a portfolio, King had always considered his conditions as too stiff -- one of which was usually the replacement of the belligerent Motherwell, by a more congenial Liberal, or a Progressive. C.A. Dunning, on the other hand, had regarded entering the Cabinet in these years as politically inopportune and chose to remain in Saskatchewan.

In the 1925 election, the representation of one had become that of fifteen, and although Motherwell was still the most able by far, the improved fortunes of the party in that province finally made a step to a federal political career more secure for a man such as C.A. Dunning. Mackenzie King could expect Dunning to be more willing, and saw this as the opportunity to get the long awaited top-notch Liberal material from the West, which in turn would increase the chances for Cabinet approval of a legislative program geared to attract Progressive support in the House.

Motherwell had always understood his position in the Cabinet since 1921, and when in the summer of 1925, King tried to get

Dunning into the Cabinet, Motherwell as we have seen, had intimated his willingness to step aside and give the Saskatchewan Premier his seat.⁶⁶ During the 1925 election campaign, however, King had stated that he wanted Dunning in the Cabinet as a second Minister from Saskatchewan,⁶⁷ and it appears that Motherwell regarded that this would be the condition of entry when he wrote Premier Dunning on November 11th, 1925, that,

if the Prime Minister invites you down here as one of his Colleagues, in accordance with his statements to that effect made on many Western platforms, then I would advise you in the interests of the country generally -- if not in your own interests to accept Mr. King's invitation.

"You may think that this is a pretty cool piece of advice", Motherwell went on, "costing me nothing". Nonetheless, Motherwell said he understood Dunning's position in considering joining a "shattered Government", but he felt that if King could "properly reconstruct" the Cabinet, the situation could be saved.⁶⁸

As it happened, Dunning had told King the summer before he would come into the Government after the election,⁶⁹ and when Motherwell was writing his letter Haydon was already on his way west to arrange details with the Premier. Dunning would call an early session of

⁶⁶ King Papers, W.L. Mackenzie King to C.A. Dunning, December 19, 1925.

⁶⁷ Morning Leader, September 30, 1925. In Winnipeg on October 9, King stated he would give posts to four Western men -- Norris, Motherwell, Dunning and Stewart, Ibid., October 10, 1925.

⁶⁸ Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to C.A. Dunning, November 11, 1925.

⁶⁹ King Papers, W.L. Mackenzie King to C.A. Dunning, November 12, 1925.

the provincial legislature to get the Government on its feet, and then join the King Government sometime in the new year as Minister of Railways and Canals.⁷⁰ At this point Motherwell was correct in his impression that he would remain in the Cabinet, since the larger representation from Saskatchewan justified two ministers. But with Dunning secure, Mackenzie King also considered that J.G. Gardiner would make good Cabinet material, and with Dunning's approval Haydon approached the Minister of Highways as to his feelings on the matter. Gardiner was receptive, and so, again with Dunning's knowledge, Mackenzie King invited Gardiner to Ottawa in the last week of December to talk the subject over.⁷¹

From the start of the speculation on Gardiner's possible entry into the Cabinet, it was obvious that he would replace Motherwell. In reporting his conversation with Gardiner in Regina in mid-November, Haydon told King that the Highways Minister had not thought the province should have three Ministers, and thereafter the "conversations rested ... on the assumption that if Gardiner came to Ottawa also, then Motherwell disappeared".⁷² Motherwell had not been informed of the details of these discussions, though he must have suspected their importance to his future. King wrote to Dunning on December 19th what he felt would be the best course to pursue with the Minister of Agriculture.

⁷⁰ Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, p. 93.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 93-95.

⁷² King Papers, Memorandum. A. Haydon to W.L. Mackenzie King, November 23, 1925.

My thought has been that if you were to take over Railways and Canals, and Gardiner Immigration and Colonization, that would strengthen our position very much, particularly in the West. I have not thought it wise to discuss this phase of the situation with Mr. Motherwell until I have reached a final decision upon it. I think I told you that before the last campaign, Mr. Motherwell intimated his entire willingness to accept the Lieutenant-Governorship of Saskatchewan and allow you to have his seat at any time that this might be deemed advisable. It would seem to me that the appropriate time would be when re-construction is being effected. It so happens that that particular period coincides with the time at which Lieutenant-Governor Newland's term expires. Mr. Motherwell leaves for the West on Tuesday. He will certainly be seeing you while in Saskatchewan, and I should like you to feel quite free to discuss with him any phase of the situation. From what I have said directly or indirectly to him, it is, I think wholly present in his mind. I may, however, have a further word with him ... so that he will feel equally free in discussing the matter with yourself.⁷³

It is not known whether these meetings occurred or not, but neither King nor Dunning appeared worried that Motherwell would not willingly comply.⁷⁴

The evidence suggests that Motherwell was not completely sure of his own course until after Christmas, when he met Gardiner in Winnipeg as he was returning home after visiting King in Ottawa. Since it was apparent that Gardiner would probably enter the federal cabinet either with, or shortly after Dunning, Motherwell agreed "to fit in with his King's plans whatever they may be", and indicated his willingness to accept the Lieutenant-Governorship of Saskatchewan.⁷⁵

⁷³ Ibid., W.L. Mackenzie King to C.A. Dunning, December 19, 1925.

⁷⁴ J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, December 18, 1925. Cook, Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, p. 233.

⁷⁵ Gardiner Papers, (wire) I. Cummings to J.G. Gardiner, December 29, 1925; W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, January 29, 1926; J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, March 2, 1926.

There matters rested for the time being. The session opened on January 8, and the delicate balancing act of staying in power began. Mackenzie King also turned his attention to finding a new seat for himself, and after some consultation with Gardiner and Motherwell, it was decided that the Saskatchewan seat of Prince Albert would provide an easy victory, if not acclamation.⁷⁶ Mackenzie King travelled West at the end of January to accept the nomination, and then returned to Ottawa, leaving the winning of the election, which was contested at the last moment by an Independent, to the smooth working Gardiner organization.

On his return to the capital, Mackenzie King found the topic of Western representation in the Cabinet had been under discussion among Saskatchewan Members, and that the general consensus of opinion was against Gardiner coming into the Cabinet as well as Dunning. On February 6th he wired Dunning to this effect, and cancelled for the time being the plans to bring in Gardiner. After the session was over, he told Dunning, Gardiner might then replace Motherwell, who also thought that it would be "hazardous" for Gardiner to come to Ottawa at present.⁷⁷ Gardiner had known about

⁷⁶ Motherwell at first suggested that King avoid an Ontario seat and take one in Saskatchewan, such as Fred Johnston's Long Lake. Dunning objected, feeling there would be stiff competition. After a careful investigation was carried out among the Liberals of Prince Albert, it was agreed that Charlie McDonald, the new Member, would resign for Mackenzie King. King Papers, L.C. Moyer to C.A. Dunning, January 8, 1926; Gardiner Papers, (wire) W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, January 12, 1926; (wire) J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, January 12, 1926; (wire) J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, January 13, 1926; (wire) A. Burton to I. Cummings, January 14, 1926.

⁷⁷ King Papers, (wire) W.L. Mackenzie King to C.A. Dunning, February 6, 1926.

the disposition among various Liberals in the House since February 29th, as well as the reason for their new attitude.⁷⁸ On January 15th, the Government had managed to avoid defeat on the vote on the Throne Speech by only three votes, with Boutillier, Campbell, Carmichael and Fansher, all Saskatchewan Progressives, plus one other Progressive, voting against the Government. The closeness of the vote prompted a re-evaluation of the anticipated Cabinet adjustments. In the aftermath of the 1925 election, even Dunning, for all his past sympathy with the Progressives, was a minor risk to bring into the Cabinet, but the entrance of Gardiner, whose record and reputation as an uncompromising opponent of the Progressives was well known, might be disastrous. Some Saskatchewan Liberals may have been so optimistic as to think that keeping Gardiner in Saskatchewan would serve to bring the four renegade Progressives from that Province to support the Government on future votes.

Gardiner's initial reaction to the fears of Saskatchewan Members was one of indignation. "If our organization defeating all but four Progressives places them in a position to select cabinet", he wired to Motherwell, "I never want to be in it or assist in its return". He indicated as well that the decision had to be made immediately if he was going on to federal politics now, or staying in provincial politics "indefinitely".⁷⁹ There was no mistaking that

⁷⁸ Gardiner Papers (wire) W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, January 29, 1926; W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, January 29, 1926.

⁷⁹ Ibid., (wire) J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, February 3, 1926.

Gardiner was annoyed with this turn of events, especially the weight given to the sensitivities of the Progressives, and on the fifteenth of February he wrote to Motherwell criticizing strongly the tendencies at Ottawa to let the Progressives make the final decisions on the present re-organization of the federal party.⁸⁰ There was a noticeable change, however, in his next letter to Motherwell on March 2nd, after he had been chosen by provincial Liberals to succeed C.A. Dunning as provincial Liberal leader and Premier. He now felt "quite confident that the best in the interest of the party has been done up to the present". He was sure Motherwell would not have been content in Government House, and himself felt he could do as much service for Liberalism in Regina, as he could have done in Ottawa. For the future, he did not think Motherwell should resign for any other reason than the one agreed previously -- Gardiner's entry into federal politics.

In view of what has taken place here recently, I may state that your leaving the Government now for any reason, other than the one we discussed, would be very much misunderstood by all our friends in the province. The whole matter has worked out very satisfactory and you can rest assured that anything I can do to strengthen your position in Ottawa at any time will be done.⁸¹

Now that J.G. Gardiner was safely installed in the Premier's chair, the one man in Saskatchewan whose political talents made Motherwell dispensable was eliminated. With Gardiner's promise of support, Motherwell's position in the Cabinet for the first time since 1921 was, for political reasons at least, secure.

⁸⁰ Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, February 15, 1926.

⁸¹ Ibid., J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, March 2, 1926.

As the spring and summer of 1926 passed, so too passed the life of the twentieth Parliament. While the legislative programme was being handled, the co-operation between Progressives and Liberals worked fairly well, but ended when the report of the Special Committee of the Commons investigating the activities of Customs Department came before the House. In the resulting plethora of motions and amendments to motions on various aspects of the question, the Government's future looked dim. Mackenzie King asked for dissolution, was refused, and so resigned. Arthur Meighen was called upon to form a Government, but it lasted only a few days, resulting in an appeal to the polls on September 14th, 1926.

In Saskatchewan, the election campaign was now solely under the direction of J.G. Gardiner, who placed Liberal candidates in nineteen constituencies, and backed two other Liberal-Progressive candidates.⁸² The Progressive threat was much less potent than in 1925, and with an inconsistent performance at Ottawa during 1926, and a popular Liberal program suggested for the West, many formerly Progressive voters were ready to add to the numbers who in 1925 had seen they could achieve more by returning Liberals, with fears of a Conservative victory encouraging this transition. In eleven constituencies the result of this trend was evident, as local Progressives threw their support behind the Liberal candidate -- the kind of "co-operation" that Motherwell preferred. Mackenzie King had worried at first that Gardiner would attack all Progressives hard during

⁸² Fred Johnston ran as a Liberal in Long Lake. The two Liberal Progressives were John Evans in Rosetown, and John Millar in Qu'Appelle.

the election, but the moderating influence of the party's federal leader was such that the new Premier and W.R. Motherwell eventually confined their stiffest attacks to W.R. Fansher, M.N. Campbell and A.M. Carmichael who had voted from the beginning of the 1926 session against the Government, and in support of the Conservatives.⁸³ The Constitutional issue was not prominent in the West, although Motherwell used it in his campaigning, but rather the same old issues of the tariff, freight rates, and the Hudson Bay Railway dominated.⁸⁴

The results made it evident that the federal Liberals had finally regained their 1910 standing with the Saskatchewan electorate. Sixteen Liberals were elected, as well as two Liberal-Progressives, gaining an impressive 56.8% of the popular vote. W.R. Motherwell easily won Melville with 67.7% of the vote against a lone Conservative.⁸⁵ Unfortunately the three Progressives the party had specifically set out to defeat were re-elected, though largely due to Conservative support since no Tory candidates were fielded.⁸⁶

⁸³ Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, pp. 163-64. Motherwell eventually discovered that Campbell had been given complete patronage rights in his constituency during the Conservatives' short term in office. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, October 5, 1926.

⁸⁴ Motherwell Papers, Clippings from Saskatoon Daily Star, August 30, 1926; Vancouver Providence, August 30, 1926.

⁸⁵ Scarrow, Canada Votes, pp. 62; 71-72.

⁸⁶ The Government eventually regarded them as pseudo-Progressives, "My understanding is", Motherwell later told Stewart in regards to patronage, "that Mr. Campbell, Fansher and Carmichael be treated as straight Tories, only several degrees worse". Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to Charles Stewart, October 13, 1926.

Returns in the country generally, brought Mackenzie King back into office, this time with a Liberal and Liberal-Progressive majority in the House. With the increased representation throughout Canada, Mackenzie King might well have taken the opportunity to cut Cabinet representation from Saskatchewan back to the originally intended two men, filling Motherwell's vacancy with a younger man; but he did not, and immediately re-appointed W.R. Motherwell Minister of Agriculture. With a majority Government at last, Mackenzie King had less need to be conscious of political factors -- in any case, the only man who could replace Motherwell in that category was now Premier of Saskatchewan. Instead, Mackenzie King needed good administrators, and Motherwell's reputation as one made him an obvious choice for continuing with the Department of Agriculture. King may also have decided that Motherwell's close relationship with J.G. Gardiner, in contrast with Dunning's, qualified him for continued Cabinet membership in order to maintain close federal-provincial Liberal ties with Saskatchewan, which leads one to the interesting speculation that because of Dunning's past threat to his leadership, King meant to keep the patronage in the hands of the loyal Motherwell-Gardiner combination.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Gardiner was called to Ottawa in September, 1926, to consult with King and other Western Ministers. At that time it was rumored that Motherwell and not Dunning would control the patronage. From the small amount of correspondence from 1926-30 between Motherwell and Gardiner viewed by the author, this appears to have some truth, due to the predominant issue of patronage in the letters. Dafoe Papers, Grant Dexter report to J.W. Dafoe, Undated.

Dafoe wrote to Sifton that he had confirmation that a "King-Gardiner-Motherwell combination" existed "designed to put Dunning in his place". J.W. Dafoe to Clifford Sifton, December 16, 1926.^{Cook} Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, p. 260.

Whatever the reasons for the decision, Motherwell was undoubtedly pleased with his re-appointment, knowing that barring illness, his position as head of the Department of Agriculture was secure for the next four or five years. His feelings were probably expressed by his wife, always "at one" with him in everything he did, when she wrote her personal thanks to Mackenzie King at the end of September, 1926. It is significant that Assiniboia echoed out of the past.

I have followed closely my husbands {sic} stands, his reasonings when taking them, his forecasts of the effects of certain movements, and my confidence in his judgement has been more and more established as I have witnessed one by one, those forecasts come true. In the famous Assiniboia bye-election I listened to him meeting after meeting giving an exact forecast of our last Parliament where groups had sway and held balance of power. Now I have the pleasure of hearing farmer after farmer who had been formerly strong Progressives come to him and tell him that he was absolutely correct and that he is a stronger man to-day with the farmers on account of this than he ever was before, which his sweeping majority in this rural and formerly strongly Progressive constituency proves.

And now I am absolutely satisfied and happy. I have lived to see the day that my husband is entirely vindicated on every count. I know you are human enough to pardon a wife's pride at such a moment and will realize the sincerity of her thanks to you for being the instrument in bringing about such a happy climax to a rugged honest political career. His appointment again to the portfolio of Agriculture means more .. than the first time, as this time there is much more material to select from, and it did require another term at least to make good in his Department. You have given him that opportunity Mr. King and I thank you warmly. And I think I can honestly say that the Agriculture of Canada will profit from your choice.

88 King Papers, Catherine Motherwell to W.L. Mackenzie King, September 27, 1926.

CONCLUSION

In order to understand the methods Motherwell preferred to use in ending the federal Liberal crisis in Saskatchewan, one must realize that he saw the movement that began the crisis, Unionism, and the movement which prolonged it, Progressivism, not in terms of the specific issues which justified their existence to the majority of Saskatchewan voters, but in terms of political principles. He sincerely believed that Canadian political life had to be guided by strong, almost moralistic devotion to the principle of the two party system, and the Canadian liberal mind, to the principles embodied in one national Liberal party. While the many who did not understand Motherwell's strong commitment to these principles branded him as an incorrigible partisan, or worse, in 1917 as unpatriotic, Motherwell maintained that his political activities, like his private life, should be judged by a higher criterion than just the exigencies of day to day existence. He viewed the attraction to former Liberals of the Unionist and Farmer phenomena as resulting from the unsettled wartime and post-war political climate, in which the traditional principles that were the framework and very spirit of the Canadian liberal's political life had been temporarily put aside. He felt that unfaithful Liberals were being misled into joining these movements by unprincipled political opportunists, especially former Conservatives, who wanted to make use of the confusion within the electorate to further their own political ambitions at the expense of the Liberal party. Seeing the situation in these terms, Motherwell chose to fight both Unionism and

Progressivism with the same crusade-like fervour, suffering defeat if necessary, until his example, or the passage of time itself, brought the Saskatchewan voter back to his political senses.

As the appeal of Unionism faded at the end of the war, and the Farmers grew into what was evidently a more lasting popularity, many Liberals in Saskatchewan, including returned Unionist Liberals, looked with alarm upon Motherwell's approach towards ending the crisis. These Liberals saw the situation as the electorate did, in terms of issues. The issue of conscription had drawn many of them into the Unionist camp, and now, although Western grievances had not made Farmers of them, they could not ignore the political fact of the Grain Growers' presence. This Dunning-Martin school quite rightly realized that political existence depended on votes, and saw politics as the art of the possible, not religious devotion to principles. Co-operation and the minimization of differences with the Progressives were necessary, and even separation of federal and provincial branches of the party might be temporarily expedient to hold the line, if not attract renegade Liberals back into the party. To this school, Assiniboia was the perfect example of how not to meet the Progressive challenge.

Obviously, before any reconstruction of federal Liberalism in Saskatchewan could begin, a choice had to be made between the two approaches. This was done as early as December, 1919. As leader of the party, Mackenzie King's opinion was important in Motherwell's change of public attitude after Assiniboia towards the Farmers, and towards Unionist Liberal elements in the Provincial party, such as

Martin and Dunning, with whom King wanted Motherwell to work to meet the Progressive challenge not by belligerence, but by ^aco-operative attitude. Motherwell followed his leader's wishes throughout the remainder of the crisis years, although it was not easy for him to do so. Sometimes his earlier hostility towards the Farmers reasserted itself, such as in the Moose Jaw by-election, and in the 1925 general election; and privately, he always retained his original opinions of Progressivism and felt that any friendship with the Farmers outside of the House of Commons had to be taken with a business reserve.

In the last analysis, the crisis of federal Liberalism in Saskatchewan was overcome by methods other than those preferred by W.R. Motherwell. As in 1917 and 1919, issues, not principles, made the difference with the electorate. While Motherwell's approach, a product of his strong calvinistic temperament and blunt commitment to principle, was commendable, it was inappropriate. In 1925 and 1926, the people of Saskatchewan returned to the principles that Motherwell held so dear not because of their inevitable attraction, but because the voter once more believed that the desires and demands of the West could best be achieved through the Liberal party. Mrs. Motherwell's reference to the vindication of Assiniboia, then, was somewhat mistaken. While his attitude had been significant, revealing the dilemma that had to be solved within the party before any comeback could be engineered, Motherwell had concretely contributed to the end of the crisis in other ways—in showing by

his performance in the Cabinet just what could be done for the West by the Liberal party, and in assisting in the re-establishment of a common Liberal organization for both federal and provincial Liberalism in Saskatchewan.

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