

JAMES G. GARDINER
THE PREMIER AS A PRAGMATIC POLITICIAN
1926-1929

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PREFACE

For three decades the name of James G. Gardiner was identified with prairie politics. The image of "Jimmy" Gardiner as a practical politician has become a part of political legend in Saskatchewan. This study of a brief part of Gardiner's political career explores some of the activities which gave birth to the legend. Gardiner was much more than a political organizer. He remains firmly identified as a spokesman for Western agrarianism and, as federal Minister of Agriculture, he profoundly influenced the pattern of governmental activity in the field of agriculture. Gardiner was, in addition, a very able administrator of the machinery of government. It is, nevertheless, the image of Gardiner in the role of pragmatic politician which remains most firmly fixed in legend, and it is this aspect of his career which is here investigated.

After a brief survey of Gardiner's early personal history and of the Saskatchewan political scene in 1925, the paper examines the details of Gardiner's accession to the office of premier. It attempts to define Gardiner's position in the Liberal party, both federally in his relations with Mackenzie King and other party leaders, and provincially where the party organization earned the sobriquet "the Gardiner machine." Gardiner's leadership is discussed,

specifically, in the context of the challenge to the party made by the quasi-political opposition of the Ku Klux Klan, and the overt political opposition of a revitalized Conservative party in 1928 and 1929. Finally the paper analyses the reasons for the defeat of the Gardiner administration in 1929, and Gardiner's reaction to defeat and opposition. From these activities is derived a portrait of Gardiner as a pragmatic politician, a firm believer in the "principles of Liberalism" within the context of the parliamentary system of government, and an even firmer advocate of a strong party organization to enable these principles to be put into effect through the actions of a Liberal Government.

I have relied chiefly on Gardiner's own views as expressed in his personal correspondence in an attempt to survey the political scene as Gardiner saw it, and to discover the motives by which he acted. The comments of other contemporary observers provide contrasting analyses. Of most value were the comments of W.L.M. King, with whom Gardiner carried on an extensive correspondence, and of such acute observers as J.W. Dafoe and T.A. Crerar.

Saskatchewan political history, particularly the activities of the old line parties, remains conspicuously unexplored in secondary works. Such monographs and studies as have been written concentrate primarily on economic issues and the development of third party movements; the complexities of Saskatchewan politics, especially within the Liberal party, have received scant attention. For this

reason the secondary works to which I have referred are limited to isolated graduate theses, occasional articles and those longer works which refer incidentally to Saskatchewan in the course of broader studies. This study, perhaps, will fill a small part of this gap in the writing of Canadian history.

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CHAPTER I

RISE TO POWER: GARDINER BECOMES PREMIER

On February 26, 1926, James Garfield Gardiner was sworn in as the fourth premier of the province of Saskatchewan. The previous evening a convention of delegates representing all the constituencies in the province had unanimously chosen Gardiner as the replacement for Charles A. Dunning, who was giving up the premiership after a four year tenure to become Minister of Railways in the federal Cabinet of Mackenzie King.

The convention was well attended and enthusiastic.¹ Characteristic of the Liberal party's operations of the day, it was also well organized and directed. It proceeded about its business with dispatch. Premier Dunning was given a rousing ovation as he proffered his resignation. A number of speakers, representing the groups of delegates present, delivered the customary tributes. Their sincerity was obvious, for Charles Dunning was well liked by his constituents. It was this widespread popularity Dunning had earned from the western farmer which occasioned the convention;

1. Saskatoon Daily Star, Feb. 26, 1926, gives a detailed report of the convention proceedings.

Mackenzie King, who was attempting to refurbish his Cabinet following a disastrous election in 1925, had selected Dunning as the best candidate to strengthen the position of the Liberal party in the West. The tribute of Dr. S. Flatt was typical. Speaking as a representative of "the real dirt farmers" he paid tribute to Dunning. He had long represented them, and that well, both in their occupational groups as delegate and later secretary of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, and in their political affairs as treasurer and later premier of the province.²

The delegates then turned to the business at hand, that of selecting a successor. A single name was put before the delegates: James Gardiner, Minister of Highways in the Dunning Cabinet, was nominated by his fellow Cabinet minister, Charles McGill Hamilton. In his nomination speech Hamilton explained how Gardiner had been selected. A caucus of members of the Legislative Assembly and defeated candidates had met that afternoon and discussed the matter of selecting a leader. The caucus had decided that a united front should be presented. A premier must have the confidence of all members and "team play" would be the order of the day.

Hamilton admitted that there had been other names considered. In addition to the final candidate, the names

2. A complete transcript of the speeches is in the James G. Gardiner Papers (Archives of Saskatchewan), 5347-76.

of Sam Latta, Archie McNab and his own had been entered. Latta and McNab had been urged to run by their constituency officials in Last Mountain and Saskatoon. Neither, however, was a threat to the selection of Gardiner. Hamilton had had more serious consideration. Prior to the convention both names had been widely considered.³ According to knowledgeable observers, what had influenced the caucus in favour of Gardiner was the fact that he had been for two years the chief organizer for the Liberal party in the province. As such he had been able to be of value to a number of candidates. His political abilities were well known to them.⁴

Gardiner's nomination was seconded by Percy M. Anderson, a Regina lawyer, and supported by both Latta and McNab. Both speakers alluded to Gardiner's youth. Bluff, blunt Archie McNab stated, characteristically, that if he were twenty years younger "there would be no Hamilton and no Gardiner." But he recognized that what was good for the province, and the Liberal party, was a younger man. There was no hesitation in his affirmation, "We will work together."⁵

3. See, e.g., the editorial in the Saskatoon Daily Star Feb. 22, 1926.

4. A.K. Cameron Papers (Public Archives of Canada), T.A. Crerar to A.K. Cameron, 27 February 1926. Crerar adds that in his opinion Hamilton would have been more popular with the rank and file in the country as Gardiner was considered a little too much of the partisan, "who would stop at nothing to further the interests of the party."

5. Gardiner Papers, Transcript of Convention Speeches, 5362.

Latta echoed complete confidence in Gardiner. He admitted that Gardiner had not been completely tried; he was not old enough. But Latta was content to follow his leadership.

Gardiner's acceptance speech was a survey of his own political past, of the history of the province, of the position of the Liberal party. He traced his involvement in Saskatchewan politics from the time of the first election in 1905, when as a youth of twenty-one he became known as the "boy orator" of the Liberals, through subsequent elections to his present position. He examined the administration of his three predecessors in office: Walter Scott, whom Gardiner always revered as the founder of the principles of Liberalism in the province of Saskatchewan, whose activities during the period of optimism and growth which characterized the province from 1905 to the Great War laid the foundations on which all subsequent development was based; W.M. Martin, whose administration was faced with the abnormal conditions of war, extreme patriotism, and greatly increased expenditure; and Dunning, whose capable financial administration had guided the province through the period of retrenchment and economy forced on the province by the depressions and dislocations of a difficult reconstruction period.

Certain principles which guided much of Gardiner's activity as a political leader were alluded to in the speech. Gardiner referred to the national Liberal convention of 1919. He praised the policies which had been incorporated

into the Liberal platform at that time. These policies paralleled his own. Through them the party would prosper, for they expressed the wishes of the people, especially the people of the West. In particular the tariff proposal of 1919 was essential for the well-being of the country.

Moreover, the convention of 1919 had been a convention where the rank and file had shown that they were in control of the Liberal party when they chose a leader, a man destined to lead the party to victory. Gardiner's faith in William Lyon Mackenzie King was unbounded; their close relationship was to be an important factor in Canadian politics for over two decades. Gardiner continued to dilate on the theme of federal activity. He referred to the Prince Albert by-election in which King had just been elected to rejoin his colleagues. Gardiner had no apologies for participating in a federal election. There were Liberal principles which could not be implemented in Saskatchewan but only in Ottawa. "I have always held," he stated, "that a leader, who stands for the policies of his party, should be prepared⁶ to expound them on a platform. That is why I participate in federal campaigns. Cooperation is necessary between men who think alike."⁷ The Prince Albert

6. Pencilled in above the type in the transcript is the phrase "should not be ashamed". Gardiner Papers, 5369.

7. Ibid.

campaign was an example of how this cooperation would work. The principles of the candidate, the Prime Minister, had been set in the recent Throne Speech at Ottawa. All those who wanted to see them enacted, whether Liberal, Progressive or Tory, had backed King and he had been overwhelmingly elected.⁸

The convention ended quickly. A new executive was chosen, resolutions affirming confidence in the King government and the Gardiner government were passed and the meeting adjourned.

Political leadership embraces three fields of activity. In the Canadian parliamentary tradition these activities are usually the prerogative of the man holding the position of prime minister. There is the leadership exerted as formulator of policy. The philosophy of a party may be formulated by conventions, and legislation may be drafted by Cabinet colleagues, but the leader of the party retains the final responsibility for policy. Secondly, the leader of the party becomes, when the party is in power, the chief executive officer. His is the final responsibility for the administration of government. Finally the party leader is responsible for the organization of the party, for in the last analysis it is the organization of the party which

8. This continued to be Gardiner's solution to the problem of the Progressives. See below, chapter II.

enables it to reduce the broad spectrum of ideas into principles and platforms, to present these to the public, and thereby to get elected. All three of these roles are important. This study, however, concentrates on the leadership that James Gardiner gave the Liberal party in Saskatchewan in the last of these, for it was in this area that Gardiner excelled. Unlike many of his fellow premiers who delegated the work of organization to a colleague, Gardiner continued, throughout his first premiership, to devote much time to organizational activity.

This is not to say that Gardiner did not exert considerable influence in the formulation of policy, or that the administrative functions of his tenure were neglected. On the contrary, he played an important role as the originator of policy both in provincial and later in federal affairs.⁹ As an administrator, he was acknowledged to be among the best. J.W. Dafoe, for example, an editor who was not generally numbered with the admirers of Gardiner, admitted: "... I will say this for Gardiner, that I believe his government on the administrative side was an improvement on the earlier administration."¹⁰ It was nevertheless the

9. Provincially, his administration introduced a number of legislative measures in the fields of resources and power development, law enforcement, labour relations, etc. His role as federal minister of agriculture deserves a study in itself.

10. J.W. Dafoe Papers (Public Archives of Canada), J.W. Dafoe to J. Obed Smith, 2 July 1929.

image of Gardiner as the politician which has been fixed in political legend. It was, moreover, a field in which Gardiner excelled, and was probably his first love.

James Garfield Gardiner was born on November 30, 1883 in Huron County, Ontario. When he was six years of age his father moved to the United States and most of his formative years were spent in the milieu of the American mid-west, first in Lincoln, Nebraska and later in Alpena, Michigan. In 1895 his parents returned to Canada. At no time was the family fortune great, and in 1901 young Jimmy Gardiner followed the migration westward to Clearwater, Manitoba where his uncle had a farm. From then on Gardiner's destiny lay with the West. He combined a university education with part time school teaching and some lay ministry in certain missions in the territories. In 1905 Gardiner was teaching in what then became the province of Saskatchewan. By 1911 Gardiner had received his B.A. with majors in Economics and History from the University of Manitoba, and had begun teaching in Lemberg, the small Saskatchewan town which was to remain his home for the remainder of his life.¹¹

From his youth Gardiner had considered the possibility

11. Biographical detail is taken from the only biography of Gardiner, Nathaniel A. Benson's None of It Came Easy, (Toronto: Burns and McEachern, 1955), corroborated from brief biographical sketches in the Gardiner Papers, Biographies, 33138ff. Benson's book is reasonably accurate with regard to family history, but not to be accepted in matters of interpretation or analysis of political affairs.

of a political career. His subjects of concentration at the university were chosen with this in mind. His essays dealt with such subjects as the role of governments in the economic affairs of a nation. His studies in history fixed his beliefs in parliamentary democracy. Many of his political speeches in the early years of his career traced the historical foundations of parliament, and Canada's adaptation of British institutions. His extra-curricular activities as well were selected carefully. Although Jimmy was an avid athlete (soccer and baseball), his chief diversion was debating and oratory. He represented Manitoba on the inter-collegiate debating team and won the gold medal in oratory in his final year. His favourite topics were those with political overtones, defending the cooperative system of marketing against socialism, upholding free trade against protection, and defending Mackenzie King's anti-combines act as the best means of limiting the powers of industrial cartels.

His rise politically was rapid. Although he had not been inactive in 1905, it was in the 1911 federal election that Gardiner had his first taste of public speaking. The following year he was an active supporter of J.A. McLaughlin, Liberal candidate for North Qu'Appelle, against John Archie MacDonald. North Qu'Appelle was a borderline constituency and Gardiner became initiated into Saskatchewan politics at the point of its most bitter competition. MacDonald won the election by a handful of votes, but the Liberal opposition

charged him with illegal activity, including the wholesale buying of votes. When it appeared that petitions to the courts would result in a commission being appointed to investigate the election, MacDonald resigned. Under Saskatchewan electoral law at the time, this stopped the investigation but the vacancy in the legislature resulted in a by-election being called.¹²

The Liberals of North Qu'Appelle held their nominating convention on December 23, 1913. Of three candidates nominated, James Gardiner was selected to bear the standard of the party in the by-election which came the following summer. The provincial organization sent George Scott to the constituency to prepare the campaign. Scott, a brother of the premier, had demonstrated his ability in earlier elections. He was the member for Arm River, a constituency he held without defeat until his retirement in 1928. Originally from Ontario, he had served his political apprenticeship under Clifford Sifton. From him Gardiner learned at first hand the rules of the political game.

Gardiner won the election with little difficulty. He decided to retire from teaching and become a full time farmer. Each winter he attended the legislative sessions in Regina, proving himself an able backbencher. His

12. Transcripts of the documents of the election may be found in the Gardiner Papers, Controverted Election, North Qu'Appelle, 1912, 545-871. See also Benson, op.cit.

debating ability and fighting temperament brought him to the notice of the Cabinet. Gardiner was soon active as a speaker on behalf of the Liberal party. He also gained administrative experience as mayor of Lemberg.

The end of the war brought unrest to the country, but especially to the prairie provinces. A number of factors combined to introduce a new factor into politics, the Progressive movement.¹³ The rapid growth of the movement forced the traditional parties to reappraise their positions. The Liberal party in Saskatchewan was split over the problem of what to do about the movement. Outright opposition might be the prelude to defeat, but an attempt to work with the Progressives meant repudiation of the federal party. The Martin administration decided on a policy of accommodation and announced that the provincial government would separate themselves from the federal scene. When a federal by-election was held in Assiniboia in 1919, the Saskatchewan Liberal organization, led by Premier Martin, advised Mackenzie King that to run a candidate in opposition to O.R. Gould, standard bearer for the United Farmers, would be a serious mistake and detrimental to Liberal interests in Saskatchewan.¹⁴ But W.R. Motherwell, provincial Cabinet

13. W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950, 1967), is the best history of the movement, and the one on which I have relied for information.

14. R. MacGregor Dawson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, A Political Biography, 1874-1923, (Toronto: University of

minister and stalwart Liberal, did not agree. He resigned from the provincial house, and stood for election as an independent Liberal. One of his supporters in the campaign, which saw Motherwell go down to defeat, was James G. Gardiner.

The following year the official Regina hierarchy refused to greet the Prime Minister publicly when he made a speaking stop in Regina. This was a disgraceful condition to Motherwell and Gardiner, who motored to Regina to welcome King. The events portray an attitude on Gardiner's part which guided his approach to the Progressives, or other third parties, for the remainder of his career. He maintained at all times the staunchest of loyalties to the Liberal party. The principles of Liberalism (and for him the word was always spelled in the upper case), as espoused in the platform of 1919, were the principles by which to govern Canada. He had no sympathy for regional parties, occupational parties, or parties of a single principle. He was from the beginning a firm believer in the two party system.¹⁵ A second significant result of his adamant stand, and his

Toronto Press, 1958), 315. King had initially supported the idea of a Liberal candidate, but Martin's advice led him to reconsider. When Motherwell went ahead on his own, King, at the last moment, supported his candidacy.

15. His public speeches during this period indicate his views. See, e.g. Gardiner Papers, 1571-6, 1593-5, 4387-97, 4400-10. Another example of his staunch belief in this principle is his refusal to participate in the Unionist party in 1917. Gardiner remained an anti-Union Liberal and fought for Laurier in the election.

support of Motherwell (who became federal Minister of Agriculture the following year), was the fact that Mackenzie King became aware of this loyal prairie partisan.

Gardiner's provincial career did not suffer unduly because of his stand. Premier Martin antagonized the Progressives by dropping, in part, his policy of non-support for federal Liberals in the 1921 campaign. In order to retain their agrarian base provincially, and maintain party strength and unity, the Liberals persuaded Martin to step down in favour of his provincial treasurer, Charles A. Dunning. In the ensuing Cabinet reconstruction, James Gardiner became Minister of Highways. On April 5, 1922 he was sworn into office. Two years later he was named chief organizer for the Liberal party in Saskatchewan. Ten years after George Scott had initiated him into the intricacies of party organization, Gardiner became chief of a well developed party structure.

He proved to be particularly adept as an organizer. In 1925 Dunning called an election in the province. The combination of the premier's personal popularity and Gardiner's organization resulted in a landslide victory. When Dunning was invited by Mackenzie King to the federal arena,¹⁶ the organizational ability of Gardiner, and the use he had made of his position, resulted in his accession

16. The circumstances are discussed below, pp. 19ff.

to the premiership of the province.

Gardiner assumed the premiership at an opportune time. Economic conditions were improving, although the prairie West did not enjoy the spectacular boom of the American industrial areas in the 'twenties. The debt structure of the war years continued to burden provincial economics. In the twenty-one years of its history the Saskatchewan scene had gone through a number of distinct periods. Its early years had been marked by rapid development, active immigration and expanding trade. During the war years increased demand for western products, abetted by the special protection given Canadian producers in the British market, sent prices soaring and induced inflation. The huge profits available had resulted in very extensive credit purchasing, individual, municipal, and provincial. The simultaneous surcease of war demand and war borrowing ended the boom. Unemployment, marketing problems, and the high cost of debt awakened discontent. The Winnipeg strike, the rise of protest parties, the spread of militant unionism, indicated the economic and social unrest. In Saskatchewan, the Dunning administration had engineered a partial recovery, and improved crop conditions continued the recovery during the Gardiner administration. Living standards improved slowly, lumbering and mining industries were begun. The public debt was being refinanced, though repayment was slow. Given a series of good years agriculturally the province would regain

some of the optimism and development of the pre-war years.¹⁷

The political history of Saskatchewan prior to 1926 is, primarily, a history of the Liberal party. The decision of the Laurier administration to call upon Walter Scott to form the first Cabinet after the formation of the province led to a Liberal victory over Frederick Haultain's Provincial Rights party in the first election. Scott's capable administration and the policies of his government during the developmental years ensured his re-election to office until his retirement. From the war year of 1916 through the difficult post-war period, W.M. Martin succeeded in returning Liberal majorities. His denial of relationship with the federal Liberal party had enabled him to weather the initial tide of the Progressive movement. When his ambivalence threatened to cost the Saskatchewan Liberals their farm support and consequently their unity, the party was able to replace him with Dunning. Dunning's personal popularity with the farmers was longstanding. He had been one of the organizers and secretary of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, from which position he had stepped directly into the

17. C.S. Burchill, "An Historical Parallel", Queen's Quarterly XLIV: 520. More detailed analyses of the prairie economy can be found in V.C. Fowke, Canadian Agricultural Policy: The Historical Pattern (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946), G.E. Britnell, The Wheat Economy (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1939), H.A. Innis, Problems of Staple Production (Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1933), and the series of books edited by W.A. Mackintosh in the Canadian Frontiers of Settlement Series.

provincial cabinet as Provincial Treasurer.¹⁸

As a result of two decades of Liberal administration the party was solidly entrenched. W.R. Motherwell analyzed it in 1922 as based on a solid civil service staff, the support of almost the entire Church organization and the temperance and social service forces, the non-English vote, a large portion of the railway and labour vote, and even a fair sprinkling of those who could not be called "temperance men". To this was added the personal popularity of the early premiers and "the boys, everyone of whom worked his head off."¹⁹ His analysis came, of course, at the height of the Prohibition era when the stand of the Saskatchewan government had won it widespread support from certain groups. Nevertheless, certain conclusions can be drawn from his analysis of the party strength. In the golden age of patronage a continuous control over civil service appointments by Liberal administration made inevitable a solid civil service vote.²⁰ The solid non-English vote, too, can be attributed to the fact that a large percentage of the immigrants came

18. The history of the Saskatchewan Liberal party remains to be written. This information is compiled from various sources, chief of which is Evelyn Eager "The Government of Saskatchewan" (unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Toronto, 1957).

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

20. The role of the civil service in the active political structure is further examined below, chapter III.

to Saskatchewan as a result of the immigration policy of Liberal administrations. Of the political organization, "the boys", more will be said later.

The 1925 provincial election demonstrated the Liberal strength in the province. As a rule the credit for the overwhelming victory has been given to the genuine popularity of Charles Dunning among the agrarian population. There is no gainsaying the truth of such an assessment; but experienced observers knew that a great deal of the credit also belonged to the party organization.²¹ And the direction of the organization in this election was in the hands of James Gardiner. The combination of personal appeal and efficient organization resulted in the government gaining 51 seats to a mere ten for the opposition.

Gardiner's entry into the premiership the next winter came at the height of Liberal power. The party was well entrenched and broadly based. The opposition was weak and demoralized. The economic outlook was hopeful.

Gardiner's rise to the office of premier was closely tied to the federal political scene. For awhile, in fact, it had appeared that he might become a federal minister instead of premier of the province. The events of the fall of 1925 and early 1926 which resulted in Dunning's elevation

21. E.g. Gardiner Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 8 June 1925, 2203.

to the federal arena and Gardiner's elevation to the premiership are complex.

The success of the Progressives in the 1921 federal election left Mackenzie King in a difficult position. Almost completely without supporters from the West, and one seat short of an overall majority in the House, he was faced with the difficulty of selecting a Cabinet which would appeal to the entire country. The domination of the eastern element in the Liberal party was obvious, and the high tariff views of people like Lomer Gouin were significant in his Cabinet. Yet to retain power, and to regain Liberal representation from the West, King had to win the support of the Progressives in parliament while attempting to rebuild the Liberal party in their constituencies.²²

The difficulty was focussed in Cabinet building. At various times members of the Progressive Party were offered Cabinet positions, but they declined all offers. King had to look elsewhere for western representation. Eventually he was able to persuade the premier of Alberta, Charles Stewart, to enter the Cabinet. To provide a seat in the Commons for him a vacancy had to be found in Argenteuil, Quebec. The man who would provide all the qualities King

22. King's position, his relations with the Progressives, and his efforts at Cabinet building, are described in R.M. Dawson, op. cit., H. Blair Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, The Lonely Heights, 1924-1932, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), and W.L. Morton, op. cit.

wanted, however, was Charles Dunning. Here was a Liberal who retained the true agrarian appeal which the federal Liberals lacked. By inducing him to enter the Cabinet, King would succeed in creating that type of Cabinet he found so desirable, with representatives from the entire spectrum of political thought, but bound together by a common allegiance to Liberalism as interpreted by himself.

King broached the subject in 1924, suggesting to Dunning that he might take over the portfolio of Minister of Railways. Despite an apparent interest in the federal arena, Dunning refused to make a commitment. Developments in 1925, the split of the Progressives over the issue of support for the King budget, the resignation of E.J. McMurray of Manitoba from the federal Cabinet because of implications in the Home Bank failure, added to the need for new Western representation in the Cabinet. Dunning's appeal, after his strong victory in the provincial election of that year was stronger than ever, but he again refused King's offer.²³

23. H.B. Neatby, op. cit., 28, 65; S. Peter Reginstreif, "A Threat to Leadership: Dunning and King", Dalhousie Review, XLIV (3): 272-5; W.L.M. King Papers, (Public Archives of Canada), C.A. Dunning to W.L.M. King, 22 August 1925, 97167-71; W.L.M. King to C.A. Dunning, 25 August 1925, 97172. Dunning stated that his leaving Saskatchewan would hurt the party provincially. King surmised that Dunning was acting as a "safety first" man: if the Liberals won an election, he could still enter the ministry; if they lost he remained premier of Saskatchewan. Professor Neatby suggests another reason. After another election the Liberals might well need Progressive support. Such a contingency could place King's leadership of the party in jeopardy; Dunning would be a prime candidate as his successor.

Dunning's refusal was somewhat mitigated by his agreement to support the King administration fully in the coming election. Dunning, along with a number of Manitoba representatives, including T.A. Crerar, A.B. Hudson and J.W. Dafoe, felt the election was unwise and had attempted to influence King to postpone it until he could reconstruct his Cabinet, and introduce legislation favorable to the West. King's failure to negotiate suitable terms with either Dunning or the Manitoba Progressive leaders made Cabinet reconstruction impossible, and under the circumstances he wrote that his Eastern colleagues would not accept another session.²⁴

There was, however, another western representative who appealed to King. That man was Jimmy Gardiner. Gardiner was persona non grata to the Progressives but he had his own appeal. He had remained continuously loyal to the Liberal party. He continued to be a strong personal supporter of King. And, he was the chief organizer in the province with one resounding success to his credit. King was prepared, therefore, to invite Gardiner into his Cabinet, with the end in view of placing him in charge of organization for the western provinces. Neatby states that Dunning, however, refused to part with Gardiner.²⁵

24. King Papers, W.L.M. King to C.A. Dunning, 25 August 1925, 97172.

25. H.B. Neatby, op. cit., 65.

Despite this refusal, on August 25 King's secretary, L.C. Moyer, wired Andrew Haydon, the Senator who was in charge of much of King's national organization, "Ask Gardiner if he would take charge campaign on prairies with view later of taking over matter talked of."²⁶ Haydon replied that he was aghast at the suggestion, and thought it unsafe to acquaint Gardiner with the message. He added that Dunning and Gardiner were ready to help as fully as possible in the campaign.²⁷ There is no evidence that an offer was made to Gardiner personally at the time. King wrote to Dunning that he was relying on Dunning to be his chief lieutenant in the West with respect to the campaign.²⁸ It was Gardiner, however, who did the actual organizational work. Dunning was effective on the platform and undoubtedly influential in Manitoba, where his status with the Progressives remained high. Gardiner was the field man who arranged itineraries and advertising, advised on candidates and their probable chances in Saskatchewan constituencies, and looked after trouble spots in Alberta, in addition to doing his share of public speaking in all three prairie provinces.²⁹

26. King Papers, L.C. Moyer to Andrew Haydon, 25 August 1925, 98356.

27. King Papers, Andrew Haydon to L.C. Moyer, 25 August 1925, 98357.

28. King Papers, W.L.M. King to C.A. Dunning, 25 August 1925, 97172.

29. Gardiner Papers, Letters and telegrams exchanged between Andrew Haydon and James Gardiner during campaign, 7355-7375.

The results of the election increased the complexity of the federal scene. The Liberal representation was reduced to 101 and the Progressives to 25 members. The Conservatives more than doubled their membership from 50 to 116. Eight Cabinet ministers, in addition to King himself, were defeated. More important, perhaps, was the fact that over seventy of the Liberals elected came from two provinces, Quebec and Saskatchewan, fifteen from the latter province which had had but a single Liberal member prior to the election. King decided to remain in office and do nothing about reconstructing the Cabinet or finding himself a seat, until parliament was convened and the Progressives had a chance to declare themselves. It is ironic that the Progressives in losing almost two-thirds of their membership nevertheless strengthened their position in holding the balance of power.

The weakness of King's position, and the confusion of the political scene confirmed in the minds of a number of people the decision that there must be a change of leadership. A group of Manitobans, dissident Liberals and ex-Progressives, desired to remove King from the party leadership, call a Western convention of all classes and establish a nationally acceptable platform. They would then offer their cooperation to Liberals from the other parts of the Dominion.³⁰ This self styled "Mafia" discussed the move

30. The discussions are described fully in S.P. Reginstreif, op. cit. See also, Cameron Papers, correspondence between A.K. Cameron and T.A. Crerar, 1925.

with certain Montreal businessmen, who agreed to sound out the Quebec wing of the party. The movement came to naught when Ernest Lapointe publicly affirmed his complete faith in King's leadership. The Manitoba group had sounded out C.A. Dunning. Dunning agreed with many of their ideas but felt that the time was not ripe for his becoming a candidate to succeed King. The messenger sent to interview him reported "In the back of his mind, he will spend the next two years getting known in the East, so as to be the man when the time comes."³¹ Throughout these manoeuvres Gardiner remained uninvolved, although he suspected Dunning of leadership ambitions. When Motherwell drew his attention to the rumours which were appearing in the press about a possible Dunning-Lapointe takeover, he dismissed them, and at the same time confirmed his faith in King as leader:

The reports... are, I think, only Conservative propaganda with a view of stirring up some dissatisfaction among the Liberals. They will of course have very little effect upon those who are at the center of things.... We all realize that the party has been most ably led during the last four years, and that no other man could have made a better showing in the last election... than... King.³²

31. A.B. Hudson Papers (Public Archives of Canada), H.J.S. to A.B. Hudson, n.d. Reginstreif dates it November 7, 1925. The principal members of the Manitoba group were J.W. Dafoe, editor of the Manitoba Free Press, A.B. Hudson, Independent Liberal M.P. from 1921-25, Frank Fowler, former Winnipeg mayor, and H.J. Symington, Winnipeg lawyer. The Montreal group was led by Kirk Cameron, businessman, Liberal and a man who disliked Mackenzie King.

32. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 19 November 1925, 2590-91.

Meanwhile King was considering the problem of Cabinet reconstruction should the Progressives support him in the House. Even before the Winnipeg group had approached Dunning, the Saskatchewan premier had considered his position and had delegated Senator Ross to approach King with an acceptance of the earlier offer to join the Cabinet.³³ King immediately dispatched Senator Haydon to the West to complete arrangements for Western representation and organization. Dunning agreed to call an immediate session of the Saskatchewan legislature, and be ready to come to Ottawa as Minister of Railways immediately it prorogued. King was also prepared to be guided by Dunning's suggestions as to Alberta and Manitoba representation in the Cabinet.³⁴

Saskatchewan representation in the Cabinet would present a difficult matter by itself. Dunning, King must have. He would be the leader of the Western Liberals as Lapointe was for Quebec. But he also wanted Gardiner. Gardiner's organizational ability had now undergone two tests and both times had come through with flying colors, winning 51 out of 61 seats provincially and 15 of 21 federally. King desired Gardiner as organizer for the three prairie provinces. Moreover, King also wanted Vincent Massey, who had been defeated in Ontario, in his Cabinet and thought there might

33. King received the message November 4. H.B. Neatby, op. cit., 92.

34. King Papers, W.L.M. King to C.A. Dunning, 12 November 1925, 97192.

be a possibility of getting him a seat in Saskatchewan. To expedite matters, King had persuaded Motherwell to resign if necessary. As a reward he would be given the position of Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan. Senator Haydon's report to King sums up the situation:

The question of running M. in Saskatchewan is bound up with the question of Gardiner's relation to Dunning.... He called Gardiner in... asked G. to present his own view about staying in Saskatchewan and taking care of organization work for these provinces. G. at once said that he could not be effective that way; if he were to take direction of the organization in the three prairie provinces he could only do so as a federal minister.... G. would like to go to Ottawa, but prefers Saskatchewan and yet if he were in the Federal field bossing the organization of the three provinces he would be happy.... G. will want to be premier if he stays.³⁵

After due consideration of the problem King wrote Gardiner early in December. He congratulated the Saskatchewan minister heartily on the success of his organization in winning Saskatchewan seats. He went on:

I am looking forward, as you know, to seeing you enter the larger sphere of politics and

35. King Papers, Memorandum, Andrew Haydon to W.L.M. King, Nov. 15-23, 98531-5. In this memorandum, Haydon also discusses in more detail Gardiner's and Dunning's relations and opinions of each other. He also gives his assessment of Gardiner: "This is the field man. A university training, brilliant student and most effective in the practical field. Somewhat of a Puritan and outside of elections has kept all the commandments from his youth up. Genial enough in his own way, but somewhat narrowly sincere. He could hardly ever be a popular figure or a kind of hail fellow which in a considerable measure Dunning is." See chapter II pp. 57ff.

to your cooperation in the work of organization of adjoining provinces as well as your own. Just how, or when, this may be worked out with greatest advantage to all concerned is something to which I would like you to give thought and consideration and which I shall welcome word both from Mr. Dunning and yourself.³⁶

Gardiner replied that the matter was one which could best be discussed in personal conversation and suggested a visit to Ottawa at Christmas. After informing Dunning, King agreed.³⁷ Neatby relates that in the Christmas discussion Gardiner agreed to join the federal government, coming to Ottawa some time after Dunning.³⁸

The details remained to be settled. As soon as the federal House met and the King government was sustained arrangements to find a seat for the Prime Minister were begun. The offer of Gardiner to find a seat for him in Saskatchewan was accepted and arrangements were made to vacate the Prince Albert constituency and elect King there. King came to Saskatchewan during the campaign and again commended Gardiner on his efficient organization.³⁹ Assured

36. Gardiner Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 3 December 25, 2220-22.

37. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 8 December 1925, 2223-4, and W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 19 December 1925, 2226.

38. H.B. Neatby, op. cit., 94-5.

39. Gardiner Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 5 February 1926, 2251-2. See also H.B. Neatby, op.cit., 113.

of victory in Prince Albert, King now turned to implementing his earlier Cabinet changes. He found that some of his colleagues opposed his plans. On February 7 he wired

Dunning and Gardiner:

I find that during my absence Cabinet representation from Saskatchewan has been much discussed among Saskatchewan members and they are practically unanimous that at present it would be unwise for both you and Gardiner to come.⁴⁰

He went on to state that he hoped the situation could be arranged after the current session of parliament was over. When Gardiner returned from Prince Albert, where he had been campaigning, and read the telegram, he replied that it was his intention to stay in Saskatchewan. Moreover, he could give no assurances about the future: "Everything which has taken place to date has been to the end that should I be compelled to take charge here, I might be compelled to remain indefinitely."⁴¹

One of the factors which influenced the Cabinet in opposing the entry of Gardiner into federal politics was the hostility towards him of the Progressives in the House of Commons.⁴² There is no evidence that Gardiner harboured

⁴⁰. Gardiner Papers, W.L.M. King to C.A. Dunning, 7 February 1926, 2646.

⁴¹. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 15 February 1926, 2253-4, and 19 February 1926, 2258-9.

⁴². Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, 29 January 1926, 2636. T.A. Crerar's comment is typical of the Progressives' stand: "What you say about Gardiner

any ill will towards King at any time, but his views on bowing to the Progressives were vehemently expressed: "If our organization defeating all but four places them in a position to select Cabinet I never want to be in it or assist in its return."⁴³ A month later, however, Gardiner viewed the situation with more equanimity. He was able to write to Motherwell, after Dunning's departure for Ottawa, and his own installation as premier, "I feel quite confident that the best in the interest of the party has been done up to the present."⁴⁴

On February 22, Dunning's appointment to the Cabinet as Minister of Railways was announced. Francis Darke, M.P. for Regina City, resigned; Dunning was nominated for that seat, and elected by acclamation. Four days later James Gardiner became the fourth premier of Saskatchewan.

is right. He is both ambitious and determined. It would be a great mistake to take him to Ottawa. He more than any other man has secured, and in a large measure earned, the hostility of the Progressives." Cameron Papers, T.A. Crerar to A.K. Cameron, 26 January 1926.

43. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 3 February 1926, 2638. See also J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 15 February 1926. Gardiner's relations with the Progressives is discussed in more detail below, chapter II.

44. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 2 March 1926, 2651-2.

CHAPTER II

RELATIONS WITH OTTAWA: GARDINER AND THE FEDERAL LIBERALS

One of James Gardiner's political maxims was that it would be a grave error in judgment to conduct a provincial election in Saskatchewan without taking into account federal affairs.¹ The true principles of Liberalism were not divisible, except insofar as the legislative competence of the Dominion and the provinces was prescribed by the constitution. From the beginning of his career as provincial Minister of Highways in 1922 Gardiner kept up a continuous correspondence with political leaders. At the outset his correspondents were few, Prime Minister King, and Saskatchewan's W. R. Motherwell being chief among them. As he became involved in party organizational work, national organizers were added to the list. As premier he naturally came in contact with many federal politicians. His control over the party organization kept him in close communication with Saskatchewan Members of Parliament, and Cabinet ministers representing the West. In later years, when he was a federal Cabinet minister himself his list of

1. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to T.C. Davis, 10 December 1958, 42463.

correspondents reads like a Who's Who of Canadian political circles.

Undue deference was never a characteristic of Gardiner. He had definite opinions on policy and procedure. Once having determined that a course of action was desirable, he immediately attempted to implement that action. Though firm in his opinions he was rarely pugnacious; tenacity and perseverance were his long suits. But his opinions were of a sufficiently firm character that he frequently made political enemies. On occasion, as will be shown, his inflexibility became a political handicap. Perhaps the most inflexible of his beliefs was an undiminishing faith in the inviolability of the principles of Liberalism. To him Liberalism was not a collection of abstract principles; it was a faith in a party. The party organization must be upheld above all, for within its framework could matters of policy be best implemented. The party system had evolved in the course of the development of the British parliamentary tradition. The British form of government was demonstrably one of the best, if not the best, forms of government which had ever existed. Consequently, party government must be upheld.² Party government, moreover, presupposed the two traditional parties. Gardiner had little time for regional parties, for parties based on a single issue, or for parties

2. Gardiner Papers, Speech Notes, 4387-97.

which threatened the existing political structure. J.W. Dafoe called him "a political anachronism — a survival of an age of political development which we have passed in the West." He doubted whether Gardiner could become modernized.³

One consequence of this belief in party was that Gardiner was a pragmatic, not a dogmatic, politician. He rarely dwelt on abstract principle. The policies he advocated were those he considered necessary for the time. He had a great many ideas as to which policies were appropriate for the period in which he was a leader of government, and he was capable of exerting a consistent, constant pressure to have them introduced. But he realized that the political game was a game of give and take and that priorities must be set to satisfy all sections of the country. For this reason he abhorred regional parties or individuals who attempted to capitalize on personal popularity to gain their immediate ends. In 1922, following his first political visit East, at a time when the Liberal party was suffering severe disagreements on matters of policy, he was able to say:

I am more satisfied then I ever was before going East that an Eastern Liberal and a Western Liberal is [sic] agreed on matters of policy and that there is no foundation for the belief that has been growing in the West that we should have a purely Western

3. J.W. Dafoe Papers, J.W. Dafoe to H.A. Sifton, 13 June 1929.

party to give voice to Western opinions.

He admitted that there was a difference on the tariff question, but "even that is one of expediency."⁴

Party government was therefore a matter of loyalty to the party above all. In many respects Gardiner in this respect was like his federal leader, Mackenzie King. But, unlike King, Gardiner had no untoward fear of the rigours of opposition. He admitted that he could respect the viewpoints of the Tories, even though he could not agree with them.⁵ And when the time came he could see the advantages to the party of a period of opposition.⁶ With this staunch belief in party in view, much of Gardiner's attitude toward the federal party and its members and policy becomes explicable.

Fundamental to all relations with the federal party was Gardiner's attitude toward King. At no time did the provincial premier's faith in the federal leader waver. Gardiner was convinced that King was as loyal to Liberalism as he was, and had an implicit trust in King's leadership. In one crisis he wrote:

4. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 25 September 1922, 2686-88.

5. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to G.M. Manuel, 21 February 1928, 8480-1.

6. See, e.g. Gardiner Papers, James G. Gardiner to H.R. Fleming, 2 August 1929, 9877. See also Cameron Papers, T.A. Crerar to A.K. Cameron, 9 June 1926.

Your judgment in all matters of first importance has been so magnificently justified by time on every occasion that it has been put to the test, that those of us who have been following your leadership would hesitate at any time, even in the face of opposite views which we might hold, to take any course other than that which you have decided on.⁷

On the other hand King had the utmost respect and gratitude for Gardiner's organizational ability. He recognized Gardiner's loyalty; moreover, he realized what the party owed to the success of Gardiner's organizational ability in Saskatchewan in 1925 and 1926. Reminiscing in later years Gardiner recalled: "I never did anything in Saskatchewan without discussing it with King — and he never did anything in Saskatchewan without discussing it with me."⁸

Gardiner's attitude was long standing. He had been deeply influenced by the expression of the common rank and file party membership in the 1919 convention. As he viewed the convention both the platform which that convention adopted and the leader the convention chose were indications of the voice of the common party members against the vested interests. The convention had chosen a leader who led the party to victory. In Gardiner's opinion, moreover, the party had been ably led in that early period of King's tenure; no other leader could have made a better showing in

7. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 20 March 1929, 8334-7.

8. Reginstreif, op. cit., 281.

the 1925 election.⁹

Following the entrance of Dunning into the federal Cabinet in 1926, it appeared to many that he was the new voice of the West in federal circles. But his was definitely not the only voice. As he had in 1925, Gardiner became the organizer of the federal Liberal campaign in the prairies in 1926. Following the election, he was invited, along with the Western Cabinet ministers, to a policy meeting in King's office to discuss the Western situation.¹⁰ One close observer of the discussions surrounding Cabinet reconstruction noted that "Gardiner has made a deep impression on King and played a very considerable part in the Cabinet making. Mr. Gardiner was at Laurier House while Dunning remained uncalled at the Chateau."¹¹ A detailed political correspondence continued between the federal and provincial leaders with few items of political concern remaining undiscussed.

An increasing confidence in each other marks the correspondence. In the early letters Gardiner offers his ideas "in view of your desire to learn of opinions re: political solution in the West and in view of the fact that

9. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 19 November 1925, 2590-1.

10. Gardiner Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 17 September 1926, 8066.

11. Dafoe Papers, Grant Dexter to J.W. Dafoe, No date; internal evidence places it after 28 October 1926.

this is a critical moment in the life of the party." He writes of his "desire to see the principles of Liberalism expressed in the form of much needed legislation." He points out that to remain in office the party must win the confidence of the West.¹² His frequently expressed views on the Progressives are discussed in detail below, but many of his specific suggestions on policy parallel those of any Western spokesman of the time: tariff reductions, the need for the Hudson Bay Railway, a restoration of confidence in banks following the Home Bank failure. His letters at this date indicate no doubt that these principles would be introduced for they were, after all, part of the platform of 1919. He was, however, much concerned with the timing of action on such issues so as to get the most political mileage from it.¹³

After Gardiner's rise to a position of authority in Saskatchewan the nature of the policy matters discussed changed. Only rarely did Gardiner attempt to utilize his private correspondence with King to influence federal legislation concerning the province. The official channels were followed. Specific matters were dealt with through direct communication with the department concerned. One of the

12. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 18 December 1923, 2178.

13. See, e.g. his letters to King dated 27 April 1923, 2177; 18 December 1923, 2178; 15 November 1924, 2192.

major items of discussion between Saskatchewan and the federal government during Gardiner's tenure of office, for example, was the transfer of police activities in the province to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the dissolution of the Saskatchewan Provincial Police. Except for incidental mention in the letters to King, the entire correspondence was conducted through Justice Minister Lapointe. Similarly the highly contentious issue of the transfer of control of natural resources was discussed at great length in briefs, federal-provincial conferences and judicial hearings. But in personal correspondence references to it were almost entirely restricted to the effect the manoeuvrings had on the political situation both federally and in each of the three prairie provinces.

Gardiner did, however, keep King fully informed on matters which were being discussed between the governments. Subjects discussed in one year, 1927, for example, included naturalization laws, the police question, federal subsidies to the provinces, the natural resources question, the Flin Flon mine development, the Hudson Bay railroad, federal licensing of breweries, railroad branch lines, freight rates, as well as general policy, patronage, and party matters.

On occasion a decision of the federal government appeared to Gardiner to be politically unwise. When that happened he would adopt a different attitude. By wire and letter he would present his views to the Prime Minister

pointing out the utter lack of political foresight the federal action displayed and the immediate steps which must be taken to repair the damage. The problem of railway branch lines is a case in point. The northern area of the province, much of which, incidentally, was in King's own constituency, had long desired a line connecting the Turtleford area with Prince Albert. Settlement was growing in the area, Prince Albert seemed a natural terminus and distribution center, and, important to Western minds, the Canadian Pacific appeared to be casting covetous eyes in that direction.¹⁴ Representations had been made to the federal government and informal assurances received that the wishes of the Northern residents would be met. In late February the Minister of Railways brought down his estimates. A three year program called for an eventual partial construction of the line, but not an actual connection. Indeed, the direction of part of the line left a distinct doubt as to whether the line would be completed in the manner desired.¹⁵ When the news reached the North a storm of protest arose.

Gardiner's action was immediate. He wired King

14. Gardiner Papers, James G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 3 January 1927, 8068-73.

15. The program called for a Prince Albert to Shellbrook line. But the Turtleford line would go to a point south of Hafford where a connection with the Saskatoon line would be made. This left the area from north of Hafford to Shellbrook without a railway. Moreover, the Turtleford area desired connections with Prince Albert rather than Saskatoon.

protesting the policy and followed up his protests in a letter:

Your plan is completely unacceptable. Provision for connection must be made,... I think it is essential for C N, the interests of the city of Prince Albert, and of the district as well as the Liberal party in northern Saskatchewan, and your own interests as P.A. member that this line be placed in the three year program.¹⁶

King's reply not only indicates the success of Gardiner's protestations but is indicative of his concern with the political implications of the matter.

Am hopeful matter can be arranged as desired by yourself and P.A. friends. Doing this will involve greater risk with Senate as to acceptance of proposal but it seems to me in view of wish of yourself and others that risk should be taken and I have so advised. Meanwhile suggest you contact right parties P.A. advising that I am pressing their views and wishes in the matter and counselling meanwhile avoidance of agitation and publicity with regard thereto.¹⁷

Matters of party policy or decisions with political overtones received direct and full discussion. It is perhaps significant that whereas on matters of legislation and specific programs King's letters were rarely of greater length than two pages, on question of party organization or an issue which might have possible electoral effects it was not unusual for his letters to run to six, seven or even

16. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 25 February 1927, 8121-4.

17. Gardiner Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 7 March 1927, 8120.

eight pages. In addition to His Majesty's Mail there were personal consultations between the two men whenever political affairs took Gardiner to Ottawa.

In some respects the consultation was one-sided. This is not surprising considering the positions of the two men. Officially Gardiner was nothing more than the federal organizer at election time, when he was given an almost free rein. Between elections his role in the federal party was of necessity limited to that of adviser for Saskatchewan affairs with some influence beyond the province in Manitoba and Alberta. But for Gardiner it was somewhat irritating not to be aware at all times of the thinking of the leaders in Ottawa.

When the federal Cabinet decided to hold up the construction of the Hudson Bay railroad pending an expert investigation of the relative merits of Nelson and Churchill as terminal ports, Gardiner allowed his irritation to show through. He was convinced that the delay was a mistake, politically at least,¹⁸ but was more concerned about the lack of consultation. "It would be much better for the Liberal party everywhere in Canada," he wrote to Motherwell, "if some of us who are not in the House of Commons, knew a little bit more about what our friends in the Commons

18. "From a purely political point of view, I think you are absolutely wrong in making any changes now," he wrote to Dunning. Gardiner Papers, 26 January 1927, 7884-6.

have in mind."¹⁹ Despite such occasional complaints about lack of communication on decisions, Gardiner remained a loyal reporter of political problems, as well as a proponent of suggested solutions. When Premier Ferguson of Ontario suggested a conference of provincial premiers to discuss a common stand to be taken at a forthcoming conference with the federal government, Gardiner consulted with King, enclosing the correspondence, and replied to Ferguson that he thought such a line-up against the federal government to be undesirable.²⁰ When Vancouver editor R.J. Cromie discussed organization problems in British Columbia, Gardiner candidly offered his opinions to King.²¹ When a Saskatchewan Progressive M.P. misrepresented some of King's views in his constituency, or when King needed advice on delicate patronage problems in Saskatchewan, he called on Gardiner to be

19. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 28 January 1927, 7602-4. In this letter, as well as similar letters to King and Dunning, Gardiner goes on to explain the political sentiment underlying a resolution introduced into the Saskatchewan legislature calling for immediate action to extend the Bay line to Port Nelson. He points out that the resolution was introduced to overcome injury to the party caused by Manitoba Free Press articles, and to prevent the opposition from doing further damage by introducing a similar resolution. It was better for the provincial Liberals to introduce it than the opposition. If the federal government were proved right, the credit remained with a Liberal party. If it were proven wrong, no opposition party could take any credit.

20. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 4 October 1927, 8166, with enclosures.

21. Ibid., 23 September 1927, 8183-6.

his trouble-shooter.

But of all the questions that affected the relations between federal and prairie Liberals in the last five years of the 1920's, three problems occupied the minds of King and Gardiner more than any other. One was the matter of the Progressives and the attitude to be taken to them. The second, closely related, concerned the organization of the Liberal party in Manitoba. Thirdly, there was the problem of misunderstandings between Gardiner and Dunning, which at times had all the ear-marks of a party-splitting feud.

Gardiner's attitude toward the Progressives is well known. To him they were to be treated as any other opposition party: opposed and defeated. From time to time he followed decisions made by party leaders to accommodate them, but he always opposed such measures while they were being discussed and was among the first to advocate a return to a policy of opposition. An examination of his statements with regard to the Progressive movement over the years bears out the consistency of his theme. In 1923 he recognized their regional appeal. He noted that they could only maintain that appeal as long as the federal government failed to implement its 1919 policies: tariff reduction, especially on farm implements, was the necessary beginning.²²

The following year he reiterated his stand, making it

22. Ibid., 27 April 1923, 2177.

more emphatic. The implementation of policy changes favorable to the West was still important. He added that there was only one attitude to take towards the Progressive movement: eradicate it. "Recognize in them the real opposition to your government," he wrote King. As long as the movement existed as a political force the removal of one issue only cleared the way for another. To cure this situation a strong Liberal representation was necessary from the West, an aim which could not be achieved as long as the Progressive leaders could appear as "saviours of the West."

If Fred Johnston [a Saskatchewan Progressive who frequently voted with the Liberals] wants to support the government, let him do it from the government side of the House. While he does not he is the most dangerous opponent the government has in this province and should be treated as such.²³

To such militant statements Mackenzie King reacted cautiously. He indicated to Gardiner that, while he agreed in principle with Gardiner's attitude, the time was not yet ripe for outright opposition. Many of his Cabinet colleagues, moreover, were not convinced of the wisdom of opposing the Progressives.²⁴

The fact that the provincial government came out in full support of the federal government in the 1925 election enabled Gardiner, as provincial organizer, to put his theories into practice. Some observers went so far as to

23. Ibid., 15 November 1924, 2192-3.

24. Gardiner Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 9 December 1924, 2193. King's actions and correspondence with others at the time indicate that he himself was not in complete accord with Gardiner's views.

give Gardiner the entire credit for the decision to support the federal Liberals,²⁵ but it would appear that Dunning's support of King was motivated by more than Gardiner's ideas alone. Nevertheless, the results of the election appeared to vindicate Gardiner's stand. The Liberals increased their representation from Saskatchewan to fifteen members from the single member they had elected in 1921, while at the same time reducing Progressive membership to six. When Gardiner followed up this victory by delivering Prince Albert to the Prime Minister in the by-election of 1926, he felt confident enough to write: "I am convinced... that there are no Progressives left in Saskatchewan."²⁶

There were, however, twenty-four Progressives left in the House of Commons and they held the balance of power between King and Meighen. If King was to retain the office of Prime Minister, and it soon appeared that he would attempt to do so, the support of the Progressives was imperative.

King undertook measures to gain this support. Dunning's entry into the Cabinet has already been discussed; it would serve to show the Progressives that a man who held ideas similar to theirs could operate within the King government.

25. Cameron Papers, T.A. Crerar to A.K. Cameron, 11 June 1929.

26. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 15 February 1926, 2640-1.

The Speech from the Throne which would open the session was of vital importance. If it could include a program which the Progressives must support their co-operation might well follow for the remainder of the session. Neatby quotes from some of King's notes regarding the proposed speech:

Appeal to those from whom support to come
Only along lines which sure to have co-
operation of Progressives.
What in speech to be determined only after
consultation with Progressives...27

From Saskatchewan, Gardiner looked on the strategy and found it wanting. "The attitude of our friends in Ottawa has been somewhat of a disappointment," he wrote to Motherwell.²⁸ From his point of view the Progressives had been defeated but their influence on the Liberal party seemed greater than ever. With regard to the Cabinet shuffle he noted:

Our organization in this province defeated all but four of the Progressive Candidates who opposed us, and I would judge from the attitude of our supporters down there that the wishes of these four men has [sic] considerable to do with the reorganization of the Liberal party.²⁹

What concerned him most was the effect this would have on the Liberal organization in Western Canada. He stressed his theme in consultation with Dunning, with King, and in long

27. H.B. Neatby, op.cit., 96.

28. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 15 February 1926, 2640-1.

29. Ibid.

letters to Charles Stewart, Dr. J.H. King, and Motherwell, Cabinet ministers from Western Canada. If the strategy of Ottawa was to stay in power at all costs,

to lower the standards of Liberalism in the West in order to keep the Ottawa government in power without another election, then it is my opinion that the party is doomed to opposition for a generation after the election does come as it will take that long to rebuild what is now being torn down.³⁰

Not only was this playing into the hands of Meighen, who had been claiming all along that the Progressives were controlling the Liberal party and that the Conservatives were the only alternative, but Gardiner was convinced that the Progressive movement was doomed, a lost cause.

The disruption of the organization would be the result of this policy. Analyzing the Saskatchewan scene, Gardiner pointed with pride to the federal organization built within one year. To destroy it now would mean that Conservatives would win many seats in the next election in Saskatchewan. Similarly, Gardiner was upset at rumours he heard that the Liberals were going to support Bracken's government in Manitoba and Brownlee's government in Alberta. This procedure would make the work of organization there impossible. With reference to Alberta he pointed out that there were more Conservative votes than either Liberal or Progressive votes. Take away an effective Liberal opposition and the

³⁰. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to C. Stewart, 17 March 1926, 6 March 1926, 7765-8.

Conservatives would replace it. Gardiner was convinced that the people of Canada were fed up with coalitions.

If I am any judge of the feelings of the people generally in Canada at the present, I think that, when the next election comes around, they will insist upon electing a sufficient number of candidates from one party to make absolutely sure that we are going to have no more dickerings with groups to carry into effect certain policies.³¹

And that one group would not be the Progressives. In 1926, Gardiner was convinced that the movement was dead in Saskatchewan. Moreover, after a visit to Portage la Prairie and, later, Winnipeg, he was convinced that the same held true of Manitoba.³²

Successful opposition to the Conservative was, therefore a matter of allying all opposing groups under one leader and one organization — the Liberal party. The Progressive members would be forced to support the Liberals; if they desired a political future, they must fall in line with the wishes of the electorate as demonstrated in Saskatchewan in 1925. There was a possibility of defeat in the House, but Gardiner did not fear a temporary defeat, if it was the best way of retaining the identity of the party and gaining in the long run.³³ "When we cannot win

31. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 15 February 1926, 2640-1.

32. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to J.H. King, 15 March 1929, 5163.

33. Cameron Papers, T.A. Crerar to A.K. Cameron, 9 June 1926. Crerar is reporting the gist of Gardiner's argument in a private conversation with Manitoba Liberals.

as Liberals," he observed, "we can, at least, be defeated as Liberals, and neither the party nor the country will be any worse off in the future because of our having been defeated."³⁴

The events in Ottawa led, despite King's wooing of the Progressives, to his ultimate defeat over the customs investigation. Meighen's subsequent defeat resulted in another election. At a strategy meeting held in King's office at which Gardiner was present, the problem of the Progressive-Liberal relationship was discussed. The course of the debate is not known but King later recalled that those present

were all strongly of the view that it was not in the interests of the Liberal party of Canada as a whole for us to regard the Progressive party as political enemies, but rather that they should be regarded as allies with whom we should seek to effect an understanding that would be helpful to destroying a common enemy, and secondly in adding to our own strength as a Party.³⁵

The strategy was followed throughout the country, except in Alberta where no understanding could be arranged, and in isolated constituencies in other areas.

Gardiner was again asked to take over the job of managing the election in the West, although the task of arranging the rapprochement in Manitoba was entrusted to

³⁴. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell. 10 April 1926, 7719-21.

³⁵. King Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 3 March 1928, 129737-41.

J.W. Dafoe. In Alberta the situation was, eventually, left up to Gardiner to do what he thought best.³⁶ In Manitoba no constituency nominated rival Liberal and Progressive candidates; many candidates were endorsed by both parties, as was, for example, Robert Forke. In Saskatchewan three of the six Progressive members were nominated either as outright Liberals or joint candidates. The remaining three had been consistent opponents of the King administration and were opposed by the Liberals. Gardiner observed that these men were not getting any support from Robert Forke and other leading Progressives, but were being assisted by certain Conservatives. As a result he felt the Liberal party would come out of the election stronger than ever in Saskatchewan.³⁷

King felt the results of the election vindicated his position. With the support of the ten Liberal-Progressives he had a majority in the House. These ten members were pledged to support him and their representative, Forke, was given a seat in the Cabinet. But the rapprochement which created such a happy situation federally had not the same happy effect in the provincial organizations, especially in Manitoba. It was not long before the Manitoba political

36. H.B Neatby, op.cit., 162ff; Gardiner Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 10 July 1926, 8047-9; Andrew Haydon to J.G. Gardiner, 14 July 1926, 7378.

37. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to Andrew Haydon, 7 August 1921, 7283-5.

scene was again fraught with difficulty, in the midst of which was James Gardiner.

The Manitoba situation was complex. Mackenzie King termed the problems there as "about the most involved of any I have ever had to face."³⁸ The split between Unionist Liberals and Laurier Liberals which divided the party across the country was particularly deep in Manitoba where several decades of acrimonious party conflict left a residue of ill will which made cross party cooperation anathema to certain Liberals. The post war phenomenon of farmers' parties and experiments in group government, moreover, was very appealing to an electorate which was surfeited with the vindictiveness and corruption of extreme party politics. Premier Norris, as head of a minority Liberal government, had attempted to retain support by repudiating connection with the federal party; when his administration was, nevertheless, defeated on a motion of censure in 1922, certain Liberals were very much disturbed at the opposition of groups which in theory at least espoused the same principles as they did. Other Liberals counselled cooperation with the new Farmer government formed by John Bracken following the resounding success of the United Farmers movement in the election of 1922.³⁹

38. King Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 3 March 1928, 119737-41.

39. W.L. Morton, op.cit., 225-33; see also Morton's Manitoba, A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), 357ff, 377ff, 396ff.

This latter group was upset at the activities of James Gardiner in Manitoba, especially his attitudes towards the Progressives as displayed in the 1925 election campaign and in his speeches to various Liberal groups in the province. In letters to King they stated their resentment at being treated as "Saskatchewan's little brother" and protested the rumoured decision to leave the Manitoba situation in Gardiner's hands.⁴⁰ The success of Liberal-Progressive cooperation federally in the election of 1926 encouraged this group to press for a similar cooperation provincially. The issue became the focal point of a convention called on January 13, 1927 to name a replacement for T.C. Norris who was retiring from the party leadership. The question of whether the party should retain its independence and separate identity or act in harmony with the Bracken government was not conclusively settled at the convention, although a vaguely worded compromise resolution was passed. Nor was a replacement for Norris chosen. That decision was deferred to a later convention to be held on April 30.⁴¹

The election of H.A. Robson, lawyer and provincial magistrate, to the leadership at this second convention indicated which group had proved most successful in gaining

40. Hudson Papers, A.B. Hudson to W.L.M. King, 20 September 1926, 102; King Papers, F.C. Hamilton to A. Haydon, 22 September 1926, 112366.

41. Canadian Annual Review, 1926-7, 413-4.

support from Manitoba Liberals. Robson was firmly committed to independence for the party. One of his strongest supporters was the Saskatchewan premier, J.G. Gardiner. Gardiner acknowledged to King that he had done everything possible to get Robson selected.⁴² The close connection between Robson and Gardiner is evident in a request by Robson asking Gardiner for his complete cooperation in organizing his campaign a month before the convention: "I do not want the slightest slip in our connection.... We understand each other and know the situation... please don't hesitate to do or suggest anything you see fit & don't wait for us."⁴³ Following his choice as party leader, Robson continued to rely on Gardiner for advice on policy matters, aid in organization, and support in the provincial election of 1927.

Those who opposed the Robson-Gardiner brand of Liberalism attempted, even after their defeat in the convention, to block the continuance of a separate Liberal party. They had the support of most of the federal M.P.'s from Manitoba, and used their influence with King, who was, because of his reliance on Liberal-Progressives for a majority, susceptible to their arguments. They also had a

42. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 11 April 1927, 8149-50.

43. Gardiner Papers, H.A. Robson to J.G. Gardiner, 2 April 1927, 8291-2.

formidable ally in J.W. Dafoe, editor of the Manitoba Free Press. Robson, in turn, protested vehemently against the fraternization of Manitoba M.P.'s with the Bracken government, and the lack of support from the Free Press.⁴⁴ Gardiner, too, discussed the situation in Manitoba, and its relation to Saskatchewan politics, with King. After the election of 1927 in which the Bracken government retained power, albeit with a reduced majority, Gardiner wrote King:

... we Liberals of Saskatchewan were in the last fight against the Bracken government in Manitoba... we did not succeed in electing any more Liberals largely because of the attitude of the Ottawa representatives from the Province of Manitoba....

Both the Alberta Government and the Manitoba Government in season and out carry on propaganda through meetings and otherwise in this province to make trouble for us even to the extent of sending members of their Governments to speak at our opposition's conventions. We are definitely convinced here that in self defense we must see that both these governments are defeated. We can elect more Liberals to Ottawa from these three provinces with the Manitoba Government Tory than we can with the Bracken Farmer Government in power. We are going out in season and out to trim the Bracken government in self-defense and we are tired of finding Ottawa lined up against us in every move we make. If the Bracken government is of greater use to Ottawa than this, then pursue the present course because strengthening of the Bracken government means the weakening if not the defeat of ours.⁴⁵

44. King Papers, H.A. Robson to W.L.M. King, 23 April 1927, 12555; 25 June 1927, 125567-9; 30 June 1927, 125575-8.

45. King Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 17 January 1928, 129730-6. This letter is handwritten; there is no copy in the Gardiner files.

King attempted to conciliate the differences between Gardiner and the Manitoba Liberals.⁴⁶ In a letter to Gardiner he emphasized the wisdom of the 1926 approach as evidenced in the federal election of that year. The position of the federal party was such that opposition to the Progressives would alienate Manitoba members and jeopardize the Liberal Government at Ottawa. He asserted that his understanding had been that a similar rapprochement was to have been worked out in Manitoba and that the failure to do so was to him a matter of "no small surprise".⁴⁷ Every Manitoba Liberal, moreover, disagreed with Gardiner with respect to the effects of a Tory government in Manitoba. Gardiner remained adamant, but Robson changed, or was persuaded to change, his mind. He admitted to King that, though it was a change of attitude on his part, he was concerned about keeping the Progressives friendly.⁴⁸

The Manitoba problem again became a matter of concern to the Liberals in the fall of 1928 when a series of accusations of government corruption were made with regard to

46. King Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 3 March 1928, 119737-41.

47. Other observers questioned whether this was really King's attitude. T.A. Crerar was of the opinion that the federal government was not averse to the Robson approach. Cameron Papers, T.A. Crerar to A.K. Cameron, 4 July 1927.

48. King Papers, H.A. Robson to W.L.M. King, 4 January 1928, 133117. Neatby attributes this change of opinion to King's influence. H.B. Neatby, op.cit., 253.

certain water power leases issued by the Bracken government. King and the federal M.P.'s supported by a group of Winnipeg Liberals, sensed a favorable opportunity to renew the negotiations for a coalition. Not only would a coalition avoid a fight which could only benefit the Tories, but it would actually strengthen the Liberals. Bracken needed help and could be persuaded to give special terms. The old guard of the Liberal party, on the other hand, sensed an opportunity to defeat Bracken and wanted to oppose him. A provincial Liberal convention was called to decide the issue early in 1929.

King has been credited with influencing the convention, and especially Robson, to vote in favour of cooperation with Bracken.⁴⁹ In fact, James Gardiner played a vital role in the negotiations. The federal party had sent one of its organizers, Thomas Taylor, to work for a coalition. Taylor talked to Dafoe, Hudson, and other Winnipeg men who favoured coalition, and with Bracken who also appeared willing to negotiate. But Robson refused to commit himself. He did not want to be a member of a government which would have to bear the odium of unwise, if not actually illegal, dealings. He stated that he would make no decision until he had consulted with Gardiner.⁵⁰ Taylor persuaded Robson

49. H.B. Neatby, op.cit., 290-1.

50. For a day to day résumé of Taylor's activities see his daily memoranda to Ottawa. King Papers, 138016-35.

that he should see Gardiner in Robson's place. Taylor's report on the interview with Gardiner was pessimistic. Gardiner supported a coalition, but only on the condition that Bracken resign within a year with Robson then becoming premier, a condition Taylor felt would "wreck everything". On returning to Winnipeg, Taylor found that Robson had decided merely to support Bracken, but in no circumstance to enter a formal coalition. Taylor requested aid from Ottawa.

Mackenzie King appealed to Gardiner. Gardiner, who had been ostentatiously avoiding direct participation, now acted. He sent his personal emissary, provincial librarian W.F. Kerr, to persuade Robson to follow the wishes of the federal Liberals, and exerted his influence in other ways.⁵¹ Kerr and Gardiner were successful: the resolution finally adopted by the convention was, however, a modified form of the original coalition proposal. Instead of openly supporting a merger, the convention proposed a joint committee of Progressives and Liberals to investigate merger; meanwhile,

Taylor, who had only begun working for the organization in 1928, had been sent to Winnipeg because, as a relative unknown, his presence would not be commented on as would that of a better known mediator, e.g. Andrew Haydon. Taylor remained, however, in constant communication with Haydon and King.

51. Ibid., 138034-5, J.F. Fisher to A. Haydon, 17 March 1929, 138013-5; Gardiner Papers, T. Taylor to J.G. Gardiner, 12 March 1929, 8240-3, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 14 March 1929, 8339, 20 March 1929, 8334-7, J.G. Gardiner to M. MacLean, 18 March 1929, 8326-7.

the Liberals would give general support to the Bracken government. Gardiner also used the occasion to emphasize the argument he had used in previous years with Western Cabinet ministers, the need for more continuous consultation with provincial leaders.

There is ... a very considerable section of the Liberal party in the West as elsewhere on which Liberalism must rest its future.... It is the section of the party which remains Liberal in the face of all opposition.... This section is composed of men who, like Judge Robson, will when occasion demands take personal chances in the interests of the party, which their own judgment would suggest are not in their personal interest.⁵²

He added that it was the other group of Liberals, who sacrificed the party to their own self-interest and were currently found in the Manitoba Progressive party, who seemed to be controlling the Manitoba scene. Yet the true Liberals remained loyal and made compromises, willingly or unwillingly. Even the defeat of his own government in Saskatchewan later in the summer of 1929 did not change Gardiner's attitude toward the Progressives. An examination of his approach to the Progressives shows that, if anything, the support the Progressives gave to a Conservative premier, convinced him that Progressives in general entered politics as a matter of self-interest and self-advancement rather than as followers of principle.⁵³

^{52.} Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 20 March 1929, 8334-7.

^{53.} See below, chapter V.

The so-called feud between Dunning and Gardiner complicated the matter of relations between the Saskatchewan and federal Liberal parties throughout the period from 1925 to 1929. That the two men were not friendly has been widely accepted and there is evidence to support the contention. But the reasons underlying their differences and the extent to which the feud was real, thereby hampering federal-provincial relations, are largely a matter of conjecture.⁵⁴ Four rumours were current: that there existed a personal feud between the two men; that Gardiner was out to "get" Dunning and his supporters in Saskatchewan, that the Saskatchewan provincial organization supported Gardiner in the struggle; and that King and Motherwell were firm supporters of Gardiner's position, especially King, who did not want to do anything to encourage a lieutenant who might aspire to his own position as leader.

It is clear from Haydon's memorandum to King at the time Haydon interviewed both men as aspirants for Cabinet positions in 1925 that, as Neatby says, the two Saskatchewan

⁵⁴. There is no evidence in the Dunning correspondence, and very little in the Gardiner Papers, with reference to the dispute. The King-Gardiner correspondence refers to "differences of opinion" between the two men on occasion. Information has to be found from third parties. With one notable exception, a letter from Gardiner to King in the King Papers (See above, n. 45), my information comes from the J.W. Dafoe and T.A. Crerar observations on Saskatchewan and federal politics. There is also an exchange of letters between Dunning and Gardiner over an article about the feud in the St. Thomas, Ontario, paper, which adds some information. Gardiner Papers, 7900-7904.

leaders might be friendly but they were not friends.⁵⁵ Gardiner suspected Dunning of great personal ambition, of aspirations for the federal premiership. He advised King not to give Dunning complete control of the West in such matters as Cabinet reorganization. Haydon concluded that Dunning had used Gardiner as his political organizer and would like to keep on doing so, but that Gardiner had ambitions of his own and "declined the leading strings."⁵⁶ Gardiner also disagreed with Dunning on matters of policy, especially the problem of how to treat the Progressives. It is possible that he learned of the abortive plot to form a Western party to which Dunning was privy; it is also possible that he distrusted the motives which led to Dunning's change of policy for the 1925 election.

Some observers, among them the editors of the Western Producer, felt that Dunning led the supporters of Hamilton in opposition to Gardiner as leader of the Saskatchewan Liberals. Others pointed out that, despite his predilection for Hamilton, Dunning took no part in the proceedings. Even so, Gardiner may have felt his suspicions confirmed by the incident. Dunning, on the other hand, attributed Gardiner's success to his control over the party organization.⁵⁷

55. H.B Neatby, op.cit., 94.

56. King Papers, A. Haydon to W.L.M. King, 23 November 1925.

57. Dafoe Papers, J.W. Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton, 26 October 1926.

Another factor contributing to their disagreements was a difference of attitude toward a Regina syndicate of businessmen. Led by George Bell, this group, all professing Liberals, had extensive newspaper interests including Regina and Saskatoon dailies. Bell was apparently not above using his newspapers to further his business interests and attempting to make deals with government leaders.⁵⁸ To Gardiner, this procedure was anathema and he had refused to deal with Bell. When Dunning drew Gardiner's attention to newspaper clippings referring to the supposed feud, Gardiner pointed out that they had appeared in Bell newspapers and stated that to his mind their authors were people who were attempting to stir up trouble within the ranks of the Liberal party. These men were supposedly Liberal and, moreover, claimed to be friends of Dunning. Gardiner declared that they were beneath his contempt or notice.⁵⁹ Dunning was a friend of Bell; and Gardiner may well have suspected that the former had inspired the criticism of his actions.⁶⁰

58. Ibid.

59. Gardiner Papers, C.A. Dunning to J.G. Gardiner, 19 February 1927, 7902-4, J.G. Gardiner to C.A. Dunning, 21 February 1927, 7900-1. The newspaper situation and Gardiner's role in it are discussed in more detail below, chapter III.

60. Dafoe Papers, J.W. Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton, 26 October 1926.

Dunning, on his side, considered the reorganization of Gardiner's Cabinet a personal affront. On October 28, 1926, Archie McNab, long time member of Saskatchewan Cabinets, resigned to become a member of the Provincial Local Government Board. Dunning intimated, in Ottawa, that this was the beginning of a campaign against his supporters. Dafoe reported a conversation with Dunning in which the latter spoke of a whispering campaign in the official organization against him, all under cover, as his personal relations both with leaders and press had indicated no signs of hostility.⁶¹ To some observers the departure of James Cross from the provincial Cabinet, in a reshuffle which saw federal M.P. George Spence become a provincial Cabinet minister, gave further indication of housecleaning. In this instance, however, it would appear that there was a definite difference of opinion between Gardiner and Cross on policy which led to the resignation. As Gardiner recalled it in later years, Cross did not agree with the uniting of the Saskatchewan Provincial Police and the R.C. M.P. in Saskatchewan, nor did he agree to take a different portfolio.⁶²

61. Dafoe Papers, G. Dexter to J.W. Dafoe, n.d.; J.W. Dafoe to Sir Clifford Sifton, 26 October 1926.

62. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to T.C. Davis, 10 December 1958, 42463. See also C.A. Dunning Papers, (Douglas Library, Queen's University), J.A. Cross to C.A. Dunning, 26 November 1927; 10 December 1927; C.A. Dunning to J.A. Cross, 30 November 1927.

Perhaps the biggest difference of opinion between Dunning and Gardiner was over the matter of how to treat the Progressives, especially in the Manitoba situation. Dunning's connection with Dafoe and the rest of the Winnipeg group was well known. Moreover, he was considered by many the voice of the West in the Cabinet and, indeed, had control over political decisions in the West. Gardiner, however, as political organizer for the party in the West during elections, had, as has been shown, completely different ideas about how to treat the Manitoba Progressives. In his only recorded direct attack on Dunning, Gardiner complained to King that the differences of opinion on treatment of the West were hurting the party. With specific reference to the problem of finding ex-Premier Norris of Manitoba a federal appointment, he asked:

Why did Dunning not discuss this matter with me while in Ottawa? There is only one reason - he is trying to build up a position for himself in Manitoba,... It would be much better for all concerned if you would place the political welfare of the West back in the hands of Mr. Stewart. The other man tries to take all the credit for things which turn out right and throw the blame on one of the other ministers, myself or yourself for everything which goes wrong.⁶³

King wrote back in a tone of grieved surprise. To his knowledge, Gardiner completely misunderstood Dunning. Dunning did not want to control the West; in fact, he wanted

63. King Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 17 January 1928, 129730-6.

Gardiner in Ottawa for that very purpose. Nor was Dunning at all disloyal to him, King, personally, or to Gardiner. King stressed that the disagreements could be traced to the difference in outlook caused by differing perspectives federally and locally. He was sure that a personal conference could iron out difficulties.⁶⁴

The situation was somewhat aggravated by the personalities of the two men. Both were intensely ambitious but in different ways. Both were loyal Liberals but with different conceptions of Liberalism. Dunning failed to understand Gardiner's devotion to party. Gardiner lacked the breadth of view necessary to encompass another's views. Gardiner's control of the party organization gave him a strong base but, perhaps, fostered a certain parochialism. Dunning relied more on popular appeal and, though not underestimating organization, could not appreciate Gardiner's concentration on it.⁶⁵

64. King Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 3 March 1928, 129737-41.

65. That Dunning was not the easiest man to get along with is evidenced by his relations with Saskatchewan M.P.'s. A. MacGregor Young, Saskatoon M.P., wrote to Dunning of the resentment building up against him. He cited two causes: the failure of Dunning to recognize the other M.P.'s in public speeches, evidence of his egotism; and suspicions about his integrity, mainly arising from his close relations with Eastern business men, combined with the increase in his personal wealth. See Dunning Papers (Douglas Library), A. MacGregor Young to C.A. Dunning, 19 December 1928.

King was forced to use all his diplomacy to alleviate these differences. By 1929, however, a measure of harmony appeared, once again, to be restored. In January 1929, Gardiner wrote King:

I agree when he says there is more mutual confidence since his last visit than has existed for some considerable time. I always felt that as we drew near to a contest, differences with regard to small matters which existed would disappear.⁶⁶

That in some measure indicates Gardiner's position with regard to the federal Liberals. He was first of all a Liberal and never was this more true than at election time, when Gardiner was at his best.

66. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 3 January 1929, 8201-2.

CHAPTER III

GRASSROOTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: GARDINER AND THE PROVINCIAL PARTY

Organization was the key to winning elections. This was the basic principle of Gardiner's political activities. He perfected the intricacies of party organization so that the "Gardiner machine" became a byword in Saskatchewan political circles. Gardiner was not the originator of the Saskatchewan Liberal machine. Its origins were concurrent with the origins of the province and it had been effectively used long before Gardiner became its head.¹ But Gardiner refined it and polished it to the extent that one journalist said of it: "Smooth as a stream-lined motor car, steady as a steam roller, slick as a newly-ground piston, the Saskatchewan Liberal party is the super-machine of Canadian politics."²

An effective political organization needs two basic components. There must be a strong, dedicated grassroots

1. The classic description of Saskatchewan Liberal organizations is Escott M. Reid, "The Saskatchewan Liberal Machine Before 1929" Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, II: 27.

2. B.T. Richardson, "High Politics in Saskatchewan" Canadian Forum, XV: 462.

organization. The constituency organization forms the basis of a provincial structure. In addition to the local groups, central coordination and direction are important. For this purpose a provincial office must be at all times in close communication with each local area, ensuring unity of direction and an integrated appeal. The central office serves as the central repository for information, directs the intelligence and communications network, and functions as a liaison between the party workers in the field and the party representatives in the Legislative Assembly. This last function is important. Although the raison d'être of an organization is to ensure the election of members, in order to do so it must frequently serve as a popularizer of policy. It does not formulate policy itself; in the Saskatchewan organization this was the function of the Cabinet and the elected members, who based their decisions on the resolutions from organizations, representations from pressure groups, and conversations with individuals such as are common to every government. The organization must, however, estimate the probable political effect on the electorate of such policies and make this known to the makers of policy. To do this effectively, the party organization requires an effective communications network. Between elections it is this network which frequently appears to be the entire organization. So to regard it is a mistake. The local organizations remain the keystone. If they do not function properly, not only will the party be handicapped

at election time when their efforts are most important, but also the intelligence of the organization between elections will be incomplete or inaccurate. It is the local opinion, after all, which must guide the organization at all times.

Gardiner was well aware of these facts. He constructed his organization so that both components would function smoothly. A description of his organization reveals this aim, but the history of his first term in office shows that between the 1926 and the 1929 elections it was the communications network which received major emphasis, at least in the eye of the general public. As is shown below, this hurt the party in 1929.³

Perhaps the most accurate description of the actual organization is that given by Gardiner himself. In an undated memorandum to national Liberal organizer Andrew Haydon, Gardiner lists the component parts of the structure.⁴ At its head was the central office in Regina with the chief provincial organizer in charge. From Regina also operated the "travelling organizer" whose duty it was to organize every local Liberal association and every constituency Liberal executive. The names of all local and constituency workers were recorded in the central office. Systematic

3. See below, chapter IV.

4. Gardiner Papers, Memorandum, Andrew Haydon file, n.d., probably 1924 or 1925, 7322-3.

reports were filed on each constituency by observers sent out periodically from party headquarters as well as by the community representatives. During elections, for example, the party provided each poll captain with a blank notebook in which to make a daily report on the poll. In central office there was also a mailing list covering the entire province, a list of available local speakers covering every area of the province, and a closely checked list of local newspapers, indicating political affiliation.

At the head of this organization presided Gardiner himself. It had been customary for premiers to designate one of their Cabinet members to supervise the organizational machinery, as Dunning had designated Gardiner, but Gardiner retained personal control until 1929. For most of the period the central office was in the hands of J.J. Stevenson, a long time Saskatchewan Liberal, although in 1928 and 1929 Gardiner relied more on Jim Cameron. Cameron had been a district superintendent for the Department of Highways, but this had not prevented him from becoming one of the party's most effective workers. In 1928 he resigned to become a full time political worker.

The civil service was the source of many of the political workers for the Liberal party. From the founding of the province in 1905, the party had had complete control of political appointments and patronage. The civil service

was consequently solidly Liberal.⁵ Much of the checking of individual constituencies was done by government employees, especially highway inspectors, road supervisors, and to a lesser extent liquor board store managers and other provincial agents.⁶ In addition to Cameron, among the most efficient of these was Archie MacCallum, who became chief trouble-shooter for Gardiner after 1925. He served as travelling organizer after the defeat of the government in 1929, but had done much of the work before then, especially after Malcolm McLean, who had held that position, became a federal member of parliament.⁷ A third major government employee who doubled as an important member of the organization was William Kerr, commissioner of publications for the government and for a time provincial librarian. His task was to survey the provincial newspapers and keep tab on their political leanings. He also acted as Gardiner's special emissary on delicate missions.⁸

5. See E.M. Reid, op.cit., 27, 37; Gardiner Papers, W.R. Motherwell to J.G. Gardiner, 5 January 1922.

6. E.M. Reid, op.cit., 28.

7. Gardiner Papers, Memorandum to A. Haydon, n.d., 7322. There are scattered references to MacCallum's activities throughout Gardiner's provincial political correspondence, e.g. pp. 9176-7, 8386-8, 8496, 8513-4, etc. In this last exchange of letters a defeated nominee at a Liberal convention writes: "I am advised here today that most all our Cabinet ministers hold their position subject to this man MacCallum's approval."

8. King Papers, T. Taylor to A. Haydon, 15 March 1929, 118034-5; B.T. Richardson, op.cit., 461.

In addition to the central office staff, a central council, democratically selected by representatives from each constituency, formed a part of the provincial organization. Its functions were, in practice, very limited and its importance negligible. It met but seldom, and received publicity only at the occasional conventions which the Liberal party held formally to endorse a new leader of the party. Each constituency association likewise had a formal executive. It, too, frequently served as a facade behind which the actual effective organization operated.

For each constituency, an organizer was appointed, usually, though not necessarily, a local resident and a member of the local organization. Sometimes this man was the constituency candidate. The constituency organizer was in charge of setting up a poll organization for each poll. In this he was assisted by "key men" who would each be in charge of four to five polls, and by local civil servants, road supervisors, weed inspectors, health inspectors, even, on occasion, school inspectors. It was the constituency organizer and his staff who served as the eyes and ears of the party structure. They were the chief advisors on the distribution of patronage and the allocation of public works projects in the community. They reported on the effects of public policy and on the activities of the opposition. Most important of their functions, however, was the task of upholding the principles of Liberalism, that is, of persuading the electors of the area that a

Liberal vote was the best vote.

The work continued between elections but when elections approached the organization swung into high gear. The poll organizations increased in size and, to coordinate all activity, a constituency secretary was appointed. Each poll had its workers. Ideally there would be a minimum of six, four men and two women. In addition to the canvassing of voters in the poll they served as scrutineers on election day. Their most important task was to divide the voters' list according to political affiliation. A detailed record was kept of those following each political party, but the most important group was the large number of people in the column marked "Doubtful". These were the ones who must be convinced that a Liberal vote was their best choice. In addition, the job of the poll committee on election day included getting out the Liberal vote. For this purpose conveyances were always ready. Outside scrutineers were cautioned to have their lists properly marked so that only Liberal voters would be hauled. The marked lists and the poll report were forwarded to the central office so that the file on every poll in the province would be kept up to date.⁹

9. Instructions to the workers were detailed and show the care with which the organization worked. Every voter must be canvassed; no affiliation was to be marked on hearsay, but only for good reasons. Each worker was to read the party literature to be prepared to answer all questions. Notes of criticism were made, complete with names and

A great deal of emphasis was placed on the nominating convention. Constituency officials were advised that a big, enthusiastic convention was half the battle; if the poll representatives could be enthused, they would return home and carry out their duties enthusiastically. Reid quotes certain organizers as playing down the importance of public meetings¹⁰ but the provincial organization recognized the importance of the right speaker at the right place and tried to influence the local organizers to realize this fact.

The constituency officials were also warned to have the convention endorse the candidate unanimously. The leaders recognized that nothing lost elections more effectively than a split party. As a general rule, Gardiner attempted to give the local organizations a free hand in the selection of candidates. More enthusiasm would be garnered for a locally selected man than one foisted on them from outside. On occasion this created some problems, where the local organization was split. Perhaps the best

addresses, so that answering letters could be sent from party headquarters. Those whom the candidate should see personally were listed; daily reports went to district chairman. For purposes of conveyancing voters, not only were names of people who needed rides collected, but also the most convenient times for each. Names of voters who should be sworn were collected and given to inside scrutineers. See, "Instructions to Poll Committees," Gardiner Papers, 9722; Reid, op.cit., 28-31.

10. E.M. Reid, op.cit., 30.

example of this problem occurred in the Saskatoon city constituency prior to the 1929 election. Saskatoon was a Conservative party stronghold, one of the seats of which was held by the Conservative leader, J.T.M. Anderson. It had, however, a tradition of splitting its vote and local Liberals hoped to win back one of the seats by running particularly strong candidates. After considerable effort was expended, Mayor G.W. Norman was picked by the executive to run on a ticket with local lawyer J.W. Estey. The local young Liberal association, however, wanted a younger man to run and at the convention successfully nominated one of their members, Charlie McCool. The older Liberals were somewhat chagrined and appealed to Gardiner. He refused to intervene. He did point out that those who had encouraged Norman to run "might have taken care to have the delegates' support."¹¹

There were, however, exceptions to the rule of non-interference. Difficult constituencies were sometimes asked to follow a certain procedure and nominate a candidate selected by the central leadership.¹² Sometimes this was

11. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to M.W. Lawton, 19 April 1929, 9134-6; M.W. Lawton to J.G. Gardiner, 14 April 1929, 9137-8. See also J.G. Gardiner to H.C. Merkely, 4 March 1929, 9114-5, in which he urges a local executive member to be careful to do nothing which looks like placing a candidate from outside the constituency. Local Liberals must be free to select their own candidate.

12. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to N. MacKay, 18 June 1928, 8509-11.

done to accommodate a special situation. The transfer of allegiance by Progressives George Cockburn and Charles Agar to the Liberal party, for example, involved Gardiner in some delicate negotiations. In May of 1928, he met secretly the executive of the Saskatoon County constituency to persuade them to endorse Agar as a Liberal. The following March he wrote letters to the influential members, some of whom were still somewhat disgruntled at endorsing a man who had been their opponent at the previous election. He pointed out that the crossing of the floor by Agar had been of great value to the party since he had been a leading Progressive. Moreover, it would put the party in a bad light provincially if these men were now refused nominations by the Liberal convention. Agar had been most influential and helpful. Gardiner concluded that, notwithstanding these facts, it was the convention's right to choose, and if it decided otherwise, the party would have to live with the decision.¹³

In Agar's case Gardiner was successful. In Redberry, Cockburn's constituency, the problem was somewhat more knotty. The original convention endorsed Cockburn, but a group of dissident Liberals refused to accept the nomination and held a separate convention. They persuaded George Langley, Liberal ex-Cabinet minister, to stand for nomination.

13. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to Jason Bradwell, 12 March 1929, 8976-80.

Strong pressure was applied to Gardiner to renounce Cockburn as the official candidate but Gardiner refused to do so.¹⁴

Concurrent with the first term of Gardiner's premiership was a movement to extend the base of the political party by forming women's and youth organizations. They were low on the priority list of organizers, however, and thus frequently short of funds. In discussing the problems of organizing the women's vote, Gardiner admitted he found it very difficult to get them started. Initially he attempted to operate within the existing structure by having women represented on executives, speaking at meetings, used as campaign workers and poll officials. He admitted that separate organization might be an answer to getting their interest. The objectives for such a group, he suggested, could be to convince the public that Liberal principles were right, to stir up enthusiasm for the ballot, and to help get out the vote.¹⁵ Little emphasis, however, was placed on the work and the organization remained limited before 1929.

14. Gardiner Papers, George Langley to J.G. Gardiner, May 1929, 9161-4; J.G. Gardiner to George Langley, 20 May 1929, 9158; J.G. Gardiner to G.E. Wainright, 20 May 1929, 9165-6. Another type of intervention is mentioned in B.T. Richardson, op.cit., 462, where a member of an ethnic group, the Ukrainians, was imposed on a constituency.

15. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to Mrs. Mary Sutherland, 30 March 1928, 8254-7.

Similar difficulties attended the organization of Young Liberal groups. Little effort was expended by the central organization to start them, although members were encouraged to foster them in their constituencies. Following the defeat in 1929 Gardiner realized that the Conservatives had been more effective than the Liberals among these groups, and his plans for reorganization included provision for a full time youth organizer.

The enthusiasm of the young men could on occasion cause embarrassment to the organization. The activities of the Saskatoon group in nominating their own candidate have been noted. The vice-president of the group created further difficulties for Gardiner when he decided to organize Young Liberal groups in all of northern Saskatchewan, hoping eventually to get a complete chain of Young Liberal groups across the Western provinces. Gardiner recognized his enthusiasm but also that his outlandish promises, for example, 60 million dollars to be spent immediately on roads, and his public criticisms, of senior Saskatoon party officials for instance, harmed the party and must be curbed.¹⁶

In addition to the information received through the formal party organization, Gardiner retained close relations with the party rank and file through personal contacts,

16. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to C.A. Dunning, 25 October 1928, 9105-6.

periodic speaking tours, and an endless correspondence with party workers and others. This correspondence can be divided into three major classes. The first broad group consists of the normal letters which cross the desk of a public official: complaints about government activities, suggestions for legislation, comments on the administration, and normal business correspondence. The second category includes the political correspondence: reports from party workers about the fortunes of the party, requests for patronage and advice about its distribution, discussion of legislation and its effects on the public. The third category might be termed the intelligence correspondence. It consisted of periodic reports from certain men in a number of organizations who reported to Gardiner about the political thinking going on among their membership. This was abetted by occasional reports from party members as they might stumble across relevant political information.

This intelligence service was very informally organized but very effective. It included members of organizations opposed to the government. There was, for example, a reporter from the Regina Daily Star who gave Gardiner information on its news sources. Certain party members were encouraged to attend meetings of the Ku Klux Klan and if necessary become members. They then reported regularly to the premier. Important political or semi-political meetings were reported in full, often with complete shorthand transcripts being taken of opposition leaders' speeches.

Particularly careful was Gardiner to preserve his party's excellent relations with ethnic groups in the province. When, for example, a colonization convention was held under Canadian Pacific Railway auspices in Winnipeg, a correspondent of Gardiner's asked whether he should attend and participate. Gardiner advised the man, an influential farmer of Eastern European background, to do so and report back. The report lauded the C.P.'s colonization policy, but spoke in disturbed tones about a proposed organization of immigrant Canadians being formed for political purposes. This group was to control a Winnipeg national press with five newspapers in various European languages, and seemed to be supported by Conservative funds. To the Saskatchewan observer there was a further disquieting factor: certain Communist agitators had also appeared at the meeting. He added that he had done his best to work against the movement, and would continue to do so, if desired. Gardiner gave unqualified support to his ally.¹⁷ Similar reports came from other ethnic groups, indeed from almost any group of significance in the province, from local Progressive organizations to United Church ministers' meetings. At any given moment Gardiner was reasonably informed on the political climate in every constituency in the province, or could be

17. Gardiner Papers, F. Fleishaker to J.G. Gardiner, 4 January 1929, 9035-7; J.G. Gardiner to F. Fleishaker, 27 February 1928, 6819.

brought up to date in very short order.

The political organization was never far removed from the administrative organization within the Liberal party. In an age when patronage was an integral part of political administration, when pork barrel allocations were common, the Saskatchewan Liberal party proved no exception to the rule. The importance of civil servants to the Liberal organization has already been shown. Many of the chief provincial organizers were concurrently employees of the government. Highway supervisors were preferred for field men; their necessary travels brought them into contact with the entire province. District employees, such as road superintendents and liquor store managers, fitted well into constituency organizations. The appointment of political workers to minor positions in the civil service was also widespread. Gardiner defended the use of patronage. When he was returned to power in 1934, for example, he did away with the competitive examination system and the powerful civil service commission set up by the Anderson government. He stressed in his public statements that the government was completely responsible for administration; therefore, this must include responsibility for the civil service. No civil service commission could be allowed to hamper the authority of the government.¹⁸

18. E. Eager, op.cit., 328, based on reports in Saskatchewan papers.

Perhaps a more accurate indication of his feelings can be derived from some of his comments on particular cases. Patronage was a political weapon. In discussing an appointee to the Immigration department, a man who was also a strong Conservative, Gardiner wrote that "a man on part time pay with a [railway] pass is much more dangerous politically" than a full time organizer.¹⁹ Patronage could be used to keep political workers satisfied. Discussing one of his workers, "one of the strongest men we have on the field," an M.L.A. pleaded with Gardiner to continue his appointment as weed inspector. The man was reeve of his municipality and had a "very extensive influence among the German people."²⁰ Patronage could be used to gain information. To a new employee of the liquor squad Gardiner wrote: "You should have real opportunities to gather information while performing your duties there."²¹ Patronage could be used to gain supporters. Recommending a doctor for the Indian reserve practice, Gardiner discussed the candidate's politics: he admitted to being a Progressive, but came from a Liberal family. "I explained to him if he proved not to be a government supporter, he could hardly expect to keep the

19. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 28 April 1928, 8649.

20. Gardiner Papers, G.W. Sahlmark to J.G. Gardiner, 25 July 1925, 2657-8.

21. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to F. Blane, 9 April 1929, 8943-6.

appointment,"²² Gardiner wrote.

Minor government purchases were also carefully observed. The short term of office of the Meighen government had caused certain changes to be made in the stores patronized by federal agents. With the return of the King ministry in the fall of 1926, a number of demands came to Gardiner's attention for a reversion to the status quo ante. Commenting on certain local officials, who tended to favour Conservative retailers, Gardiner wrote: "Some action should be taken which would indicate clearly to everyone that this cannot be tolerated in the future."²³ The pork barrel distribution ranged widely. In some communities there were major differences of opinion over which bank should get the deposits of a local government agency. Public buildings were placed where they would be of political advantage or occasionally, as with liquor stores, not placed where they would be a disadvantage. The electorate was not un-receptive to the offerings of the party officials. Indeed, the public was conditioned to the situation, and in fact demanded rewards for ballots delivered. Frequently Gardiner had to smooth ruffled feelings when political appointments seemed to local officials to be inappropriate.

This use of patronage for party purposes served to

22. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 17 May 1928, 7503.

23. Gardiner Papers, ibid., 5 October 1926, 7711-2.

provide the party with a solid civil service vote. Reid points out that wherever statistics can be isolated it appears that the civil service vote went Liberal almost unanimously.²⁴ Patronage also gave the party loyal workers at little direct cost. To all appearances the pork barrel allocations also paid good political dividends, though this contention is impossible to substantiate. It was Gardiner's belief that patronage was, therefore, not only defensible, but also desirable. It was only so, however, in the sense that it was good for the party and, hence, the province. Party government was an essential element of Gardiner's political thinking, and patronage had always been a legitimate technique of Canadian political parties. Gardiner, on the other hand, had no sympathy for people who attempted to use governmental machinery for their own benefit. A man who served the party faithfully might be rewarded, should the party emerge victorious in an election, but a man who sought personal rewards by becoming a party supporter found no sympathy in Premier Gardiner. This fact led to one of the latter's bitterest political feuds. Gardiner's personal moral uprightness was never seriously challenged in Saskatchewan. He might be called a dictator, an autocrat, a machine politician, but no charges of any personal gain resulting to him from improper use of his positions were

24. E.M. Reid, op.cit., 37.

ever laid. As Senator Haydon remarked, he was somewhat of a Puritan.²⁵ Gardiner expected the same personal rectitude and party devotion from other party members.

In 1922, shortly after entering the Dunning ministry, Gardiner was informed by a syndicate of Regina businessmen that to swing a large deal in Saskatoon it would be essential that their company be guaranteed a sizeable percentage of culvert sales to the Department of Highways. The transaction was similar to others in which the agency had been acting as broker for companies doing business with the government, where the firm intimated that they had a private line to the Cabinet. As Gardiner explained his attitude in later years, "I refused to do business that way."²⁶

One of the leaders of the syndicate, George Bell, later tried to have an employee of the Department of Highways dismissed, and also led the lobby against Wheat Pool legislation. Gardiner also suspected him of leading a lobby to influence the M.L.A.'s to select Hamilton as premier

25. Chapter I, n. 35.

26. An outline of his position with regard to this controversy is found in a speech prepared for delivery during the Arm River by-election, found in Gardiner Papers, 11497-500. Because I am dealing with Gardiner's views on such matters, I have accepted his facts at face value. This is not to say that Gardiner was blameless in the controversy or that all the facts cannot be disputed. C.A. Dunning compared the dispute to the irresistible force and the immovable mass, adding "I don't see eye to eye with either." Dunning Papers (Douglas Library) C.A. Dunning to George Bell, 13 September 1929.

in 1926, though not at Hamilton's instigation. In each case Gardiner was convinced that Bell's actions were in retaliation for this initial incident.

The most significant development of the feud came over the relations between the government and the Regina Leader. The granting of printing contracts was a favourite device of political organizations to gain journalistic support, alike from small town weeklies and the dailies of the cities. From the earliest history of the province the Leader had been the chief recipient of these contracts.²⁷ It was also known as the nearest thing to an official government organ. George Bell and two of his cohorts had a minority share of the stock of the Leader Publishing Co. and its sister company which controlled the Saskatoon Star. Bell's campaign against Gardiner resulted in a shuffle of the board controlling the newspaper. The majority stockholders, Burford Hooke and the Mellicke brothers, were close friends of Gardiner. In the shuffle Bell was removed from the board;

27. See, for example, the investigations of the Public Accounts Committee into printing contracts in the 1928-9 session, and the newspaper coverage of the revelations of which newspaper got contracts. Liberals claimed the number of papers receiving contracts showed that favours were distributed widely and that it was natural for the Regina paper to receive the bulk of the contracts since it was the most convenient. Opposition members claimed the results showed favouritism and were a manifestation of machine politics. Scrapbook Hansard, 1928-9, Legislative Library, Saskatchewan. Clippings from the Regina Morning Leader and the Regina Daily Star.

in turn, he attempted without success to buy out the rest of the shareholders. Eventually he sold his share of the papers and moved his newspaper interests to Alberta, where he acquired control of the Calgary Albertan.²⁸ His opposition to Gardiner in Saskatchewan became intensified to the extent that he and his supporters opposed the government in the 1929 election. Gardiner outlined the history of the feud on the hustings in a reply to direct attacks from Bell and his organization. He characterized Bell's group as a Saskatchewan Tammany Hall. The influence of the dispute on the election campaign is discussed in a later chapter, but the entire incident exemplifies Gardiner's attitude toward problems of patronage.²⁹ Gardiner continued his machinations with regard to the newspaper control. The high prices offered the majority shareholders influenced them in favour of selling out but their loyalty to Gardiner remained steadfast. Several eastern groups indicated their interests in the papers, among them R.B. Bennett, the Southam interests, and Sir Clifford Sifton. A detailed discussion of the various transactions is not necessary here but Gardiner was the controlling influence in the manoeuvres

28. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to Andrew Haydon, 24 June 1927, 7430-3.

29. Gardiner Papers, Speech Transcript, 11497-500; J.G. Gardiner to J.H. Hilton, 18 June 1928, 8431-5; See also, below, chap. IV. Bell, in turn, called Gardiner the "Mussolini of Saskatchewan."

which saw the Sifton chain eventually assume complete control.³⁰

It was not only the big papers which were closely observed. When an unknown easterner bought out the Wadena Herald, Gardiner inquired about his political leanings.³¹ That solicitude paid political benefits could not be doubted. Frequent favourable publicity was the result. This was especially true of the "ethnic press". The editor of Le Patriot, a French language weekly, requested an interview: "We would like to know what our attitude must be for the next election and what campaign to start." The combined Scandinavian language papers, The Swedish Canada News and Norröna, likewise assured Gardiner they would like to help gain a Liberal victory.³²

30. Details are available in the Gardiner Papers, 14087-14147. Two quotations suffice to indicate Gardiner's role. "The option has placed the whole stock in Meilicke's hands. He will place Bell's anywhere I advise. This puts us in a capital position." J.G. Gardiner to J.H. Ross, 18 October 1927, 14117. "My feeling toward Mr. Gardiner is, of course, completely understandable. When we were straining every resource to get control of the Saskatchewan papers, he gradually transferred his support from other parties to ourselves, and finally gave his unqualified approval of the sale to us, before the Meilickes would talk business in Toronto." Dafoe Papers, Harry Sifton to J.W. Dafoe, 21 June 1929.

31. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to R.O. Campney, 21 December 1926, 8679.

32. Gardiner Papers, P.M. Dahl to J.G. Gardiner, 28 May 1929, 9258.

Despite numerous allegations by political opponents of electoral malfeasance on the part of the Liberal organization, no instance was ever proven. Indeed only two cases reached the courts and both were dismissed. Nor would it be possible to catalogue all of the crimes the "machine" was charged with in political debates. No account of the Liberal organization of 1925 to 1929, however, would be complete without a brief reference to some of the more widely publicized incidents.

Tampering with election machinery in the Happyland constituency in the 1925 provincial election was one such charge. Immediately following the election the defeated Conservative candidate had requested copies of the records of certain polls. No formal protest was filed, however, and the elected candidate was seated. Three years later in the Arm River by-election, J.T.M. Anderson, Leader of the Opposition, referred to the election and charged the government with irregularities. The government pointed out that every opportunity had been given for protest action to take place but no investigation had been asked for within the allotted time limit. When invited by the government to lay formal charges in the House so that an investigation committee could be set up, Anderson declined to do so. The charge that "irregularities" had taken place was in his opinion sufficient for an investigation. The government declined to investigate such vague accusations and took no action. But the charges played an important role in the

1929 election campaign.³³

Another incident of the 1928-29 session of the Legislative Assembly was the attempt of the Public Accounts Committee to investigate James Cameron, ex-superintendent of highways, and Gardiner's chief political lieutenant. Opposition members demanded information about the salary and expenses paid Cameron during his career as a civil servant. They requested Cameron to appear before the committee to answer questions, and insisted that he be questioned under oath. The government refused to swear Cameron unless specific charges were laid against him. When the opposition did not do so, Cameron was not brought before the committee.³⁴ Gardiner admitted later that it was probably a mistake to take the stand the government did for, despite the fact that Cameron's accounts were no greater than other supervisors and the provincial auditor passed them without difficulty, the opposition gained more political benefit from the government's refusal to allow him to be questioned than they would have from any statements made by Cameron.

Other allegations of "machine" interference received

33. Gardiner Papers, "The Facts About the Happyland Election", 9048-51; J.J. Keelan to J.G. Gardiner, 6 October 1928, 9063-4, 10 October 1928, 9061-2. See also Scrapbook Hansard, 1928-9, op.cit.

34. Scrapbook Hansard, 1928-29, op.cit., contains the details of the House activity. See also the Regina Leader and especially the editorials in the Regina Daily Star for January 1929, for reactions to the incident.

widespread publicity, especially during the 1929 election campaign. Among many were the charges of a former provincial police inspector, publicized widely by the Conservatives, that during election campaign he had frequently been given instructions not to prosecute liquor cases.³⁵ Another former member of the provincial police charged that the machine had sent him to bribe witnesses in the case of a Liberal party worker charged with theft from a rural municipality.³⁶ Perhaps the most widespread of all charges was the claim that there existed a bond between the Liberal government and the Bronfman liquor interests, generally considered to be using their liquor export warehouses in Saskatchewan for bootlegging and smuggling purposes. The federal Minister of Justice declared his Department was not able to find sufficient evidence to prosecute. The Anderson government did place Bronfman on trial, but the case was dismissed.

The concept of a political organization, that is, of a political "machine", invariably carries with it connotations of corruption. The opposition press of the day left little doubt in the minds of the Saskatchewan electorate

35. Regina Daily Star, June 3, 1929.

36. Regina Daily Star, May 29, 1925. A fuller discussion of charges against the machine in the 1929 election campaign can be found in Patrick Kyba, "The Saskatchewan General Election Campaign of 1929" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1964), 66-70. All of the charges were of course denied by the Liberal party. None was subjected to formal inquiry.

that the "Gardiner machine" was not averse to any nefarious practice in order to stay in office, as any perusal of the Regina Daily Star editorials will indicate. The cry of "Break the Machine" was constantly heard in 1929. Gardiner himself admitted that the Liberal organization was being attacked, even by nominal supporters of the government:

There seems to be a feeling in the province that the intensive methods of organization which we have followed were intended to control the situation as to make it necessary that the rank and file of voters should step in and smash what they were pleased to call the "machine".³⁷

In public statements Gardiner himself refuted the charges that his was a machine government, and in so doing set the criteria by which he judged political conduct.³⁸ In the first place, he emphasized the democratic aspects of the selection of candidates. Every candidate was selected in open conventions; the central organization could not dictate to a convention. This principle was one of Gardiner's basic tenets of organization, as has been shown. Secondly, he emphasized that by far the majority of party workers were local men, volunteer workers who believed in the principles of the party. The Bell case illustrated Gardiner's attitude to party members who sought personal gain from

37. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to A. Shinbane, 20 June 1929, 10077-9.

38. Gardiner Papers, Speech notes, 10990.

their political affiliation. The third of Gardiner's points of defense was his pride in the honesty of his financial administration. Even after the acrimonious election of 1929 he was able to say proudly that "no serious financial difficulty had arisen" with regard to the financial administration of the province.³⁹

In analyzing his own organization, Gardiner decried the weakness at the party's grassroots rather than the efforts of the provincial officials.⁴⁰ With sufficient support from the local workers the provincial organization would be able to limit its efforts to coordination and communication, its proper functions. Gardiner admitted that the political activities of the central staff might have been "overdone" to the extent that voters thought that their views were being made for them. This was not because the organization was in any way "improper"; to him it indicated that insufficient attention had been paid to strengthening the principles of Liberalism in local constituency workers.⁴¹

39. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to S. Moulton, 3 July 1929, 9996-8. No evidence of the eternal problem of campaign contributions is available for the period. Gardiner did point with pride to the fact that his personal campaign funds had never been subscribed to by anyone outside his constituency. J.G. Gardiner to B. Howard, 4 March 1929, 9067-8.

40. See below, chapter V.

41. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 15 June 1929, 9576-8.

Other commentators have not accepted Gardiner's standard of political ethics. Escott Reid indicts the Saskatchewan Liberal machine on four counts: the use of civil servants as party workers; the use of patronage; the use of public works allocations for political purposes; the granting of contracts, especially in printing services, to gain support.⁴² That Gardiner's organization was engaged in all these activities is historically evident. To him they did not, however, constitute corruption. They were implicit in the party system, and the party system was essential to the effective operation of the parliamentary system. It may be that Gardiner was, in Dafoe's phrase, a political anachronism. But to Gardiner's mind the best way to serve the party was to help it win an election. It was the verdict of the electors, not the verdict of the moral philosophers, which was important.

42. E.M. Reid, op.cit., 37.

CHAPTER IV

ISSUES AND ELECTIONS: GARDINER, THE KLAN, AND THE CONSERVATIVES

The election of 1929 was a surprise and a shock for the Liberals of Saskatchewan. They had been in office for twenty four years. They were well organized. Their administrative record appeared sound, and their platform did not differ markedly from previous elections. Yet they were defeated. The reasons for this defeat, as shown by an analysis of the campaign, indicate that a new element had entered Saskatchewan politics. A study of the campaign reveals some interesting points. For the first time in the history of the province the campaign was not based primarily on economic issues.¹ Although emotional appeals are not absent from any political campaign, the 1929 election saw a concerted, well organized opposition appeal primarily to issues with an emotional content. Not the least of the factors which played a role in the campaign and the events

1. One possible exception to this statement would be the first election in 1905 when the Provincial Rights party based much of its campaign on political and constitutional issues. See E. Eager, op.cit.. For a detailed discussion of the 1929 campaign, its issues and patterns, see P. Kyba, op.cit.

leading up to it was the activity of an organization new to Western Canada, the Ku Klux Klan.

James Gardiner dealt with the situation created by the appearance of this group in his characteristic manner. He followed the movement closely, became convinced that it was politically dangerous, and then attacked it, root and branch. The Klan itself soon disappeared in the province, but the emotions aroused as a by product of its appearance and of Gardiner's introduction of the problem into political controversy, did not die as rapidly. They were one of the major causes of the 1929 defeat. There were other issues, as will be shown; but the emotional divisions produced in the province by appeals to religion, to race, to prejudice formed the base of a political upheaval.

An examination of the history of the Klan in the province and the actions of Gardiner in dealing with it affords some interesting insights. Such an examination assists in understanding the election and its results. But it also provides an example of Gardiner's reactions to a type of political problem, unique in itself, but characteristic of his methods of analyzing political situations, dealing with political issues, and confronting political opponents.

The origins of the Ku Klux Klan can be traced to the Reconstruction period of the American Civil War. Originally a quasi-political movement aimed at destroying Republican Reconstruction governments in the Southern states, it gained a reputation for terrorism, intimidation, and anti-Negro

violence. Following the "Great Compromise" of 1877 when the American political parties solved some of their differences in the South, the Klan gradually declined in influence, though it never disappeared completely. During this period of relative obscurity it added such prejudices as anti-Asiatic and anti-Catholic planks to its appeal in order to gain support in the mid-Western states where the Negro was not a problem. Eventually it added anti-immigrant prejudices, advertising itself as a 100 percent American secret brotherhood. The event which gave impetus to a revival of the organization on a widespread basis was the showing of the film The Birth of A Nation. Its portrayal of the history of the American nation showed the Klan as the saviour of the South in a time of troubles. In the early 1920's the Klan's influence spread rapidly throughout the Southern and Western parts of the United States.²

The new Klan soon became as involved in politics as the original Klan had been. It began to use its terrorist activities, cross-burnings, beatings, and lynchings to influence voting behaviour. It followed no single party line; the love of the dollar was becoming its unofficial platform. In Indiana, for example, the head of the Klan

2. See Gardiner Papers, draft of an article on the Klan, 12274-12285, 12630-9. A general history of the American Klan, including a comprehensive account of the revived Klan, is D.M. Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965). Chalmers includes a brief chapter on the expansion into Canada.

and a number of his associates were eventually tried and found guilty of, among other things, murder.

Unscrupulous organizers continued to spread the activities of the Klan. Because of its patriotic approach (on its official platform) it appealed to nativist groups and individuals, particularly those who feared the influence of large scale immigration on their traditional way of life. The organizers capitalized on these fears to add to their membership: each additional member added to the money which they extracted from the organization.³ It was not long before the unexploited areas north of the United States border would become tempting.

Ontario was the first target, though Klan activities soon spread to both British Columbia and New Brunswick. In 1925 an organizer named C. Lewis Fowler, who had been ejected from the Indiana organization, started the first movement in Toronto, signing up over 700 members the first month. At ten dollars each for initiation fees, plus \$6.50 for the proper robe from each member, this provided a great deal of incentive to continue the work. Within three months, however, the organization began to run into difficulties. Fowler and his chief lieutenant, J.H. Hawkins,

3. See, e.g., the letter from L. Fowler to J.H. Hawkins, 12 September 1924, Gardiner Papers, 12672-3. Fowler was in Ontario and attempting to recruit Hawkins to act as an organizer. He alludes to the strength of nativist groups, and the complete control the organizers would have on the offices, the regalia, and, of course, the funds of the organization.

disagreed as to the wording of a formal constitution. Hawkins, who drew it up, had included provisions which would have the effect of "making him complete boss with access to all possible graft which might accrue."⁴ The result was that Hawkins was read out of the group. But part of the treasury was missing. Fowler accused Hawkins of taking it and even took him to court.⁵ Hawkins went on to form a new group in Hamilton, but his activities there led to similar treatment. After unsuccessful attempts to gain influence with several other groups, he eventually left for Alabama.

Despite an exposé of the organization in the periodical Saturday Night, Fowler continued his activities in Ontario. One of his fellow workers was a member of the New Brunswick legislature, J.S. Lord, who had received, somewhere, control over the initiation ritual for the higher degrees of the order. Fowler and Lord soon found they could not work well together and split up, each claiming that the group he led was the true Klan.⁶ January 17, 1927 marks the beginning

4. Gardiner Papers, James Anderson to J.G. Gardiner; n.d., 12336-9; Anderson was writing for a disgruntled Klan member from Ontario to whom Gardiner had written asking for information; the man was willing to supply the information but refused to write anything personally or sign his name.

5. A complete transcript of the court hearing is in the Gardiner Papers, 12690ff. See also J.E. Atkinson to J.G. Gardiner, 27 March 1928, 12162.

6. J.S. Lord's early connections with the Klan are unknown to me. He is first mentioned in the Gardiner correspondence with regard to this 1926 activity in Ontario.

of the decline of the Klan in Ontario. On that date the two factions, the Ku Klux Klan of Kanada (also known as the Canadian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan on the west coast) and the Ku Klux Klan of the British Empire, had a meeting in Toronto to discuss their differences. One of the issues to be discussed was the allegation that certain groups of the K.K.K. had participated in the 1926 election campaign for money.⁷ It proved to be a disorderly uproar and the accusations and general vilification of the leaders led to a fairly widespread disenchantment with the organization.⁸

Declining interest in Ontario moved the Klan organizers to look for new fields to exploit. Chief among these was the prairie province of Saskatchewan. The field looked favourable for a number of reasons. In the first place, Saskatchewan had been the recipient of large numbers of immigrants from the time of its earliest settlement. Naturally this created a problem of assimilation. In Saskatchewan it proved to be a slow process; the original differences of habit and outlook, accentuated by the fervour of

From scattered references it appears that he had other connections with the American Klan at one time, though he was definitely a Canadian. Gardiner mentions his activities in the 1925 election in New Brunswick, and states that the Klan was influential in that election. Throughout, more information is available on the Fowler faction. Lord's activities in Saskatchewan are difficult to ascertain, though it would appear they were not inconsiderable.

7. Gardiner Papers, J.E. Huckins to J.G. Gardiner, 8 April 1928, 12346.

8. Gardiner Papers, James Anderson to J.G. Gardiner, n.d., 12336-9.

imperial patriotism of the war years, created conflicts. The process of building good will between groups was hampered by the existence of ethnic communities which were slow to relinquish their customs and especially their language. Saskatchewan remained, moreover, a rural community. The state of prairie communications left the rural areas in some measure isolated from the outside world. The news of such movements as the K.K.K. did not precede the organization into the province. Another influential factor in drawing the movement west was the rapid progress the province was making in regaining a favourable financial standing. Such indicators as personal income levels were reaching all time highs. Finally, the provinces of the West retained a residue of the anti-Catholic emotions aroused by successive crises over the issue of sectarian education. An anti-Catholic appeal would find willing listeners among certain groups on the prairie.⁹

The exact date of the entry of Klan organizers is impossible to determine. From Gardiner's correspondence it would appear that the J.S. Lord faction was first into the province. It is certain that one of the men who later worked closely with the Klan, J.S. Maloney, entered the province for the 1926 by-election in Prince Albert.¹⁰

9. Gardiner Papers, "Ten Thousand Suckers" a pamphlet on K.K.K. development in Saskatchewan, 12597-606.

10. King Papers, L.C. Moyer to J. G. Gardiner, 8 February 1926, 111755.

Maloney was somewhat of an enigma. He had originally studied for the priesthood, but lost his position over money difficulties, and eventually became virulently anti-Catholic. He entered the Saskatchewan scene as a self-styled Independent but was suspected by the Liberals of secret arrangements with the Conservatives. After the election he stayed in the province making public speeches for which he charged admission. He worked chiefly in areas where Orange Lodges were located, constituting a ready made audience. His speeches were attacks on religious and racial lines. He was probably not a formal member of the K.K.K. but was using it to support his own ends, even as the Klan spokesmen used Maloney propaganda. Maloney founded a newspaper, The Freedman, in which he carried on his attacks on the Catholic Church, immigrant groups, and later, the Liberal government, especially Gardiner.¹¹ Gardiner suspected a link between Maloney, Lord and the provincial Conservative organization but was not able to prove a connection. However, the fact that Lord was a Conservative member of the legislature in New Brunswick, and had been linked with election irregularities in Ontario, that Maloney had opposed the federal Liberal party in Prince Albert, and

11. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to H.D. Ranns, 15 February 1928, 12091-3; J.G. Gardiner to J.E. Brownlee, 28 February 1928, 12144. Copies of The Freedman are in the Gardiner Papers, K.K.K. Clipping File, 12839-14147.

both appeared simultaneously as opponents of the government in Saskatchewan, was sufficient circumstantial evidence for Gardiner to be suspicious of their actions.

Some time in the winter of 1926-7 the Fowler group of the Klan followed the Lord wing West. Fowler had, after being expelled from the Ontario group, made his peace with Hawkins. Together they recruited two fellow Indiana men to act as their agents in Saskatchewan. These two men, who used the name of Scott, posed as father and son. They in turn added a third member to their staff, a man variously known as Pat Emory, Pat Emerson, and Pat Emmons. These three became the chief organizers operating out of Regina and Moose Jaw, but visiting towns throughout the province.¹² Within the first year they had signed up over ten thousand members.

At first Gardiner was inclined to leave the treatment of this element of the Klan to those locally affected. He recognized that

the main objective of these men is to abstract as many ten dollar bills from Saskatchewan people as they can.... In the meantime they are creating a good deal of bitterness and as you suggest it is just possible that some trouble may come out of the bitterness.

It is somewhat difficult to know how to deal with such matters without creating a worse situation rather than righting the evil.

12. Gardiner Papers, Statement and Transcript of the Trial of Hugh F. Emmons, 12531-93. All five men, Fowler, Hawkins, the two Scotts, and Emmons, had originally worked with the Indiana Klan.

We are watching their activities as closely as we can and shall endeavour to see that the organization does not overstep the bounds....13

Meanwhile he kept in close contact with the Klan's activities. His informants were sitting in on Klan meetings and he began to suspect that the movement would harm the Liberal party if not checked. In addition, the proper revelation of its activities might pay political dividends. He reported to one inquirer, "We have considerable information re: Klan activities which I do not want to reveal yet." After tracing the history of the organization, he added,

... in every organization in Saskatchewan, while there are a few Liberals who have been wooed into it, those mainly responsible for everything which has been done are leading Conservatives in the community. When the time comes to reveal the information many will be convinced that there is a very close relationship between this organization and the active opponents of the government.14

At the same time Gardiner was seeking information about the Klan organizers from outside sources. The government hired detectives to trace the history of the men in Toronto, Detroit, and South Bend, Indiana. Information was readily available, for the men involved had been ousted from every group to which they had ever belonged. Emmons in particular had an unsavoury reputation as a "director of systematic operations to extract money." The detective work

13. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to H.D. Ranns, 29 August 1927, 12036.

14. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to B.F. MacKay, 4 February 1928, 12054-7.

was successful but, when the detectives returned to Saskatchewan, rumours had apparently reached the organizers about the investigation. Within three days the three field men, Lewis Scott, his alleged son, and Emmons, left the province taking with them many of the files and all of the treasury of the Klan.¹⁵

The disappearance of the leaders with the funds raised somewhat of a furore within the Klan. A number of members sought out Gardiner to see what they could do to get their money back. It was revealed that their membership rolls contained approximately 13,000 names, which at thirteen dollars each meant \$169,000 had been received by the organization.¹⁶ Gardiner advised that the membership take action against the men, indicting them for receiving money under false pretences. A certain part of the membership refused, influenced no doubt in part by a desire to avoid exposing their credulity to a laughing public, but also, according to Gardiner's assessment of the situation, by a disinclination to break up the organization. "Knowing these men as we know them, the use which they intend to make of [the

15. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to J.L. Nicol, 11 February 1928, 12076-84.

16. Evidence at the Emmons trial revealed that each member paid a ten dollar initiation fee plus annual membership fees of \$3.00. The organizers received a minimum of \$6.50 per person, the remainder going to pay expenses, or to the headquarters staff of Fowler and Hawkins. See Transcript, 12531-93.

organization] in the future would be easy to guess," he concluded.¹⁷ Eventually a group of members did decide to take legal action. Charges were formally laid against the three organizers and the American police notified.

In the fall of 1927 Gardiner decided the time was ripe to expose the Klan. The disappearance of the leaders had exposed the membership to some ridicule. The Conservatives were attempting to use the failure to apprehend the leaders as propaganda.¹⁸ The disappearance of the Scotts and Emmons had not ended the activities of the Klan, since Hawkins had now come into the province to assume the leadership. A further factor may have been the advice of Mackenzie King: "You cannot do better than to expose as quickly and completely as possible their efforts."¹⁹ Gardiner waited until the annual session of the legislature. Then on January 31, 1928, he delivered a carefully prepared exposé of the activities of the Klan in Saskatchewan. He traced the lineage of the organization from the mob violence of the American Klan, through the crass money-grabbing of the Ontario organization, to its origins in the province. He linked the opposition to the movement. He outlined the

17. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to J.L. Nicol, 11 February 1928, 12076-84.

18. Gardiner Papers, F.W. Workman to J.G. Gardiner, 26 September 1927, 12041.

19. Gardiner Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 30 August 1927, 8174.

activities of the organizers.²⁰ It was a typical Gardiner fighting speech, prepared with the aim of annihilating the enemy.

The province reacted. Gardiner received a number of letters, some from Conservatives, lauding his stand. The Klan itself sent Gardiner an invitation, by registered mail, to appear at a public meeting in Regina where the Klan would answer his accusations. Those who attended the meeting were somewhat disappointed. Though a fiery cross (of electric lights) lit up the stage, Hawkins refused to let the ushers wear robes or Klan regalia. Moreover, the widely advertised attack on Gardiner turned out to be more of a diatribe against the Catholic church. The Catholic separate schools were attacked, the Klan's regalia defended, the Klan's positive program, equal rights for all and protection for Protestantism, defended. Hawkins also took credit for the clean up on Moose Jaw's River Street. A Chinese hotel keeper had been arrested a few day's earlier on charges of keeping a bawdy-house, and being in possession of opium. Hawkins portrayed the Klan as the bulwark against the invasion of colored people, particularly Asiatics.²¹

20. See Gardiner Papers, 12639, for a copy of the speech. Newspaper coverage and opinion, pro and con, can be seen in any of the Saskatchewan dailies for February 1, or in Scrapbook Hansard for the 1928 session.

21. Gardiner Papers, "Comprehensive Report of Meeting of the K.K.K. held at City Hall, Regina, 16 February, 1928," 12517ff. The Klan published the text of the speeches in a pamphlet called "So The People May Know."

Gardiner was satisfied that exposure would spell the end of the organization in the province. "With that accomplished," he wrote, "I feel satisfied that they will have a short life in the province."²² He admitted that there was immediate political reaction. He pointed out that whereas originally the activities of the Lord faction had been politically motivated and those of the American faction based on pecuniary motives, the proceedings against the latter had made them "even more political than the other group."²³

As a result of their activity, [he wrote] some of our friends who did not keep their ears very close to the ground, see considerable danger in the movement. I am inclined to think that up to date we have made far more votes than we have lost through the activities of the Klan and possibly stand to gain even more as time goes on when those who joined realize they have spent considerable money and have very little in return for it except expense.²⁴

The campaign against the Klan was aided by the apprehension of Pat Emmons. In Indiana he had turned state's evidence and testified against certain Klan members. Now he offered to return to Canada to "clear his name" despite

22. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to H.D. Ranns, 15 February 1928, 12091.

23. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to J.E. Huckins, 16 April 1928, 12349.

24. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to M. McLean, 12 March 1928, 12150.

the fact that the offence with which he was charged was not extraditable. The hearing took place in May, 1928. It soon became apparent that no case could be made against Emmons. He offered proof that his agreement with Fowler and Hawkins gave him the right to retain the money he had collected. The case was dismissed but Emmons' statement revealed some interesting items. In his testimony he intimated that leading Conservatives, especially J.T.M. Anderson and J.F. Bryant, were connected with the Klan.²⁵ The Conservatives issued immediate denials and charged the Liberals with bringing Emmons back for political purposes. But, as Gardiner suggested, they would have to take proceedings against Emmons for perjury to deny his evidence. Furthermore, it was well known that three prominent Klansmen, including the provincial Grand Wizard and Secretary, were delegates to the Conservative Convention, and J.H. Hawkins had been an observer.²⁶

Gardiner concluded that the trial had had the effect of making the Klan the laughing stock of the province, and everyone associated with them as well, including the Tories.²⁷

25. Gardiner Papers, Transcript of Hearing, 12531-93.

26. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to S. Moyer, 10 May 1928, 12197, J.G. Gardiner to R.C. Hall, 18 May 1928, 12213.

27. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to G.W. Proust, 10 May 1928, 12200.

To ensure the complete demise of the organization he held a series of meetings across the province continuing the exposé. He challenged the Klan members to meet him in debate at any of his meetings (though he refused to speak on a Klan platform). Hawkins eventually appeared at a meeting in Lemberg, Gardiner's home town, before an audience of 1500 people. According to Gardiner's own testimony, Hawkins was "fairly well floored."²⁸ At any rate Gardiner concluded his series of meetings well satisfied that the Klan had been spiked in the province. A few days later Hawkins was deported under a federal government order as an undesirable.

Not all observers shared Gardiner's optimism. It was apparent that the formal organization was fatally wounded and would probably never regain the strength of 1927. But the emotions kindled by the Klan did not die a similar death. The fears which the Klan had aroused had been latent in the minds of many Saskatchewanians. Fear of Catholic power, resentment at non-English-speaking residents and unusual customs in ethnic communities, anger at nuns teaching in public schools in Catholic areas, all remained evident. The result was an undercurrent of resentment which was bound to influence the political arena. Thomas Crerar, astute observer of the political scene, reported a feeling that

28. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to Niel Calder, 30 June 1928, 12295. The Regina Leader agreed. See the issue of June 30.

"the Government was playing up too much to the foreign element, and particularly to the Catholic part of the population."²⁹ Another observer summed up the situation aptly. Andrew Haydon, reporting on the Saskatchewan scene, wrote to King:

I feel that the Premier out there has been too rigid and too fierce and that he made a real mistake when he went out into the field against the Klu [sic] Klux Klan. A religious fight is not to be battled with out in the open, but quietly through some single personal talks.... His going out publicly has aroused the Protestant sentiment in the province, which is exceedingly strong, as you know. The Catholic minority is a comparatively small one and how far the thing may go is hard to say. At any rate, it creates a real basis of danger in the federal field.³⁰

It would also prove dangerous in the provincial field.

The election which resulted in the defeat of the Gardiner administration took place on June 6, 1929. In many respects, the campaign had been under way for a year previous to that date. The stage for the 1929 campaign was set during a by-election the preceding fall. The Arm River seat became vacant with the resignation of George Scott who had held it continuously since 1908. Rumours were rife that Gardiner would call a general election in the fall of 1928 but in fact he did not think the time was propitious.

29. Cameron Papers, T.A. Crerar to A.K. Cameron, 8 February 1928.

30. King Papers, A. Haydon to W.L.M. King, 7 December 1928, 130058-9.

He agreed with certain of his advisors that it would be desirable to allow the emotions of the June fight against the Klan to settle down before a general campaign. A by-election, however, was a different matter; it could be the culmination of the battle against the Klan. He wrote to one advisor who questioned the wisdom of even a by-election at a time when the Klan, speakers like Maloney, and the Conservatives were all muddying the political waters with emotional appeals to prejudice: "When we have a contest there we want to strike a blow at the movement which has been on foot in the province stirring up religious prejudice. I think it has taken as strong a hold in Arm River as any part of the province."³¹

Insofar as issues, campaign tactics and the attitudes of parties were concerned the by-election proved to be a preview of the coming provincial campaign. Two parties nominated candidates, the Conservatives and the Liberals. The Liberals were prepared to fight their standard campaign. The issues would be the usual economic ones; the party would stand on its record of provincial development. The machinery was organized to the utmost extent; Gardiner intended to slay the Klan dragon once and for all. But there was one very important difference in this election (as well as in the provincial election the next year) from the previous

31. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to J.F. Johnston, 18 June 1928, 8810.

campaigns which Gardiner had conducted. The Conservatives for the first time in a decade were also well organized. For this organization a great deal of the credit must go to J.T.M. Anderson, Conservative leader. For the better part of two years, since he had resigned his job as provincial school inspector, he had been occupied with organizing the province. The opposition party was confident and prepared. They were not going to sit back and let the Liberal machine take the offensive; they struck first, forcing the government to answer their charges, discuss their issues, follow their campaign. The ground had been well prepared by the Klan. Suspicions existed in the minds of many about the influence of the Catholic Church in the Liberal government. The platform of the Conservatives called for complete elimination of all sectarian influences in public schools. Uneasiness about non-English speaking communities was met by proposals to enforce provisions for compulsory English education in all schools; moreover, the Conservatives promised greater control of immigration into the province. Rumours that the federal government planned to bring one hundred thousand French-speaking settlers into Saskatchewan, denied as they might be, received wide circulation. Finally, the opposition conducted a widespread campaign about the arrogance, the autocracy, the corruption of the Gardiner machine.³² It is also significant that for

32. P. Kyba, op.cit., Chap III.

the first time in a decade the Conservatives had the support of a daily newspaper in the province. The Regina Daily Star with financial support from federal Conservative leader R.B. Bennett had begun operations in 1928.

The Liberal workers were no less active. They blanketed the constituency. Meetings were held in every town with Cabinet ministers defending the record of the administration. Party workers interviewed every prospective voter; the issues raised by the Conservatives were met, and accusations returned. On October 25 the constituency voted. The result was a Liberal victory with but the narrowest of margins, 2764 for Dr. T. Waugh, Liberal, to 2705 for S. Adrian, Conservative. The interest which had been aroused, and the effectiveness of both party organizations were evident in the fact that 91 percent of the electorate voted, compared with only about 50 percent in the constituency in the 1925 election. The Conservatives claimed a moral victory: the Liberals had had to increase their vote by over 1000 voters, and had barely retained their majority.³³

The Liberal organization was also pleased. Gardiner was somewhat disappointed by the narrow margin of victory but he was gratified by the final victory and optimistic about its portent for the future. He analyzed the campaign

33. See the Regina Daily Star, 26 October 1928, for typical Conservative reactions.

in a letter to Dunning:

It was the most bitterly fought campaign that I have ever experienced in the Province of Saskatchewan with the Conservative party, the Klan, and power interests all organized against us.... The election had the effect of bringing out every attack which the opposition could possibly make against us.... I do not see how they can effectively make use of the same propaganda in any general election.³⁴

Not only was Gardiner pleased that the opposition campaign tactics had been entirely exposed and defeated, and that the Liberal organization had worked effectively, but he was also gratified that the Bell interests had been exposed. They had come out fully for the Conservative party. Gardiner had publicly discussed the issues which had divided the government from this group and was satisfied that "now we can discuss public questions without having to expect to be knifed in the back by a group of men who are supposed to be Liberals."³⁵

Gardiner was also pleased that the Klan had been routed. Arm River was an area where about 50 percent of the voters were of American descent, and was heavily populated with Orange Lodges. It had been a K.K.K. stronghold, and he suspected that the opposition had even had workers appear in Catholic garb at non-Catholic polls to influence voters. Despite this Klan influence, despite the organization

³⁴. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to C.A. Dunning, 29 October 1928, 8837-8.

³⁵. Ibid.

of the Conservatives (workers from Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and Regina were all close to Arm River and had participated in the campaign), despite the efforts of the Bell group, and despite financial backing for the Conservatives from the power interests (who opposed the Government's public power policy introduced in 1928), the Liberal machine had come through victorious.³⁶

After examining reactions in other parts of the province, Gardiner felt more justified than ever in calling the election. The campaign had been closely followed throughout the province. The type of campaign had created a province wide interest and Gardiner reported a widespread influence on public opinion. He wrote that in his opinion "it was one of the most important victories that the Liberal party has at any time won and that it's [sic] effect upon the next general election will be far reaching."³⁷ After the session of 1928-9 he reiterated his stand. The by-election had placed the people in a position of judging the opposition's "wild accusations" and comparing these with the proof, or rather the lack of it, presented in the Legislature.³⁸

36. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 29 October 1928, 8860-2; J.G. Gardiner to G.A. Ferguson, 29 October 1928, 8840-1.

37. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to H. Danielson, 17 November 1928, 8686.

38. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to H.F. Hogarth, 8 February 1929, 9076-7.

A scrutiny of Gardiner's analysis of the by-election as translated into strategy for the 1929 campaign reveals two areas in which he misjudged the Saskatchewan political situation. In the first place he underestimated the impact of the kind of emotional issues introduced in 1928-29 on the behaviour of the electorate. In the second place he overestimated the Liberal organization and its ability to meet the new type of challenge it faced. An examination of the 1929 election reveals some interesting evidence in support of these contentions.

Gardiner's earlier electoral successes had been scored against the Progressives. In these campaigns he had recognized that those people who supported Progressive principles had legitimate grievances, but he disagreed with their proposed means of redressing these grievances. As the organizer of an electoral campaign, he conceived it to be his task to convince the electorate that redress could be gained more quickly and more surely through support of a party able to put its principles into practice. By actual demonstrations of success he had succeeded in all but removing the Progressives from the provincial scene. When confronted with the challenge of the Klan and, later, of the Conservatives he followed the same tactics. He was convinced that a rational explanation of the actual situation would remove the doubts on which the Klan and the Conservatives based their appeal. When the opposition charged that the Department of Education was controlled by Catholic

interests, Gardiner demonstrated that the proportion of members of the civil service of Catholic faith, was less than the proportion for the province as a whole. When the Conservatives cited examples of nuns teaching in public schools, Gardiner cited statistics to show that the number of school rooms thus affected was very small, and, moreover, that these schools were in heavily Roman Catholic areas. But the effect was not what he thought it would be. The fears of the voters were not calmed by statistics.

The Conservative campaign, on the other hand, was well planned. On the religious issue, they came out foursquare for non-sectarian public schools. They did not rule out separate schools; in fact, they maintained always that any religious group had the right to set up a parochial school system. But the important issue was that the initial school in any district be non-sectarian. The fact that this system would increase the number of separate schools in the province was brought out by the Liberals, but to the electorate, this was not the issue. Every child had the right to attend a non-sectarian school, and the Conservative platform promised that.³⁹

As has been pointed out in a study of the Conservative platform in the election,⁴⁰ each plank had this emotional

39. Gardiner Papers, J.W. Estey to J.G. Gardiner, 16 May 1929, 9020-1; See also the Report of the Conservative Convention, 26, 27 March 1929, 10409ff.

40. P. Kyba, op.cit.

content. The major appeal centered upon the education issue. The natural resources issue was based on the pride of autonomous control over provincial affairs. Immigration lent itself to the same type of fear of foreign elements and pride of British institutions that was used in the education issue. Even the plank calling for use of Saskatchewan coal for Saskatchewan public buildings had a patriotic ring. Perhaps the second biggest issue of the campaign was the "Break the machine" cry, which was widely heard. Every questionable act of the Liberal government was raised and used to support the cry. Most frequently mentioned were the Happyland election charges, and the Cameron affair, but a host of minor incidents were raised as well.⁴¹ Finally, the Conservatives secured good mileage out of the slogan "It's time for a change."

In contrast to the Conservative campaign, and largely in reaction to it, the Liberal campaign was a defensive one. Gardiner was prepared to stand on the party's record. As he wrote to a school girl who inquired about the platform of the party: "The policy of an opposition is given expression to by a platform and the policy of a government is given expression to in their acts."⁴² Gardiner agreed

41. Ibid.; See above, Chapter III.

42. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to Lily Robson, 29 November 1928, 8589.

with the Liberal member from Moose Jaw who catalogued the accomplishments of the 1929 session: a power bill, a new Workmen's Compensation Act, support for Teachers' pensions, public health legislation, a continuing road construction program. It made a satisfactory platform.⁴³ The defensive quality of the Liberal campaign was noticeable in speeches. Much time was spent refuting the charges made against the Liberal organization, or attempting to disprove the validity of Conservative claims by reciting statistics and facts. Unfortunately for the Liberals, their answers rarely kept pace with the Conservative charges; the positive impact of the Conservatives' appeal was greater than that of the Liberals' reliance on their record.

The central Liberal organization misjudged the campaign. Despite warnings from local workers that the Conservatives were putting up a strong campaign,⁴⁴ the greatest fear Gardiner had was that his men would become over confident and some seats would be lost because of a lack of hard work.⁴⁵ When on the evening of June 6 the results started coming in, the Liberal party was stunned. For the first time in the history of the province, the Liberals had

43. Gardiner Papers, J.W. Ross to J.G. Gardiner, 5 February 1929, 9401.

44. E.g., Gardiner Papers, D. Cassels to J.G. Gardiner, 28 May 1929, 8992.

45. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to James Malcolm, 17 April 1929, 9193-4.

lost an election. The standings were Liberals, 26; Conservative, 24; Independents and Progressives, 11. Two deferred elections would ultimately go to the Liberals. The Liberal party retained a plurality of seats, but the combined opposition parties could defeat the government at will.

In retrospect Gardiner could see clearly how the reasons for his defeat had built up over a period of time. He recognized that the type of campaign directed at the Liberal party had been effective. The major reason for defeat was

the application of racial and religious prejudice to the political situation... fostered through a discussion of individual school difficulties, based upon the separate school law in this province, the activities of the Immigration Department at Ottawa and the fact that the Liberal party gains a considerable part of its support from the Province of Quebec and the Province of Saskatchewan.⁴⁶

Gardiner was not ready to admit that it was the attack on the Klan which was primarily responsible. He admitted that it would have been preferable to have the attack led by other than political leaders. But he was convinced that had he not attacked the Klan and brought its political machinations into the open the Liberal party would have

⁴⁶. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 15 June 1929, 9576-8.

been defeated much more decisively than it was.⁴⁷

Gardiner attributed the defeat chiefly to the inability of the Liberals to deal with this type of campaign effectively. This was due, in the first place, to the fact that the Liberal government had been in power for twenty-four years, so that the "time for a change" cry was effective. Secondly, during this period, a number of complaints against the administration had arisen, each small in itself but, when brought together in a single campaign, apt to loom fairly large in the eyes of the public. There was a third factor.

There has been built up in Saskatchewan a fairly strong organization which eventually came to be looked upon as too powerful in its effects upon the political situation in this province. The fact that that organization was used so successfully in the elections of 1925 and again in 1926 in the federal campaign, tended to add strength to the feeling in many quarters in the Province that it controlled, rather than persuaded, the votes of the people of the Province. Although the organization was a perfectly proper one, it was possibly a little overdone and people began to think that their views were being made for them.⁴⁸

Fourthly the organization itself was overconfident. "It did not seem possible to get the rank and file of our workers stirred up to a realization of the danger which

47. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to A. Murray, 12 June 1929, 9661.

48. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.R. Motherwell, 15 June 1929, 9576-8.

surrounded us," Gardiner wrote.⁴⁹ A fifth factor contributing to the difficulties of the organization was the aftermath of the Bell-Gardiner dispute. Bell's activities in opposition to Gardiner had not ceased, and he had, according to Gardiner, worked closely with the Regina Daily Star.⁵⁰ Finally, the organization had misjudged the number of votes necessary to win, a direct result of not taking into account the increase in number of eligible voters. The increase in Liberal voters was approximately 20,000 from 1925 to 1929, but the results showed only about half as many members elected.⁵¹

Other reasons for the defeat were occasionally set forth. Some people regretted the failure to hold a provincial convention to inspire the Liberal workers. Others believed that redistribution might have saved the day. Some observers thought that had a different man been in charge of the party organization the result would have been different; James Cameron, able as he was, had not the experience and knowledge of the province that Jack Stevenson had.⁵² But whatever the reason it was apparent that the Liberal party had failed a test under unusual circumstances.

49. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to G.B. Johnson, 18 June 1929, 9610.

50. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to C. Endicott, 20 June 1929, 9683.

51. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to H.D. Leitch, 12 June 1929, 9667.

52. E.M. Reid, op.cit., 34.

CHAPTER V

CRISIS AND REACTION: GARDINER ENTERS OPPOSITION

The election of 1929 was indecisive. No party had received a majority, and the minority parties held the balance of power. The stage was thus set for a minor constitutional crisis. The opposition parties demanded Gardiner's immediate resignation. Conservative leader Anderson supported vigorously by the Regina Daily Star¹ led the attack. He pointed out that the government had only a minority of the seats. On the other hand, although the Conservatives too had only a minority of the seats they were in a position to get support from the other parties, support which the Liberals had no chance of obtaining. All members of the three opposition parties had been elected as opponents of the administration. It was obvious, therefore, that 35 members being elected as opposed to the government constituted a defeat for the Government.

Exactly what the position of the minor parties would

1. See Regina Daily Star editorials for the period immediately following June 6, 1929, especially after the announcement of the cooperation agreements signed among the three minor parties, June 11, 1929.

be was not immediately clear. Quite definitely they were opponents of the Liberal government; whether they were supporters of a Conservative government was not as apparent. In the past the Progressive party had shown little sympathy for Conservatives; to form a government, however, Anderson would have to be sure of the solid support of all the Progressives.

The doubt did not long remain. On the weekend following the election calls went out to all opposition members to gather in Regina to consider their situation. On June 11 two caucuses met, one of all the Conservatives members-elect, one of the Progressives and Independents. Before the day was over they gathered in joint conference to decide on strategy. Out of the meeting came two identically worded resolutions, one signed by the members of the Progressive-Independent group, the other by the Conservatives. The resolutions affirmed that members of all three parties had been elected as opponents of the Gardiner government, that this constituted a "decisive condemnation" of the Gardiner administration, and, therefore, the government should immediately resign.²

The three opposition parties were prepared to provide an alternative to the Liberal government. At the same

2. Copies of the resolutions are in Gardiner Papers, 10033, 10037.

meeting, they agreed to form a Cooperative government. The conditions on which the two smaller groups would cooperate, namely, civil service reform, retention of the identity of each group, and complete freedom in federal politics, were accepted by the Conservatives. Dr. Anderson then resigned as leader of the Conservative party, and was unanimously accepted as the leader of each of the three cooperating parties.³ The three parties were ready to form a government.

Gardiner reacted to the rapidly changing situation. His initial thought was to explore the possibilities of gaining Progressive support and attempting to retain office. The formation of the Cooperative Anderson party made such a possibility unlikely. A meeting of Liberal candidates was held; the Cabinet decision to meet the legislature was ratified by the caucus. The Gardiner government would carry on at least until defeated in the Legislative Assembly.

Much criticism was directed at this decision of Gardiner and he was subject to no small amount of advice. Chief among his advisors were Mackenzie King, who was in almost daily communication with Gardiner in the days immediately after the election, and Gardiner's Attorney-General, T.C. Davis. King's initial advice was that Gardiner should meet the legislature and attempt to carry on in the same way as the federal government had decided to do in 1925:

3. Canadian Annual Review, 1928-29, 469.

I think you should bring on deferred elections at once and fix time of opening of session at early date as possible after return of those members.... I would announce that I would make [no] 4 appointments meanwhile but will give Progressives and Independents opportunity to say in Legislature to which of the old political parties they wish to give their support. This will force them into open and out from under names which are or are not a subterfuge. It will I believe help situation in province and dominion to have this course adopted.⁵

King added that Gardiner should make clear that he was following the constitutional position of having the voice of the people heard in the proper forum, the Legislative Assembly. Gardiner hesitated; he realized that the Progressives in Saskatchewan were not inclined to favour him. But King reiterated his stand.⁶

The news that a formal and open commitment in support of the Conservatives had been given by the Independent-Progressive group led King to change his mind. He wired Gardiner that it appeared to Ottawa observers that resignation seemed the proper course.⁷ Gardiner, however, had

4. The telegram is coded and the decoded message written in. The word here is "monopolized" with no decoded word.

5. Gardiner Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 8 June 1929, 9945-6.

6. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 11 June 1929, 9944; W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 11 June 1929, 9943. King may have been influenced by wires from Manitoba Liberals that they had delivered an ultimatum to Manitoba Progressives: If Saskatchewan Progressives refused to support Gardiner, Manitoba Liberals would refuse to support Bracken. See, e.g. King Papers, H.A. Robson to C.A. Dunning, 10 June 1929, 142103.

7. Gardiner Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 13 June 1929, 9942.

made up his mind. The actions of the opposition parties were fully reported in the press, but neither he nor the Lieutenant-Governor had received any official intimation about coalitions. The Cabinet had decided that the proper course would be to announce that the election would be completed as quickly as possible, and then the legislature would be convened, as King had earlier suggested. Gardiner noted that the Progressives might not join the Cooperative government wholeheartedly; he had heard rumours that some might defect. The legislature was the proper authority to decide matters of confidence.⁸ King acquiesced but counselled that it was important the plan be announced in its entirety and that "you are endeavouring to save public in long run by holding on till exact decision can be definitely and constitutionally ascertained."⁹

On July 15 the Liberal caucus of members-elect and defeated candidates discussed the situation and accepted Gardiner's analysis. A public statement was prepared which outlined the government's position. After discussing the results, and the division of popular vote, Gardiner noted that he had two alternatives: either to resign and allow the Lieutenant-Governor to summon the leader of the second

8. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.L.M. King, 14 June 1929, 9941.

9. Gardiner Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 15 June 1929, 9940.

largest group, or to summon the legislature to determine the will of the elected representatives. The second choice seemed to be the only proper one. No precedent existed for a resignation when the government retained the largest number of seats. On the contrary all precedents indicated that the legislature must be met. As far as the press reports of a coalition of opposition parties were concerned, Gardiner noted that neither he nor the Lieutenant-Governor had received any official communication. He added:

With respect to the Leader of a political party not having a clear majority in the Legislature, and not even comprising the largest political group in the Legislature, being called upon to form a government, the Cabinet is of the opinion that responsible self-government calls for a decision by the Legislature itself, not by informal group caucuses held behind closed doors.¹⁰

The Lieutenant-Governor had, therefore, been advised to summon the legislature.¹¹

10. Regina Leader, 17 June 1929; the full text of the statement is in the Gardiner Papers, 9730-1.

11. Later that summer Winston Churchill was in Saskatchewan during a tour of Canada. Gardiner discussed the constitutional implications of his position with Churchill who agreed that the position taken was justified. Any other position would have been indefensible. Gardiner was pleased to be able to add the weight of a leading British political figure to his arguments which consisted of appeals to constitutional authorities such as J.S. Ewart, and to precedents both Canadian and British. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to C.C. Stuart, 22 August 1929, 10114-9; Constitutional defense of position, 9734-7.

The statement made to King that the Progressives were divided in their attitude towards the proposed Cooperative government proved to be not without foundation. The Progressives held a provincial convention on June 20. According to a statement issued afterwards the decision of the meeting was that the Progressive members-elect were to support a vote of non-confidence in the Gardiner government, but that they should neither enter a Co-operative Cabinet, nor attend the caucus of either old line party.¹² It was soon revealed that the members-elect had not attended the convention; Gardiner held little hope that they would support his Government. His personal analysis of the Independent and Progressive members showed that six had originally been Conservatives, and one was suspected of being a Communist. Of the three who had originally been Liberals, two were personally bitter towards the Liberals because of previous Liberal opposition; only one of the group did not seem inclined to favour the Conservatives.¹³ Gardiner readily admitted that the main objection the Progressives had toward the Liberals was the fact that the Liberal party had been their major opposition; they were now in a position to wreak vengeance. Moreover, he realized that neither the Manitoba Progressives, the Federal Progressives, nor the

12. Canadian Annual Review, 1928-9, 470.

13. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to A. Shinbane, 26 July 1929, 8356-61.

Manitoba Free Press were in a position to influence the Saskatchewan group. The Saskatchewan group, as their failure to attend the Progressive convention proved, were not doctrinaire Progressives and not controlled by the movement. They had in most instances been elected with the endorsation of the Conservatives.

Certain Liberals were inclined to blame Gardiner's attitude toward the Progressives for the Liberal defeat.

T.A. Crerar's criticism is representative of this view:

It is probably a fact that 75% of the Progressive vote in Saskatchewan in 1921 was of Liberal antecedent. Gardiner's tactics in his efforts to annihilate them lost thousands of these people who are nominally Liberals and are sore and angry.¹⁴

Gardiner questioned the validity of such an analysis. While he would admit that some Progressives had defected to the Conservatives, many more had recognized that the principles for which they stood could be realized within the Liberal party. The actions of Cockburn and Agar in crossing the floor of the legislature had demonstrated this fact most decisively. During the election campaign further evidence of the success of Gardiner's policy had been noted. He drew attention to the fact that at least twelve former opponents of the Liberals were now government supporters, four of them as Liberal candidates. Furthermore, of the

¹⁴. Cameron Papers, T.A. Crerar to A.K. Cameron, 11 June 1929. See also Dafoe Papers, J.W. Dafoe to J.S. Woodward, 10 July 1929.

sixteen members of the Progressive provincial executive in 1925, six were openly supporting Liberal candidates in 1929. Any gains made by the Conservatives were more than offset by gains made by the Liberal party.¹⁵

The immediate problem remained. Should attempts be made to encourage the Progressives to support the Liberals? Gardiner felt that it would be a difficult coalition to control. "As long as we are the government they can demand anything from us in the way of Legislation and we would either have to submit to their demands or submit to defeat in the house, which would mean the bringing in of a Conservative government," he noted.¹⁶ His Attorney-General agreed. Davis submitted a six page memorandum to Gardiner analyzing the government's situation. It was inevitable that after twenty-four years of continuous power a break would come sooner or later. In view of the circumstances, Davis was convinced that 1929 was a propitious time. It was better to be opposed by a coalition government with all the inherent weaknesses of coalitions than by a majority government a few years hence. It was better for the Tories to be subject to the dictates and demands of other groups. Davis advised that the legislature be met, the government

15. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to R.M. Douglas, 17 April 1929, 9007.

16. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to A. Shinbane, 26 July 1929, 8356-61.

state its case and accept defeat.¹⁷ Gardiner took advantage of the wait for the two deferred elections to go to Ottawa to consult with Liberal hierarchy there. Davis' analysis seemed apt; it was similar to the advice of King, and to the personal inclinations of Gardiner himself. He summarized his thoughts:

While it is always pleasant to be in power it is just possible that since the Party cannot always be in power this would be as good a time as any other to be in opposition.... If we go into opposition with our present standing in the House, we should be able to strengthen Liberalism in this province placing it possibly upon a stronger footing than it has been for some considerable time.... If on the other hand the House decides that we are to carry on, we will have to do the best we can under difficult circumstances, until such time as another expression of opinion can be secured. I may say that I am a little in doubt as to what the result of an immediate appeal to the people would be.¹⁸

The last doubt was not inconsequential. Before another election Gardiner wanted sufficient time to reorganize the Liberal party.

The announcement that the Liberal government would meet the legislature did not end the constitutional dispute. In response to Gardiner's statement that no communication of the opposition parties' decision to cooperate had been received by the government, a petition was drafted and

17. Gardiner Papers, Memorandum, T.C. Davis to J.G. Gardiner, 20 June 1929, 9594-99.

18. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to H.R. Fleming, 2 August 1929, 9877.

signed by all 35 members of the opposition. On July 26, 1929, Dr. Anderson presented it, on behalf of the cooperating groups, to Lieutenant-Governor H.W. Newlands. The petition included copies of the statements made by each of the caucuses, and the information that they had agreed to cooperate with J.T.M. Anderson as joint leader. It objected to Gardiner's decision to carry on as premier until the House met: the government had been defeated, 26 members to 35; the government had refused to resign; the administration should not be allowed to carry on without the confidence of the people. A special session was unnecessary: the government would automatically be defeated; there would be a further long delay while a ministry was formed and re-elected in accordance with existing procedure; the convention that a government must resign when in the minority after an election was being broken by Gardiner's ministry. The petition asked that Gardiner be dismissed, and that Dr. Anderson be called to form a new government.¹⁹ The Lieutenant-Governor conferred with Gardiner. Gardiner claimed the right "as leader of the largest party elected" to meet the legislature and let the members of the House decide the future government of the province. Newlands announced that he had agreed to this on the understanding

19. Gardiner Papers, Petition to H.W. Newlands, 10041-2.

that the legislature was to be convened as rapidly as possible.²⁰ With this the opposition had to be content.

Gardiner had been very careful to stipulate that no appointments would be made during the period between the election and the meeting of the Assembly. But the results of the election had scarcely become known before Gardiner had authorized one measure to prevent future attacks on the Liberals. During the session of 1928-9 the opposition had repeatedly called for an independent audit, a measure rejected as often by the Government. To circumvent a possible move by the incoming government in that direction, on July 9 Provincial Treasurer W.J. Patterson wrote to the widely respected accounting firm of Price Waterhouse & Co. requesting them to undertake a complete audit of the government's records. In addition to the regular certification of the provincial balance sheet, the government wished to ascertain whether the provincial system of bookkeeping and auditing was adequate.²¹

The Speech from the Throne for the special session was the subject of much thought as the September 4 opening date drew nearer. The initial purpose of the session was, of

20. Canadian Annual Review, 1928-9, 470, n.

21. Gardiner Papers, W.J. Patterson to Price Waterhouse & Co., 9 July 1929, as quoted in K. Drennan, Price Waterhouse & Co. to Provincial Treasurer, 29 August 1929, 18867. The report, incidentally, was very favourable to the government.

course, to determine whether the government retained the confidence of the legislature. Gardiner deliberated about the best means of presenting the issue. He wanted to make it very clear to the electorate, especially those of Progressive persuasion, that the Progressive and Independent members were voting against their statements of policy and voting for vengeance only in supporting the Conservatives. He was determined to present the proposed program of legislation the Liberal party was prepared to put into effect. He had little hope or, at this stage, desire of continuing in office. He did want to make clear, however, that the vote against the government would be vindictive in character. Various drafts of the speech contain references to power legislation, Workmen's Compensation legislation, the natural resources problem, the Crow's Nest Freight Rates, a Civil Service Act, teachers' pensions, amendments to the Education Act and Highways Act, and relief measures for unemployment and the drought condition, as well as a reference to the special audit.²²

A second issue that Gardiner wished to bring out in the special session was the constitutional problem. Two drafts of the Speech include a summary of the justification for the Liberal position complete with references to precedents and constitutional authorities. Gardiner's notes

22. Various drafts of the Speech can be found in the Gardiner Papers, 10509, 10510, 10514, 10517, 10519 and 10528-9.

bristle with quotations from most of the major speakers of the 1926 crisis in the federal government, using King's arguments to show that a government had the right to retain office until defeated in the legislature, and Meighen's to justify the party with the largest number of elected members meeting the legislature. Also included were references to the Baldwin decision in the United Kingdom in 1924, as well as lengthy quotations from constitutional authorities.²³

Having achieved a reasonably satisfactory draft Gardiner submitted it to King for his comments and advice. King's advice is worth noting for Gardiner followed it in its entirety. In the first place King cautioned against including the constitutional argument in the Speech from the Throne:

The impression conveyed by the Speech, as drafted, is that it is in the nature of an argument and, in part, special pleading. I do not think that either should find a place. ... The shorter and more to the point the speech is, the more likely and certain is the public to grasp its significance. If it is long and argumentative it will appear that you are seeking to justify yourself, or are seeking to retain office beyond the immediate division.²⁴

In the second place King questioned the inclusion of specific government proposals, particularly the provision for drought relief from unappropriated liquor revenues, in the

23. Gardiner Papers, Special Session File, 10530-44.

24. Gardiner Papers, W.L.M. King to J.G. Gardiner, 21 August 1929, 10522-6.

speech. If the opposition formed a government then the Liberals would be committed to voting for the appropriations. If the government were sustained on the vote on the speech from the throne, they could always introduce the measures later. King concluded: "So far as the present session is concerned, the more clean-cut you can make the question of political support its sole purpose, the better it will be for you throughout the province and the Dominion, both immediately and in the long run."²⁵

Gardiner followed King's advice. The final draft of the speech contains just four paragraphs. The first paragraph welcomed the members to the session. The second referred to the improved health of King George. The third paragraph was the longest; it stated simply that the session had been called to give the Independents and Progressives a chance to decide publicly whom to support. Until this vital issue was settled, it concluded, "my advisors are of the opinion that it is not advisable to submit a programme of legislation." The final clause dealt with special remuneration for the members.

The legislature assembled on September 4. For several days prior to its assembly rumours abounded that the opposition parties would not allow the government to carry on even to the extent of having the Speech from the Throne read.

25. Ibid.

It was rumoured that the government would not be allowed to elect a speaker or that a motion of want of confidence would be introduced before the Speech from the Throne was read. The government discussed the situation and prepared to meet every possible tactic. If the opposition were to nominate their own candidate for speaker, the government looked to precedent to prove that this did not constitute a want of confidence motion.²⁶ Tactics were discussed as to what should be done if the opposition refused to accept any choice of speaker, or if the opposition moved to adjourn after the choice of speaker but before the Speech from the Throne was read. Every conceivable contingency was prepared for. Gardiner was determined that the Progressives and Independents would be forced to make a public, recorded choice between the Conservatives and the Liberals. He prepared a long speech outlining his position; as he stated in one of his prepared statements "we are not prepared to be gagged."²⁷

Much of the preparation proved to be unnecessary. The special session proceeded in an orderly manner and, except for a few minor flurries over points of order, without undue contention. The first division came over the election

26. Gardiner Papers, Memorandum from T.C. Davis to J.G. Gardiner, 27 August 1929, 10547-52; See also the attached documents, 10554-67.

27. Gardiner Papers, Special Session File, 10553.

of a speaker. Traditionally, the premier made the nominating speech for the government's choice. But the Liberals broke precedent: a private member, Charles McIntosh, nominated J.M. Parker.²⁸ Opposition leader Anderson then introduced the name of J.F. Bryant as a nominee. Gardiner explained the departure from tradition. The government was determined to keep the choice of the speaker from political differences; they were not treating the vote as one of confidence in the government. Parker was defeated on a straight party vote, and Bryant accepted unanimously.

The Speech from the Throne was then read. Premier Gardiner moved that it be immediately considered. Anderson introduced an amendment of want of confidence and the debate began. With the exception of Dr. Anderson all the speakers were Liberals. The longest and most comprehensive contribution to the debate was made by Gardiner, who along with T.C. Davis led the presentation of the government's case. Davis upheld the constitutionality of the government's action. Gardiner presented the arguments which the Progressives would have to counter. He surveyed the history of the British parliamentary system, and the role parties played in this system. The special session, he stated, was a trial of the party system, not for the Conservatives or Liberals who had upheld their principles consistently,

28. All details about the session come from Scrapbook Hansard, 1929 Special Session.

but for the Progressives and Independents. By voting with the Conservatives, the Progressives would be voting against their long held principles for these were part of the Liberal platform. Gardiner discussed the definitions of Independent, contending that under no circumstances could they uphold the principle of independence in a coalition government.

Gardiner continued with a discussion of the alternatives before the House. The Liberals could form a coalition with one group opposite; the Conservatives could form a coalition with both minor parties; a Cooperative government of all parties was theoretically possible, but impossible in practice because the Liberals would not be a party to such a government; the Liberals could carry on as the government, with the smaller groups holding the balance of power. The Liberal leader considered this last possibility at length. He stated that the Progressives need not consider the coming vote as a test of confidence. It could be considered simply as an invitation to the government to introduce legislation, each bill becoming a separate test of the government's ability to meet the wishes of the province as represented in the legislature. It was not enough to vote a government out; the platform and policies of an alternative government must be considered.²⁹

29. See Scrapbook Hansard, 1929 Special Session. A complete text of Gardiner's speech is also in the Gardiner Papers, 10549-607.

The speech lasted two hours. Gardiner did not expect to persuade the Progressives to change their minds. He did want to make the alternatives perfectly clear to every M. L.A. in the house, every visitor in the gallery, and, via the newspapers, every voter in the province. At twenty-five minutes past midnight, in the early minutes of September 6, 1929, a recorded roll call resulted in the defeat of a Liberal ministry for the first time in Saskatchewan's history.

The following morning, Gardiner formally tendered his resignation to Lieutenant-Governor Newlands, recommending that Dr. J.T.M. Anderson be called as his successor. Three days later, Dr. Anderson and his Cabinet were sworn in as the new Government.

Defeat did not rest lightly on Gardiner's shoulders. He might have misjudged the circumstances surrounding the election of 1929; he was willing to pay the price and go into opposition. But he was determined that the party should not suffer a second loss. When the next Saskatchewan election occurred, the Liberal party would be ready.

Reorganization was the key to Gardiner's early activity as the Leader of the Opposition. Freed of the responsibilities of public office he turned his entire energy to rebuilding the party. First it was necessary to analyze the party's weaknesses. Then efforts must be made to win back the votes lost for whatever reason. Then the party organization must be revitalized to gather the votes in any

forthcoming election. A month before the September session, Gardiner was already moving in this direction. An informal meeting was held in Regina on 30 July 1929 at which were present the president, vice-president, secretary and candidate from every constituency. The agenda of the meeting was simple: party organization.³⁰ Gardiner, in his address to the assembled delegates, explained why he had called the meeting. The results of the vote on June 6 were discussed and analyzed. The reason for the party's position had been, in part, the organized effort of the opposition groups to replace consideration of the government's record with religious prejudices and personal attacks. But the Liberal party itself was also to blame. The elections of 1925 and 1926 had created over-confidence. The lack of effort in some constituencies was noticeable in the results. Difficult constituencies had been retained; supposedly safe seats had been lost. Weakness of local effort led to too heavy a reliance on the provincial organization, which in turn led to accusations of "machine politics". The meeting must consider the ways and means of reorganization so that the party could once again operate effectively.³¹

The analysis of the vote proved interesting. The

30. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to W.C. Barrie, 22 August 1929, 9792-3; J.G. Gardiner to W.C. Ross, 30 July 1929, 10031.

31. Gardiner Papers, Notes for speech, 10521.

Liberal vote had increased by about 33,000 votes, yet the number of members had decreased from 53 to 28. This indicated, in the first place, a large increase in the number of voters, both newcomers to the province and young people. An analysis of the reports of local committees, however, showed no considerable defection of old party standbys. In a very large measure, Gardiner concluded, the failure of the Liberal organization lay in not paying sufficient attention to these new voters.³² The July 30 meeting proceeded with measures to remedy the situation. A large 23 member executive was placed in charge of reorganization, to begin work immediately following the Special Session. To overcome the weakness in local support, reorganization would begin at the local constituency level. This would be followed by the formulation of strong, active district organizations. When a well-organized Liberalism was achieved, a provincial convention would be held to formulate policies, and generate enthusiasm.

Gardiner realized that his own leadership was not without challenge. The movement of certain groups, led by the Bell interests, to found an Independent Liberal party existed.³³ Gardiner privately admitted that he would retire from the leadership if an alternative could be found,

32. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to Mrs. Mary Sutherland, 4 July 1929, 10084-8.

33. See, e.g., the front page of Saskatoon Star Phoenix 5 September 1929, and the editorial of the following day.

although he retained reservations about the type of Liberal whom he would be willing to accept as his successor.³⁴ The confidence the organization retained in Gardiner was manifested in the unanimous vote of approval the Liberal convention gave him in 1930.

In addition to remodelling the central organization, Gardiner proposed two further lines of action. To bring the young people of the province to a "fuller understanding of Liberalism", a major emphasis was to be placed on the organization of Young Liberal Clubs. Gardiner suggested that they should also be consulted on matters of organization. Secondly, the long considered matter of the women's organization was to be followed up. A full time women's organizer was appointed. For the position Mrs. Mary Sutherland, wife of a Shellbrook doctor and longtime Liberal stalwart, was chosen. Mrs. Sutherland was also a vice-president of the National Liberal Women's Organization. A youth organizer was to be hired as soon as a qualified person could be found. Another change made in the central office was the replacement of Jim Cameron by former provincial organizer J.S. Stevenson.³⁵ One other member taken into the new offices the party opened in Regina was former provincial commissioner of publications, William Kerr, whose

34. Dafoe Papers, J.W. Dafoe to H. Sifton, 25 June 1929.

35. King Papers, A Haydon to W.L.M. King, Memorandum on Organization, 18 September 1929, 138086.

presence in the civil service the Anderson Government found unnecessary. Representing the elected members, George Spence was chosen as Organizer-in-Chief. Behind the scenes, directing the entire organization, was James Gardiner.

Any study of the career of a political figure is limited by the defined scope of the study. This survey of James Gardiner's first premiership has been limited to the purely political aspects of his activities as premier. It was, however, the function of a party leader which he himself considered paramount. The activities of the organizational network were to Gardiner the sinews which moved the democratic process of government. The voice of the people spoke, but someone had to prepare the machinery through which it spoke, someone had to define for it clearly the issues on which it spoke, and, frequently, someone had to prod the people to make them speak. Gardiner relished the role. He found campaigns interesting, fascinating, enjoyable. In reading his correspondence one is continually struck by the depth of Gardiner's insight into the political effects of almost any action. A secondary factor is just as prevalent: Gardiner enjoyed his work. Underlying Gardiner's activity as provincial political organizer was his dedication to the principles of Liberalism. Loyalty to the Liberal party was synonymous with faith in the British parliamentary system, an unyielding affirmation of the traditions of Western agrarianism, combined with a

pragmatic realization of the compromises essential to a federal party. But no principles could be effective, no administration efficient unless a party was successful at the polls. This was the primary theatre of Gardiner's activity. His success as a political organizer brought him to the attention of the federal party and gave him an influential voice in it. His organizational talents were recognized by the provincial party which selected him as its head. His ideas governed the shape the provincial party took. When defending his principles he was rigid and unyielding.

In one sense a study of Gardiner as political organizer from 1925 to 1929 is only half of the story. In 1929 his organization was defeated and he was in opposition. The second half of the story ends with his personal triumph in 1934 when the Liberal party was able to defeat every member supporting the Anderson Cooperative government.

The facts of organization were simple. A close relationship must be retained with the federal party. A provincial organization must be strongly grounded in constituency organizations. Grassroots loyalty was important. No organization could be effective, however, without close supervision and coordination from the central organization. The use of patronage and the pork barrel were legitimate political techniques and in the 1920's Gardiner questioned neither their effectiveness nor their morality. When his government was defeated Gardiner was prepared to shoulder

some of the blame for not having his organization prepared. Perhaps the priorities which he gave to the many duties of a political leader are best indicated in a final quotation:

This election has led me to believe that we can sometimes give too much attention to provision of thorough-going and efficient administration and too little attention to the preaching of the real doctrines of Liberalism upon which any Liberal administration must rest.³⁶

The people must know the "doctrines of Liberalism" and it was the organization which made them known.

36. Gardiner Papers, J.G. Gardiner to Mrs. Mary Sutherland, 4 July 1929, 10088.

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