

W. M. MARTIN
AND THE FARMERS' MOVEMENT
IN SASKATCHEWAN
1916-1922

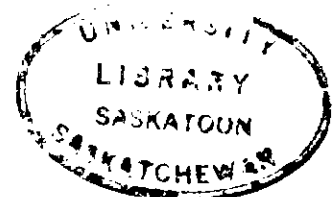
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ABSTRACT

Since its creation in 1905 Saskatchewan, unlike its immediate neighbours, has been characterized by a political continuity represented by the Liberal Party which dominated the government until 1944 and has subsequently dominated the opposition. No party in western Canada, of any political persuasion, has a better record of longevity or electoral support. The Liberals survived numerous crises which weakened or destroyed their counterparts elsewhere: the agrarian unrest of the 1920's, the great depression, the rise of a protest movement, and twenty years of opposition. William Melville Martin, Premier of Saskatchewan from October 1916 to April 1922, was important in enabling the Liberals to overcome their first major challenge; the entry of the farmers' movement into politics.

During his term the Progressives made their spectacular federal debut, capturing sixty-five seats and sweeping the prairies. Provincially, farmers toppled the governments of Ontario (1919) and Alberta (1921); the Manitoba government fell in March 1922 after a 1920 election had reduced it to a minority position. In Alberta the Liberals never recovered from this collapse, while in Manitoba their identity was blurred by coalition politics. Saskatchewan Liberals escaped this turbulence intact, despite contesting an election in 1921, the worst year of discontent. Through a combination of shrewd policies and fortuitous circumstance, Martin was able to guide his party through the crisis. This thesis intends to ascertain the reasons for his success at a time when his counterparts elsewhere failed.

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INTRODUCTION

The farmers' revolt against the established political system in 1921 was not an isolated phenomenon attributable only to unusual circumstances and economic hardships. Its roots were as old as the west. Between 1896 and 1911 the prairies seemed prosperous as a record number of immigrants settled the region, towns proliferated, and railways expanded. However, problems accompanied this growth. The immigrants were beset by substantial increases in the prices of land, livestock, and machinery, as well as serious difficulties in the transportation and marketing of grain.¹ Resentment began to build against the railways, the Hudson's Bay Company, eastern banks, the private grain companies, and foreign land speculators, who were blamed for the troubles and criticized as insensitive monopolies, motivated solely by a desire to maximize profits.

A major crisis in 1901 crystallized these sentiments and sparked the creation of the first permanent farmers' organization in the west. A record sixty million bushels of wheat were harvested that year, but almost half was lost due to transportation problems.² Farmers blamed the Canadian Pacific Railway and the private grain companies for their losses and responded by forming the Territorial Grain Growers Association of Assiniboia, which became the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association (S.G.G.A.)

¹See P. F. Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948), pp. 21-31; S. M. Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 57-94; W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), pp. 3-26.

²S. M. Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism*, p. 71.

in 1905. Similar groups were founded in Manitoba in 1903 and Alberta in 1905.

The primary purpose of the new organizations was to educate their members in collective action, a knowledge of their legal and political rights, and an appreciation of the dignity of their calling. The organized farmers began with a deep conviction that the root of the farmer's plight was his individualism, his isolation, and his ignorance of matters outside his narrow practical experience.³

Increasingly farmers came to feel that there was something profoundly wrong with the economic system; that its benefits flowed elsewhere. They saw their grain sold on the competitive world market, but all the goods they purchased were protected by tariffs. As economic conditions deteriorated the tariff became the symbol of western frustration and, for farmers, the source of their troubles. The *Grain Growers Guide*, voice of the farmers' movement, enunciated these concerns. Its columns were characterized by a hatred of corporate wealth, privilege, and monopoly, an undying faith in democracy, and a distrust of the political system which, it felt, had been corrupted by big business.⁴ The *Guide* condemned the old political parties for their reliance on manufacturing interests for campaign funds, arguing that this encouraged them to perpetuate an economic system which was detrimental to the interests of all but the privileged. As early as 1909 it called for the formation of an independent progressive party in federal politics, presaging future developments.

Discontent began to peak after 1909 as wheat prices declined while manufactured commodities continued to rise.⁵ The Laurier government responded to agrarian pressure by negotiating a reciprocity

³W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, p. 11.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 15-18.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 19.

agreement with the United States, but the proposal was defeated in the 1911 general election. Manufacturing interests had combined with the Conservatives to appeal to nationalism, raising the dreaded spectre of annexation to encourage rejection of the scheme. The west was stunned. The results seemed to confirm all the suspicions concerning the sinister connections between businessmen and politicians. The campaign destroyed the Conservative Party on the prairies and eroded faith in the traditional political system, setting the stage for independent political action in federal politics.

Provincially the farmers were far more successful, confident of their influence on governments.

Our political parties look upon us as the great index finger which indicates more or less clearly the storm centre of public opinion, at least amongst the farmers. We also keep the different departments of our provincial machinery alert, watchful, careful, active, running down the path of duty, trying to forestall us in many cases to do for us the thing they see we are about to ask. They fear us more than they do the opposition.⁶

The statement was valid. During the 1917 legislative session in Saskatchewan so many cabinet ministers deserted the chamber to attend the Grain Growers' Convention in Moose Jaw that proceedings ground to a halt.⁷ The Scott government (1905-1916) had taken great care to cultivate the goodwill of the S.G.G.A.; its legislative requests had evoked a sympathetic response and two of its top leaders, W. R. Motherwell, the first president of the old Territorial Grain Growers Association, and George Langley, an S.G.G.A. director, were invited to enter the cabinet. Legis-

⁶S.G.G.A. Convention Report, 1912, cited in D. E. Smith, *Prairie Liberalism: The Liberal Party in Saskatchewan, 1905-71* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), p. 72.

⁷Evelyn Eager, "The Conservatism in Saskatchewan Electorate" in N. Ward and D. Spafford, eds., *Politics in Saskatchewan* (Don Mills: Longmans of Canada Limited, 1968), p. 7.

lately its major accomplishment was the establishment of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company in 1911; by 1916 it was a stable financial success owning one hundred and thirty-three elevators, giving farmers control of the marketing of their grain.⁸

Between 1916 and 1923 the prairies were plagued by severe economic difficulties which, added to the unresolved pre-war problems, made farmers increasingly militant. The war had been accompanied by an inflationary boom; prices steadily mounted until the first half of 1920 when a recession struck.

From 1920 to 1923 the prices of farm products fell by one-half and the price of wheat by almost three-fifths, whereas the prices of manufactured goods fell by but one-third and the Canadian cost of living index by less than one-fifth. Under these circumstances the over-all economic position of Canadian wheat producers can readily be imagined. Heavily in debt for land and equipment, as is normal for frontier producers, prairie wheat growers were thrust within a matter of months during 1920 into the position of having their obligations doubled and even trebled, in real terms by the collapse of agricultural prices.⁹

Nature aggravated this situation; the 1916 crop was impaired by rust, followed in 1917 by the first of four summers of widespread drought.¹⁰ Many farmers throughout the prairies suffered five successive crop failures, a stunning blow to their security. The Martin Papers are filled with letters from farmers about to be foreclosed begging the Premier for assistance. As a rule he intervened, writing the concerned bank or loan company requesting leniency on their part, an often futile action. These

⁸S. M. Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism*, pp. 67-68. Originally farmers had petitioned for government ownership but an attempt by the Manitoba government to implement such a scheme ended disastrously due to poor management, discrediting the proposal. Instead the Saskatchewan government proposed a co-operative approach whereby it would lend farmers money to establish their own company.

⁹V. C. Fowke, *The National Policy and the Wheat Economy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 78.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

letters are a stark reminder of the sense of frustration and desperation which prompted farmers to reject the political and economic system. This sentiment, dangerous to all politicians, dominated Martin's entire term.

CHAPTER I

THE SELECTION OF MARTIN AS PREMIER

The selection of William Martin as Premier of Saskatchewan resulted from a combination of events which made a change in leadership necessary, and which, at the same time, eliminated several other potential candidates from consideration. The Liberal government of Walter Scott, which had held continuous power since 1905, was impaired in 1916 by a series of scandals. J. E. Bradshaw, the Conservative member for Prince Albert, initiated the difficulties on February 10 when he accused the Scott government of graft and corruption, charging various Liberal members of the Legislature with accepting bribes and claiming that the Department of Highways had paid substantial sums for road work which had never been done.¹ The government initially dismissed these accusations as politically inspired attacks which had been deliberately presented in a sensational fashion to attract attention. However, evidence soon surfaced which substantiated some of the claims.

Only days after Bradshaw's charges J. P. Brown, a prominent civil servant on the Highways Commission, abruptly vanished. James Calder, the Minister of Railways, informed the Legislature that investigations launched after the disappearance had uncovered evidence of fraud. Another startling revelation quickly followed. An ex-official of the Licensed

¹The above summary of the Bradshaw charges and their consequences is taken from J. C. Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1916* (Toronto: The Annual Review Publishing Company Limited). (Hereinafter referred to as C.A.R.)

Victuallers of Saskatchewan published an affidavit declaring that certain Liberal members of the Legislature were planning to have four men, himself included, arrested on serious charges relating to the scandals. By such action these Liberals hoped to discredit any testimony which the four might give to the anticipated charges against them. The government now realized the gravity of the situation and established two legislative committees to conduct inquiries; one, to investigate the accusations of bribery, the other, the alleged frauds in the Department of Highways.²

Despite this action the scandals continued to proliferate. On March 3 Bradshaw introduced new charges involving the Departments of Public Works and Telephones. He specifically accused four ministers: George Langley, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, W. F. A. Turgeon, the Attorney-General, James Calder, the Minister of Railways, and A. P. McNab, the Minister of Public Works. Two days after this barrage the government received another jolt when warrants were issued for the arrest of the missing Brown, E. H. Devline, the Liberal M.L.A. for Kinistino, John Lindsay, a Liberal worker, and E. L. H. Smith, a Regina bank manager. Lindsay died of a heart attack after his arrest, while neither Devline nor Smith could be found; both had fled the province.

Shortly afterwards, the two legislative committees brought down their reports implicating ten Liberal M.L.A.'s, some of them on several counts, and recommending the establishment of Royal Commissions to continue the investigations. To the government's embarrassment more arrests

²The Conservatives refused to sit on these committees. They were outnumbered forty-six to eight in the House and feared that the government would use this massive majority to cover up the scandals. Instead they proposed that a Royal Commission be established to conduct investigations.

followed, including three Liberal M.L.A.'s, one former Liberal M.L.A., and several other individuals, some of whom had close party connections. In addition, a senior civil servant retired under circumstances which aroused suspicion. The government now had no choice but to yield to mounting public demands for an independent inquiry. On March 9, following the advice of the legislative committees, it appointed three Royal Commissions. One was instructed to investigate the allegations of bribery, the second the frauds in the Highways Department, and the third the charges against the Departments of Public Works and Telephones. Most of the appointees were drawn from the judiciary and at least one was a well-known Conservative, suggesting the government wished to ensure that the press and the public would accept them as independent and unbiased.

The Highways Commission reported in August. Of the twenty-seven charges it examined, fifteen were dismissed, two Bradshaw had withdrawn, seven were upheld, and three the judges could not agree on. Four Liberal M.L.A.'s were found guilty of various misdeeds and suspicion continued to linger about McNab, although the Commission did not uncover any evidence directly implicating him. Even though most of the accusations had been dismissed the report dealt a severe blow to the government as public disenchantment mounted. These difficulties, serious in any age, were aggravated by the strong wartime mood of moral reform which pervaded the country. The Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association epitomized this sentiment and its leaders were deeply offended by the existence of corruption in the ranks of a government they had so strongly supported over the years. They met in Regina in early October to discuss the situation, and while they made no official statement their concern disturbed the

government, for any break with the Association would have disastrous political consequences in an era of agrarian unrest.³ Astute observers such as J. W. Dafoe, editor of the Manitoba *Free Press*, concluded that the Scott government was in serious danger, having been badly compromised only months before a provincial election.⁴

This situation was further complicated by the poor health of Premier Scott which was steadily deteriorating, making a change in leadership inevitable. For almost two years the Premier had spent long periods of time outside Saskatchewan trying to recuperate; these trips had provided only temporary relief. Throughout most of 1916 Scott was incapacitated and unable to provide the government with the determined leadership it required. He was forced to leave the province shortly after Bradshaw had levied his charges, not returning until well into the summer. Calder, who had often served as acting Premier in Scott's previous absences, attempted to fill the breach, but failed to inspire public confidence because he headed the troubled Department of Highways and had been personally accused of misconduct. Unable to dispel the scandals the government began to lose its poise. Scott's return briefly bolstered its sagging spirits but by September the Premier was exhausted and reluctantly admitted he could no longer continue. Calder and Senator J. H. Ross, a close friend of the Premier, were instrumental in persuading him to tender his resignation as soon as a successor could be found.⁵

While the scandals were the government's immediate concern in the

³Saskatoon *Daily Star*, 17 October 1916.

⁴Public Archives of Canada, Sir Clifford Sifton Papers, Dafoe-Sifton, 17 October 1916, p. 160906 - 08. The last election was held in July 1912 so the life of the legislature would expire in July 1917.

⁵Archives of Saskatchewan, J. A. Calder Papers, Reminiscences written in 1944, pp. 9835-36.

fall of 1916 another serious problem had arisen with the appearance of the Non-Partisan League, a new farmers' organization. The League had originated in North Dakota spreading into Saskatchewan in the summer of 1916 when one of its adherents returned from the United States to settle in the Swift Current area.⁶ Its first organizational meeting was held on July 12 and within two months the League attracted about twelve hundred members. Such phenomenal growth could hardly have escaped the notice of the provincial government, especially given the League's radical program. It appealed to farmers long troubled by economic grievances and frustrated by the inability of traditional institutions to rectify them. The League's growth represented a protest against high costs, low prices, poor marketing conditions, and eastern financial interests. As a solution the League called for the nationalization of public utilities, banks, coal mines, industries where competition had ceased, and industries associated with water power and forests.⁷ In addition, it proposed constitutional changes including universal suffrage, direct legislation, the right of recall, referendums, and the abolition of the Senate.⁸ The Non-Partisan League, as its name suggests, also capitalized on the growing dissatisfaction with political parties. This feeling had crystallized after the 1911 federal election and was augmented by the alleged corruption of the Borden government in Ottawa and the Liberals in Regina. Many westerners would have agreed with one supporter of the League who characterized the party system as ". . . hollow sham, and hypocrisy, special privileges in legislation, a rotten civil service, narrow minded

⁶P. F. Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948), pp. 77-79.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸J. C. Hopkins, *C. A. R. 1917*, p. 781.

nationalism, and pretended patriotism of grafting politicians."⁹

Such sentiments were not new. They had been expressed in the *Grain Growers Guide* for years. Throughout 1916 the *Guide* had become increasingly disillusioned with the federal Liberal Party advocating the formation of an independent western group to contest the next election.¹⁰ Liberal newspapers such as the Saskatoon *Phoenix* and the Regina *Morning Leader* became apprehensive and several times felt compelled to defend the party system and identify farmers' interests with those of the Liberals, especially with the Saskatchewan government.¹¹ In this situation the League becomes very important because, for the first time, farmers were being organized for political action outside the traditional parties. The League sought to create new institutions which, like the older farmers' organizations, would be non-partisan, reflective of the people, free from corruption, and above party control. It received a tremendous boost in September when its counterpart in North Dakota swept to an amazing victory capturing both the governorship and control of the state legislature.¹² Undoubtedly Calder understood that this agrarian unrest was especially dangerous to a government discredited by scandal and would have to enter into the selection of a new premier. An indication of his concern can be found in a letter to Laurier advising the federal Liberal leader to secure candidates representing the Manitoba Grain Growers

⁹Quoted in P. F. Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt*, p. 80.

¹⁰L. A. Brown, "Progressivism and the Press in Saskatchewan, 1916-1926" (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1966), p. 11.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

¹²W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 44. Also see *Grain Growers Guide*, 16 September 1916, p. 5.

Association to contest two upcoming by-elections in that province.¹³

Calder realized the west had become a fertile breeding ground for new movements on all levels of politics.

On October 18 over two hundred prominent Liberals from throughout Saskatchewan gathered in Regina with members of the Legislature to choose a new provincial leader.¹⁴ Under normal circumstances Calder, who arranged the meeting, would have been the logical successor having been a successful and influential organizer and the dominant figure in the cabinet for years.¹⁵ Knowledgeable observers expected him to assume the premiership, as did most of those in attendance who, according to all accounts, pressed him to accept the office.¹⁶ However, Calder declined. He felt the scandals had so compromised his position that he lacked the moral authority to command trust.¹⁷ Furthermore he was slated to testify before one of the Royal Commissions on November 1, and, while confident its report would ultimately vindicate him, Calder realized this would be an inauspicious start for a new premier. Similar considerations eliminated all other members of the caucus.

Another factor entered into Calder's refusal of the premiership. It was rumored in the press that he intended to enter federal politics where he would certainly become a cabinet minister if the Liberals were

¹³Public Archives of Canada, Sir Wilfrid Laurier Papers, Calder-Laurier, 30 October 1916, p. 193616.

¹⁴Calder Papers, Reminiscences written in 1944, pp. 9835-36.

¹⁵Archives of Saskatchewan, Walter Scott Papers, Scott-Telfer, 3 July 1918, pp. 15470-72. Scott admitted that Calder did most of his work during the last two years of his term.

¹⁶Sifton Papers, Dafoe-Sifton, 17 October 1916, p. 160906 - 08; Laurier Papers, Calder-Laurier, 8 November 1916, pp. 193721-24. Also see Scott Papers, Scott-Telfer, 3 July 1918, pp. 15470-72.

¹⁷Laurier Papers, Calder-Laurier, 8 November 1916, pp. 193721-24.

restored to power.¹⁸ This view is substantiated by correspondence between Calder and Laurier which reveals that Calder had federal organizational responsibilities for Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which, he confessed, he had been unable to attend to because of the scandals.¹⁹ Several months later, at a Liberal convention, Calder hinted that such aspirations had influenced his decision though he stressed that the effects of the scandals had been his primary concern.²⁰

Having chosen to decline the premiership for these various reasons Calder secured a suitable candidate in William Melville Martin, the federal Member of Parliament for Regina. Martin had been born in Norwich, Ontario, on August 23, 1876.²¹ The son of a Presbyterian minister, he received a good education attending Exeter Public School, Clinton Collegiate Institute, and the University of Toronto where he was awarded a B.A. Honours in Classics. Martin then taught for several years before studying law at Osgoode Hall. He moved to Regina in 1903, quickly making a good impression on local Liberals. In 1905 they offered him the federal nomination for Assiniboia West, where a by-election was required, but Martin declined. In 1908 he accepted a similar offer for the new seat of Regina, winning by a considerable margin. He proved a very capable member building a solid, if unspectacular, record and was easily re-elected in 1911 with a greatly increased majority.

Martin seemed ideally equipped to restore the prestige of the pro-

¹⁸J. C. Hopkins, *C.A.R. 1916*, p. 720. For a specific example see *Saskatoon Daily Star*, 20 October 1917.

¹⁹Laurier Papers, Calder-Laurier, 30 October 1916, p. 193616; 8 November 1916, pp. 193721-24.

²⁰*Regina Morning Leader*, 29 March 1917.

²¹Archives of Saskatchewan, W. M. Martin Papers, p. 3485.

vincial government. He was untouched by the scandals and enjoyed a reputation for honesty, integrity, and common sense.²² For a man of forty he had a striking record of achievement and had demonstrated during his eight years in Ottawa that he possessed the sound judgement and administrative talents required of a capable premier. Added to this combination of youth and experience was a pleasant personality and substantial oratorical abilities, all of which made him an attractive candidate. In essence Martin was stainless and reliable. The meeting quickly endorsed his candidacy, undoubtedly pleased by his willingness to retain Scott's entire cabinet. This action not only gave the government continuity but erased any doubts which some of those in attendance may have had about the new Premier. As might be expected the Liberal press warmly greeted Martin's selection. However, independent journals were also impressed; the influential *Grain Growers Guide* welcomed Martin with guarded enthusiasm commending his youth, energy, ability, and "unblemished political record" which, it noted, was a great asset.²³ This was a promising start.

Martin, however, had one drawback. He had no connection with farmers; he was a lawyer by profession and had represented a basically urban seat in the House of Commons. The Liberals rectified this deficiency by persuading Charles Dunning, an eminent agrarian leader, to enter the cabinet as Provincial Treasurer, even though he did not hold a

²²These characteristics were stressed by the Liberal press. For examples see the *Regina Morning Leader*, 20, 24 and 25 October 1916. Upon becoming premier Martin disposed of various stocks and resigned several directorships to avoid conflicts of interest. See Martin Papers, Martin-Barr, 20 October 1916, p. 11; Martin-North-West Electric Co., 20 October 1916, p. 146.

²³*Grain Growers Guide*, 25 October 1916.

seat in the Legislature and had not displayed any strong party loyalties in the past.²⁴ Dunning was general manager of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company; he had been vice-president of the S.G.G.A. in 1910; he had served as one of the its directors in 1909 and again from 1911 to 1916; and he was a member of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, the farmers' national body.²⁵ This background had won him the respect and trust of farmers throughout Saskatchewan so his entry into the cabinet strengthened the government's ties with the S.G.G.A. and bolstered its appeal. The *Guide* greeted Dunning's move with tremendous enthusiasm, lauding his abilities, stressing his intimate knowledge of agricultural problems, and remarking he had the true interests of farmers at heart; a pleasant endorsement for the new minister.²⁶

Martin immediately turned his attention to the scandals which still clouded the government's future. In his first address he pledged to dismiss any civil servant or member of the Legislature who was found guilty of criminal activities or unsavory conduct.²⁷ In addition, Martin announced that a Liberal convention would be called to ratify his selection as leader and formulate a platform for the upcoming election. A convention would also boost shattered party morale. Calder reported that many workers refused to begin preparations for the upcoming campaign until the scandals were resolved; an indication of considerable anxiety within the party.²⁸ The government reorganization completely rectified this problem. Neither Martin nor Dunning were opposed by the Conserva-

²⁴ *Regina Morning Leader*, 22 December 1916.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 20 October 1916.

²⁶ *Grain Growers Guide*, 25 October 1916.

²⁷ J. C. Hopkins, *C.A.R. 1916*, pp. 720-22.

²⁸ *Laurier Papers, Calder-Laurier*, 30 October 1916, p. 193616.

vatives in their bids to win election to the Legislature, an action which represented a profound shift in Liberal fortunes. Martin received an amazing reception at his nominating convention as over two hundred people had to be turned away unaccommodated.²⁹ In contrast, a Conservative meeting the previous evening had attracted fewer than one hundred people. More important than numbers was Calder's observation that the meeting had been "enthusiastic from start to finish with the disgruntled Liberals in the van."³⁰ Calder was elated; before the reorganization he felt the Liberals would have been badly beaten in any election in Regina, afterwards he assured Laurier that Liberalism stood "as firm as a rock" and that it would sweep the province at the polls.³¹ He also reported that the central organizational office was now in "full swing," gleefully remarking that the cabinet reconstruction had been a "master stroke."³² Martin was delighted by these developments, expressing cautious optimism for the future.³³ Most of the party seemed to sense this change, recovering its confidence; Agriculture Minister Motherwell was satisfied that the province had "settled down" and that the public now regarded the Bradshaw charges as "largely wind jamming."³⁴

Nevertheless Martin continued to handle the scandals prudently. He instructed all M.L.A.'s to obtain letters from respected municipal officials in their constituencies testifying that the work done by the

²⁹Laurier Papers, Calder-Laurier, 8 November 1916, pp. 193721-24.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹*Ibid.*

³²*Ibid.*

³³Martin Papers, Martin-Scott, 17 November 1916, pp. 166-67.

³⁴Scott Papers, Motherwell-Scott, 30 November 1916, p. 14239.

Department of Highways in their area had been sound.³⁵ This gave him authoritative evidence to counter Conservative charges of sloppy building practices. The two outstanding Royal Commissions proved a blessing for they dismissed most of the remaining accusations and cleared the entire cabinet of suspicion.³⁶ As a result the scandals ceased to be an issue.

All that remained was for Martin to eject those M.L.A.'s who had been incriminated. Three had resigned of their own accord; of these, one had contested the by-election in an effort to clear his reputation but Martin refused to recognize him as an official Liberal candidate and ensured that he received no assistance from the party.³⁷ Aided only by his personal friends the ex-member was narrowly defeated by the Conservatives. Dunning successfully contested Devline's seat of Kinistino while the final seat lay vacant. On February 8, 1917, almost a year to a day after Bradshaw had issued his charges, Martin rose in the Legislature to deal with their final repercussions. He moved the expulsion of one member who had refused to resign after being convicted by the courts and read another, who was guilty of impropriety though not criminal

³⁵Martin Papers, Martin-all Liberal M.L.A.'s, 27 November 1916, p. 26843.

³⁶In its final report the Commission dealing with the Highway frauds concluded that Brown, Smith, Devline, Lindsay, a junior clerk, and a road supervisor had been the only culprits. It criticized the government's accounting procedure which was quickly tightened; the Department became a full cabinet post on April 2, 1917. The Commission investigating the Departments of Public Works and Telephones uncovered little of value and died with the session. On a motion by the opposition leader, W. B. Willoughby, its work was transferred to a standing legislative committee. The Commission examining the bribery charges confirmed what had already been uncovered so its report, presented in 1917, caused little stir. See J. C. Hopkins, *C.A.R. 1916*, pp. 696-710 for more information.

³⁷Martin Papers, Martin-Dafoe, 14 December 1916, p. 35084. The member had not actually committed a criminal offence though he had clearly abused his position.

action, out of the Liberal Party, since there was no legal way to force him to relinquish his seat.³⁸

These actions were well received, especially by rank and file Liberals, some of whom were still concerned over the effects of the scandals. Finally, to rid the party of all embarrassment, four other members who had been tainted by the affair, were probably encouraged to retire. Of the ten members who had been named by the Legislative committees in 1916 only two ran again, and both had been conclusively cleared by the Royal Commissions.

The other problem, the disturbing growth of the Non-Partisan League, solved itself when the League became embroiled in a quarrel with the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association which, added to internal difficulties, led to its collapse. The two organizations were closely entwined as every official of the League and most of its membership also belonged to the Association.³⁹ The dispute began when the League, carelessly assuming it had the Association's sympathy, issued several public statements suggesting that the S.G.G.A. supported its program. These were promptly refuted. In November 1916, at a meeting of the Association's executive, it became evident that most directors actually disliked the League's radical proposals.⁴⁰ One S.G.G.A. director, who also belonged to the League, admitted that parts of the League's platform were unsound, but begged his colleagues to refrain from public condemnation, informing them that an imminent convention was expected to adopt

³⁸Martin Papers, Speech to Legislature, 8 February, 1917, pp. 42756-61

³⁹Archives of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association Papers, Head-Musselman, 6 November 1916, pp. 113-14.

⁴⁰S.G.G.A. Papers, Directors' Meeting, 24 November 1916, pp. 55-56.

a new program and select new leaders. The executive disregarded his request issuing a statement declaring its disapproval of the League's activities. Some members of the League were infuriated by this action and bitterly denounced the Association's leadership in public. This rupture was aggravated at the S.G.G.A. convention in February 1917 when a motion asking the Association to sanction the League's ideals, particularly its desire to enter politics, was crushed by a margin of ten to one.⁴¹ The debate revealed that the League, despite its dynamic growth, was badly divided, for several of its adherents, while endorsing its principles, urged others not to join until the executive had been removed.⁴² Public display of these internal quarrels discredited the League and, coupled with its rejection by the S.G.G.A., ended its effectiveness. By May Martin dismissed it as a spent force.⁴³

These developments enabled Martin to approach the 1917 election with great confidence. He faced no major challenge and could reasonably expect the campaign to follow traditional patterns involving only Liberals and Conservatives. Such contests had resulted in impressive Liberal victories in the province's first three elections. The party had captured fifty-two percent of the popular vote and sixteen of the twenty-five seats in 1905, fifty percent of the vote and twenty-seven of the forty-one seats in 1908, and fifty-seven percent of the vote and forty-six of the fifty-four seats in 1912.⁴⁴ One of the many reasons for these successes was the exceptional organization which had been developed; an advantage Martin

⁴¹S.G.G.A. Papers, Report of 1917 Convention.

⁴²*Grain Growers Guide*, 21 February 1917.

⁴³Martin Papers, Martin-Erickson, 5 May 1917, p. 24260.

⁴⁴D. Smith, *Prairie Liberalism: The Liberal Party in Saskatchewan 1905-71* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), Appendix A.

inherited.

One aspect of the Liberal machine was the warm relationship maintained with the S.G.G.A. As has been mentioned, several of the Association's top leaders were recruited by the government; Langley, Motherwell, and Dunning were the most prominent examples, but this affiliation extended to all levels of the Liberal Party. Of the fifty Liberals elected in 1917 thirty-two others belonged to the S.G.G.A., with eleven either holding or having held executive positions.⁴⁵ This intimate connection enabled the Liberals to anticipate the Association's requests; consequently the government was regarded as a sympathetic friend and rarely criticized, an attitude which provided considerable electoral benefits.

The Liberals also cultivated ethnic minorities, awarding their newspapers government contracts⁴⁶ and courting their community leaders.⁴⁷ One minority, French-Canadians, had their own representative in the cabinet in W. F. A. Turgeon, the Attorney-General. The government kept in contact with these groups through the province's education inspectors who, the Conservatives charged, were little more than paid Liberal organizers.⁴⁸

⁴⁵Regina *Morning Leader*, 19 February 1919. The Conservatives by contrast, had few members belonging to the Association and none even remotely matching the prominence of men like Langley and Dunning.

⁴⁶Martin Papers, pp. 35064-69. Both the Saskatchewan *Courier* and the Rosthern *Deutsche Press*, German language newspapers, appear on a list of journals to receive government patronage; also see Martin-Latta, p. 5203, for instructions that French language newspapers be given similar treatment. This letter concerns La Bonne Presse Ltd. which published *Le Patriote* which had a large circulation in the province.

⁴⁷Martin Papers, Parker-Martin, pp. 1082-84, is a good example. Parker, a Liberal worker, asks Martin to correspond with a Hungarian community leader whom he feels can deliver five hundred votes in the election. Martin readily complies.

⁴⁸Martin Papers, MacEachern-Martin, 7 December 1916, p. 16683, suggests that some efforts were made to ensure that education inspectors were Liberal; Martin-Golzen, Golzen-Martin, pp. 4057-58, refer to A. W. Golzen who worked for the party in the Melville area among the Germans. For com-

This may have been true in some cases, but in reality ethnic voters supported the Liberal Party because it was more sympathetic to their problems and more willing than the Conservatives to tolerate cultural diversity. The bitter conflict over education (which will be discussed in a later section) is one example of different attitudes which cemented ethnic voters to the Liberals. Some of these groups were conscious of their influence in elections and used it to secure concessions as indicated by the following warning Martin received from a French-Canadian leader:

We are between forty and fifty thousand in this province. It is not enormous, but it is enough . . . to exercise a certain influence in a good many districts.

Our strength lies above all in the fact that we form a united block, compact, organized, ready to negotiate with that one of the groups that will guarantee us a minimum of school liberty, without troubling ourselves as to whether that group bears the ticket of liberal, conservative, or even "Grain Grower."⁴⁹

As in any political machine patronage was also a key ingredient. Local M.L.A.'s or defeated candidates were always consulted about appointments in their ridings, and made the final decision. This practice was followed in allocating positions such as Process Issuer,⁵⁰ Notary Public,⁵¹ Justice of the Peace,⁵² and Councillor of Oaths.⁵³ There is one instance plaints by Conservative leader Willoughby about the activities of education inspectors see the Saskatoon *Daily Star*, 19 May 1917.

⁴⁹Martin Papers, Denis-Martin, 17 September 1919, p. 16621.

⁵⁰Martin Papers, pp. 12355, 12041.

⁵¹Martin Papers, Attorney-General: Appointments Notary Public 1916-22. This folder is filled with examples of individuals whose appointments were not renewed due to pressure from local Liberals. Martin was given a list of all Notaries Public in his seat and was asked to cross off those whose appointments he did not wish renewed. He could also make any additions he desired. This was standard procedure for every M.L.A.

⁵²Martin Papers, Martin-Wells, p. 12085. Martin remarks that it was standard procedure to follow the recommendations of local members in making these appointments. There are various examples of some not being renewed for political reasons. Again each M.L.A. was given a list of appointments in his seat and could make whatever alterations he chose. See Martin Papers, Turgeon-Martin, 10 December 1917, pp. 11541-543.

⁵³Martin Papers, Attorney-General: Appointments, Commissioners

of an M.L.A. being asked to decide which Trust Company in his riding should become official agent for the surrounding Judicial District and where it should open its account, a striking example of the extent of patronage.⁵⁴ Local Liberals grew to expect these rewards of office and were quick to voice their discontent when the practice was disregarded. "As Liberals here understand Liberal patronage [one individual wrote Martin] any slight benefits which might occur from such patronage should be given to the men who worked here and spent their time and money in winning the Election."⁵⁵ Martin agreed with this view, keeping the party organization well-greased, though taking care not to offend public opinion.

The entire network was held together by road supervisors and highway inspectors under the skillful direction of Calder.⁵⁶ Their jobs took them to all parts of the province enabling them to monitor local conditions and report any discontent. The following letter, written by a highway inspector who had been dismissed, provides a glimpse into their activities on behalf of the party.

I have always felt that I was more or less one of the boys who turned in and helped out at the proper time.

I had worked faithfully for the Government ever since I left your office back in 1904, and resigned several times to do election work.

. . .
I would tell you more about the Highways Department and the way they have been running things during the past ten or twelve years. Leave that bunch alone and they will wreck any government, even if the Apostle Paul was premier.⁵⁷

for Oaths. Again, this folder contains many examples of appointments made or cancelled because of pressure from local Liberals.

⁵⁴Martin Papers, pp. 12843-44; 12847-48.

⁵⁵Martin Papers, Watkins-Martin, 27 September 1917, p. 1352.

⁵⁶For an explanation of how this system operated see E. M. Reid, "The Saskatchewan Liberal Machine Before 1929" in N. Ward and D. Spafford, eds., *Politics in Saskatchewan* (Don Mills: Longmans Canada Limited, 1968), pp. 93-104, especially pp. 98-99.

⁵⁷Martin Papers, Bettschen-Martin, 11 May 1919, pp. 2455-56.

This last warning was justified given the public's disgust with partisan politics, so for most of Martin's term the party organization was "quietly submerged."⁵⁸

In addition to their organization the Liberals also enjoyed substantial newspaper support. The Martin Papers contain a list of all journals in the province, along with their political affiliation and an indication whether they were to receive government contracts.⁵⁹ All forty-five Liberal papers received patronage with the sole exception of the *Govan Prairie News*, which was owned by Sam Latta who became a cabinet minister in 1917. This omission would avoid charges of conflict of interest. Seventeen papers marked 'Favourable,' seven marked 'Independent-Liberal,' fifteen marked 'Independent,' five marked 'Independent-Conservative,' one marked 'Conservative,' and one for which there was no comment also received government business. Twenty-seven newspapers marked 'Conservative,' five marked 'Independent-Conservative,' eight marked 'Independent,' one marked 'Favourable,' and twenty-eight for which there was no designation were not to be awarded any contracts. These contracts could be lucrative; in August 1918 the *Regina Morning Leader* received \$2,446.53, the *Saskatoon Phoenix* \$4,421.84, the *Moose Jaw Times* \$1,337.94, the *Melville Canadian* \$23.75, the *Battleford Press* \$95.05, the *Kindersley Expositor* \$47.00 and the *Prince Albert Herald* \$211.35.⁶⁰ One scholar has estimated that this patronage was often worth one to three hundred dollars a year, a sum which could spell the difference between collapse and survival for many small town journals.⁶¹ Opposition papers, which did not have access to this support, were soon in serious trouble; the last Conservative daily ceased publication

⁵⁸ D. E. Smith, *Prairie Liberalism*, p. 158.

⁵⁹ Martin Papers, pp. 35064-69.

⁶⁰ Martin Papers, p. 34663.

⁶¹ W. J. Brennan "Press and Party in Saskatchewan 1914-25" in *Saskatchewan History* Vol. XXVII (1974), p. 82.

in 1920.⁶² Needless to say this situation gave the Liberals an advantage which they carefully maintained by ensuring that whenever ownership changed hands the paper remained under Liberal control.⁶³

Before calling the election Martin had to devise a system to enable soldiers in Europe to vote. He chose to create three soldiers' seats, one for those stationed in Great Britain and two for those on the western front. The Premier favored this system because of its simplicity and because it guaranteed the return of at least three soldiers to the legislature.⁶⁴ However, opposition quickly developed; Martin was convinced it was mostly politically inspired.⁶⁵ While the Conservatives certainly attempted to capitalize on the issue, most of the complaints came from groups such as the Saskatoon Veteran's Society and the Army and Navy League in Canada, suggesting genuine discontent.⁶⁶ Petitions were circulated, both in Europe and in Saskatchewan, urging soldiers to reject the scheme because it allowed men of alien birth, who had not volunteered for service, to elect the government while soldiers were disfranchised by being given only three seats when entitled, by their numbers, to ten.⁶⁷ The Moose Jaw County by-election of December 1916 was used to support these claims as the petitions charged that the government candidate carried

⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶³For example, Martin was involved in the sales of the *Estevan Mercury* and the *Melville Progress*. See Martin Papers, Dunbar-Martin, 13 November 1918, pp. 1648-49; Snow-Martin, 23 June 1919, p. 3613, Eymann-Martin, 21 November 1921, pp. 5031-32, mentions Turgeon, McNab, Martin, and Senator Ross as involved in the *Courier*.

⁶⁴Martin Papers, Martin-Moore, 8 March 1917, p. 9602.

⁶⁵Martin Papers, Martin-Bore, 26 March 1917, p. 9624.

⁶⁶Martin Papers, Martin-Moore, 8 March 1917, p. 9602.

⁶⁷Martin Papers, Letter circulated among soldiers, 23 February 1917, p. 9527.

all of the "foreign vote" in that contest.⁶⁸ Martin soon realized that it might have been better to nominate men at the front to contest existing seats and collect the soldiers' votes to be counted in their home constituencies. This, however, no longer seemed possible even though the government already had two M.L.A.'s at the front, because, in their absence, local Liberals had nominated new candidates.⁶⁹ Rather than trying to reverse proceedings Martin chose to introduce his plan. The results eventually justified his decision for two of the three soldiers elected were government supporters.

A final concern was the public disenchantment with party politics. J. A. Alkin, editor of the Saskatoon *Phoenix*, warned Martin to be cautious as the electorate was "supersensitive" on the issue.⁷⁰ Martin took this advice and tried to avoid partisan stands, confident, however, that the political situation had "materially improved" and that his government would be returned.⁷¹ Taking nothing for granted he embarked upon a lengthy speaking tour of the province in early 1917 to introduce himself to the electorate and solidify the government's improved position.⁷² The Premier found the task monotonous, but the tour reinforced his confidence though he expected the government's majority to be somewhat reduced. It also enabled him to assess personally the public mood, which he found to be fluid and uncertain.⁷³ Martin had already made efforts to identify

⁶⁸In fact this was a poor example for the Liberals did not run a candidate. This particular by-election has already been mentioned in connection with the scandals. See page 17.

⁶⁹Martin Papers, Martin-Lochead, 26 March 1917, p. 9607.

⁷⁰Martin Papers, Alkin-Martin, 15 February 1917, p. 1111.

⁷¹Martin Papers, Martin-Lochead, 7 February 1917, p. 9521.

⁷²Laurier Papers, Martin-Laurier, 7 May 1917, pp. 195576-77.

⁷³Martin Papers, Martin-Laurier, 16 April 1917, p. 765.

himself with the mainstream of western opinion. In his 1916 Christmas message he had denounced the tariff declaring that the west had to be freed from this "bondage" before peace and goodwill could be restored on the prairies.⁷⁴ Of course this attitude was not new since Martin, along with most western Liberals, had espoused these principles for many years. Nevertheless, it reassured farmers of his sympathy and concern for their problems.

Generally, farmers seemed satisfied with his performance, and not without reason. Martin had continued the government's traditional support of co-operatives by incorporating the Saskatchewan Co-operative Creameries Company and providing loans to help it begin operation. Changes were made to the Municipal Hail Insurance Act improving the scheme along lines suggested by the S.G.G.A. Also passed was an innovative piece of legislation which virtually created a government loan company.⁷⁵ It was designed to help farmers through their economic hardships by providing credit at low rates at a time when eastern financial institutions were being widely denounced for their insensitivity and harsh terms. Martin shared these sentiments feeling that the banks did not understand western problems and charged outrageous interest rates.⁷⁶ This legislation was warmly received by the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association's convention in February.⁷⁷

The gathering revealed the government's success in restoring its prestige for the farmers concerned themselves with federal issues barely

⁷⁴Martin Papers, Christmas message 1916, p. 34777.

⁷⁵J. C. Hopkins, C.A.R. 1917.

⁷⁶Martin Papers, Martin-Burnham, 21 February 1917, p. 6102.

⁷⁷S.G.G.A. Papers, 1917, p. 15. Also see *Grain Growers Guide*, 21 February 1917.

mentioning the scandals. They unanimously endorsed the platform of the Canadian Council of Agriculture after carefully discussing it clause by clause. The program, which had been released in December of 1916, called for tariff reductions, free trade with Britain within five years, and enactment of the 1911 Reciprocity Agreement with the United States.⁷⁸

The delegates also passed resolutions calling for graduated income taxes, inheritance taxes, taxes on corporate profits, the nationalization of all coal mines and railways, and the establishment of price controls for the duration of the war. These proposals did not concern the provincial government as they were all federal matters; indeed, both Langley and Dunning had helped draft them as members of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, a post Langley still held. More disturbing was the influence of the Non-Partisan League. Even though it was soundly rejected, many of its planks were adopted; the convention approved of the initiative, the right of recall, referendums, direct legislation, and disclosure of the source of all campaign funds. Many of these proposals could be introduced at the provincial level but Martin chose to ignore them. The farmers did not press the point as these resolutions paled beside the federal questions which preoccupied them.

The final Liberal preparations for the election took place in late March when a provincial convention was held. It wholeheartedly endorsed Martin's selection as leader, commended his handling of the scandals, and adopted an election program. The government intended to stand on its record since 1905, stressing its role in the creation of the province's basic institutions, its support of the co-operative movement, and its pro-

⁷⁸S.G.G.A. Papers, 1917, pp. 44-47.

gressive legislation on issues such as prohibition and women's suffrage.⁷⁹ The Liberals promised to continue improving services particularly the schools, the telephone system, and public health. Farmers were promised an investigation into the high cost of farm machinery, help for the dairy industry, and a plan to accelerate settlement of still vacant lands at fair prices and low interest rates. Women received special attention as they would be voting for the first time. They were offered laws to improve their working conditions and pensions to support and educate their children if they were without means.⁸⁰ At the convention women were officially represented as accredited delegates and given an equal number of seats on the various committees; in addition a female vice-chairman was selected. However, there is no evidence to suggest that women had any great impact on the party either at the convention or throughout Martin's term. Nevertheless, the *Morning Leader* was able to capitalize on their involvement, contrasting it to a conspicuous lack of women at a recent Conservative convention. The election was not called until June, with polling day set for the twenty-sixth to enable farmers to complete seeding and take an active part in the campaign.

The Conservative campaign was a total failure. Their platform resembled that of the Liberals promising little more than better management.⁸¹ Most Conservative candidates tried to stress the scandals but they were no longer an effective issue.⁸² Their leader, W. B. Willoughby,

⁷⁹Regina *Morning Leader*, 30 March 1917.

⁸⁰Regina *Morning Leader*, 29 March 1917.

⁸¹This was the opinion of the *Grain Growers Guide*, see 11 July 1917. Dunning also held this view as did the editors of the *Saskatoon Daily Star*, see *Saskatoon Daily Star*, 5 June 1917.

⁸²Speech by W. B. Willoughby in *Saskatoon Daily Star*, 12 June 1917. Most Conservative advertising in the *Daily Star* stressed the scandals. For

was a handicap as even his ardent supporters admitted he was no orator and possessed little magnetism; despite his efforts throughout the campaign he was unable to generate any enthusiasm.⁸³ The Conservatives had received a disheartening blow several weeks before the election was called. On March 17, 1917, the Saskatoon *Daily Star* and the Regina *Daily Post*, which had strongly supported them in the past, announced that they would now take an independent stand on all issues, thereby depriving the party of an organ in the two largest cities of the province.⁸⁴ The Conservatives' only effective issue was the school question.

The controversy over education had erupted in 1905 with the federal legislation which had created the province.⁸⁵ The Laurier government had included several clauses in the bill which recognized the right of minorities to establish separate, non-sectarian schools subject to the regulations of the Department of Education. F. W. G. Haultain, leader of the Provincial Rights Party,⁸⁶ questioned the constitutionality of these clauses on the grounds that education was a provincial power and the federal government had no right to legislate in the area. Walter Scott defended the Act and the controversy became the dominant issue in the first provincial election. The Liberals won, but the campaign had shar-

another example see campaign speech by Bradshaw in Martin Papers, pp. 24307-09.

⁸³Saskatoon *Daily Star*, 6 June 1917.

⁸⁴L. A. Brown, "Progressivism and the Press," pp. 12-13.

⁸⁵The brief summary of the language issue is taken from R. J. A. Huel, "L'Association Catholique Franco-Canadiens de la Saskatchewan: A Response to Cultural Assimilation, 1912-1934" (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Regina, 1969).

⁸⁶The Conservatives campaigned under this name from 1905 until 1912 when the name "Conservative" was adopted.

pened linguistic and religious divisions which were to characterize provincial politics for the next twenty-five years. The Liberals carried all seven seats where Roman Catholics or "new Canadians" formed a majority. The Provincial Rights Party won its nine seats in areas dominated by protestants and Anglo-Saxons.

After the election the issue died down until 1913 when the Scott government, in an effort to improve the financial position of separate schools, passed an amendment making it mandatory for ratepayers of the minority to support the separate school in their area. This change was opposed by a prominent clergyman, Reverend Murdoch MacKinnon, Minister of Regina's Knox Presbyterian Church, who eventually denounced it from his pulpit. He argued that the legislation deprived citizens of the right to send their children to public schools and that it would stabilize separate schools which he felt were an obstacle to unity. Other organizations, such as the Orange Lodge, soon entered the debate which grew increasingly bitter. At one point Premier Scott condemned the Reverend MacKinnon as a moral leper.

By 1916 the criticism was no longer aimed at a specific piece of legislation but had developed into a concerted attack on separate schools and their alleged failure to teach English. They were accused of perpetuating foreign languages and cultures to the detriment of the whole nation. The war intensified the conflict as Germans and former subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, who were now the enemy, were among the most prominent of the various minorities. French Canadians were also included since English Canadians felt they were not contributing their fair share to the war effort. The school question soon became entwined with the moral crusade which the war had stimulated and reform of the separate

schools became identified with democracy and the preservation of British values.

In January 1916 the Conservatives committed themselves to ensuring that English become the sole language of instruction in all schools of the province, and within the next few months important organizations such as the S.G.G.A., the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, the Methodist Conference, and the Presbyterian Synod all adopted similar resolutions. Martin, who was also Minister of Education, defused the issue by promising to rectify the situation quickly. His pledge satisfied the electorate. The minorities, though offended, had nowhere else to go and had little choice but to continue supporting the Liberals as the more acceptable alternative. Without this issue the Conservative campaign utterly collapsed.

On June 16 the *Saskatoon Daily Star* and the *Regina Daily Post* both endorsed the re-election of the Martin government. The *Daily Star* remarked that the government had done all the "essential things," that it had better and more experienced members, and that it had handled both the scandals and the language question with expertise.⁸⁷ It concluded that it would be foolish for the electorate to oust such a government. With this endorsement even Conservative hopes for an improved showing faded.

The only other participant in the campaign was the Non-Partisan League which lingered on, nominating eight candidates. However, it had little organization and limited funds, so was hardly a threat. Seven of its candidates ultimately lost their deposits while the eighth, D. J. Sykes of Swift Current, was elected by acclamation as both Liberals and

⁸⁷*Saskatoon Daily Star*, 16 June 1917.

Conservatives also nominated him, feeling he was unbeatable.⁸⁸ After this election fiasco the League collapsed, torn apart by bitter internal quarrels. Within a few months its most prominent members, notably Sykes, resigned; ironically its membership peaked in this period.⁸⁹

The election results were a foregone conclusion. The Liberals captured fifty-seven percent of the popular vote and fifty seats.⁹⁰ The Conservatives won thirty-six percent carrying but eight seats, while the League, and several other independent candidates, garnered seven percent of the vote and one seat. Most satisfying of all was the sweet defeat of Bradshaw in Prince Albert, and with him all the troubles which had plagued the Liberals for over a year. Martin's selection as premier had accomplished its intended objective.

⁸⁸ Martin Papers, Martin-Erickson, 5 May 1917, p. 24260.

⁸⁹ Membership in the League reached about 5,000 in the fall of 1917 well after the League had begun to crumble. This was due to the method used to sell memberships. Full-time organizers had been hired who would keep one-quarter to one-third of the \$15 membership fee for their efforts. Apparently they went right on with their work despite the difficulties. See *Grain Growers Guide*, 21 March 1917. This issue also deals with the case of P. L. Craigen who had been expelled from the League for questioning the activities of its "salaried men." This is a good example of the type of quarrel which ripped the League apart.

⁹⁰ For complete results see Appendix A, pp. 135-38.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEMS OF UNION GOVERNMENT

Under Walter Scott the federal and provincial wings of the Liberal Party had been closely aligned, with Scott the recognized leader of both sections. Martin's smooth transition from the House of Commons to the Legislature suggested that this relationship would continue unchanged, as he appeared willing to assume a similar role. During his first months in office the Premier was preoccupied with familiarizing himself with his new duties,¹ and with a series of meetings throughout the province.² These activities demanded his undivided attention leaving him little time for federal affairs. However, Martin soon realized that the growing disenchantment with the federal Liberals threatened to have troublesome repercussions provincially. He was concerned that the federal party's fiscal policy, especially relating to the tariff, would prove unacceptable to westerners and possibly become an election issue. The problem never materialized. Laurier, expecting a federal campaign and eyeing western voters, was sensitive to Martin's anxiety and proposed a conference to formulate a suitable tariff plank for the entire party.³ George Graham and E. M. Macdonald were dispatched to the prairies to ascertain western views and ensure cooperation. On March 6, well before the provincial campaign, all western incumbent federal Liberals, along with

¹Scott Papers, Pell-Scott, 5 December 1916, p. 13774.

²Laurier Papers, Martin-Laurier, 7 May 1917, pp. 195576-77.

³Laurier Papers, Laurier-Martin, 27 February 1917, p. 194960.

candidates who had already been nominated, attended the proposed meeting, and adopted a platform which closely resembled the fiscal program released by the Canadian Council of Agriculture.⁴ While this failed to check the federal party's decline it benefited Martin, for he could now freely use federal issues against the provincial Conservatives. Throughout the election campaign the Liberals depicted themselves as the farmers' party equating the Conservatives with their federal colleagues who supported the loathsome tariff.⁵ The Conservatives, much to their discomfort, found it difficult to answer these charges, which were damaging to their image and election hopes. While Martin enjoyed this advantage in 1917 it was becoming apparent that the Liberals might soon experience similar problems as the popularity of their federal counterparts continued to dwindle, exacerbated by the conscription debate. Skillful and determined leadership would be required to cope with these troubles.

In Saskatchewan it was not apparent who would provide it. Martin found it difficult to assert his leadership; he stood in Calder's shadow, generally regarded as a disciple. Calder contributed to this impression by assuming the position of President of the Executive Council, becoming the only man in Saskatchewan's history to hold this post apart from the premiership.⁶ Calder also dominated the federal field. As mentioned in the previous chapter, he was responsible for the federal organization in Saskatchewan and Manitoba; on matters of importance Laurier always corresponded with him, not Martin. This is not surprising considering

⁴Martin Papers, Oliver-Martin, 15 March 1917, p. 41371.

⁵Speeches by Dunning and Calder reported in the *Saskatoon Daily Star*, 5 June 1917.

⁶D. E. Smith, *Prairie Liberalism*, p. 63.

Calder's federal aspirations, but it aggravated Martin's leadership difficulties because he lost an important duty previously associated with the premiership. Calder was aware of these problems and, according to Walter Scott, was eager to "remove himself so as to let Martin have a fair and proper show."⁷ He understood that as long as he remained in the provincial government he, rather than Martin, would be considered the real head. Martin was widely respected as a man of "stirling [sic] worth" who had an "uncanny" ability for making friends.⁸ "Everyone likes him [one prominent Liberal remarked] and were it not for this he would never fit the bill for, talking confidentially, he is not considered a strong man."⁹ His cabinet colleagues shared this attitude; Langley commented that the new Premier made "a most excellent impression" but was "deferential and docile."¹⁰

Calder was only one reason for this outlook; another was Martin's character. Even though he had been an effective and respected member of parliament for eight years he disliked the rough partisanship of political life and never displayed much ambition.¹¹ Martin liked to stress that he had been "offered" the federal nominations rather than having actively sought them.¹² He carried this attitude to Regina accepting the premiership only because "it was thought that it was in the best

⁷Scott Papers, Scott-Telfer, 3 July 1918, pp. 15470-72.

⁸For two examples see Calder Papers, MacMillan-Calder, 9 June 1916, pp. 6379-80, and Scott Papers, Mackenzie-Scott, 17 May 1917, p. 14514.

⁹Scott Papers, Mackenzie-Scott, 17 May 1917, p. 14514.

¹⁰Scott Papers, Langley-Scott, 12 November 1916, p. 14106.

¹¹This was the view of *Saturday Night*, 17 May 1919, Martin Papers, pp. 44164-65.

¹²Martin Papers, p. 3485. This was a point Martin stressed in some biographical material he prepared.

interests of the party that I do so."¹³ Furthermore, the new Premier was plagued by self-doubts, wondering if it had been "wise" for him to take office and if he could handle it "properly."¹⁴ It is perhaps normal for any individual to have such moments when assuming new duties, but in Martin's case they were magnified because his entire cabinet, with one exception, was a holdover. Calder and Motherwell had entered the government in 1905, McNab in 1910, Langley and Bell in 1912. All were older than Martin, all were better acquainted with their duties, and all were more experienced in provincial politics. It is not surprising they found him deferential and docile. Even the election victory had failed to bolster his prestige to any great extent as Calder, deservedly so, shared in the glory. His organizational talents had been an invaluable asset, especially when contrasted to the feeble Conservative effort in that area. Until his departure, Calder was the dominant influence in the party, an important consideration when examining the conscription crisis.

January 1917 was critical in altering Calder's views on the subject. Until then he had supported Laurier's refusal to grant another extension of parliament and shared the federal leader's faith that enough men could be persuaded to enlist voluntarily. In January Calder embarked on a trip across Canada which enabled him to assess the mood of the country. Not surprisingly he found widespread dissatisfaction with the Borden government, but, unexpectedly, also serious doubt about the advisability of placing Laurier in charge.¹⁵ He sensed a growing sentiment in favour of

¹³Laurier Papers, Martin-Laurier, 30 October 1916, p. 193608.

¹⁴Martin Papers, Martin-Scott, 17 November 1916, p. 166.

¹⁵Laurier Papers, Calder-Laurier, 16 January 1917, pp. 194533-40. The entire section concerning Calder's views on coalition and conscription, including the quotations, is drawn from this account.

forming a coalition government; in Manitoba Premier Norris observed "that the slightest movement along this line will set the heather on fire." Everywhere Calder found the public weary of partisan politics and awaiting "some strong leader." Convinced this demand was irresistible, Calder urged Laurier to seize the opportunity to control the process by proposing the formation of a Union government.

If Borden had been astute he would have made the move long ago. . . . You will at once appeal to the imagination and the good sense of thousands upon thousands of our citizens who have more at stake in the war than the game of party politics.

Calder felt Laurier could not lose with such a proposal. If Borden accepted, Laurier would receive the credit; if he refused, Laurier would still gain by appearing to have risen above partisan considerations. Calder made it clear he disliked this situation, but could see no alternative.

Nothing would please me better than to see a straight stand up fight with the Tories. . . . Until recently I have all along assumed that we would fight the battle out on the old lines. This present trip however has caused me to conclude that there may be rocks ahead.

Martin agreed. His travels throughout the province revealed widespread opposition to Laurier's stand on the war, even among Liberals. In early May he advised Laurier to endorse some form of conscription and grant another extension of parliament, informing him that many party supporters opposed a general election.¹⁶ Laurier replied that both suggestions were unacceptable and he had no choice but to face the electorate.¹⁷ Martin was disturbed, urging Laurier to reconsider and warning that "an election under the circumstances will be the bitterest contest ever

¹⁶Laurier Papers, Martin-Laurier, 7 May 1917, pp. 195576-77.

¹⁷Martin Papers, Laurier-Martin, 21 May 1917, p. 766.

experienced in this country and should be avoided."¹⁸ On June 16, before a massive audience in Regina, these differences became public as Martin assured the people of Saskatchewan that he favoured the formation of a nonpartisan government and selective conscription of men and wealth.¹⁹ This statement dispelled Conservative charges to the contrary, but contradicted federal Liberal policy which Laurier had enunciated only ten days before when he had firmly and finally rejected both coalition and conscription.

These tensions intensified during the summer. On June 11 the Military Service Bill had been introduced in the Commons, and by July 24, following a turbulent debate, it became law. Twenty-two Liberals broke ranks to vote for the measure. In Western Canada Clifford Sifton and John Dafoe, exasperated with Laurier's stand, began to organize a movement to replace him. Western Liberals were scheduled to gather in Winnipeg in early August, ostensibly to finalize an election platform, but it was now apparent that conscription and Union government were going to become the key issues. In July Sifton toured Saskatchewan trying to persuade Liberals to abandon their leader at the upcoming convention. The trip was a disaster. Western Liberals had never forgiven Sifton for his treason in 1911, when he had opposed reciprocity, and accorded him a hostile reception even though many personally supported coalition and conscription.

Maintenant les libéraux de Saskatchewan sont pratiquement unanimes dans leur détermination de nous rester fidèles et de faire adapter par la convention une résolution de confiance en vous. Tous les membres de notre Government sont ralliés à ce sentiment, —Martin comme les autres. Hier nous avons rédigé une résolution au sujet de

¹⁸Laurier Papers, Martin-Laurier, 3 June 1917, pp. 195932-33.

¹⁹Saskatoon *Daily Star*, 16 June 1917.

la guerre que nous allons essayer de faire passer. Cette résolution approuve votre politique d'enrôlement volontaire et le principe du référendum et exprime notre attachement à vous comme chef du parti. Calder est allé à Winnipeg hier soir dans le but de conférer avec nos amis de là-bas et leur persuader, s'il le peut, d'accepter cette résolution. Mais je sais qu'il va rencontrer beaucoup d'opposition.²⁰

This would be the last time that the provincial government would stand united on the issue. On August 7 over twelve hundred Liberals attended the Winnipeg convention; they were unable to come to any consensus on conscription. Laurier's supporters, following his advice, avoided the issue, and presented a resolution, which was passed, asserting the party's admiration for its leader.²¹ This solved nothing. The *Grain Growers Guide* was disgusted, accusing the Liberals of petty partisanship, machine politics, and evasion of a vital issue.²² Such reporting hardly enhanced the party's sagging fortunes throughout the prairies.

Martin was apprehensive about these developments, aware that they were creating deep rifts. Despite his strong statement in June, the Premier was convinced that, with a proper effort, sufficient recruits could be obtained through the voluntary system; a position similar to Laurier's.²³ However, he felt that the Borden government was incapable of such action and favoured the formation of a coalition which would be better equipped to revitalize the war effort.²⁴ Martin was disheartened by the political situation feeling it intensified, rather than solved, the crisis.²⁵ On September 6 Arthur Meighen introduced a new element

²⁰Laurier Papers, Turgeon-Laurier, 3 August 1917, pp. 196508-13.

²¹Joseph Schull, *Laurier, The First Canadian* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1965), pp. 585-86.

²²*Grain Growers Guide*, 15 August 1917.

²³Martin Papers, Martin-Ross, 20 August 1917, pp. 9193-94.

²⁴Martin Papers, Martin-Thompson, 22 August 1917, p. 26219.

²⁵Martin Papers, Martin-Ross, 20 August 1917, pp. 9193-94.

into the drama, the War Times Election Act, which dealt with the foreign born, most of whom were in the west and most of whom were Liberal. The bill disfranchised for the wartime election "those of alien enemy mother tongue or native language, who have been naturalized since the thirty-first of March, 1902."²⁶ In addition, the bill enfranchised the wives, widows, mothers, sisters and daughters of men who were, or who had been, in the armed forces. With this stroke much of the Liberal voting strength in the west was eliminated.

Several days after the announcement Martin wrote the Census Department inquiring about the number of foreign peoples in the various provinces and what percentage had voted in 1911.²⁷ It was apparent, even before the reply, that the bill assured the re-election of the Borden government. Ten days later James Calder, accompanied by other prominent provincial Liberals from throughout the prairies, gave way before the inevitable and agreed to enter into a coalition. Martin was disgusted with the turn of events.

We scarcely know here what to do in regard to the matter. I would not like to be placed in the position where even for a limited period of time we have to desert Sir Wilfrid Laurier. It looks very much to me just now as this is the position in which we will find ourselves. . . . The present Dominion Government has done about as badly as any aggregation could have done and how in the world we can be expected to support them in this country is difficult to see.²⁸

The Premier had little choice but to accept the coalition, accompanying Calder to Ottawa and participating in the final negotiations.²⁹ By then he had overcome his initial revulsion, reluctantly concluding that per-

²⁶ Joseph Schull, *Laurier*, p. 589.

²⁷ Martin Papers, Martin-Coats, 12 September 1917, p. 428.

²⁸ Martin Papers, Martin-Scott, 25 September 1917, p. 1213.

²⁹ Martin Papers, Martin-Scott, 19 October 1917, p. 1215.

haps it was the best thing for everyone.

These developments shattered the Liberal Party throughout Canada; many favoured the coalition while others remained loyal to Laurier. In Saskatchewan nine candidates had been nominated before the division. Eight now withdrew while one ran as a Laurier Liberal. Of the five Liberal incumbents, all of whom had previously announced they would stand for re-election, three ran as Unionists, one retired, and one, William Knowles, directed the Laurier Liberal campaign. Since Martin supported Union Government, and Calder had joined it as Minister of Immigration and Colonization, the federal Liberals no longer had a leader in the province. Consequently, Laurier had asked Knowles to assume the position; Knowles reluctantly accepted, but candidly informed the federal leader that any effort in Saskatchewan was doomed to failure because "so far as organization goes, Calder is the whole thing and his going and the acquiescence of the Provincial Government have left us high and dry."³⁰ He realized that without organization, money, or newspaper support, and handicapped by the War Times Election Act, the cause was already lost. The hopelessness of the situation bred frustration and bitterness, much of it directed against those Liberals who endorsed the coalition. There was little Martin could do but hope that the party could be reunited once the war ended.³¹

Despite his acceptance of Union Government, Martin's position was always somewhat ambiguous. On December 17, the day of the election, he issued a statement expressing his support for the coalition but also regret at the break with Laurier, unhappiness with the isolation of

³⁰Laurier Papers, Knowles-Laurier, 6 November 1917, p. 198103.

³¹Martin Papers, Martin-Honey, 19 November 1917, p. 24124.

French Canada, and disgust with the War Times Election Act which he condemned as "un-British and undemocratic."³² More important was an earlier declaration that his views would not be binding on other members of his government. Motherwell, Bell, Langley, and Turgeon, a majority of the cabinet, campaigned for Laurier; only Dunning and McNab joined him on the Unionist side.³³ There is some evidence suggesting that a majority of M.L.A.'s were hostile to the coalition and angry with Calder and Martin for their involvement with it.³⁴ Calder was aware the whole affair had caused tremendous bitterness and, like Martin, hoped that time and the end of the war would heal the wounds.³⁵

Though Martin was isolated within his own party his position was realistic. Like most Liberals he had a deep respect for Laurier, indeed he had spent eight years at his side, but he recognized that the popular demand for coalition government was irresistible and party considerations would have to be put aside. The election results justified his stand. As expected, the Unionists swept the province polling 82,741 votes to 32,181 for Laurier. Admittedly the results were distorted by the War-time Elections Act as eight thousand fewer individuals were eligible to vote than in 1911, despite the rapid growth of the province and the

³²Archives of Saskatchewan, C. A. Dunning Papers, Manifesto issued by Martin, 17 December 1917, p. 50127.

³³J. C. Hopkins, C.A.R. 1917, p. 571. Dunning Papers, Manifesto issued by Martin, 17 December 1917, p. 50127.

³⁴Martin Papers, MacNutt-Martin, 23 December 1917, p. 925.

"I do not understand the move or the object — remembering the reception I got from the Provincial Liberals in the Liberal campaign rooms at Regina, the attitude to Calder and the manner in which your cabinet and supporters left you practically alone in the late campaign."

Two of the more prominent M.L.A.'s to campaign for Laurier were J. Gardiner and George Scott, brother of the former premier.

³⁵Scott Papers, Calder-Scott, 19 December 1917, p. 79016.

extension of the franchise to some women.³⁶ Borden had not taken any chances.

The conscription tragedy was not Martin's only problem. Farmers again loomed as a disruptive force having become ambivalent towards the federal Liberals, though continuing to support Martin provincially. The conscription crisis was the climax rather than the cause of this indifference. It provided a final breaking point as both the S.G.G.A. and the *Grain Growers Guide* endorsed the Unionists and viewed the election results as the termination of party politics in the west.³⁷ This desire had been exemplified by the proliferation of independent candidates throughout the west in the summer of 1917, well before the formation of Union Government. Influential agrarian leaders such as J. A. Maharg, president of the S.G.G.A., R. C. Henders, president of the M.G.G.A., and J. S. Wood, vice-president of the M.G.G.A. had accepted nominations to stand as farmers' candidates.³⁸ The *Guide* had viewed these developments as the start of a process which would sweep away the old party system and regenerate the nation.

The present situation is due to a failure of party government, that fetish too long worshipped in this country. It has failed us at the time of greatest national stress we have ever faced. The bitter partizanship [sic] engendered through years of partyism has been fatal to harmony. Personal ambition and conceit have been developed more highly than national patriotism.³⁹

The Liberals had made a futile attempt to stem the tide at their Winnipeg convention by unanimously accepting the Canadian Council of Agriculture's program.⁴⁰ Unfortunately for them this action was over-

³⁶H. A. Scarrow, *Canada Votes* (New Orleans: Hauser Press, 1962).

³⁷*Grain Growers Guide*, 14 November 1917.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 27 June 1917.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 25 July 1917.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 15 August 1917.

shadowed by the conscription turmoil and the reaffirmation of faith in Laurier, an action which the *Guide* interpreted as a continuation of support for the eastern protectionist wing of the party.⁴¹ Prior to the convention, the *Guide* had urged the Liberals to sever all ties with their eastern counterparts and form a new western party dedicated to conscription and economic reform. It was disappointed in what it considered was an evasion of both issues, and conclusively dismissed the Liberals feeling they had thrown away their last chance to return to the mainstream of western opinion.

An independent farmers' party might have crystallized in 1917 had the formation of Union Government not intervened. The protest movement was briefly absorbed, mollified by the addition of T. A. Crerar to the cabinet and the election of men like Maharg and Henders as independent Unionists.⁴² However, the S.G.G.A. made it clear that farmers were only "temporarily foregoing some important internal economic reforms for the sake of the greater international cause."⁴³ Western agrarian leaders were confident their movement was unstoppable and that they now held the balance of power in national politics.⁴⁴ The 1917 federal election had destroyed the old party system and, for the first time, had given the west a decisive voice in the nation's affairs. Eastern Canada had split

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² In addition to S. A. Maharg, three other Saskatchewan members were viewed as representing the Association, though all had been elected as Liberal-Unionists. They were Andrew Knox in Prince Albert who had been a district director of the Association, J.F. Reid in Mackenzie, another former district director, and Levi Thompson of Qu'Appelle, a former vice-president. In 1921 Knox was returned as a Progressive, Reid retired, and Thompson failed to win a nomination.

⁴³ S.G.G.A. Papers, Directors' Report, 1918, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁴ S.G.G.A. Papers, 1918, pp. 6-7.

ninety-eight to eighty in favour of the coalition; its massive majority had been built up in the west where it captured fifty-four of the fifty-six seats. Westerners expected their influence to be even greater in the next campaign since redistribution would give them more seats. Leaders such as Maharg realized that the source of this power was unity. They continually stressed that if westerners did not allow themselves to be divided by party politicians or eastern business interests, they would be able to secure economic reforms by capturing political power.⁴⁵ From this attitude serious tensions would arise between the provincial Liberals, who could not afford to alienate the organized farmers, and their federal counterparts, who had already lost them.

For the moment the federal party's collapse at the polls was the chief source of internal strain, and Martin faced the task of trying to restore harmony within his government. He took the attitude that "it should be possible for men to disagree in regard to questions that arise in the Dominion and at the same time be united in so far as Provincial matters are concerned."⁴⁶ He had little other choice considering a majority of his cabinet had campaigned for Laurier and many members of the Legislature were still hostile to the coalition.⁴⁷ In May 1918, Martin was presented with an opportunity to heal some of the wounds. George Bell, the Minister of Telephones, perhaps weary of political life at sixty-two, resigned from the cabinet and was appointed chairman of the Local Government Board. Martin chose William Knowles, a former

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁶Martin Papers, Martin-Wells, 4 March 1918, p. 12087.

⁴⁷Martin Papers, Cross-Martin, 16 January 1918, p. 8345. "Looking again to the political side, I am rather surprised at the position taken up by so many members of the legislature."

member of parliament for Assiniboia West (1906-1908) and Moose Jaw (1908-1917), as his replacement. He cited Knowles' long experience, oratorical abilities, and reputation as a champion of western interests as the reasons for the selection.⁴⁸ However, whenever a politician reaches outside his caucus to recruit a cabinet minister, one suspects other considerations aside from talent. This appointment was an attempt to end the bitterness which had plagued the party since the 1917 federal election. Knowles, as the recognized leader of the Laurier Liberals in the province, was the ideal choice; his entry into the cabinet could be viewed as a symbolic end to the internal feuds.

If this was the intention it failed. The appointment caused resentment among members of the caucus who were passed over⁴⁹ and some expressed doubts about Knowles' abilities. "I am not sure that this will make for cabinet cohesion. Knowles is bright and more able than Martin, but he is erratic, an idler, and in some measures a dreamer."⁵⁰ Despite these concerns Knowles was accepted and most members grudgingly began to tolerate Martin's support of the Union Government, especially after Walter Scott, who returned to Saskatchewan in September, made a public declaration that he also endorsed the coalition.⁵¹

However, some partisan elements were still dissatisfied and found a sympathetic ear in Ottawa. The very day that Scott issued his declaration, H. M. Arnand, secretary of the Lumsden County Liberal Association, informed Laurier that he had "been repeatedly asked by many Liberals if

⁴⁸Martin Papers, Speech by Martin to the Legislature, December 1918, pp. 42875-76.

⁴⁹Scott Papers, Haslan-Scott, 12 December 1918, p. 4862.

⁵⁰Scott Papers, G. Scott-W. Scott, 9 June 1918, p. 15307.

⁵¹Regina *Morning Leader*, 19 September 1918.

the time were not ripe for a reorganization of the Party."⁵² He revealed that the cabinet was still divided although Martin appeared to have improved his position. Arnand explained that he had been in contact with Motherwell and Latta who, he felt, were the only prominent members of the government who could be relied upon.

I think I am safe in stating that they would welcome and support any move towards the re-establishment of Liberal organizations not only in this section but throughout the Province, but for reasons that I am sure you will readily understand, they could not very well take an active part at present.⁵³

Neither was prepared to embarrass Martin even though they disapproved of his policy. Arnand enunciated their common fears, remarking that the party might permanently lose those who had abandoned it over conscription if organizational work was not launched immediately. Laurier concurred. He replied that a decision to reorganize had already been taken and that J. H. Sinclair, member of parliament for Antigonish-Guysborough in Nova Scotia, had been entrusted with the responsibility.⁵⁴ It had been left to Sinclair to decide whether the Saskatchewan government ought to be invited to cooperate.⁵⁵ Sinclair had decided not to make a formal appeal but had sent copies of Laurier's decision to Motherwell, Turgeon, Langley, and Knowles, hoping they would act on the matter.⁵⁶ The failure to include Martin was an unwarranted indication of distrust. Martin's support of Union Government had always been "a bit weak-kneed

⁵²Laurier Papers, Arnand-Laurier, 19 September 1918, pp. 201300-301.

⁵³*Ibid.*

⁵⁴Laurier Papers, Laurier-Arnand, 25 September 1918, p. 201304.

⁵⁵Archives of Saskatchewan, W. R. Motherwell Papers, Laurier-Sinclair, 24 September 1918, p. 12607.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

and against the grain"⁵⁷ resulting from practical reasons such as the War Times Election Act and public opinion rather than any waning of Liberal loyalty. Martin considered the coalition a temporary expediency which would dissolve after the war ended; several times he expressed concern over what he felt was a tendency towards the formation of a permanent Union party.⁵⁸ He would have disapproved of Laurier's decision to reorganize at that time, but should have been consulted if only to maintain appearances.

This uneasy situation worsened two weeks after the armistice when Scott, now editor of the *Moose Jaw Times*, dramatically broke with the Union Government.

I am a supporter of Union Government no longer. If many men who as Liberals upheld Union Government have minds that work like I find my mind working, then Messrs. Calder, Crerar, Mewburn, Bonell, etc., will "come out from among them," without loss of time or they may as well so far as I am concerned stay with their Tory associates for keeps.⁵⁹

He condemned the coalition as "the most rankly and rottenly inefficient administration that ever cursed Canada."⁶⁰ This vehement attack was a call to arms for Liberals and aggravated the tensions within the provincial cabinet as Scott was still respected by his former associates. Most dangerous was his attitude to the Unionist-Liberals. Before issuing the statement Scott had consulted with Calder, apparently trying to persuade him to resign. He was stunned by the response.

⁵⁷ Scott Papers, Craig-Scott, 17 October 1918, p. 14724. Miss L. Craig was Martin's secretary. She had held a similar position under Scott and occasionally corresponded with him. These letters often commented on the political situation in the province. Miss Craig would also serve Dunning when he assumed the premiership.

⁵⁸ Martin Papers, Martin-Miller, 26 December 1918, p. 2038.

⁵⁹ Scott Papers, *Moose Jaw Times* editorial, 25 November 1918, p. 4.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, editorial, 13 December 1918.

I simply cannot comprehend Jim—he does not seem the same man that I worked so many years with and in whom I had such trust, for whom I had such admiration; and for whom I was willing to sacrifice almost anybody else. It seems inconceivable that one short year in such rank company as he is with, could so entirely spoil the man.⁶¹

These sentiments were shared by many Liberals who had supported Union Government out of a sense of duty, without genuine admiration for its members or its policies. Now their uncompromising outlook provoked a cabinet crisis.

Scott's declaration coincided with an emotional cabinet disagreement on a provincial matter; education had resurfaced as the burning issue in the province.⁶² Every major organization including the S.G.G.A. passed resolutions urging Martin to resolve the problem. This pressure had intensified at the annual convention of the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association which had been held in March. An acrimonious debate had erupted between the majority of delegates and the French-Canadian trustees who, while willing to allow other languages to be restricted, demanded special status for their own. The convention rejected this request, arousing public opinion; petitions, from both sides, poured into Martin's office. By August he had prepared an amendment to the School Act making English the sole language of instruction and banning the use of all other languages during school hours. French would be retained as a subject, limited to one hour a day, provided the local school board concurred. Both Motherwell and Turgeon strongly opposed the measure and threatened to resign if Martin did not relent.

⁶¹Scott Papers, Scott-Miller, 28 November 1918, p. 15170.

⁶²R. J. A. Huel, "L'Association Catholique Franco-Canadiens de la Saskatchewan." Again, the section dealing with the continuing education dispute is drawn from this account.

Amid this turmoil came Scott's break with the Union Government. On December 10 Motherwell, frustrated by the Premier's stand on both issues, tendered his resignation.

Publicly, Motherwell cited Martin's refusal to criticize the coalition as the major reason for his departure.⁶³ He admitted the Premier was not required to comment on federal affairs, but argued that in this case it was his duty to issue a statement since he had made a declaration supporting the coalition in 1917.

Walter Scott while Premier of this province, was not only Premier but was also leader of the Saskatchewan Liberals on both provincial and Dominion matters. There is no reason why these capacities should be combined in one person; in fact occasionally they are not; nevertheless in Saskatchewan, since 1905, we have grown to look upon the Premier of the Province as leader of the Liberal Party therein in all capacities. Because of that, probably nineteen out of twenty of our people look to you, regardless of the fact that this is a federal question.

These remarks implied Martin was neglecting his party duties. Motherwell felt there were many reasons why the coalition should now be rejected: it had mishandled national registration and the production campaign, especially in agriculture; it had alienated labour; it had mismanaged the railway system; it had introduced the War-time Elections Act; it had failed to return natural resources to the western provinces; it had introduced a feeble settlement program for soldiers; and it was marred by graft and corruption. Furthermore, it had delivered a "gross and unblushing insult" to farmers when it had retracted its pledge not to conscript farmers' sons. Motherwell begged the Premier to help sweep aside this "procrastinating, hopeless, impotent aggregation" which was unfit for the task of reconstruction.

⁶³Martin Papers, Motherwell-Martin, 10 December 1918, pp. 2055-69. The section dealing with the contents of Motherwell's letter of resignation, including the quotations, is drawn from this account.

You have not from now until doomsday to act on this question. A leader is needed badly, you are the only one to properly fill that position, and I implore you for the good of the nation, as well as for your own good, to do it now.

Only in the second last paragraph did Motherwell briefly refer to the language issue. In resigning Motherwell hoped either to force the Premier's hand or free himself to lead what he felt would be a fight between the privileged classes and the common people. By implication Martin's position placed him in the ranks of the former. Motherwell intended that the resignation take effect before Christmas but to his surprise Martin accepted it immediately.

I must point out to you as I have endeavoured to do from time to time during the discussions we have had recently that I cannot fully understand the reason for your position. Your statement sets out a number of matters of great interest it is true, but of Federal jurisdiction and of Federal politics and I cannot see what bearing they have on remaining a member of the Government of Saskatchewan. I am sure, you must admit that I have always left you free to take any stand you might deem proper in public or in private upon these matters and that your freedom of speech and action have in no manner been hampered by your association with the Government of which I have the honor to lead [sic].

You refer also to a certain provincial question upon which we have had differences of opinion. While differences of opinion will and must exist among members of a Government, I have always understood that once an agreement was reached the matter was closed; and it is, therefore, with some surprise that I see a reference to this incident in your statement relating to your resignation.⁶⁴

This was a position Martin had held consistently ever since the 1917 federal election; Motherwell, however, found a division between federal and provincial politics intolerable. Despite the abruptness of the Premier's acceptance of Motherwell's resignation the two parted on friendly terms, more in sorrow than in anger.⁶⁵

⁶⁴Martin Papers, Martin-Motherwell, 11 December 1918, pp. 2072-73.

⁶⁵Martin Papers, Motherwell-Martin, 12 December 1918, pp. 2074-77. He expressed similar feelings in a telegram to Scott. Scott Papers, Motherwell-Scott, 13 December 1918, p. 78105. "No ill feeling on either side on the very regrettable stand I was obliged to take."

The resignation was impulsive and unnecessary. Scott, who had inspired it unintentionally, labelled it a "fool course bringing dissension and turmoil,"⁶⁶ adding that Motherwell "never had and never will have political sense."⁶⁷ He also criticized Martin and the cabinet feeling they should have called upon Senator Ross or himself to restrain Motherwell, and persuade him to change his mind. While Scott agreed with Martin's general position, he expected that some recalcitrant member would eventually force the Premier into making some statement on Union Government by introducing a motion on an issue such as natural resources. This being the case he was puzzled by Martin's reluctance to make any comment whatsoever. Motherwell attributed this to Calder, who, he was convinced, still dominated the Premier.⁶⁸ However, Martin had very pragmatic reasons for his attitude. The Union Government still enjoyed considerable popular support; a premature break would have been regarded as an unnecessary and extreme display of partisanship and invited public censure. It would also offend the S.G.G.A. whose leader, J. A. Maharg, still sat on the Government benches hoping the coalition would carry out desired economic reforms.

A week after his resignation Motherwell, perhaps realizing the foolishness of his actions, shifted his position. He now claimed that the language dispute had motivated his departure. Even the sympathetic Turgeon admitted this was not quite accurate.⁶⁹ Possibly, because of the resignation, Martin compromised; rather than abolishing French entirely, he changed the legislation to allow its use as a language of

⁶⁶ Scott Papers, Scott-Turgeon, 13 December 1918, p. 78106.

⁶⁷ Scott Papers, Scott-Smith, 17 December 1918, pp. 78141-42.

⁶⁸ Scott Papers, Motherwell-Laurier, 7 February 1919, p. 16353.

⁶⁹ Scott Papers, Turgeon-Scott, 18 December 1918, pp. 78145-46.

instruction in grade one. Turgeon accepted the new proposal though "after much hesitation and with many misgivings."⁷⁰ This concession was attacked by the *Regina Daily Post* and the *Saskatoon Daily Star* as well as the Reverend MacKinnon who declared:

French must go, Quebec failed us during the war. . . . Let all enlightened citizens speak write and wire until French goes with German.⁷¹

In the legislative debates Martin defended his amendment on the grounds of historical rights while at the same time stressing that the proposal would allow the French language but one-third of the privileges it enjoyed under Regulation 17 in Ontario.⁷² Motherwell was confused by this change. He was pleased that Martin had come round to his way of thinking⁷³ but began to feel that he had been "jockeyed out of the cabinet."⁷⁴

Mr. Martin [he remarked] is a very vacillating man . . . and there is no telling just yet what he is going to do until it is done. Something else may happen today that will send him back to where he was yesterday.⁷⁵

This was the true cause of Motherwell's departure; he felt the Premier was incapable of leadership and refused "to follow a leader who apparently does not know where he is leading himself to."⁷⁶ Motherwell seemed incapable of appreciating the sound reasoning which caused Martin to remain temporarily in the Unionist camp.

⁷⁰Scott Papers, Motherwell-Laurier, 12 December 1918, p. 78098.

⁷¹Quote cited in R. J. A. Huel, "L'Association Catholique Franco-Canadiens de la Saskatchewan."

⁷²Martin Papers, Martin-Rothwell, 20 December 1918, p. 18412.

⁷³Scott Papers, Motherwell-Laurier, December 1918, p. 78131.

⁷⁴Scott Papers, Scott-Laurier, December 1918, p. 78163.

⁷⁵Scott Papers, Scott-Laurier, 1 December 1918, p. 78131.

⁷⁶Scott Papers, Motherwell-Scott, 13 December 1918, p. 78105.

The resignation was poorly received by rank and file Liberals. George Scott noted this discontent, also expressing doubts about the Premier's judgement and remarking that the party had been somewhat uneasy during the session following Motherwell's resignation.⁷⁷ Another observer commented that "many of the local members feel as Motherwell does, but without leadership, they simply nurse their bitterness."⁷⁸ These annoying qualms perhaps contributed to the Premier's rough handling of Motherwell. It almost appears as if he took advantage of the impulsive resignation to assert his position and rid himself of a minister whose partisanship had become a liability, who had little regard for his leadership, and who had been a constant source of dissension within the party and the government. Privately Martin blamed Scott for his troubles, feeling the ex-premier had created the mess with his editorials in the *Moose Jaw Times*.⁷⁹

To make matters worse federal affairs remained unsettled.

The Dominion political situation is one which of course causes me a good deal of anxiety as no one can tell what is going to happen and the ultimate effect on provincial governments may be very serious, however I agree with you that no move should be made in regard to Union Government at the present time. I do think, however, that in our legislature it will be necessary for us to pass certain resolutions setting forth the western policy on certain questions. If we do not do this someone else is very liable to do it for us.⁸⁰

The Premier feared that several new parties would be created, placing all incumbent governments in an awkward position.⁸¹ His own inclina-

⁷⁷Scott Papers, G. Scott-W. Scott, 6 January 1919, p. 15302.

⁷⁸Scott Papers, Bole-Scott, 14 December 1918, p. 14607.

⁷⁹Martin Papers, Martin-Ross, 7 January 1919, pp. 3491-92.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

⁸¹Martin Papers, Martin-Patterson, 5 February 1919, p. 3346.

tion was to devote himself solely to provincial politics, hoping to
escape untouched from the federal turmoil.⁸²

⁸²Scott Papers, Martin-Scott, 27 December 1918, p. 15160.

CHAPTER III

THE INTENSIFICATION OF AGRARIAN UNREST

In February 1919 over two thousand people gathered in Regina to attend the annual convention of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association. It was to be one of the most important in the Association's history, as delegates would be asked to decide whether they should enter the political arena as an independent entity. For months there had been persistent agitation for such action. The S.G.G.A. executive had already discussed the proposal at a meeting in December concluding the Association could no longer reject the demands of its adherents to help organize supporters of the New National Party.¹ Only J. B. Musselman had strongly objected to using its name and prestige for such purposes, but by February, after the United Farmers of Alberta and the Manitoba Grain Growers Association both endorsed the proposition, he realized the sentiment was inexorable and resolved "to attempt to guide the movement along sane and rational lines."²

The Martin government, anxious to maintain its harmonious relationship with the Association and discourage any entry into the provincial field, had come to the same conclusion. In an attempt to mollify the farmers Martin, Langley, and Latta addressed the convention, while Dunning and Charles Hamilton, who was to become Minister of Agriculture

¹S.G.G.A. Papers, Musselman-Motherwell, 17 June 1921, 1921 Election File.

²*Ibid.*

in 1920, were also prominent at the proceedings.³ The Premier assured the convention that the provincial government would continue to sympathize with its representations and attempts to secure desired legislation.⁴ He agreed that agriculture had never been given proper consideration in the formation of the country's fiscal policies, calling for tariff reductions and endorsing the New National Party. However, he urged the delegates to approach the subject in a spirit of moderation keeping in mind that Canada must remain a united nation. With this speech Martin identified with the mood of the west, taking a position which the Convention would subsequently assume, thereby emerging as an agrarian spokesman rather than a partisan political figure.

Langley was far more blunt. He also endorsed the farmers' platform, which he had helped draft, but emphasized that he opposed the Association's entry into party politics.⁵ He reminded delegates that the Association's successes resulted from the ability of men of various political persuasions to work together to achieve common goals, and warned that entering politics would destroy this unity.⁶ Most agrarian leaders shared this apprehension. They realized the New National Policy left open the possibility that a third federal party would be formed, but hoped that farmers would choose to support candidates from the old parties who pledged themselves to secure implementation of the program.⁷ To this Langley had no objection, as long as the Association itself remained aloof.

³S.G.G.A. Papers, 1919, p. 4.

⁴Martin Papers, pp. 43038-39.

⁵S.G.G.A. Papers, 1919, p. 67.

⁶S.G.G.A. Papers, 1919, p. 9.

⁷W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, p. 64.

Others disagreed. Salem Bland, an exponent of the social gospel who was a guest speaker at the convention, declared it would be impossible to return to the old parties.

We are no longer Liberals or Conservatives but Canadians, and while farmers should be the main base of the new party it should also seek support among the workers, returned soldiers, and anyone else attracted by reform.⁸

He urged the convention "to start a new movement which may mean the regeneration of Canada."⁹ Bland's eloquent plea was nullified by the refusal of the S.G.G.A. executive to endorse the proposal. J. A. Maharg, its president, indicated he preferred farmers in each constituency to take the initiative themselves.¹⁰ As an example, he alluded to his own nomination in 1917, which had not involved the Association. R. McKenzie, acting secretary of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, concurred.

All that is necessary for us is for farmers in each electoral district to get together, select one of ourselves as a candidate to represent us in parliament and after we have selected him to elect him. . . . One thing we want to forget the term Grit and Tory."¹¹

While not opposing the farmers' entry into politics it was obvious the executive was reluctant to involve the Association in the process. Musselman suggested that the Association limit itself to providing facilities through which interested farmers could organize and establish a separate political association.¹² The executive, convinced that prolonged political involvement would destroy the Association's effectiveness, hoped this would satisfy the demands of the majority for action yet leave

⁸S.G.G.A. Papers, 1919, p. 9.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰S.G.G.A. Papers, 1919, p. 78.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²S.G.G.A. Papers, 1919, p. 82. Thomas Sales, a director of the Association who was elected as a Progressive in Saltcoats in 1921, also agreed with this suggestion.

the Association untouched by the consequences. All that remained was to persuade the delegates that this was the wisest path to follow.

Musselman was horrified to find that the first resolution presented from the floor proposed to turn the Association into a political party; he begged the convention to refrain from such a serious mistake.¹³ Much to his relief the following resolution was ultimately adopted after a heated discussion.

Therefore be it resolved that the Central Board be hereby authorized on request of one quarter of the Locals therein to call conventions in the Federal Constituencies of Saskatchewan under such restrictions as to units of representation and credentials as it may decide of supporters of the Farmers' National Political Program for the purpose of providing convenient facilities by which they may organize themselves so that they may best secure the election to parliament of suitable representatives.¹⁴

This proposal satisfied the executive as it committed the Association only in the initial stages and retained the possibility of endorsing candidates from one of the old parties.

Martin seemed unconcerned by what had transpired, an indication he shared the executive's hopes. He was still troubled by the confused situation in Ottawa, continuing his half-hearted support of the Borden government despite incessant criticism from Motherwell. The former minister had embarked upon a speaking tour of the province, ostensibly to explain why he had resigned from the cabinet. At his first meeting in Kindersley, on February 26, he strongly denounced Martin's refusal to discuss federal politics, claiming this negligence invited other organizations to take the lead.¹⁵ Apparently the S.G.G.A. convention had

¹³S.G.G.A. Papers, Musselman-Motherwell, 17 June 1921, 1921 Election File.

¹⁴S.G.G.A. Papers, 1919, p. 83.

¹⁵Saskatoon *Daily Star*, 27 February 1919.

alarmed him; he feared the Liberals might be displaced federally unless vigorous action was taken quickly. Motherwell urged the Premier to summon a convention to reunite the party and capitalize on the growing discontent, a suggestion which demonstrated his naiveté. He also resurrected his old charge that Martin was only nominally premier, remarking that Calder really called the tunes. Martin ignored this attack, and continued to move cautiously in the federal sphere, though he began to detach himself from the Unionists. His first opportunity came in March when Munro Cameron, the Liberal M.L.A. for Saskatoon County, introduced a series of resolutions into the legislature demanding tariff reductions, the return of the province's natural resources, and the repeal of the War-time Elections Act. Implicitly they were a condemnation of the Borden government. The resolutions were unanimously accepted and presented to the Governor-General as a petition.¹⁶ This action coincided with a corresponding change in the *Grain Growers Guide's* editorials, which became increasingly impatient with the Unionists and urged western parliamentarians to produce tangible results.¹⁷ A similar sentiment pervaded the Canadian Council of Agriculture; at a meeting in early April considerable enthusiasm was shown for political action though there was no talk yet of forming a separate party.¹⁸

Martin was disturbed by this growing frustration. He feared events might soon place him in a position as awkward as that of 1917, and while still avoiding an open break with the Unionists, he sensed that "the time is fast approaching when some definite action will be required."¹⁹

¹⁶*Grain Growers Guide*, 5 March 1919.

¹⁷*Grain Growers Guide*, 26 March 1919.

¹⁸*Grain Growers Guide*, 9 April 1919.

¹⁹Martin Papers, Martin-Ross, 17 March 1919, p. 3495.

Calder created the circumstances when he finally responded to the demands of prominent Liberals for his resignation from the Borden government and return to his former allegiances. He stunned westerners by stating that he would remain a Unionist and warning that tariff reforms would have to await a solution to the problems of reconstruction.²⁰ On March 26, in a major speech at Tisdale, Martin replied to this declaration. He emphasized that the west was determined to secure substantial tariff reductions and rebuked eastern critics who were attempting to discredit the proposal by equating it with Bolshevism.²¹ The Premier attacked Calder's views, arguing that future revisions would prove arduous if industries were allowed to re-establish themselves on the old tariff. For the first time, aside from his denunciation of the War-time Elections Act, Martin publicly criticized the Unionists. He charged that the cabinet and several western M.P.'s had struck a bargain whereby a commission would be appointed to study tariff alterations and a new franchise bill, similar to the War-time Elections Act, passed, in exchange for continued parliamentary support.²² The Premier dismissed the commission as a decoy and censured this attempt to create a permanent Unionist party through gerrymandering. He warned the Borden government that it faced bleak electoral prospects if it persisted in political maneuvering and failed to comply on the tariff; not once did he mention the Liberals.

Though severely critical, Martin had avoided a sweeping condemna-

²⁰Saskatoon *Daily Star*, 3 March 1919.

²¹Martin Papers, Tisdale Speech, pp. 43024-31.

²²R. C. Henders, President of the M.G.G.A. and a Unionist M.P., was one of those involved in this deal. He continued to support the government after other agrarian leaders left it in June over the tariff question. Consequently he was unceremoniously forced to relinquish his position in the farmers' movement. See *Grain Growers Guide*, 30 July 1919.

tion of the government. Western agrarian leaders were inclined to await the federal budget before determining their future course; consequently, they still sat on the government benches. The Premier, not wishing to embarrass them by repudiating a government they still supported, chose his words with care. Nevertheless he again emerged as a relentless advocate of tariff reform, reinforcing his image and prestige. Motherwell was dismayed by the Tisdale speech; he regarded it a betrayal of the federal party. "The apathy and inaction of Premier Martin [he declared] . . . has been largely responsible for imposing upon the Grain Growers the duty of action."²³ Martin was irritated by these unremitting admonishments even though his remarks had been well received by other prominent Liberals.²⁴

He felt trapped between partisan Liberals such as Motherwell, who demanded vigorous action to revive the federal party, and the Grain Growers, who seemed determined to form a new one regardless of their leaders. Martin could not afford to alienate the latter, yet was tied to the former by sentiment, belief, and friendship. A similar dilemma faced the S.G.G.A. executive which had to contend with incompatible elements within the Association. Criticism of its actions had become so widespread that the executive felt compelled to respond.

More subtle and vastly more dangerous . . . are the countless forces which are constantly sowing the seeds of carping criticism, of suspicion of leaders, of jealousy, of discontent and of dissatisfaction amongst the farmers all over the Province. . . . This is one of the very old methods which the enemies of a movement of the people always resort to and it is amazing that so many farmers have so little faith in their kind that they are ever

²³Scott Papers, Motherwell-Scott, 2 April 1919, p. 16376.

²⁴Martin Papers, Martin-Ross, 19 April 1919, p. 3499; Scott Papers, Scott-Motherwell, 9 April 1919, p. 16363.

prone to believe suggestions of evil of their own most carefully selected leaders for no other reason than because they are in leadership.²⁵

The Retail Merchants' Association, long an adamant enemy of the S.G.G.A., and disgruntled adherents of the Non-Partisan League, who blamed the executive for its demise, were two sources of discontent. However, the most serious reprimands came from within the Association, from Liberals who opposed entry into party politics and suspected the executive of encouraging such action, and from farmers who favoured the move and feared it was attempting to forestall them. Both questioned the executive's motives and accused it of complicity in plots to further the other's designs. These charges intensified throughout 1919 when the executive tried to restrain the drive towards the formation of a third party while, at the same time, participating in the process. This ambiguity had arisen after the February convention when Musselman began arranging for meetings of supporters of the New National Policy who were interested in political involvement. He circulated a questionnaire inquiring whether the meetings should nominate candidates or merely establish an organization. Ninety-five percent of the locals replied that they also wished to choose candidates.²⁶ Musselman was alarmed by this response since the conventions, scheduled for June, would have to be called on the basis of the Association's local units and he feared that any candidates selected would be so closely aligned with the Association that it would, in effect, become a political party. After consulting several of his colleagues Musselman resolved to prevent any nomina-

²⁵S.G.G.A. Papers, 1919, p. 82.

²⁶S.G.G.A. Papers, Musselman-Motherwell, 17 June 1921, 1921 Election File.

tions. Three days before the first convention he called a meeting of the full board of directors and, after several hours of argument, persuaded them to ratify his position. He then attended every convention to ensure that they adhered to the executive's wishes. Only on a few occasions was there any dissent, motivated mostly by groups supporting a particular candidate who did not want to lose the opportunity of securing his selection. By the end of June farmers, with the assistance of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, had established independent political organizations in each federal constituency.²⁷ Only Musselman's prompt intervention, supported by the executive, had prevented them from forming a distinct political party, much to the chagrin of the more radical elements.

In early June, coinciding with the first conventions, the Union Government presented its budget which lacked significant tariff revisions. Consequently Thomas Crerar, the Minister of Agriculture, resigned. He shifted to the opposition benches accompanied by eight western Unionists including J. A. Maharg; instead of sitting with the Liberals they formed an independent parliamentary group. The *Guide* viewed these developments as the dawn of a new age.

From all this the organized farmers and the unorganized farmers must learn their lesson. They must get down to business and organize in real earnest. They must see that at the next election no member is elected from the prairie provinces, at least, unless he can be relied upon to support the cause of the organized farmers as set forth in the farmers' platform. It will be of no use to elect a Tory candidate, nor a Grit candidate, nor a Union candidate, no matter what their pledges or their promises may be. If they are elected as supporters of these parties they will stand by their parties first, last, and all the time.²⁸

²⁷W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party*, p. 65. Also see the *Grain Growers Guide*, 25 June 1919 over 9 July 1919, for reports of the actual proceedings at the conventions.

²⁸*Grain Growers Guide*, 11 June 1919. The issue is actually dated 21 May 1919 on the cover but is a composite issue spanning several

However, many agrarian leaders still hoped to change one of the old parties, preferably the Liberals, converting them into exponents of western and rural interests. It has been suggested that the actions of the Canadian Council of Agriculture in early 1919 were designed to encourage the Liberals into adopting the farmers' platform intact.²⁹ This was certainly a possibility since the party had already scheduled a convention to draft a new program and, after Laurier's death on February 17, 1919, to choose a new leader; actions which would facilitate an attempt to create a different image. Undoubtedly many Liberals would regard this an effective means of restoring the party's fortunes throughout the prairies and rural Ontario.

Martin shared these sentiments and added his prestige to the effort to convince Liberals to accept the New National Policy. On June 17 at Weyburn, he finally repudiated the Borden government thereby keeping in step with the agrarian leaders, as he had ever since the formation of the coalition.

While I believe [he declared amid prolonged applause] that a reorganized Liberal Party with a progressive platform is the best medium of expression for western opinion, I do not intend, nor do the people of Saskatchewan intend, to slavishly follow the Liberal party or any other party. The people of this country want a clean-cut low tariff policy. They want no trimming on the question and if the Liberal convention at Ottawa does not announce itself in unmistakable terms on this all important question then we in this province will require to take other measures . . .³⁰

Coming from a Liberal, the message was especially unequivocal. The

weeks. This occurred because the *Guide's* presses were shut down during the Winnipeg General Strike.

²⁹W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party*, pp. 65-66. If this was the case, which seems likely, then it was another reason for Musselman's vigorous actions to prevent the selection of candidates at the June conventions.

³⁰Report of the Weyburn Review in Martin Papers, p. 44128.

federal party must either comply with western views or be abandoned even by its most devoted followers. Martin assured Thomas Crerar that if the federal Liberals refused to endorse the farmers' platform his government would renounce its Liberal allegiance and support a western radical party which would undoubtedly be formed under such circumstances.³¹ J. W. Dafoe reported that Crerar, Langley, and Dunning were trying to arrange a suitable deal, but he suspected events had slipped out of their control.³²

Most members of the Saskatchewan government realized their predicament even before the federal party's convention. A typical example was J. A. Dowd, M.L.A. for Kerrobert (1917-1926). The federal Liberals had scheduled a meeting in his riding to select delegates to their national convention. Dowd had attended but discovered that many prominent former Liberals would not because they had pledged their support to the new political associations the farmers had established in June.³³ However, most had assured him of their continued endorsement of the provincial Liberal party. Dowd was convinced the Grain Growers now intended to place a candidate in every seat, regardless of Liberal actions in Ottawa.

The unhappy position which I find myself in is that I have to support the farmers' man if I wish to be elected when the next time comes.³⁴

This problem faced every provincial member; Martin could offer no solu-

³¹Ramsay Cook, ed., *The Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, 1919-1927* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., 1966), Dafoe-Sifton, 21 July 1919, p. 4.

³²Ramsay Cook, ed., *The Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence, 1919-1927*, Dafoe-Sifton, 24 July 1919, p. 9.

³³Martin Papers, Dowd-Martin, 14 July 1919, pp. 2663-64.

³⁴*Ibid.*

tion but hope that time would ease the difficulties.³⁵

Prior to the federal convention there was considerable speculation that Martin would seek the leadership; the *Fredericton Gleaner* first raised the possibility on February 17, the day of Laurier's death.³⁶ On the surface Martin seemed an attractive candidate; he was young, charming, a proven politician, a gifted orator, and a westerner. In February, Mackenzie King regarded Martin as his strongest opponent, mostly because he would have "a strong western influence and is a practical politician."³⁷ By April, after a realistic appraisal of his chances, the *Regina Leader* reported that Martin had confided to friends that he would not seek the leadership. Several factors militated against his candidacy. First of all he had been a Unionist; therefore unacceptable to numerous Liberals who had remained loyal to Laurier. King regarded this a major disadvantage, convinced the convention would choose a Laurier Liberal if forced to decide between the two.³⁸ The provincial language dispute was another constriction for Martin's legislation destroyed any hopes of support from the Quebec delegation.³⁹ Equally damaging were the doubts Motherwell had kindled. For example, the *Montreal Star* referred to Martin as "an amiable, plausible chap, with no black marks on his political record, but apparently without the ability and punch required to pilot an opposition

³⁵Martin Papers, Martin-Dowd, 21 July 1919, p. 2666.

³⁶*Saskatoon Daily Star*, 28 February 1919.

³⁷Public Archives of Canada, W. L. M. King Diaries, 18-22 February 1919, p. 63026.

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹Scott Papers, Scott-Calder, 25 February 1919, p. 15128. ". . . his language mix-up puts him out of the running permanently—he can never touch Quebec now." Similar sentiments were expressed in a letter to Motherwell, 9 April 1919, p. 16363.

party to victory.⁴⁰ Such reports would hardly enhance the chances of any leadership aspirant. The position Martin had assumed at Tisdale and Weyburn, where he had insisted that the party must adopt a radical program committed to tariff revision, was another liability. While this stance would appeal to westerners and farmers in Ontario, it alienated the influential protectionist wing of the party.⁴¹ Martin's potential support was quite limited and he was never a serious contender, regardless of persistent newspaper reports to the contrary. It is difficult to account for their continued interest since Martin discouraged it;⁴² the publicity, if anything, was damaging because it identified the Premier with an increasingly unpopular party, at least on the prairies. One can only conclude the press misread the situation. Indeed, Martin could not even command undivided support from his own province. Motherwell would never endorse him; Knowles was questionable because of the conscription crisis, and Turgeon was offended by the language legislation.⁴³ Scott was also disenchanted with his successor. "All is not gold that glitters. I suspect that Martin, in whom I saw no flaw, has a serious one concealed about his person somewhere."⁴⁴ While this opposition would not have been decisive at the convention, it would certainly have been embarrassing. Finally, Martin did not seem to want the job. "Even if it were offered me [he remarked], I don't know that I would

⁴⁰Clipping from the *Montreal Star*, 14 July 1919, in Martin Papers, p. 44117.

⁴¹Clipping from the *Regina Morning Leader*, 20 May 1919, in Martin Papers, p. 44120.

⁴²Clipping from the *Regina Morning Leader*, 21 May 1919, in Martin Papers, 44123.

⁴³Scott Papers, Scott-King, 8 October 1919, p. 78190.

⁴⁴Scott Papers, Scott-Calder, 25 February 1919, p. 15728.

take it."⁴⁵ His reluctance is understandable for the federal Liberal leadership in 1919 was not particularly attractive; the party lay in ruins, its chances of recovery in the west appeared slim, and the party system seemed to be fragmenting into several class-oriented factions.

Though he led a large delegation to the convention, Martin continued to maintain a certain detachment from the federal party, emphasizing that his ultimate allegiances depended on the new platform. This attitude was likely intended to influence eastern delegates on the tariff issue, but it alarmed partisan Liberals such as Motherwell who grew even more suspicious of the Premier's party loyalty. Martin's role at the convention was limited, and discreet; he seconded the Premier of Alberta's resolution on natural resources and was one of W. S. Fielding's nominators.⁴⁶ Neither action could provoke much controversy at home since the public was in agreement on the resources question and Fielding still evoked warm memories because of his attempted introduction of reciprocity in 1911.

The convention accepted the farmers' fiscal program but it quickly became evident this was no longer enough. Too many years of frustration and shattered expectations had accumulated for farmers to take this conversion seriously. The *Grain Growers Guide* reminded its readers of the equally radical platform the Liberals had adopted in 1893 which had been promptly discarded once they had achieved power.⁴⁷ It accused the Liberals of political opportunism even though George Langley, a trusted

⁴⁵Clipping from the *Regina Morning Leader*, 21 May 1919, in Martin Papers, p. 44123.

⁴⁶D. Smith, *Prairie Liberalism*, p. 159; Martin Papers, King-Martin, 26 August 1944, p. 44544. In this letter King remarks that Martin voted for Fielding in 1919.

⁴⁷*Grain Growers Guide*, 13 August 1919.

friend, had moved the tariff resolution. The *Guide* was also perturbed by the manifest reluctance with which the Quebec delegation and the protectionists had accepted the proposal, which, it pointed out, did not even include the repudiation of protection as a principle.⁴⁸ Mackenzie King, the new leader, was another liability; most westerners had supported Fielding as King was not well known on the prairies.⁴⁹ For example, Scott reported that before the convention he could not find one man in fifty in the west who regarded King as a serious contender.⁵⁰ The *Guide* greeted King's accession with indifference, declaring it was uncertain of his stand on many vital issues.⁵¹ King, in his acceptance speech, caused much of this lack of interest with an inopportune reference to the new Liberal platform as a chart for general guidance rather than a set of specific instructions.⁵² Nothing could have been better calculated to arouse western skepticism. In his attempts to mollify the protectionists by refraining from an explicit endorsement of the tariff plank, King jettisoned his last opportunity to recapture the prairies and rural Ontario.

Martin seemed disappointed by the convention. He remarked that it was as good a gathering as could be expected under the circumstances; hardly a ringing endorsement of the new leader.⁵³ It reinforced his belief that an agrarian party would be formed which would divide the low

⁴⁸W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party*, p. 80.

⁴⁹This is the view of J. W. Dafoe, see R. Cook, ed., *The Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence*, 26 August 1919, p. 12.

⁵⁰Public Archives of Canada, W. L. M. King Papers, Scott-King, 10 August 1919, p. 43819.

⁵¹*Grain Growers Guide*, 13 August 1919.

⁵²W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party*, p. 81.

⁵³Martin Papers, Martin-Ross, 9 September 1919, p. 3501.

tariff vote between Liberals and Grain Growers.⁵⁴ By September, he had concluded nothing would prevent the farmers from running their own candidates.⁵⁵

This creates a very awkward position for us as it will never do in this province to run counter to them. As a matter of fact, I do not see very much difference between electing a Grain Grower or a Liberal in our rural constituencies.

Perhaps it might be well to endeavor as far as possible to have our friends, particularly in certain rural seats, support the Grain Grower candidates.⁵⁶

The Premier realized this pragmatic approach would not meet with the approval of strong party men but felt there was no other option. This did not mean that he was prepared to relinquish every rural seat; for example, he advised J. F. Johnston, M.P. for Last Mountain, to organize his renomination quickly because the riding could be held.⁵⁷ Martin's approach was flexible. Constituencies which could not be won ought to be graciously surrendered, those which could be won should select a candidate before the Grain Growers, thereby shifting upon them the onus of splitting the progressive vote.

The farmers completed their drive into federal politics in early September. On the seventeenth, eighty-four representatives selected at the June conventions met with the S.G.G.A. executive in Regina to formulate plans for the next federal election. A constitution was drafted and an executive elected, creating a provincial organization which was revealingly entitled the 'New National Policy Political Association' (N.N.P.P.A.), a label which judiciously avoided the disagreeable connota-

⁵⁴Martin Papers, Martin-Robson, 27 August 1919, p. 3482-83.

⁵⁵Martin Papers, Martin-Ross, 8 September 1919, pp. 3501-02.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷Martin Papers, Martin-Johnston, 27 September 1919, p. 24131.

tions of the word party.⁵⁸ The Grain Growers also expressed their utter contempt for the old parties firmly reiterating that they would enter the political arena as an independent force. Much to Martin's discomfort they also deliberated involvement in provincial politics, but after an emotional debate concluded they lacked a mandate for such action, leaving the resolution of the issue to the 1920 S.G.G.A. Convention. There was no doubt that the N.N.P.P.A. commanded the allegiance of the vast majority of the province's farmers; it had the largest, most effective political organization and by November was able to report it had already received over fifty thousand dollars in contributions.⁵⁹

These developments were indicative of the general trend throughout the prairies but it was not until the Assiniboia by-election that the situation slipped beyond redemption for the federal Liberals. The seat had been vacant since September of 1918 when John Turiff, a Liberal Unionist, had been elevated to the senate. After delaying as long as possible the Borden government reluctantly scheduled a by-election for October 27, 1919. At the Ottawa convention in August Martin had assured King that a Liberal would promptly be nominated to contest the riding.⁶⁰ After consulting with local Liberals upon his return, and perceiving that the convention had failed to check the party's decline, Martin became more cautious and informed King he wished to avoid any conflict with the Grain Growers. He proposed that the Liberals delay their convention until the farmers revealed their intentions, indicating he would be reluc-

⁵⁸*Grain Growers Guide*, 1 October 1919.

⁵⁹*Saskatoon Daily Star*, 12 November 1919.

⁶⁰King Diaries, 5-9 August 1919, p. 63147; King Papers, King-Martin, 11 August 1919, p. 41731.

tant to oppose their choice should they run.⁶¹ At first King seemed to agree and left matters to the Premier's judgement.⁶² Martin's prudence was quickly rewarded; on September 17 the N.N.P.P.A. announced that it would field a candidate.⁶³ It appeared that an open clash between the Liberals and the Grain Growers had been averted. A troubled Motherwell, acting on his misconceptions, now intervened. He was appalled by Martin's willingness to surrender the seat, and, after a stormy but fruitless meeting with the Premier, implored King to resist the farmers.⁶⁴ King was persuaded and pressed Martin to initiate a nomination.⁶⁵ The Premier reiterated his opposition to such a cause. "Our judgement has always been that if the Grain Growers nominated a man whose past record with respect to Liberal policies has been consistent, we should all support him."⁶⁶ He warned King that the party would surely lose any contest and that a majority of Liberals thought it better to yield than to incur the enmity of the farmers.⁶⁷

The N.N.P.P.A. convention ought to have convinced everyone of the wisdom of Martin's position and ended all thoughts of a Liberal nominee. Eighteen candidates presented themselves and after five ballots the four hundred and ninety delegates in attendance selected Oliver R. Gould.⁶⁸ Gould's record was impeccable. He had left the Conservatives in 1911

⁶¹ King Papers, Martin-King, 16 August 1919, p. 41736.

⁶² King Papers, King-Martin, 30 August 1919, p. 41737.

⁶³ *Grain Growers Guide*, 1 October 1919.

⁶⁴ King Papers, Motherwell-King, 23 August 1919, pp. 41976, 41981; Martin-Motherwell, 3 September 1919, p. 41989-90.

⁶⁵ King Papers, King-Martin, 5 September 1919, pp. 41740-41.

⁶⁶ King Papers, Martin-King, 30 September 1919, pp. 41748-49.

⁶⁷ King Papers, Martin-King, 8 September 1919, p. 41742.

⁶⁸ *Grain Growers Guide*, 15 October 1919.

over reciprocity and became a prominent Liberal worker in the provincial campaigns of 1912 and 1917.⁶⁹ It was widely rumored he intended to seek election to the Legislature once the incumbent in his area retired. In the opinion of the provincial government this background made his independence and sincerity unquestionable and left nothing to campaign against. Furthermore, it had been revealed at the meeting, that over nine thousand people had already contributed to the campaign.⁷⁰ Assuming that a contribution indicates a commitment, this was more than enough to sweep the election.

Motherwell, not one to be deterred by hard realities, responded by foolishly accepting a Liberal nomination from a convention attended by only thirty-seven voting delegates. Understandably, Martin was dismayed. He was convinced that Motherwell would be hopelessly defeated and was alarmed by the consequences. "The real danger is that he will dig a gulf between the Grain Growers and the Liberal Party that may involve us all in ruin."⁷¹ Since the Unionists did not run a candidate the Liberals seemed the only obstacle to the farmers' movement. Martin begged King to secure Motherwell's withdrawal before irreparable damage was done.⁷² He also dispatched Turgeon, Knowles, and McNab to Assiniboia to persuade Motherwell to relinquish this nomination and accept one in Saltcoats.⁷³ However, Motherwell was determined to stay in the race, encouraged by a letter he had received from King. Langley and Dunning were so incensed they considered going into Assiniboia and campaigning for Gould.⁷⁴ Although a

⁶⁹Scott Papers, Turgeon-Scott, 3 October 1919, pp. 78179-85.

⁷⁰*Grain Growers Guide*, 15 October 1919.

⁷¹Scott Papers, Turgeon-Scott, 3 October 1919, pp. 78179-85.

⁷²King Papers, Martin-King, 30 September 1919, pp. 41748-49.

⁷³Scott Papers, Turgeon-Scott, 3 October 1919, pp. 78179-85.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

number of private members sympathized with Motherwell no one except James Gardiner dared to assist him for fear of antagonizing farmers in their own seats. Scott and Sydney Fisher, King's national organizer, were his only other notable supporters. Both had also endeavoured to convince Motherwell to retire and had reluctantly agreed to remain when his obstinacy proved insurmountable.⁷⁵

As predicted, the election was a disaster for the Liberals. Gould won by over five thousand votes; Motherwell, unsobered by defeat, blamed Martin for the loss. He resented being left on his own and suspected that the Premier, along with Langley and Dunning, had struck an informal bargain with Musselman pledging to drop out of the federal field if the farmers stayed out of provincial politics.⁷⁶ If this was true it was a consequence, rather than a cause of his defeat, and a frank admission of what the by-election revealed to everyone; the Liberals were no longer a federal force in the province. Motherwell had only aggravated the situation by endangering the provincial government. "I frankly say to you [Scott told him] . . . that you have never possessed, do not possess, and never will possess the sagacity of a mosquito in relation to elections or political management."⁷⁷

The Assiniboia by-election was not an isolated triumph for the far-

⁷⁵Scott Papers, Scott-King, 8 October 1919, p. 78190; King Papers, Fisher-King, 13 October 1919, p. 38964.

⁷⁶Scott Papers, Motherwell-Scott, October 1919, pp. 78173-74. This certainly seems to have been a possibility. The King Papers contain an undated memorandum of the text of the agreement whereby Motherwell was to withdraw from Assiniboia and be accepted by the Grain Growers of Saltcoats. Both Martin and the officers of the S.G.G.A. were parties to the understanding. Since Motherwell refused, the agreement was never signed. Even so it soon became evident that the S.G.G.A. executive opposed entry into provincial politics and Martin withdrew completely from federal affairs, suggesting that some consensus had been reached. This will be explored in detail in the next chapter. See King Papers, pp. 38962-63.

⁷⁷Scott Papers, Scott-Motherwell, 3 November 1919, p. 16262.

mers; that same month they swept contests in diverse areas such as New Brunswick, Ontario, and Manitoba. In addition, the United Farmers of Ontario scored a remarkable victory in a provincial election forming the government with the support of twelve Labour members. These successes had an electrifying effect. An elated *Guide* declared the revolution was in process, "peaceful, constitutional, but irresistible."⁷⁸ Its pages were filled with a new-found confidence. Even the normally subdued Musselman interpreted these events as the "death-blow to Liberalism, Toryism, and Unionism."⁷⁹ As Martin had feared, the defeat of a strong Liberal candidate had generated such great expectations that it would be difficult to mollify the farmers in the future.

The provincial party did not escape untouched from Motherwell's folly despite intense efforts to dissociate itself from his candidacy. In early November two S.G.G.A. locals in the provincial riding of Kindersley, which Motherwell had vacated to run in Assiniboia, decided to nominate a farmer to contest the by-election as an Independent.⁸⁰ They cited Motherwell's campaign and Martin's attendance of the National Liberal Convention, an action they felt revealed his true allegiances, as the reasons for their disenchantment with the provincial government.⁸¹ The Liberals held their nominating convention simultaneously with that of the Grain Growers and tried to select the farmers' nominee, W. H. Harvey, as a joint candidate; he repudiated their endorsement.⁸² Not

⁷⁸*Grain Growers Guide*, 5 November 1919.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*

⁸⁰*Saskatoon Daily Star*, 5 November 1919.

⁸¹Clipping from the *Montreal Star*, 12 November 1919, in King Papers, p. 42135.

⁸²*Saskatoon Daily Star*, 10 November 1919.

wishing to repeat the federal party's errors in Assiniboia, the Liberals gave way and allowed Harvey to win by acclamation. The most disturbing aspect of the affair was Langley's failure to dissuade the farmers; he had gone to Kindersley but had been asked not to attend their convention.⁸³ Even Musselman was strongly rebuked when he criticized the Grain Growers for their unauthorized use of the Association for election purposes.⁸⁴ It seemed that the agrarian movement was slipping out of control and turning against all incumbent politicians. Harvey exemplified this attitude by insisting that he was the first representative of the farmers' movement in the House, a statement which provoked an angry reply from Dunning.

When did I cease to be a representative of the farmers' movement in this Legislature? . . .

All my public life has been spent in the grain growers movement. My connection with it is possibly more intimate than any member of this House. I stand where I stood. The principles which the grain growers organization through a long period of years instilled into me are there to stay.⁸⁵

This challenge to Dunning's credentials was but one indication of growing militancy. As 1919 drew to a close Martin was a very troubled man. The federal Liberal Party had collapsed beyond repair and had become a serious liability. He could no longer concern himself with its plight. The survival of his government was now at stake as farmers threatened to enter provincial politics.

⁸³*Ibid.*

⁸⁴Dunning Papers, Report of 1920 S.G.G.A. Convention, pp. 1005-18.

⁸⁵Dunning Papers, Speech in the Legislature, 4 December 1919, p. 22568.

CHAPTER IV

DISSOCIATION FROM THE FEDERAL LIBERALS AND

THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION OF 1921

Martin responded to the troubles which beset him after the by-elections in Assiniboia and Kindersley by quietly beginning to dissociate his government from the federal Liberal Party. At the Ottawa convention a National Liberal Organization Committee (N.L.O.C.) had been formed to rebuild the party structure throughout English Canada. Initially, Martin had agreed to head the Saskatchewan section, but he now tendered his resignation despite intense pressure from King to retain the post.¹ Without him the last remnants of the federal party disintegrated and, for a time, Saskatchewan had to be omitted from the work of the N.L.O.C.² These developments totally demoralized partisan Liberals. One influential worker was convinced that the farmers would sweep the province, regardless of anyone's efforts, and the best the party could hope to do was try to see that former Liberals were selected as Grain Grower candidates.³ Another commented that the Liberal Party no longer existed on the prairies and that its few remaining adherents were "as insignificant in personnel and prominence as in numbers."⁴ He saw no chance of reversing this trend

¹ King Papers, Martin-King, 17 November 1919, p. 41759; King-Martin, 25 November, 1919, p. 41760; Martin-King, 11 December 1919, p. 41764-65.

² King Papers, King-Fisher, 11 December 1919, p. 39984.

³ King Papers, Miller-Haydon, 24 December 1919, p. 41860. Miller later became a member of the N.L.O.C.

⁴ King Papers, Mackenzie-Haydon, 31 December 1919, pp. 39951-52.

in the immediate future since farmers seemed determined to smash the old political system.

For Martin provincial politics had taken an ominous turn at Kindersley, threatening to follow the federal pattern as farmers throughout the west were becoming increasingly receptive to the idea of provincial political action. The Manitoba Grain Growers discussed the question at their convention in January, 1920, and after seven hours of debate decided to leave the issue to the initiative of local constituencies with the provision that the executive would summon a general convention to help erect a provincial organization if a majority favoured entry.⁵ This restrained approach was due mostly to Thomas Crerar who had pleaded with the delegates to refrain from provincial involvement, arguing that it would weaken the federal effort, smack of class domination, and lack justification without a program.⁶

Similar warnings were being sounded in Saskatchewan. On January 20, two weeks before the S.G.G.A. convention, Martin introduced a resolution in the Legislature which was almost identical to the tariff plank of the New National Policy.⁷ This action was intended to remind farmers that the government shared their views on all vital issues, thus demonstrating that no practical reason existed for their entry into provincial politics. At the same time Musselman was cautioning farmers, both in speeches and in the *Guide*, against building a class movement emphasizing that a government should represent all groups in society.⁸ He carried

⁵*Grain Growers Guide*, 14 January 1920.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Dunning Papers, Report of 1920 S.G.G.A. Convention, pp. 1005-08.

⁸*Grain Growers Guide*, 7 January 1920, 28 January 1920.

this theme to the convention insisting that no class could be safely entrusted with absolute power and that farmers needed the support of other classes to achieve their goals in federal politics.⁹

Unlike the previous year, when there had been a broad general consensus in favour of federal political action, the 1920 convention was split over provincial involvement. Langley opened the debate by strongly defending the record of the provincial government and stressing its intimate connection with farmers. He reminded delegates that he had been a member of the Association for eighteen years, a director for nine, and a director of the Grain Growers Grain Company for five; that he had helped draft the New National Policy as a member of the Canadian Council of Agriculture; and that "there was hardly a single activity of this organization looking to legislation either in Ottawa or Regina in which I did not take an active part, in many cases a leading part."¹⁰ Langley also addressed himself to the most persistent, and for farmers most persuasive, charge levelled at members of the provincial government.

I have been told I am a politician. Of course I am. I am a politician in exactly the same way that Drury of Ontario is and in exactly the same way as Crerar is. . . .

The men and women of the farms of this province made me a politician and in their interests and in connection with the work I have done both as a member of the Assembly and of the government, I have no explanation to give and I refuse to apologize to anyone.¹¹

Langley's message was explicit. Through Dunning and himself the provincial government was sufficiently representative of farmers and responsive to their interests; there was no need for the Association to involve itself any further.

⁹*Grain Growers Guide*, 30 October 1920.

¹⁰Dunning Papers, Report of 1920 S.G.G.A. Convention, pp. 1000-03.

¹¹*Ibid.*

The S.G.G.A. executive concurred. However, it first had to answer charges which had arisen from its implementation of the 1919 resolution on federal political action, particularly from Musselman's role in preventing the selection of candidates at the June conventions.¹² Maharg stressed that all sixteen federal seats had political associations and that an independent executive with its own offices and secretary had been formed to coordinate them. He felt this completely fulfilled the 1919 convention's instructions. Musselman was far more vocal in defending his conduct. In an emotional address he reiterated all the charges which had been levelled against him. Conservatives had accused him of being a Liberal in disguise; Liberals had charged him with being a tool of Clifford Sifton, splitting the low tariff vote, being a danger to farmers, and preventing the successful grouping of western progressive forces; the eastern press claimed that he had pushed farmers into politics to gratify his ambitions; while unspecified papers had referred to him as a dangerous man whom old Grain Growers had long sought to eject.¹³ Musselman dismissed these accusations, recollecting his services to the Association and indicating that he had never identified with any particular party. He frankly admitted that he opposed entering provincial politics, not because he wished to perpetuate the present government, but because he feared that such involvement would endanger the Association.

The Association is an industrial organization. The primary purpose of its existence is safeguarding the interests of the farmers as a class. For full effectiveness it requires a membership of the largest number of farmers. It was promoted and supported by the per-

¹²S.G.G.A. Papers, Report of 1920 S.G.G.A. Convention, 1920, pp. 44-50.

¹³Dunning Papers, Report of 1920 S.G.G.A. Convention, pp. 1005-08. The entire section concerning Musselman's speech, including the quotations, is drawn from this source.

sonal contributions of farmers with all shades of political opinion. . . .

One group of grain growers has as much right to use the association to forward its particular political purpose as has another. A group of Unionist grain growers has no less right to exploit the association for its own ends than a group of Liberals or Conservatives or non-partisans or independents. The peril is that one group of grain growers may support one of these and one another in which case the association would find itself divided and its usefulness destroyed.

Musselman warned the delegates that Conservative elements were trying to use the Association to overthrow the provincial government and defeat several cabinet ministers whom "every fair-minded farmer of intelligence in Saskatchewan knows have been our true and stalwart champions." These men, he added, should not be repudiated for working through the only mechanisms available to them. Furthermore, Musselman emphasized that half the cabinet and forty-six of the fifty farmers in the Legislature belonged to the Association. Under these circumstances he felt further involvement unwarranted, repeating Crerar's statement to the Manitoba convention that it would weaken the federal effort, smack of class domination and lack justification without a program.

Despite these appeals the convention persisted in discussing the matter; a resolution was presented from the floor calling for the formation of a provincial organization to nominate candidates with the approval and assistance of the Association.¹⁴ A heated debate followed. Its mover attacked flirtations with the old parties condemning recent attempts by the *Regina Morning Leader* to create the impression that farmers and Liberals were indistinguishable. He shared the widespread con-

¹⁴Dunning Papers, Report of 1920 S.G.G.A. Convention. The remainder of the discussion on the convention, including the quotations, is drawn from this source. An excellent table of contents will quickly direct readers to the relevant sections.

tempt for politicians, warning them to keep their unclean hands off the farmers' program and charging that the S.G.G.A. executive was leading the Association into a Liberal internment camp. Several delegates echoed these sentiments adding that they saw no difference between federal and provincial Liberals; Martin's refusal to aid Gould in Assiniboia was taken as an indicator of his true allegiances. Opponents of the resolution repeated Langley and Musselman's arguments and insisted that Martin's neutrality in Assiniboia was appropriate conduct for a provincial politician. At this point Musselman intervened decisively. Realizing that the convention could not be persuaded to drop the subject, he proposed that a committee of five be elected to draft a platform which would then be presented to the next convention for approval. This action, he argued, would have to precede any decision on political involvement. The convention accepted this compromise, elected a committee, and adjourned for the day, the issue apparently resolved.

However, Musselman was still not satisfied. Next day, worried that the situation would slip out of control if the executive did not take charge, he revived the question. Musselman dramatically asked all delegates who were attending their first convention to raise their hand, and after ascertaining that they formed a substantial majority, beseeched them to change their minds.

Will you not be good enough to spare the life and soul of the association in spite of your heat? I am pleading now; yes, I am pleading for the association. If we do not get this thing on the same lofty plane as we have federally, if we go out and invent a platform just to get into politics, I would not give you the snap of my fingers for the difference between this movement and any other party movement in Canada.

For the sake of all that is good and fair do not allow the outside public to know that you have no faith in the board which you elect from year to year, that you cannot trust it to try and formulate a list of the legislation we think you want provincially.

Once Musselman had finished, as if on cue, Mrs. Flatt, a member of the committee of five, informed the convention that four of them wished to resign and recommended that their task be delegated to the Central Board and executive of the Women's Section. Other executive members indicated their approval with silence; none attempted to resist the suggestion or offer an alternative. This demonstration swayed the delegates who accepted Mrs. Flatt's proposal by a margin of seven to one. Musselman sealed his victory by encouraging the convention to pass a resolution forbidding any local from using the Association's name and machinery for unauthorized political purposes, thus completely vindicating his position regarding the Kindersley by-election. The dissidents made one last attempt to embarrass both the executive and the provincial government by introducing a motion requesting any executive members who held a post in another organization, whether commercial or political, to resign. It was soundly defeated.

The Martin government drew little solace from the convention for farmers had merely deferred, not defeated, the resolution to enter provincial politics. Only Musselman's efforts had restrained them and he had acted more out of fear that the Association would be harmed than a desire to preserve the government which he admittedly admired. The cabinet was disturbed by the decision to draft a program for this action seemed a repetition of the steps the farmers had taken before entering federal politics.¹⁵ Langley was apprehensive after the convention, and somewhat suspicious of Musselman who he felt had allowed himself to be swayed far too much by Conservative elements during the proceedings.¹⁶

¹⁵Scott Papers, Langley-Scott, 2 February 1920, p. 17343.

¹⁶King Papers, Motherwell-King, 26 February 1920, p. 47885.

Furthermore, two critical resolutions had been endorsed which implicitly criticized the government and demanded an answer. One called for the abolition of party patronage and the establishment of an independent commission to make civil service appointments; the other requested the separation of federal and provincial politics asking that provincial governments refrain from using their influence on behalf of federal parties.

These developments had an immediate impact on relations between Martin and King which had been strained ever since the Premier's withdrawal from the N.L.O.C. King already suspected Martin of abandoning him and trying to forge a coalition with farmers through Crerar, and Unionist Liberals, through N. Rowell.¹⁷ Though unfounded, this reveals both the confused political atmosphere in 1920, where anything seemed possible, and the growing distrust between the two men. In late February, they met in Ottawa to discuss what had transpired. The Premier candidly informed King that he would have to keep out of Dominion politics and might find it necessary to support the farmers' party.¹⁸ He advised the federal leader that it would be best to abandon Saskatchewan to the Grain Growers. Martin felt this was the stiff price the party would have to pay to maintain cordial relations with the farmers; King found it unacceptable. After this uncomfortable, and according to King unfriendly, conversation, relations between the two men descended into icy silence. When Martin again visited Ottawa later in the year King did not see him, and, except for a brief apology for this, there was no correspondence between them for the rest of 1920 and early 1921.

¹⁷King Diaries, 18 February 1920, p. 63319.

¹⁸King Diaries, 28 February 1920, p. 63328.

King now resolved to organize Saskatchewan without Martin. Knowles reluctantly assumed the vacant post of leader of the federal wing, as he had done in 1917, but this time only one other member of the provincial government, James Gardiner, M.L.A. for North Qu'Appelle, joined him.¹⁹ However, this revitalized N.L.O.C. proved unable to establish any local associations, attract any workers, raise any money, or generate any enthusiasm.²⁰ They blamed Martin for this state of affairs and tensions within the party mounted.

It is a question [Gardiner informed King] as to whether we could elect a single Liberal in Saskatchewan at present. . . . While our so-called leaders are standing aside we are being robbed of the best of our young blood through the circulation of false accusations against Liberalism which are going unanswered.²¹

The national organizer, Sydney Fisher, was dismayed by the situation but felt it inadvisable to request Martin's assistance, choosing instead to address a personal letter to Turgeon asking for advice.²² The federal party seemed incapable of comprehending its true position. Had it looked in the pages of the *Guide* it would have found an accurate reflection of agrarian opinion.

Unfortunately, today, Liberalism to many Canadian Liberals means merely liberation from militarism, imperialism, orders-in-council, War Times Election Act, and other such iniquities, rather than economic liberation of the people. The Liberal party has been living under the influence of rich men, to whom

¹⁹ Knowles became head of the N.L.O.C. Other members were Motherwell, no longer in public life, Gardiner, A. Champagne, former M.P. for Battleford (1908-17), H. Banford, who worked for the *Morning Leader*, J. H. Lindsay, F. E. West, E. S. Miller and C. Locke. King Papers, Locke-King, 22 May 1920, p. 47368; King-Locke, King-Knowles, 6 December 1920, pp. 47131-32, 47367.

²⁰ King Papers, Locke-King, 22 May 1920, p. 47368; King-Locke, King-Knowles, 6 December 1920, pp. 47131-32, 47367.

²¹ King Papers, Gardiner-King, 1 March 1920, pp. 46504-06.

²² King Papers, Fisher-King, 29 January 1920, p. 46313-14.

Liberalism means not liberty from economic servitude, but merely liberty from rule by the Tory party.²³

To farmers the Liberal Party had become an anachronism in an outdated system; it no longer had any principles save a desire to win power. So widespread had this feeling become that despite King's personal intervention the party was unable to organize a single nominating convention even in an urban seat such as Saskatoon.²⁴

Martin's spirits rose as those of his federal colleagues plunged. By April he had recovered his composure and settled on a policy designed to solidify agrarian support. He admitted the farmers still posed an awkward problem but was heartened by their apparent divisions over entering provincial politics.²⁵ At the same time, perhaps not so coincidentally, Musselman was expressing the hope that a class-oriented provincial farmers' party would not be formed.²⁶ Martin's first step occurred on April 26 when C. M. Hamilton, a farmer from Indian Head with strong S.G.G.A. credentials, was brought into the cabinet as Minister of Agriculture.²⁷ Though only a member of the Legislature for one year, Hamilton was accepted by Liberals because of his solid party background.²⁸ The new minister loudly proclaimed that he would spend only as much time in Regina as his

²³*Grain Growers Guide*, 2 June 1920; 9 June 1920.

²⁴King Papers, MacDermid-King, 5 March 1920, p. 47417.

²⁵Martin Papers, Martin-Ross, 15 April 1920, p. 4560.

²⁶S.G.G.A. Papers, Musselman-Adrian, 15 April 1920, Provincial Platform 1920.

²⁷Martin Papers, Martin-Hamilton, 15 November 1916, p. 30873. Hamilton regularly attended the annual meetings of the Grain Growers Grain Company, had been prominent at the 1919 S.G.G.A. Convention, and had held an executive position in his local. Since Motherwell's resignation first Langley, then Dunning, had held the post of Minister of Agriculture.

²⁸Martin Papers, Martin-Hamilton, 10 December 1916, p. 30870. Hamilton had been on the Committee responsible for organizing the 1917 Liberal Convention.

official duties required; he pledged to continue farming.²⁹ Martin hoped that the addition of a bona fide farmer, who was not identified as a politician, would undermine the two most persistent reasons presented for the farmers' entry into provincial politics: that the provincial government was not representative of farmers and that it was composed of politicians. The Saskatoon *Daily Star*, an ardent supporter of the farmers, had been especially vocal in expounding these arguments. While expressing genuine admiration for the Martin government it nevertheless endorsed entry into provincial politics as the only way to abolish party patronage, party caucuses, and meaningless party labels.³⁰ It proposed that these aims be the core of the farmers' provincial platform. The *Guide* took a loftier view. It commended farmers for their caution remarking they had ample time to change the government if it did not change to suit them.³¹

In May Martin responded to these criticisms at Preeceville. He flatly declared that party patronage had been entirely suppressed, but boldly defended his government's right to make some appointments itself, instead of through an independent commission.

There are . . . certain positions which it is necessary for the Government to fill without reference to anyone else. For instance, if I, as Minister of Education, require a Deputy Minister, I would make this appointment myself; in fact I would not allow anyone else to make it, as I must have a man in whom I have the utmost confidence, one who will co-operate with me in the work of the Department.³²

On other matters the Premier yielded. He agreed federal and provincial

²⁹Scott Papers, Craig-Scott, 5 April 1920, p. 17133. Also see Martin Papers, Speech in Legislature, November 1920, p. 43168, for similar comments.

³⁰Saskatoon *Daily Star*, 12 February 1920.

³¹*Grain Growers Guide*, 24 March 1920.

³²Martin Papers, Preeceville Speech, pp. 43103-167.

politics ought to be separated declaring that henceforth he would not be responsible for either the policies, or the organization, of any federal political party. His government, he added, would give strong support to low-tariff candidates in the next campaign regardless of party affiliations. Martin ended his address by emphasizing that the next provincial election should be fought over local matters, unclouded by federal issues. This repudiation of the federal party, together with the addition of Hamilton to the cabinet, was intended to give the Martin government an independent, nonpartisan image which would be attractive to farmers. King, who had been informed of the contents of the speech on April 23, regarded it as a complete capitulation to the farmers, especially since he had been asked once more to leave Saskatchewan to the Grain Growers.³³ His anger was understandable since Martin's repudiation proved a final blow to the N.L.O.C.'s efforts in the province.³⁴

However, the speech quickly produced the desired provincial results. Musselman began to equivocate in drafting a platform, publicly stressing it was neither a movement for nor against the provincial government but only an expression of agrarian opinion.³⁵ This was a significant departure from the spirit, though not the terms, of the convention's resolution on the subject. In June the surprising showing of the United Farmers of Manitoba in a provincial election encouraged proponents of provincial action in Saskatchewan. Twenty-six farmers had contested seats and, despite a lack of organization or program, garnered thirteen ridings and enough votes to reduce the Liberal government of Premier Norris to minority status. Most observers felt the farmers would have swept the province

³³King Diaries, 23 April 1920, p. 63358.

³⁴King Papers, Motherwell-King, 3 June 1920, p. 47869.

³⁵Grain Growers Guide, 19 May 1920.

had they made a concerted effort in every constituency.³⁶ This was an obvious reminder of what could happen in Saskatchewan and justified Martin's campaign of appeasement.

You will find [he reassured one local Liberal] there is really no subject of importance which the Grain Growers have asked us to deal with which has not been dealt with and some action taken. In fact in this regard we have done just as much as any Government could possibly do.³⁷

Langley and Dunning were invaluable in presenting this argument as they crisscrossed the province defending the government's record.³⁸

In July the effectiveness of this strategy became apparent. Musselman had circulated a questionnaire asking locals to express their opinions regarding items which should be included in the proposed platform. Only a small percentage replied with a minority offering any suggestions. Concluding that this response indicated insufficient interest on the part of the membership the S.G.G.A. executive suspended any further work on formulating a program.³⁹ This was a significant victory for Martin as farmers would now be unable to justify any provincial political involvement. While the S.G.G.A. executive, which had never favoured the idea, had obviously seized this opportunity to discard the project it was equally apparent that most locals were satisfied with the Martin government. This mood differed from the one which characterized the February convention and is attributable to Martin's efforts and the compliance of the S.G.G.A. executive. Regardless, the Premier could now

³⁶Sifton Papers, Dafoe-Sifton, 7 July 1920, p. 162563 - 71.

³⁷Martin Papers, Martin-Roy, 16 August 1920, pp. 4593-94.

³⁸For example, in July Dunning addressed a joint meeting of five S.G.G.A. locals defending the provincial government. *Grain Growers Guide*, 4 August 1920.

³⁹*Grain Growers Guide*, 11 August 1920.

expect to contain the farmers as long as he avoided any actions which would rekindle dissatisfaction.

On policy issues this proved no problem. Martin continued to take the lead on matters of primary importance to the province, always careful to ensure that his position was unassailable. For instance, he strongly denounced the federal government's natural resources policy and insisted the province be compensated for fifteen years' lost revenue.⁴⁰ In September, when railway rates increased forty percent on freight and twenty percent on passenger service, Martin responded constructively, engaging an expert to prepare a case showing actual examples of discrimination; he then used this evidence to argue for revisions before the railway commission.⁴¹ While this energetic action produced limited results it bolstered the Premier's prestige since it was well publicized. The most important question facing farmers in 1920 was wheat marketing and again the government pressed to the forefront as Langley and Dunning were both very vocal in urging the reestablishment of the Wheat Board.⁴² Martin saw the issue as a way to divert the farmers from provincial involvement.

It is a question which is being more discussed by the farmers today than any other question. . . .

The Grain Growers' Convention meets the first of February and from present appearances this is the subject which will overshadow everything else and, if you and Mr. Dunning and Mr. Hamilton were in a position to deal with the question, some Government policy being announced prior thereto, I believe the question of the Grain Growers going into Provincial politics would become comparatively insignificant.⁴³

In March 1920, the Premier secured James Stewart, former chairman of the

⁴⁰ Martin Papers, Speech delivered in August 1920, pp. 43118-125.

⁴¹ Martin Papers, Martin-Graham, 7 October 1920, p. 38574; Speech in Legislature, pp. 43177-180.

⁴² Martin Papers, Martin-Turnbull, 14 October 1920, p. 33304.

⁴³ Martin Papers, Martin-Langley, 31 December 1920, pp. 33330-33.

Wheat Board, and F. W. Riddell, former vice-Chairman and president of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company, to prepare an advisory report on the subject.⁴⁴ He emphasized that his government was prepared to assist the farmers in any way possible, once they decided their course. Throughout Martin had an eye for publicity, even to the point of instructing Hamilton to arrange for questions in the Assembly covering every important activity of the Department of Agriculture.⁴⁵

These attempts to placate the farmers soon led to another clash with King. In the fall of 1920 the federal Liberal leader toured the west; his presence embarrassed the provincial government. When King arrived in Swift Current he was met by Reverend M. L. Leitch, M.L.A. for Morse, who informed him that Martin would not appear with him in Regina for fear of offending the Grain Growers.⁴⁶ King was incensed with this "miserable type of Liberalism" commenting that Martin was a "weak vessel" and a "mere tool" of Calder.⁴⁷ He seemed unable to appreciate the Premier's difficult position. King's reception in Moose Jaw was somewhat more dignified as he was met by Knowles who accompanied him to Regina.⁴⁸ There he was received by a large crowd; Martin remained at home for dinner.⁴⁹ The Premier tried to make amends by inviting King to supper the following day but as at their last meeting, both were ill at ease.⁵⁰

⁴⁴*Grain Growers Guide*, 9 February 1921; L. A. Wood, *A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada* (Reprint of 1924 edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), p. 323.

⁴⁵Archives of Saskatchewan, C. M. Hamilton Papers, p. 2.

⁴⁶King Diaries, 22 October 1920, p. 63412.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹King Diaries, 23 October 1920, p. 63413.

⁵⁰King Diaries, 24 October 1920, p. 63414.

During the conversation Martin repeated his contention that the farmers would sweep the prairies and tried to dispel the rumours surrounding his relationship with Calder. He admitted he still valued the latter's friendship, and found the current situation trying, but strongly disapproved of Calder's recent statements against tariff reductions.⁵¹ All correspondence between the Premier and Calder in the Martin Papers is of a formal business nature suggesting their friendship was strained. Nowhere is there any evidence to indicate Calder had any influence on Martin; their exchanges rarely contained political comments. The next day Martin attended King's major speech but sat in the audience and apparently instructed his ministers to do likewise.⁵² The *Regina Morning Leader*, almost overstressing the point, noted that W. D. Cowan, the Unionist M.P. for Regina, was also present.⁵³ Ironically, the theme of King's address was unity.

One result of King's visit was the resignation of Knowles from the cabinet ostensibly because he wished to devote full time to his deteriorating law practice.⁵⁴ Though the resignation was presented on December 17 it did not become effective until February 28. This suggests Martin was contemplating several changes which he would announce simultaneously to enhance their impact. It became evident later that Knowles' official reason for leaving was a façade for on April 12, only a month after his departure, he accepted the federal Liberal nomination for Moose Jaw;

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵²King Diaries, 25 October 1920, p. 63415.

⁵³Martin Papers, Clipping from the *Regina Morning Leader*, 26 October 1920, p. 44187.

⁵⁴Martin Papers, Knowles-Martin, 17 December 1920, p. 24516.

this action belied his wish to return to private life.⁵⁵ Several years later J. W. Dafoe commented that Knowles had been dismissed because of "poor performance" in his work.⁵⁶ While this would certainly be ample reason, another factor probably entered into consideration. Knowles' close allegiance to the federal party was dangerous for a government which was desperately trying to sever such ties. He was head of the N.L.O.C. and had accompanied King through the greater part of his tour in the province; his reputation for partisanship was widespread and would offend the farmers. Under these circumstances Martin would be eager to dispose of Knowles.

The federal party continued to flounder hopelessly entering 1921, an election year. In early January the N.L.O.C. arranged two meetings with Liberal M.L.A.'s, excluding only Martin and a few others, to discuss the situation.⁵⁷ Motherwell was heartened by the reception; only Langley was unfriendly and Turgeon was so perturbed that he personally promised all possible assistance short of breaking with the Premier.⁵⁸ However, Motherwell noted that all were "desperately afraid" to do anything which would antagonize the farmers, fearing that the slightest provocation would cause them to enter provincial politics.⁵⁹ These apprehensions were justified for in Manitoba the United Farmers had just taken this step without much opposition from their ranks.⁶⁰ Though favourable to the federal Liberals, there was little the M.L.A.'s could offer except encour-

⁵⁵ *Regina Morning Leader*, 13 April 1921.

⁵⁶ R. Cook, ed., *The Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence*, 12 March 1923, p. 164.

⁵⁷ King Papers, Motherwell-King, 17 January 1921, pp. 55862-3.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Grain Growers Guide*, 19 January 1921. They also changed their name from the M.G.G.A. to the United Farmers of Manitoba.

agement. There is no reason to suspect that Martin felt otherwise. He had always maintained that he saw no difference between the policies of the Liberals and the Progressives; all the advice he had offered since the Assiniboia by-election was based on sound political reasoning and a desire to save his government and not on any dampening of his federal allegiances. Even Langley was not as unfriendly as Motherwell suggested for, together with Turgeon, he had tried unsuccessfully to arrange a fusion between Liberals and Progressives on the prairies.⁶¹

Martin's judicious behavior bore fruit provincially as the 1921 S.G.G.A. convention was a triumph for the government. Maharg and Musselman joined Langley and Dunning in dissuading the farmers from provincial political action, thereby virtually assuring the re-election of the Martin government in the campaign expected in June.⁶² Maharg's address was a confident and bold attack on provincial involvement.⁶³ He emphasized Martin's dissociation from the federal Liberals declaring this action was in "exact accord" with the resolution passed at the last convention. He also recalled Motherwell's resignation using it as proof that Martin no longer sympathized with his federal colleagues and was prepared to support the N.N.P.P.A. Maharg then defended the executive's decision to jettison the formulation of a provincial platform, arguing that the poor response to Musselman's circular

. . . demonstrated clearly an absolute lack of unanimity of our members on this question as well as an amazing absence of

⁶¹R. Cook, ed., *The Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence*, 10 November 1920, p. 35.

⁶²Scott Papers, Motherwell-Scott, 24 January 1921, p. 18253.

⁶³S.G.G.A. Papers, Report of 1921 S.G.G.A. Convention, p. 1. The entire section dealing with the convention proceedings, including the quotations, is drawn from this source. A comprehensive table of contents will quickly direct readers to relevant sections.

of interest and entire lack of enthusiasm for the action proposed since 80 percent of our locals made no reply whatever.

Musselman later provided a specific breakdown of the one hundred and thirty-five replies which had been received. Sixty-nine approved of drafting a program but only twenty-eight bothered to offer suggestions; forty-four opposed the idea; eighteen were indifferent expressing general satisfaction with the Martin government; while four had been impossible to categorize. However, he admitted this number of replies compared favourably with the normal response to circulars. The executive also stressed the evident divisions within the Association.

We trust therefore that you will debate this whole question with your hearts and minds entirely free from partizan [sic] leanings, from class prejudice or desire for class domination and from everything except consideration of what is the best permanent interests of this Association which you have been called together to govern. In any event it must be patent to you as it is to us that any action to be taken by the Association on such a question which is, after all, extraneous to its original purpose would inevitably weaken it very greatly unless it were taken with the practically unanimous consent of the members in all parts of the province.

The convention indicated its approval of these remarks by passing a resolution commending the provincial government for severing its ties with the federal Liberals and by awarding Langley and Dunning enthusiastic receptions. This display made the results of the discussion on political action a foregone conclusion. A resolution was endorsed declaring it was not in the best interests of the Association to draft a provincial platform at this time and suggesting that the matter be returned to the locals for further consideration. Since a provincial election was slated for June, this action effectively ended the threat of farmers entering the campaign as an independent, organized group. There had been a few ripples of dissent stemming mostly from the Wynyard and Creeland locals both of which contained energetic proponents of provincial involvement. The Wynyard

local sponsored a motion of non-confidence in the executive, angry with its failure to develop a program or support the Canadian Council of Agriculture's plan on wheat marketing. It garnered but six votes. A member of the Creeland local then presented a resolution asking the President's term of office to be limited to four years; again, it was overwhelmingly defeated. Evidently these locals felt that the executive was the main obstacle to provincial involvement. E. S. Wilbur, a member of the Creeland local who had clashed with Maharg after the last convention, later caused an uproar by nominating A. G. Hawkes, vice-president of the Association, to contest the presidency. Hawkes was not present because of a serious illness and Langley and Dunning eventually persuaded Wilbur to withdraw his name. This action infuriated Maharg who, in a moment of anger, resigned.

I have to inform you that I cannot accept your offer, under the conditions, to become president again. I appreciate your offer but the pleading that has been necessary to make Mr. Wilbur withdraw his nomination has got under my skin. It has been of such a nature that it is absolutely impossible for me to accept the office of president of your association for the coming year. That is final. It has come to the point where the last straw has been placed on the camel's back and the camel has gone down.

The convention was stunned and only through a rousing demonstration was it able to convince Maharg to change his mind. For the provincial government there was only one moment of mild embarrassment when one delegate questioned Knowles' involvement with the federal Liberals. Dunning responded:

If my good colleague Mr. Knowles or any of my colleagues differ from me on some question of Dominion politics, for which as a government we are not responsible, how can I deny him that measure of personal liberty which I hold to myself? The premier's statement is clear; the government as a government will not be permitted to use its organization for political purposes and the government as an organized body will not attempt to accept responsibility for the organization of any Federal campaign, but I trust that this convention is broad-minded enough to allow to the individual members of the

government that freedom of action which individual members of this convention demand for themselves.

Nevertheless, Dunning assured the convention that a majority of the cabinet would be supporting Crerar's party in the next campaign.

While the Martin government could draw considerable satisfaction from the convention the federal Liberals could not. Knowles sadly reported to King that the political situation had not changed and that the party could not expect much support from farmers.⁶⁴ The only hope, as Martin had suggested six months before, lay in some sort of accommodation with the Progressives, which the N.L.O.C. now sought by requesting a meeting with the N.N.P.P.A. executive. It was too late. R. M. Johnson, the secretary of the N.N.P.P.A., replied that a deal would be impossible because

Large numbers of our following are drawn not only from the Old Liberal Party, but from the Conservative Party and other independent movements, comprising men and women who are trying to get away from the Bi-Party system and establish a new order of things.⁶⁵

The arrangement Martin had been able to offer Motherwell in exchange for withdrawing from the Assiniboia by-election was now unattainable.

Martin, who had handled the farmers far more skillfully than his federal colleagues, could now prepare for the upcoming election with reasonable confidence. "It gives me great satisfaction [wrote one enthusiastic supporter] to observe how nicely your own craft appears to round the breakers."⁶⁶ On March 23, at Francis, the Premier revealed the strategy he intended to pursue in the campaign. He indicated that he did not want the election complicated, or decided, by federal issues; he was

⁶⁴King Papers, King-Knowles, 15 February 1921, p. 53826.

⁶⁵King Papers, Johnson-Locke, 2 March 1921, pp. 52953-54.

⁶⁶Martin Papers, Dunbar-Martin, 5 March 1921, p. 4989. Dunbar was editor of the *Estevan Mercury*.

prepared to stand on his own record.⁶⁷ The bulk of the speech was designed to garner the support of farmers. He reminded them that successful agrarian enterprises such as the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Creameries Limited had been established with government assistance and promised to continue this policy particularly in the area of national wheat marketing where he still awaited the Stewart-Riddell report. The Premier also emphasized that the Department of Agriculture had always been headed by a minister "drawn from the ranks of farmers themselves" claiming that no government in the country had paid more attention to farmers. "In looking back over the past few years I know of nothing which any Government could have done in this direction which has not been done." This was to be one of the Premier's persistent themes throughout the campaign. Martin refuted charges generally levied at incumbent politicians, assuring his audience once again that party patronage had been eliminated and that nominating conventions would be arranged and managed entirely by local people, free from any party control. Never once in the speech did he use the term 'Liberal'; always he referred to the 'Government.'

Martin had one final card to play before the campaign, a cabinet reorganization. Two weeks after Knowles' resignation was announced, Turgeon was appointed to the bench. With this stroke the two most partisan Liberals in the cabinet were removed and their departure facilitated the development of a nonpartisan image; McNab and Langley were now the only survivors from the old Scott cabinet. Knowles and Turgeon were replaced by J. A. Maharg, the M.P. for Maple Creek, who sat as a Progressive in the Commons. The move had been planned for some months

⁶⁷Martin Papers, Francis Speech, 23 March 1921, pp. 43231-272.

for Martin had written Maharg on January 1 arranging for a meeting, presumably to discuss the S.G.G.A. president's entry into the cabinet.⁶⁸

Musselman regarded these changes as a complete victory for the farmers.

The entrance of Mr. Maharg into the provincial cabinet will fully assure the last doubter of the complete severance of the Government of this province from federal party affiliations, especially when considered in conjunction with the resignations of Mr. Motherwell and Mr. Knowles. . . .

The Grain Growers of Saskatchewan have good reason to congratulate themselves. The thing which farmers in all provinces have wished for, for which in some they are earnestly laboring, which in Ontario they secured only after a hard struggle, has come about in Saskatchewan easily and naturally, without turmoil or disturbance of industry or generating class antagonism. This is, the tried and trusted leaders of the organized farmers are in position to control the administration of this province.⁶⁹

Maharg shared these sentiments stressing that he was not entering the government as a politician since old party bonds and traditions had been snapped and men now stood for principles, not parties.

My ten years in the presidency of the Grain Growers' Association is the best evidence that I have had the interests of the Grain Growers at heart. It would be impossible for me to prove false to the trust so long reposed in me, and in taking the step I have, I am doing something which I am sure will enable me to serve the farmers of Saskatchewan more effectively. Had any conditions been suggested that in any way would have interfered with me giving my heartiest support to the Farmers' Movement provincially, and also to the national progressive movement throughout Canada, I would not even have considered the position.⁷⁰

The Regina *Morning Leader* viewed the cabinet change as "the most significant that has been made on the political checkerboard for a long time."⁷¹

⁶⁸Martin Papers, Maharg-Martin, 1 January 1921, p. 5296. This would be another reason for Maharg's staunch defence of the Martin government at the 1921 S.G.G.A. Convention.

⁶⁹Martin Papers, Article by J. B. Musselman published in Regina *Morning Leader*, 30 April 1921, p. 44244. The *Grain Growers Guide* echoed these views, 11 May 1921.

⁷⁰Martin Papers, Clipping from Regina *Morning Leader*, 3 May 1921, p. 44245.

⁷¹*Ibid.*

It noted that for all intents and purposes the Liberals and farmers had amalgamated making the government's re-election certain since the Conservatives had no leader and the action undercut the independent movement. The benefits were not all Martin's. The S.G.G.A., with five of its members in a cabinet of seven, enjoyed its greatest influence in the province's history and avoided a bitter split within the Association over provincial political involvement. In addition to its accurate analysis the *Morning Leader* perceptively touched upon the new cabinet's major difficulty; it could agree on all provincial issues but could this unity be maintained on federal questions?⁷² For the moment neither Martin nor Maharg thought this a problem; Maharg was satisfied that he would not be hindered in campaigning for the Progressives, while Martin expected federal and provincial politics to be kept totally separate; each man would be free to do as he wished federally. Maharg's actions elicited some discontent from various elements within the Association, but Musselman denounced this "carping, unfair, and unintelligent criticism" continually stressing that the Liberal Party no longer existed and that Maharg had joined an Independent provincial party.⁷³ He also restrained a number of locals who wished to nominate independent candidates.⁷⁴ Obviously Martin now inspired complete trust, at least from the S.G.G.A. executive. Partisan Liberals were again wary for Martin had blurred party divisions beyond recognition by creating a nonpartisan government.⁷⁵

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Martin Papers, Clipping from Regina *Morning Leader*, 11 June 1921, p. 44248.

⁷⁴ On at least three occasions Musselman had to emphasize that locals were not authorized for political involvement. Included is a stern warning to the Melfort local. See *Grain Growers Guide*, 13 April 1921; 27 April 1921; and 1 June 1921.

⁷⁵ Scott Papers, Oliver-Scott, 3 May 1921, p. 18284.

On May 16 the Premier pressed his advantage by calling an election for June 9 several weeks before it was expected. This caught the Independents, who had already scheduled a convention for May 31 in Saskatoon thinking this would allow them enough time to organize for a late June election, unprepared. The Premier's election address was a repetition of the Francis speech stressing the government's record, its businesslike administration, its sympathy for farmers, and its divorce from federal parties.⁷⁶ These were the themes of the government campaign. The Independents were quite divided on policies agreeing only on the need to destroy party politics, party patronage, and rubber stamp members.⁷⁷ They were furious with the timing of the election charging that it prevented farmers, who were still preoccupied with seeding, from participating and undermined the democratic process by denying them the opportunity to organize.⁷⁸ The day after the Independents' convention Dunning arrived in Saskatoon to answer their charges. He labelled the Independents as the greatest hotch-potch of opposition which had ever appeared.

I have collected nineteen different platforms, many of them absolutely opposed to each, but, if you please, they are all a part of this Independent organization--aggregation--circus--what is it? . . . Anyone can get in on that game. It is catching when the little bunches get together in one corner of a constituency and appoint a candidate. Anyone can call himself an independent and run. . . . There is no democracy about that. Hypocrisy comes closer to the mark, in my judgement.⁷⁹

⁷⁶Martin Papers, Clipping from *Regina Morning Leader*, 17 May 1921, pp. 44263-64.

⁷⁷*Saskatoon Daily Star*, 21 May 1921; 23 May 1921; 27 May 1921; 31 May 1921. There was some justification for the charges as this was the earliest an election had ever been held although the government defended itself by emphasizing that an election had been expected for months. The *Manitoba Free Press*, 27 May 1921, saw this as the greatest grievance in the campaign.

⁷⁸*Saskatoon Daily Star*, 27 May 1921.

⁷⁹Martin Papers, Clipping from *Saskatoon Daily Star*, 2 June 1921 p. 44322-30.

Dunning noted that one strong element within the movement was the Conservative Party which was openly contesting only five seats but actually running in many more under the guise of Independents.⁸⁰ He ridiculed this development within a movement committed to abolishing political parties. Finally, he responded to the charges of corruption which had been levelled against the government.

I challenge any man in that convention yesterday, or in the province, to prove a single charge of corruption against the present government. . . .

When people set themselves up as purists—and I am looking at some of them right tonight—and want pure government, they should get away from this party mudslinging. . . .

Public life is bad enough, and I am always suspicious of that kind of uplifter who starts uplifting political life by accusing his opponents of corruption.⁸¹

The idea that the political system and political parties were corrupt was perhaps the greatest danger faced by the government for it had become so ingrained that it was almost impossible to dispel.

The filing of nomination revealed the government's strength. It placed candidates in every seat but Thunder Creek, the Independents ran forty-seven, the Conservatives five, and Labour four.⁸² Sixteen government members including Maharg, Dunning, Latta, and Gardiner were elected by acclamation. However, Dafoe noted that the situation was not unlike that which had prevailed in Manitoba the previous year and felt that the result might be similar since the Independents appeared to be gaining

⁸⁰ Ibid. The *Manitoba Free Press*, 27 May 1921, agreed with this observation noting many Conservatives were joining the Independents because their own party had no leader and planned no campaign.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Martin Papers, Clipping from *Regina Morning Leader*, 4 June 1921, p. 44306. Elections were deferred in Tisdale and Cumberland. Some ridings had several Independents, four of which belonged to the Non-Partisan League.

momentum.⁸³ Traces of concern could also be seen in Musselman, particularly in the following circular sent to all S.G.G.A. directors.

Three or four letters in criticism of Mr. Maharg's attitude have reached this office, but so far there is no evidence that any of the true friends of the association are experiencing anything but satisfaction at this tremendous increase of the Association's prestige in the public affairs of the province. There are of course many rumours of criticism but it would appear that they emanate principally from those who wish to exploit his action for party political advantage in the present provincial campaign, though there is a class, entirely too numerous for their own well-being and that of this province, who seem to think that the only path to progress is to destroy and pull down and who would not trust their own mothers if the latter were to accept responsibility for public affairs. With this class, of course, no reasonable person can reckon for they themselves are not responsible. The rank and file of the association will have satisfaction in Mr. Maharg's promotion and will continue to trust him as they have in the past.⁸⁴

The government did not take any chances. The *Free Press* reported the cabinet, spurred on by the fate of the governments in Manitoba and Ontario, covered every constituency in the province campaigning hard for re-election.⁸⁵ They avoided, as Martin had for some time, any reference to the 'Liberal Party' replacing it with the 'Government Party' or 'supporters of the Martin Government.'⁸⁶ Towards the end of the campaign they began to emphasize the theme of order or chaos, suggesting that a vote for the Independents would lead to a confused situation and ineffective government. On June 9 their efforts were rewarded as the government captured twenty-nine seats which, added to the sixteen it had won by

⁸³R. Cook, ed., *The Dafoe-Sifton Correspondence*, 21 May 1921, pp. 68-69.

⁸⁴S.G.G.A. Papers, Circular, 27 May 1921, p. 3.

⁸⁵Martin Papers, Clipping from *Manitoba Free Press*, 27 May 1921, p. 44327.

⁸⁶*Ibid.* The *Free Press* reported that "the Liberal Party, by name, is almost as extinct as the Conservative Party."

acclamation, gave it forty-five of the sixty-three ridings.⁸⁷

However, the size of the opposition is noteworthy especially considering the government's many advantages. It captured eighteen seats, the greatest number in the province's history to that point, and forced the Liberal share of the popular vote to drop significantly.⁸⁸ In the ridings of Canora, Pelly, Pipestone, and Pheasant Hills, the government candidates might well have been defeated had several Independents not been in the field. In total the Liberals lost ten seats, recaptured one, and swept the four seats added by redistribution for a net loss of five. The opposition papers were satisfied with the results.⁸⁹ The one black mark for the government was the defeat of George Langley in Redberry. His loss is attributable to local issues, stemming from his efforts to secure a railway line running through the northern part of his seat. Residents of the towns along the C.N. line, fearing this action would

⁸⁷H. A. Scarrow, *Canada Votes*, pp. 218-303.

PARTY	ELECTED	NOMINATED	NUMBER OF VOTES	PERCENTAGE
Liberal	46	62	94,255	52.2
Independent	7	35	46,593	25.8
Progressive	6	7	13,613	7.5
Conservative	3	7	13,431	7.4
Labour	1	4	7,724)	7.1
Non-Partisan League	0	4	5,137)	

⁸⁸D. E. Smith, *Prairie Liberalism*, Appendix A - % of Popular Vote. See also Appendix A, pp. 139-42.

PARTY	1912	1917	1921
Liberal	57	57.2	52
Conservative	42	36	4
Independent	1	7	45

⁸⁹Martin Papers, Clipping from *Regina Daily Post*, 11 June 1921, p. 44341. Also see *Saskatoon Daily Star*, 11 June 1921 and *Grain Growers Guide*, 13 June 1921, which welcomed the increased opposition.

affect their growth, voted against him.⁹⁰ Langley quickly won a deferred election in Cumberland. Despite these minor setbacks the 1921 election was a remarkable achievement for Martin. At the height of agrarian unrest he had persuaded farmers to maintain his government, something his counterparts in Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta proved unable to accomplish. His political savvy became apparent the following month when Premier Stewart of Alberta, perhaps encouraged by Martin's success, called an election which resulted in an overwhelming defeat of his government.⁹¹ Through a shift to nonpartisanship, a cabinet reorganization, and skillful leadership, Martin had averted this fate.

⁹⁰King Papers, Dunning-King, 13 June 1921, p. 51466.

⁹¹L. G. Thomas, *The Liberal Party in Alberta: A History of Politics in the Province of Alberta 1905-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), pp. 189-195. Thomas notes that Stewart's situation was similar to Martin's in that the United Farmers were reluctant to enter the provincial arena and were divided on the issue. However, Stewart, unlike Martin, was unable to exploit this situation to his benefit, partly because the U.F.A. had a very different outlook from its Saskatchewan counterpart.

CHAPTER V

THE 1921 FEDERAL ELECTION AND RETIREMENT

The federal Liberals viewed Martin's return to power with mixed feelings. Despite lingering distrust of the Premier they had supported him throughout the campaign, lacking a realistic alternative.¹ Their own position remained unchanged; only Walter Scott's *Moose Jaw Times* offered any encouragement.² However, some members of the provincial government began to modify their attitude now that they had been re-elected. On June 13 Dunning sent King a friendly note offering to discuss certain election trends on his next visit to Ottawa, indicating a new willingness to associate with the federal Liberal leader.³ Martin's interest in federal affairs also revived though he maintained a prudent silence in public. He eagerly sought information on the eastern political situation, particularly in Ontario, thus lending credence to a suspicion that he was attempting to determine which opposition party was in the ascendancy before committing himself openly.⁴ Martin realized that Liberal prospects on the prairies were dim, especially after the Progressives swept the Medicine Hat by-election, but discerned that the western vote might not be as decisive nationally as the farmers expected, though he thought they

¹ King Papers, Motherwell-King, 1 July 1921, p. 55868.

² *Ibid.*

³ King Papers, Dunning-King, 13 June 1921, p. 51466.

⁴ Martin Papers, Martin-Ross, 11 July 1921, pp. 41827-28. D. C. Ross was a Liberal member of Parliament for Strathroy. Scott Papers Martin-Scott, 12 July 1921, p. 18241. For the suspicions concerning the Premier's aims see King Papers, Motherwell-King, 1 July 1921, p. 55868.

would do well in Ontario. Gardiner, despite continuous organizational problems, felt that the party should contest eight of the sixteen seats: Regina, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon which were predominantly urban, and Battleford, Mackenzie, Saltcoats, and Humboldt where the ethnic vote was a significant factor.⁵ He optimistically expected to win at least four of these constituencies. Others advised King to contest only the urban seats leaving the rural ones to the farmers.⁶

Martin and Dunning found this view congenial. In early September, after Meighen had indicated an election was imminent, J. A. Robb, M.P. for Chateauguay-Huntingdon, sent King a propitious report on the Premier's attitude.

I am satisfied that Martin is most anxious and willing to do all he can to further our cause, but of course he must act discreetly. He is not without hope that with a little tact, he might send from his province four to six supporters, and others, he hopes to arrange by a sawoff with the Farmers. . . . I found him in a most friendly frame of mind.⁷

King came to a similar conclusion after a meeting with both Martin and Dunning, even though the latter had cautioned him that most government members would be aiding the farmers.⁸ This was a continuation of the policy of accommodation which the Premier had counselled since Assiniboia, though it was inconsistent with the pledges he had given at Preeceville. Evidently Martin still considered an arrangement a viable option, despite the rebuff the N.L.O.C. had received in March. Perhaps he felt the

⁵King Papers, Gardiner-King, 5 September 1921, pp. 52171-73.

⁶King Papers, Clipping from the Regina *Morning Leader*, p. 55350, for the views of Senator J. Ross; Hooke-King, 8 September 1921, p. 53348, for comments by Banford Hooke who was associated with the *Morning Leader*.

⁷King Papers, Robb-King, 5 September 1921, p. 56894.

⁸King Diaries, 6 September 1921, p. 63540. Dunning remarked that only McNab, himself, and one other, presumably the Premier, would be supporting the Liberals.

farmers would be more receptive to the idea if it was presented by Dunning and himself; perhaps he thought he could obtain Musselman and Maharg's consent. The latter was a possibility, for Musselman was disturbed by the growing bitterness developing between the Liberals and the Progressives; along with Motherwell he sought to alleviate it.

In your efforts to prevent a clash between the old party Liberals of this province and the N.N.P. organization, you can depend on my sympathetic co-operation. I have done vastly more in this direction than you or the general public have any idea of. . . . Indeed I have several times heard one of the leading officers of the N.N.P. say that he would rather see the present government go back to power than see the Liberal party win. I can assure you that in this effort which is dear to your heart there is room for the finest tact and most statesmanlike diplomacy and I do not feel that I am especially equipped with either faculty, yet I shall continue to do my best to prevent a split amongst what I consider the truly Liberal forces of this province.⁹

While this attitude seemed to augur well for the campaign, the discussion proved fruitless for the same reasons as in March. Meanwhile the provincial government was beginning to divide.

On September 21 George Langley dispatched a letter to the *Regina Morning Leader* declaring an end to his support of the federal Liberal Party, thereby joining Maharg on the Progressive side. He cited the strong protectionist wing within the Liberal Party as the reason for his decision, concluding the Progressives were better equipped to implement tariff reform.¹⁰ The *Morning Leader* disagreed, arguing that Crerar might be unable to mould his supporters into an effective, united, parliamentary group.¹¹ In addition it challenged Langley's contention that the

⁹S.G.G.A. Papers, Musselman-Motherwell, 17 June 1921, 1921 Election File.

¹⁰Martin Papers, Langley-Editor of *Regina Morning Leader*, 21 September 1921, p. 44388. The letter was also published in the *Grain Growers Guide* on September 28.

¹¹Martin Papers, Clipping from the *Regina Morning Leader*, 26 September 1921, p. 44387.

Progressives were untainted by reactionary influences, using the movement's conservative element, which had blocked a rapprochement with the Liberals, to bolster its case. Martin watched this debate with growing concern, hoping the government would survive as it had in 1917 when various ministers had taken opposing stands. Nine days after Langley's declaration he revealed his position by attending a Liberal nominating convention in Regina which selected Motherwell as its candidate. The Premier was accompanied by Dunning, J. A. Cross, M.L.A. for Regina, and Banford Hooke of the *Morning Leader*.¹²

Martin felt compelled to explain his presence taking the same attitude as he had throughout the Union government crisis.

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

This approach was the only way to reconcile cabinet divisions since it would allow Maharg and Langley to campaign freely for the Progressives without embarrassing the Premier. It had worked in 1917 and there seemed no reason why it could not be applied to the present situation. Martin carefully avoided offending the Progressives; he stressed his sympathy for the movement, lamenting the division of anti-government forces, and urging that only one low-tariff candidate be selected in each riding.

Dunning was equally conciliatory:

I hope to have the opportunity of helping Liberals in straight

¹²Martin Papers, Clipping from the *Regina Morning Leader*, 1 October 1921, p. 44361. The entire section concerning Martin and Dunning's remarks to the convention, including the quotations, is drawn from this account.

fights against Meighen Government candidates. I hope I may have the opportunity of helping Progressives in straight fights in Saskatchewan against Meighen Government candidates. But, Mr. Chairman, I am not going to help Liberals cut the throat of a Progressive or help a Progressive cut the throat of a Liberal and thus play the Tory game.

He also provided the rationalization for supporting Motherwell in Regina declaring the Liberals had the best organization in the city, therefore, the best chance of defeating the government candidate; where the situation was reversed he counselled Liberals to endorse Progressive candidates. According to Dafoe, Martin and Dunning were attempting to arrange a deal whereby they would support the Progressives throughout the province in exchange for Motherwell's unopposed election in Regina.¹³ This deal seemed cheap for the Premier was certain that most seats would fall to the Progressives and feared that Liberal candidates would only serve to divide the vote and possibly cause the election of two or three government supporters.¹⁴ An arrangement would guarantee the return of at least one Liberal from the province.

One can only speculate about the Premier's reasons for striving so hard to secure the election of a man who had been a thorn in his side for years. One factor was party loyalty. Martin had represented the Liberal party for thirteen years and could hardly be expected to discard it, despite its unpopularity in the province. A trace of partisanship was evident in his address at Motherwell's convention when he had stoutly defended the Liberals' sincerity in advocating tariff reductions.¹⁵ All his actions, particularly at Preeceville, had been designed to save the provincial government; once this was accomplished, he had plunged back

¹³Sifton Papers, Dafoe-Sifton, 14 October 1921, p. 162823 - 58.

¹⁴Martin Papers, Martin-Russell, 21 October 1921, p. 5519.

¹⁵Martin Papers, Clipping from the Regina *Morning Leader*, 1 October 1921, p. 44361.

into federal affairs. A second consideration was his dislike of certain aspects of the Progressive movement. Martin had consistently criticized both its class base, which he thought dangerous, and its eagerness to abolish political parties, which he thought naive.¹⁶ Finally, the Premier may have realized the Progressives were a regional phenomenon which would not garner enough votes to form a government. He might have anticipated a Liberal victory and wanted to ensure that the province had at least one representative in the federal cabinet. Whatever Motherwell's faults his sincerity was unquestionable and Regina was the strongest Liberal seat in the province.

For the first time Martin's actions placed him in opposition to the S.G.G.A. On September 23, the executive had endorsed the Progressives and resolved to campaign on their behalf.¹⁷ However, despite the near unanimity with which farmers had entered federal politics, the Association found its position attacked by several disgruntled groups. These included staunch Liberals, those who had opposed the Association's stand in the provincial election, and the Non-Partisan League, which continued its shadowy existence.¹⁸ Once again Musselman had to plead for faith in the executive, a sign that the campaign had created serious rifts.

The Progressives also experienced tensions, though for a different reason. They had inaugurated a series of primary elections which led to the development of an army of aspirants in each riding, bitter factional

¹⁶*Ibid.* Also see Martin Papers, Clipping from the *Weyburn Review*, June 1919, p. 44128; Martin-Sparrow, 5 April 1920, pp. 4683-86, for similar comments.

¹⁷*Grain Growers Guide*, 12 October 1921.

¹⁸S.G.G.A. Papers, Circular sent to all Directors, 27 September p. 3.

contests, and the delaying of nominating conventions.¹⁹ These spirited battles revealed the vitality of the movement, but also indicated how uncontrollable it had become since even prominent Progressives had to struggle to secure nominations. For example, O. R. Gould faced five challengers who extended him to four ballots.²⁰ On October 21, the Progressives in Regina chose a candidate to oppose Motherwell, thereby dashing all hopes of an accommodation. In retaliation Motherwell toured the province securing as many Liberal candidates as possible. These developments interjected considerable bitterness into the campaign.²¹ By early November it had deteriorated into a "real feud."²²

Amid this heated atmosphere George Langley abruptly resigned from the cabinet accepting the presidency of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company. He was dismissed for attempting to interfere in a police investigation involving one of his old supporters in Redberry.²³ This action incensed the Premier who accused Langley of having no sense of public morality and immediately requested his departure. Langley complied, admitting to a grave indiscretion, but offended by his harsh treatment, especially after his many services.

You could remember that I . . . was your colleague and as such had at times helped you with wise counsel, and further you could have remembered your obligation to me, for a general idea prevails that, but for my actions, assisted by others, at the Grain Growers' Convention at Moose Jaw in February last, there would today be no 'Martin Government.' And last of all you could have remembered that I was more than old enough to be your father.²⁴

¹⁹Sifton Papers, Dafoe-Sifton, 14 October 1921, p. 162823 - 53.

²⁰*Grain Growers Guide*, 26 October 1921.

²¹Sifton Papers, Dafoe-Sifton, 29 October 1921, p. 162823 - 73.

²²Sifton Papers, Dafoe-Sifton, 5 November 1921, p. 162823 - 88.

²³Martin Papers, Correspondence published in the *Regina Morning Leader*, 15 December 1921, p. 44348.

²⁴*Ibid.*

He asked that the resignation be delayed but Martin refused, although he promised not to reveal the reasons unless it became necessary. They were not released until the Legislature convened in December, after the federal election, when Martin was pressed by opposition M.L.A.'s to provide an explanation. Until then the Regina *Daily Post's* reasoning seemed credible; Langley had resigned because of Martin's support of the Liberals in the federal campaign.²⁵ Langley never suggested that this had been a consideration. Indeed Maharg's continued presence in the government, after Langley's departure, ought to have confirmed that the *Daily Post's* speculation was inaccurate.

As the campaign progressed Martin began to shed the cautious approach which had characterized his behaviour since Assiniboia. In November King again visited Regina as part of his election tour; this time Martin sat at his side solidly identifying with the federal Liberal leader.²⁶ King was pleased.

Let me say how very sincerely I appreciated your presence on the platform at the Regina meeting. I hope the day is not far distant when no embarrassment will be experienced through our appearance together on a Liberal platform in any part of the Dominion.²⁷

King's remarks were equally significant. In his first speech in Saskatchewan, at Melville, King had departed from his previously conciliatory attitude by denouncing the Progressives as a class movement and declaring that henceforth the Liberals would have nothing to do with them. King repeated this attack in Regina, charging the Progressives

²⁵Martin Papers, Clipping from the Regina *Daily Post*, 21 October 1921, p. 44347.

²⁶Martin Papers, Clipping from the Regina *Morning Leader*, 17 November 1921, pp. 44365-67.

²⁷King Papers, King-Martin, 23 November 1921, p. 55501.

²⁸Sifton Papers, Dafoe-Sifton, 7 December 1921, p. 162823 - 102.

with dividing the low tariff vote by opposing individuals such as Motherwell; he appealed to westerners not to isolate themselves by electing candidates from a class-oriented regional party.²⁹ Martin's presence seemed an endorsement of these views. Even more persuasive was a report that the Premier had thrown the provincial election organization into the fight in every constituency where the Liberals were thought to have a chance.³⁰

By late November Martin was extremely disenchanted with the Progressives, disgusted perhaps by the embittered tone of their campaign. He felt the movement had slipped out of control and weakened itself by casting aside many of its experienced leaders who had counselled restraint.³¹ In one speech he asserted the Progressives' campaign had "resulted in the appearance of the largest number of political carpet-baggers ever scattered over these prairies."³² On December 1, five days before the election, the Premier delivered a stunning speech which constituted a comprehensive attack on both the Progressives and their program.³³ He began, as always, by deploring the division of low tariff forces and expressing sympathy for the general aims of the Progressive movement: to better western conditions and secure a greater representation for farmers in Ottawa. Martin then turned to specifics. He labelled

²⁹Martin Papers, Clipping from the *Regina Morning Leader*, 17 November 1921, pp. 44365-67.

³⁰Sifton Papers, Dafoe-Sifton, 7 December 1921, p. 162823 - 102. Latta now also committed himself openly to the Liberals. See *Regina Morning Leader*, 26 November 1921.

³¹Martin Papers, Martin-Thomson, 25 November 1921, p. 23547.

³²Martin Papers, Clipping from the *Regina Morning Leader*, 26 November 1921, p. 44369.

³³Martin Papers, Clipping from the *Regina Morning Leader*, 2 December 1921, p. 44370. The entire section discussing Martin's remarks, including the quotations, is drawn from this account.

their tax proposals ill-considered, their labour policy non-existent, their ideas on public ownership hasty and their suggested parliamentary reforms fads. In addition, he criticized the absence of references to important questions such as the national marketing of grain, freight rates, and natural resources. Finally, the Premier came to his most severe complaint.

The leaders of the new party condemn everything that savors of party. They say: Away with the old political parties; away with all the history and traditions associated with them; away with everyone who has ever been in public life. Experience in public life counts for nought. We will have in future nothing but new men. We will change the economic outlook in Canada. They propose to do away with parties, and at the same time create another party to increase political parties. They condemn party organization and at the same time endeavor to build up an organization such as has never before been seen in Canada. . . .

They say that they stand for everything that is good in public life. Yet in the last analysis they are no better and perhaps no worse than the average man. They are only human, and if placed in power tomorrow on a platform with so many planks which could never fit into our system of constitutional government, I do not see how we could look for any better government than we have had in the past. The chances are that it might be a little worse, because men cannot be pitchforked into the highest positions in Canada without some qualifications or some previous experience.

Martin contrasted this with the Liberals whom, he declared, had sincerity, experience, and a platform which would unite all Canadians irrespective of class. The Premier concluded with a moving appeal to the pride and traditions of the Liberal Party, which must certainly have warmed Motherwell's heart.

The reaction was swift. George Langley, who was still campaigning for the Progressives, refuted the Premier's allegations several days later, but the spotlight fell on Maharg. On December 5, the day before the election, the Agriculture Minister tendered his resignation by phone.³⁴

³⁴Martin Papers, Clipping from the *Regina Morning Leader*, 5 December 1921, p. 44251; Maharg-Martin, 7 December 1921, pp. 44256-58.

He rejected the Premier's request for a conference, accusing Martin of breaking a gentleman's agreement made when he had entered the cabinet in May: that the provincial government would always remain friendly to the farmers. He was offended by the Premier's "last minute" intervention, especially since it gave the Progressives little opportunity to respond. Finally, Maharg implied that Martin had deceived him by suggesting that he would campaign for the Progressives if the situation permitted, contending there had been ample opportunity for five seats were without Liberal candidates.

Martin replied by repeating the policy both he and Dunning had enunciated at Motherwell's nomination; all government members were free to follow their own conscience in federal affairs. Martin reminded Maharg that he had exercised this right, campaigning vigorously throughout the province without interference.

If, [he added] by anything I have ever said to you on the subject you feel that you were misled in any way, it will always be a matter of the greatest regret to me.³⁵

The Premier denied, with justification, that he had entered the campaign in the dying days, emphasizing his public involvement since September 30. The *Morning Leader* also entered the debate noting that Maharg was the only cabinet minister to campaign extensively; McNab had confined himself to assisting the Liberal candidate in Saskatoon, Martin and Dunning had done likewise in Regina, while Latta and Hamilton had discouraged the selection of Liberal candidates in Last Mountain and Weyburn respectively.³⁶ These arguments were ineffectual, Maharg crossed the floor to become leader of

³⁵Martin Papers, Martin-Maharg, 7 December 1921, pp. 44256-58.

³⁶Martin Papers, Clipping from the Regina *Morning Leader*, 5 December 1921, p. 44251.

the Opposition; the only time this has occurred in the province's history.

These events did not appear to have any impact upon the election results. As expected the Progressives swept the province, capturing fifteen seats and polling 136,472 votes despite nine three-cornered fights. Eleven Liberals garnered 46,448 votes, 7,786 of them in Regina where Motherwell was handily elected. The Conservatives put on a dismal performance running last in the fourteen ridings they contested. Part of their showing is attributable to a bargain concluded by Senator J. Ross, on behalf of the Liberals, and newly-appointed Senator Calder, on behalf of the Conservatives, in an attempt to prevent a Progressive landslide.

In all three Saskatchewan cities, Regina, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon, the Liberals got heavy votes at the expense of their Conservative rivals. This is only explainable on the theory that the Conservative vote where it could be controlled, was switched to the Liberals. In Regina the tactics were successful, Mr. Motherwell going out of the city with a majority so large that the Progressives could not overcome it in the rural polls. In Moose Jaw the result was different simply because the weight of the vote was in the rural districts. Although . . . Moose Jaw is a C.P.R. and a conservative town, Knowles was presented with a majority of 2,000 in the city, which was thought to be quite sufficient to insure his election but the rural vote overtook this and gave Johnson a substantial majority.³⁷

Martin was in a difficult position after the election for, as Musselman noted, he was not in accord with the opinions of the vast majority of the province.³⁸ His speech produced a rapid erosion of agrarian support which jeopardized the government's future, despite the massive legislative majority. The Regina *Daily Post* examined the whole affair from the proper perspective, assessing the effect, if not the in-

³⁷Sifton Papers, Dafoe-Sifton, 7 December 1921, p. 162823 - 102.

³⁸*Grain Growers Guide*, 14 December 1921.

tent, of the Premier's remarks.

The last speech of Mr. Martin in the Federal campaign was given to an attack upon the Progressive party and the Conservative party, but with a difference, the difference being that one hour and ten minutes were given over to the attack upon the Progressives, and ten minutes to criticism of the Conservative party. It was not an impromptu address, but was carefully prepared, and the course it followed was deliberate. Whatever the Premier's motives may have been, the fact remains that he did his level best to injure the Progressives in every part of the Province and in every part of the Dominion, to the advantage of the Liberal candidates. It was not merely the fact that Mr. Martin did not do anything to elect Progressive candidates; it was not merely that he did what he could to secure the election of Liberal candidates; it was the fact, which Mr. Martin cannot dispute, that he deliberately and actively tried to injure the Progressive party, with his authority as Premier behind every word he uttered.³⁹

This was certainly the view taken by the S.G.G.A. On December 29, Musselman circulated a bulletin to all locals informing them that the question of entering provincial politics would be reopened as a result of Martin's actions.⁴⁰ The *Grain Growers Guide* ominously remarked that it was now apparent that the provincial government did not sympathize with the farmers' movement.⁴¹ Martin's greatest fear had finally materialized; the farmers' movement had turned against him.

Why did the Premier make such an explosive speech which contrasted so sharply with his previous behaviour? One scholar suggests that Martin was "deliberately preparing his exit."⁴² This may well have been a consideration, but it seems unlikely the Premier would bequeath the enmity of the organized farmers to his successors for just this purpose. Since cordial relations with King had been restored in September, the way to

³⁹Martin Papers, Clipping from the *Regina Daily Post*, 16 December 1921, p. 44261.

⁴⁰S.G.G.A. Papers, Circular to all Locals, 29 December 1921, p. 3.

⁴¹*Grain Growers Guide*, 14 December 1921.

⁴²D. E. Smith, *Prairie Liberalism*, p. 161.

the bench was clear, without any need for an ostentatious display of loyalty. One is tempted to propose that Martin misjudged the impact of his remarks, or was swept up by the rancorous debate which characterized the campaign's final days; but he was always an astute politician and it seems incredible that he would falter at this stage, after his skillful maneuvers of the preceding years. The *Daily Post's* simple explanation is perhaps best, Martin was trying to influence the outcome of the election. The Premier spoke from a prepared text, so one can reasonably assume he knew what he was doing. Throughout the campaign he had accurately predicted that most seats would fall to the Progressives. Perhaps, in light of the bargain struck with the Conservatives, he saw an opportunity to swing one or two seats, particularly Moose Jaw and Saskatoon, with one dramatic statement. If he was already considering retirement, the risk may have seemed worthwhile, especially if he was confident that his successor would be able to quell the storm. In late December he told one Manitoba Liberal that he had "cooked his goose" and had little choice but to get out at the first opportunity, turning the reins over to Dunning, who, he felt, would be able to placate the farmers.⁴³ These remarks are not inconsistent with the above explanation. On December 23, the Premier visited King, informing him he intended to retire and requesting an appointment to the bench.⁴⁴ Again Martin proposed Dunning as his replacement suggesting the minister could rebuild the harmonious relationship with the S.G.G.A. King apparently offered the Premier a cabinet post, which Martin declined. On January 27, before the S.G.G.A. convention convened,

⁴³Sifton Papers, Dafoe-Sifton, 31 December 1921, p. 162823 - 24.

⁴⁴King Diaries, 23 December 1921, p. 63614.

he formalized this decision in writing.⁴⁵

Martin did not have to resign; he still commanded a substantial legislative majority and the support of his colleagues. Had he desired it he might well have been able to mend his fences, since an election could be delayed until 1926. Therefore, part of his decision must be attributed to a distaste for politics and public life. He had accepted the Premiership reluctantly, never relishing the fierce battles in which he had become enmeshed. His years in office had been unhappy, dominated by tension, confusion, and political upheaval. The emotional conflicts with King and Motherwell made the prospect of a similar struggle with the S.G.G.A. particularly unappetizing. Martin may have felt that his task was completed. He had guided the Liberals through the scandals, Union government, and agrarian unrest; Dunning would be a capable successor.

The 1922 S.G.G.A. convention determined the timing of Martin's departure and provided a sad denouement for Maharg, Musselman, and Langley. It became evident Martin's December 1 speech had discredited them as much as himself. All three were placed in the uncomfortable position of defending their actions in light of recent developments, and refuting press reports which suggested they had concluded a political deal with the Premier before the provincial campaign.⁴⁶ None of them had a ready answer.

Insofar as my own actions during the past year are concerned, [Maharg remarked] I have very little to say other than they were made in good faith. If I have any criticism of myself it is that I took too much for granted.

Musselman also recanted and, with the executive's concurrence, urged the

⁴⁵ King Papers, Martin-King, January 27, 1922, pp. 66104-105.

⁴⁶ S.G.G.A. Papers, Report of the 1922 S.G.G.A. Convention, 1922. The entire section discussing the convention's proceedings, including the quotations, is drawn from this account. An excellent table of contents will quickly direct readers to the relevant passages.

convention "to go the whole way and organize a political party . . . within the association." Dunning strongly opposed the motion.

I don't care about your proposal to form a political association also, provided the Association to which all of us can come is left intact. Kick me out politically if you wish, that is your privilege, but do not debar a man who may not agree with your particular political movement from belonging to a farmers' organization.

Amazingly the convention adopted Dunning's position, not because it favoured the provincial government, but because it did not wish to entrust its executive with a greater concentration of power. The delegates chose to emulate their federal position; the Association was instructed to help organize a distinct provincial political body. For the government there was a disturbing unanimity in this decision.

This was not the only slap at the executive. A motion of confidence in the executive was tabled and another substituted censuring it for a twenty-five percent drop in membership, sloppy administration of the Association's trading department, and erratic behaviour in the provincial arena. It fell ten votes short of passing. The executive elections provided another forum for the expression of discontent. For the first time in years Maharg faced an opponent. Although he emerged victorious the vote totals were not announced, suggesting a close race. Vice-President Hawkes faced five aspirants and after several ballots went down to defeat losing to George Edwards by fifty-eight votes. Edwards had never held office outside his local though he was chairman of his constituency's N.N.P.P.A. committee. Musselman was barely re-elected as a director placing fifth; the year before he had led the polls. The leadership had clearly lost the confidence of a sizeable portion of the membership, thus paying a stiff penalty for its role in the Premier's re-election. In 1924 George Edwards completed his meteoric career replacing Maharg as president of the Associa-

tion.⁴⁷ Maharg and Musselman became president and vice-president, respectively, of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company.

These events, however, were in the future. After the convention the executive plunged into provincial politics with considerable gusto. At an executive meeting it decided to rearrange the Association's districts to conform with provincial constituency boundaries and resolved to hold organizational meetings within the year.⁴⁸ A circular was distributed to all locals instructing them to begin activities and promising to hire full-time organizers to ensure the government's defeat in the next campaign.⁴⁹ Though few were aware of it at the time, the S.G.G.A.'s moment had passed. On December 17, 1921, the Farmers Union of Canada held its first organizational meeting at Ituna.⁵⁰ Under the motto of 'One Aim, One Bond, One Brotherhood' it quickly rose to challenge the Association's primacy. By dividing the farmers' movement and diverting attention to economic rather than political action the Farmers' Union doomed the Association's efforts from the very start.

These developments were not apparent in 1922 so the S.G.G.A.'s vigorous activity alarmed the government causing Martin to accelerate his planned departure. On March 10 he asked King to hurry his pending judicial appointment.

Since my return here I find that in the interests of my successor I must retire almost immediately. This is necessary because there are several by-elections to be held—and we are simply drifting at the present time. . . .

My anxiety is wholly due to the local situation—for I feel that every day I remain I am unfair to my successor—a very unfortunate

⁴⁷D. E. Smith, *Prairie Liberalism*, p. 133.

⁴⁸S.G.G.A. Papers, Directors' Meeting, 20 February 1922, p. 24.

⁴⁹Martin Papers, Gardiner-Martin, 13 March 1922, pp. 30934-36.

⁵⁰Archives of Saskatchewan, Farmers Union of Canada Papers, p. 52.

situation. The matter has been fully discussed with my colleagues and they all agree that the earlier my retirement takes place the better.⁵¹

King complied and the transfer was arranged for April 5. It resembled Martin's accession in that it had been carefully planned, smoothly instigated, and widely expected in political circles. The press was not surprised, adopting the attitude that the change had been inevitable since the December 1 speech.⁵² Even so the *Daily Star* had kind and respectful words for the departing Premier. Dunning kept all of Martin's ministers and added James Gardiner, James Cross of Regina, and J. M. Uhrich of Rosthern, thereby reasserting the cabinet's Liberal complexion which Martin had masked so successfully. The new Premier offered the S.G.G.A. an olive branch declaring he would never fight it and asking for co-operation. He proved as capable a leader as Martin easily winning re-election in 1925 by a substantial margin. The ex-Premier went on to an eminent career on the bench serving as Chief Justice of Saskatchewan from 1944 until his retirement in 1964 at the ripe age of eighty-eight.

⁵¹King Papers, Martin-King, 10 March, 1922, p. 66117.

⁵²Saskatoon *Daily Star*, 4 April 1922; *Grain Growers Guide*, 12 April 1922.

CONCLUSION

In April of 1922, as Martin's political career drew to a close, the farmers' movement appeared as vigorous and potent as ever. Its adherents still occupied sixty-five seats in the Commons and held sway provincially in Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario. In Saskatchewan the provincial Progressive Party seemed to be preparing for a concerted effort to defeat Dunning's government at the next election. Though few realized it at the time, the farmers' moment had passed; subsequently various factors combined to redirect the movement along new paths stressing economic rather than political action. Federally the Progressives quickly disintegrated; in November 1922 Crerar resigned as leader, in March 1923 the Canadian Council of Agriculture withdrew its support, by the end of that year the caucus was breaking into two distinct groups.¹ On the provincial level the government of the United Farmers of Ontario was crushed in an election in June 1923 and the organization ceased to be a factor in that province's political life. In Manitoba the United Farmers drifted into a coalition with the Liberals to forestall a reviving Conservative Party. Only in Alberta did the farmers' political arm remain an independent force until its defeat during the depression.

In Saskatchewan the movement floundered; it lost an important by-election in June 1922 by over four hundred votes and membership in the S.G.G.A. began to drop at an alarming rate. In 1924 the Association res-

¹For a discussion of the collapse of the federal Progressives see W. L. Morton, *The Progressive Party*, pp. 168-209.

cinded its decision to enter provincial politics paving the way for the virtually uncontested return of the Dunning government in 1925.

By then it had become apparent that the farmers had been contained at a crucial stage during Martin's term and that Saskatchewan Liberals, alone among their prairie counterparts, had escaped the consequences of the vicissitudes of the period. The major reason for the survival of the Saskatchewan government was its special relationship with the S.G.G.A., nurtured in the Scott era and cemented under Martin through the addition of Dunning and Maharg to the cabinet. Throughout the period the S.G.G.A. executive, especially Musselman and Maharg, actively intervened to prevent the Association from embarking upon a course detrimental to the provincial government. Though they genuinely admired Martin's government their motives were not altruistic. Fifteen years of intimate contacts and significant influence could not be disavowed without creating serious tensions within the Association, as witnessed by the response to Musselman's questionnaire on the subject. Men like Langley and Dunning commanded widespread respect among farmers; to repudiate them seemed impossible, to accuse them of excessive partisanship seemed unbelievable. These fears were not unfounded for among the reasons for the continuous fall in membership after 1922 was the Association's political involvement.² Farmers had become accustomed to viewing the provincial government as their own, a sentiment Martin skillfully exploited. This situation was unique to Saskatchewan.

In Manitoba the Conservatives held power between 1900 and 1915. Though they were receptive to agrarian demands, notably by establishing a government-owned elevator company in 1911, they were unable to develop

²*Ibid.*, p. 232.

lasting attachments because of the unpopularity of their federal counterparts, their lack of effort, and their opposition to various reforms demanded by the Manitoba Grain Growers Association concerning temperance, immigrants, and women's suffrage. The Liberal opposition had little to offer farmers, except promises. By 1915, when they captured power, the farmers' movement had already crystallized and it was too late to emulate the Saskatchewan Liberals. Furthermore, Manitoba's chief agrarian leaders were unable to restrain their followers. Crerar was preoccupied by other duties, first as Minister of Agriculture, then as national leader of the Progressive Party. Henders, the M.G.G.A.'s president, was discredited in 1919 when he remained with the Borden government. No one could play the role of Maharg or Musselman. In Alberta the Liberals, who held power from 1905 until their defeat in 1921, had to contend with a different situation. The United Farmers of Alberta were devoted to the concept of group government, hence unreceptive to overtures from the traditional parties. No one wanted to play the role of Maharg or Musselman.

Circumstances, therefore, provided Martin an opportunity denied other prairie politicians and he did not waste it. His shrewd political sense, hard realism, and skillful leadership enabled him to exploit the situation and save his government. Martin's formula for success was simple: enunciate western concerns, meet the farmers' legislative requests, dissociate from the federal Liberal Party and traditional politics, and finally maintain, at all costs, the relationship with the S.G.G.A. He was constantly criticized by partisan Liberals for weakness and indecision; they failed to realize it was a time for caution not boldness. Individuals such as Motherwell were frustrated by the Premier's position, especially by his renunciation of federal ties which was a startling depar-

ture from traditional practices. What they mistook for weakness was actually a frank admission of political reality and the strength of the farmers' movement; what they considered indecision was usually an attempt to avoid alienating the farmers while, at the same time, preserving as much of the Liberal complexion as possible within the government. Martin's leadership was both competent and steady; the Liberals survived the Bradshaw charges, Union government, the language dispute, and the farmers' revolt, testimony enough to the Premier's abilities. The government he handed Dunning was stronger, younger, and more firmly entrenched than that which he had inherited.

A final question must be raised: what benefits, partisan considerations aside, were gained by the preservation of the provincial Liberal Party in Saskatchewan? One was the development of the most competitive political system in the country.³ Despite long periods of one-party dominance Saskatchewan elections have always been hotly contested and the victor often faced a sizeable and well-organized opposition in the Legislature. This has given the electorate an obvious alternative to the government, a choice it has exercised five times beginning in 1929. More important was the continuation of the national party system. Throughout the 1920's, 30's, and 40's Saskatchewan was the western pillar of the Liberal Party and a succession of eminent individuals enjoyed great influence at the national level. Motherwell was Minister of Agriculture for nine years, Dunning became the west's only finance minister, and Gardiner was a central figure in the King and St. Laurent governments for

³An idea developed in J. C. Courtney and D. E. Smith, "Saskatchewan Politics in a Politically Competitive Province," in M. Robin, ed., *Canadian Provincial Politics* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada Limited, 1972), pp. 309-312.

twenty years. One reason for their successes is that they were supported by a secure provincial organization, so strong that King found Prince Albert a safe haven from 1926 to 1945. This is the significance of Martin's accomplishment; he helped create an intensely competitive political system and a solid party which enabled his successor to have a greater voice in federal affairs and contributed to giving the west, as a whole, a share of national power.

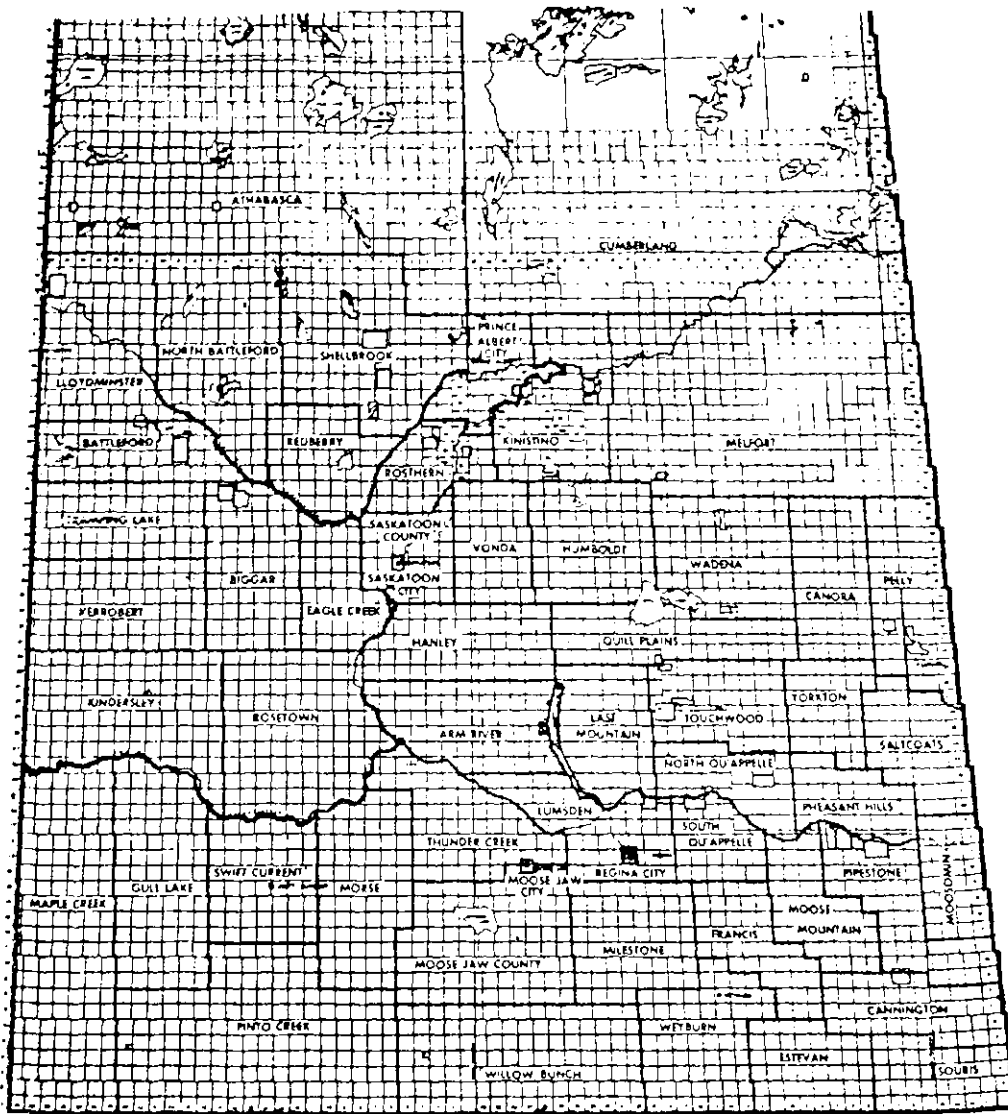
APPENDIX A

SASKATCHEWAN PROVINCIAL ELECTION RESULTS

1912 - 1921

The material in this section is drawn from a publication by the Saskatchewan Archives Board entitled *Saskatchewan Executive and Legislative Directory 1905-1970* (Regina: Lawrence Amon, Printer to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, 1971).

1912 ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES



1912 ELECTION: 54 Members

Liberals 46

Conservatives 8

MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEGISLATURES

Members returned at the General Election held on July 11, 1912,* to serve in the *Third Legislature* (Dissolved June 2, 1917)

Electoral Division	Member
Arm River - - - -	- George Adam Scott (Liberal)
Athabasca - - - -	- Joseph Octave Nolin (Liberal)
Battleford - - - -	- Sydney Seymour Simpson (Liberal)
Biggar - - - -	- Charles Henry Cawthorpe (Liberal)
Cannington - - - -	- John Duncan Stewart (Liberal)
Canora - - - -	- John Duff Robertson (Liberal) (Declared void, see by-election, Sept. 8, 1913)
Eagle Creek - - - -	- George Hamilton Harris (Liberal)
Estevan - - - -	- George Alexander Bell (Liberal)
Francis - - - -	- Walter George Robinson (Liberal)
Gull Lake - - - -	- Daniel Cameron Lohead (Liberal)
Hanley - - - -	- James Walter MacNeill (Liberal)
Humboldt - - - -	- Hon. William Ferdinand Alphonse Turgeon (Liberal)
Kerrobert - - - -	- George Harvey Watson (Liberal)
Kindersley - - - -	- Hon. William Richard Motherwell (Liberal)
Kinistino - - - -	- Edward Haywood Devline (Liberal)
Last Mountain - - - -	- Samuel John Latta (Liberal)
Lloydminster - - - -	- John Percival Lyle (Liberal)
Lumsden - - - -	- Frederick Clarke Tate (Conservative)
Maple Creek - - - -	- David James Wylie (Conservative)
Melfort - - - -	- George Balfour Johnston (Liberal)
Milestone - - - -	- Bernhard Larson (Liberal)
Moose Jaw City - - - -	- Wellington Bartley Willoughby (Conser- vative)
Moose Jaw County - - - -	- John Albert Sheppard (Liberal)
Moose Mountain - - - -	- Robert Armstrong Magee (Liberal)
Moosomin - - - -	- Alexander Smith Smith (Liberal)
Morse - - - -	- Malcolm L. Leitch (Liberal)
North Battleford - - - -	- Donald M. Finlayson (Liberal)
North Qu'Appelle - - - -	- John Archibald McDonald (Conservative)
Pelly - - - -	- John Kenneth Johnston (Liberal)

*Except in Athabasca where date of polling was December 14, 1912.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEGISLATURES

Electoral Division	Member
Pheasant Hills - - -	- Andrew Benjamin Alton Cunningham (Liberal)
Pinto Creek - - -	- Samuel Robert Moore (Liberal)
Pipestone - - -	- Richard James Phin (Liberal)
Prince Albert City - -	- John Ernest Bradshaw (Conservative)
Quill Plains - - -	- Wilhelm Hans Paulson (Liberal)
Redberry - - -	- George Langley (Liberal)
Regina City - - -	- James Franklin Bole (Liberal)
Rosetown - - -	- Cephas Barker Mark (Liberal)
Rosthern - - -	- Gerhard Ens (Liberal)
Saltcoats - - -	- Hon. James Alexander Calder (Liberal)
Saskatoon City - - -	- Hon. Archibald Peter McNab (Liberal)
Saskatoon County - -	- William Charles Sutherland (Liberal)
Shellbrook - - -	- Samuel James Donaldson (Conservative)
Souris - - -	- Richard Forsyth (Liberal)
South Qu'Appelle - -	- Frederick William Gordon Haultain (Conservative)
Swift Current - - -	- Hon. Walter Scott (Liberal)
Thunder Creek - - -	- Alexander Beaudreau (Liberal)
Touchwood - - -	- George Maitland Atkinson (Liberal)
Tramping Lake - - -	- James Murray Scott (Liberal)
Vonda - - -	- Albert Frederick Totzke (Liberal)
Wadena - - -	- Herbert Chandler Pierce (Liberal)
Weyburn - - -	- Robert Menzies Mitchell (Liberal)
Willow Bunch - - -	- William W. Davidson (Conservative)
Yorkton - - -	- Thomas Henry Garry (Liberal)

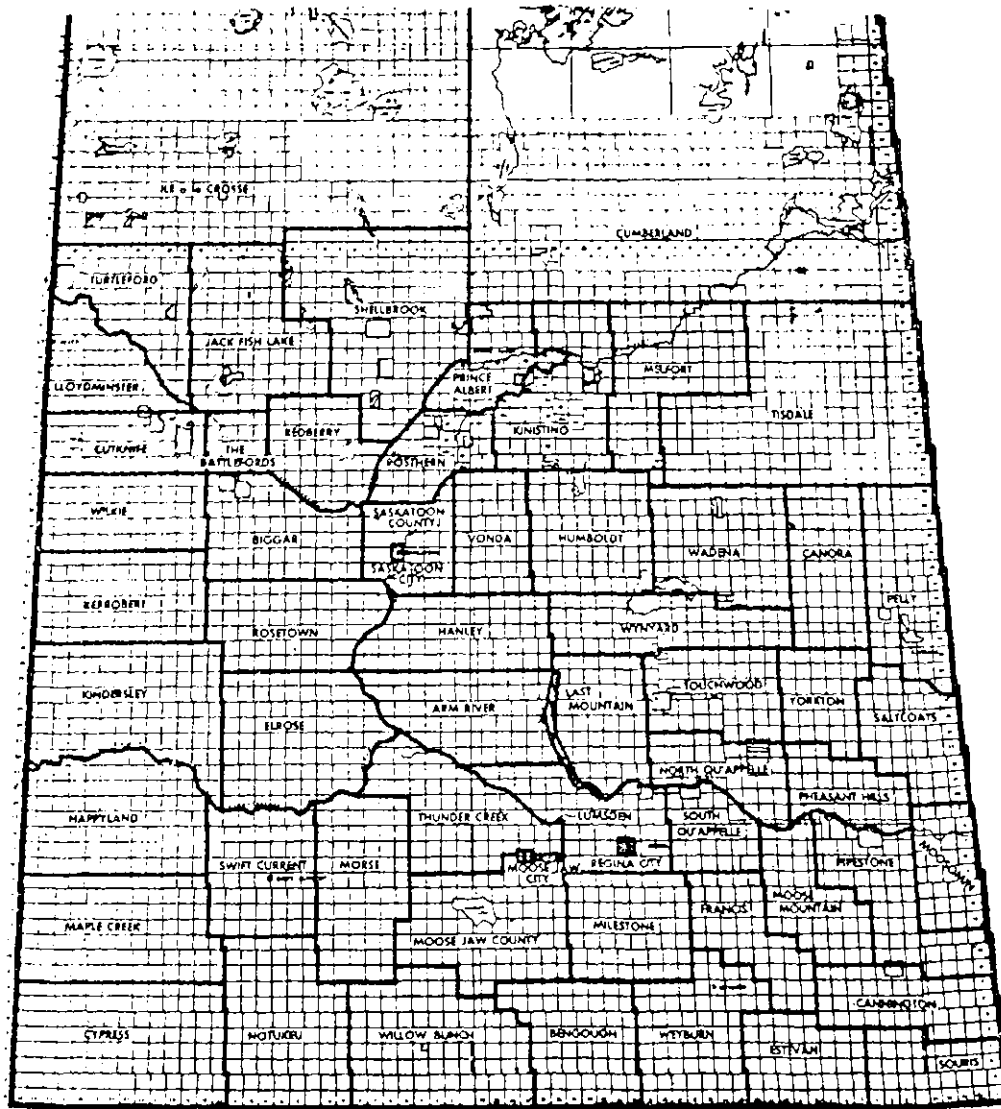
By-Elections held during the *Third Legislature*

Electoral Division	Date	Member
Cumberland	Sept. 8, 1913	Deakin Alexander Hall (Liberal)
Estevan	Sept. 5, 1912	Hon. George Alexander Bell (Liberal)
Hanley	June 28, 1913	Macbeth Malcolm (Liberal)
Kinistino	Nov. 13, 1916	Hon. Charles Avery Dunning (Liberal)
Moose Jaw County	Dec. 5, 1916	John Edwin Chisholm (Conservative)
North Qu'Appelle	June 25, 1914	James Garfield Gardiner (Liberal)

MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEGISLATURES

Electoral Division	Date	Member
Redberry	Sept. 5, 1912	Hon. George Langley (Liberal)
Regina City	Nov. 13, 1916	Hon. William Melville Martin (Liberal)
Rosthern	June 25, 1914	William Benjamin Bashford (Liberal)
Shellbrook	May 10, 1915	Edgar Sidney Clinch (Liberal)
South Qu'Appelle	Dec. 4, 1912	Joseph Glenn (Conservative)

1917 ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES



1917 ELECTION: 59 Members

Liberals	50 (including 2 Armed Services members)
Conservatives	8 (including 1 Armed Services member)
Independents	1

MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEGISLATURES

Members returned at the General Election held on June 26, 1917,* to serve in the *Fourth Legislature* (Dissolved May 16, 1921)

Electoral Division	Member
Arm River - - - -	- George Adam Scott (Liberal)
Battlefords, The - - - -	- Allan Demetrius Pickel (Liberal)
Bengough - - - -	- Thomas Evan Gamble (Liberal)
Biggar - - - -	- George Hamilton Harris (Liberal)
Cannington - - - -	- John Duncan Stewart (Liberal)
Canora - - - -	- H. P. Albert Hermanson (Liberal)
Cumberland - - - -	- Deakin Alexander Hall (Liberal)
Cut Knife - - - -	- William Hamilton Dodds (Liberal)
Cypress - - - -	- Isaac Stirling (Liberal)
Elrose - - - -	- Hon. Archibald Peter McNab (Liberal)
Estevan - - - -	- Hon. George Alexander Bell (Liberal)
Francis - - - -	- Walter George Robinson (Liberal)
Hanley - - - -	- Macbeth Malcolm (Liberal)
Happyland - - - -	- Stephen Morrey (Liberal)
Humboldt - - - -	- Hon. William Ferdinand Alphonse Turgeon (Liberal)
Ile à la Crosse - - - -	- Joseph Octave Nolin (Liberal)
Jack Fish Lake - - - -	- Donald M. Finlayson (Liberal)
Kerrobert - - - -	- John Albert Dowd (Liberal)
Kindersley - - - -	- Hon. William Richard Motherwell (Liberal)
Kinistino - - - -	- John Richard Parish Taylor (Liberal)
Last Mountain - - - -	- Samuel John Latta (Liberal)
Lloydminster - - - -	- Robert James Gordon (Liberal)
Lumsden - - - -	- William John Vancise (Liberal)
Maple Creek - - - -	- Alexander John Colquhoun (Liberal)
Melfort - - - -	- George Balfour Johnston (Liberal)
Milestone - - - -	- Bernhard Larson (Liberal)
Moose Jaw City - - - -	- Wellington Bartley Willoughby (Conser- vative)
Moose Jaw County - - - -	- Hon. Charles Avery Dunning (Liberal)
Moose Mountain - - - -	- Robert Armstrong Magee (Liberal)
Moosomin - - - -	- John Louis Salkeld (Conservative)
Morse - - - -	- Malcolm L. Leitch (Liberal)

*Except for the Active Service Voters who were polled October 3-13, 1917.

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURES

Electoral Division	Member
North Qu'Appelle - - - -	- James Garfield Gardiner (Liberal)
Notukeu - - - -	- George Spence (Liberal)
Pelly - - - -	- Magnus O. Ramsland (Liberal)
Pheasant Hills - - - -	- James Arthur Smith (Liberal)
Pipestone - - - -	- Richard James Phin (Liberal)
Prince Albert - - - -	- Charles M. McDonald (Liberal)
Redberry - - - -	- Hon. George Langley (Liberal)
Regina City - - - -	- Hon. William Melville Martin (Liberal)
Rosetown - - - -	- William Thompson Badger (Conservative)
Rosthern - - - -	- William Benjamin Bashford (Liberal)
Saltcoats - - - -	- Hon. James Alexander Calder (Liberal)
Saskatoon City - - - -	- Donald Maclean (Conservative)
Saskatoon County - - - -	- Murdo Cameron (Liberal)
Shellbrook - - - -	- Edgar Sidney Clinch (Liberal)
Souris - - - -	- William Oliver Fraser (Conservative)
South Qu'Appelle - - - -	- Joseph Glenn (Conservative)
Swift Current - - - -	- David John Sykes (Independent)
Thunder Creek - - - -	- Andrew Dunn Gallagher (Conservative)
Tisdale - - - -	- Hugh Evan Jones (Liberal)
Touchwood - - - -	- John Mason Parker (Liberal)
Turtleford - - - -	- Archibald B. Gemmell (Liberal)
Vonda - - - -	- James Hogan (Liberal)
Wadena - - - -	- John Angus MacMillan (Liberal)
Weyburn - - - -	- Robert Menzies Mitchell (Liberal)
Wilkie - - - -	- Reuben Martin (Liberal)
Willow Bunch - - - -	- Abel James Hindle (Liberal)
Wynyard - - - -	- Wilhelm Hans Paulson (Liberal)
Yorkton - - - -	- Thomas Henry Garry (Liberal)
Armed Services Voters in France and Belgium - - - -	Private Harris Turner - Captain Frederick Bertram Bagshaw
Armed Services Voters in Great Britain - - - -	- Colonel James Albert Cross

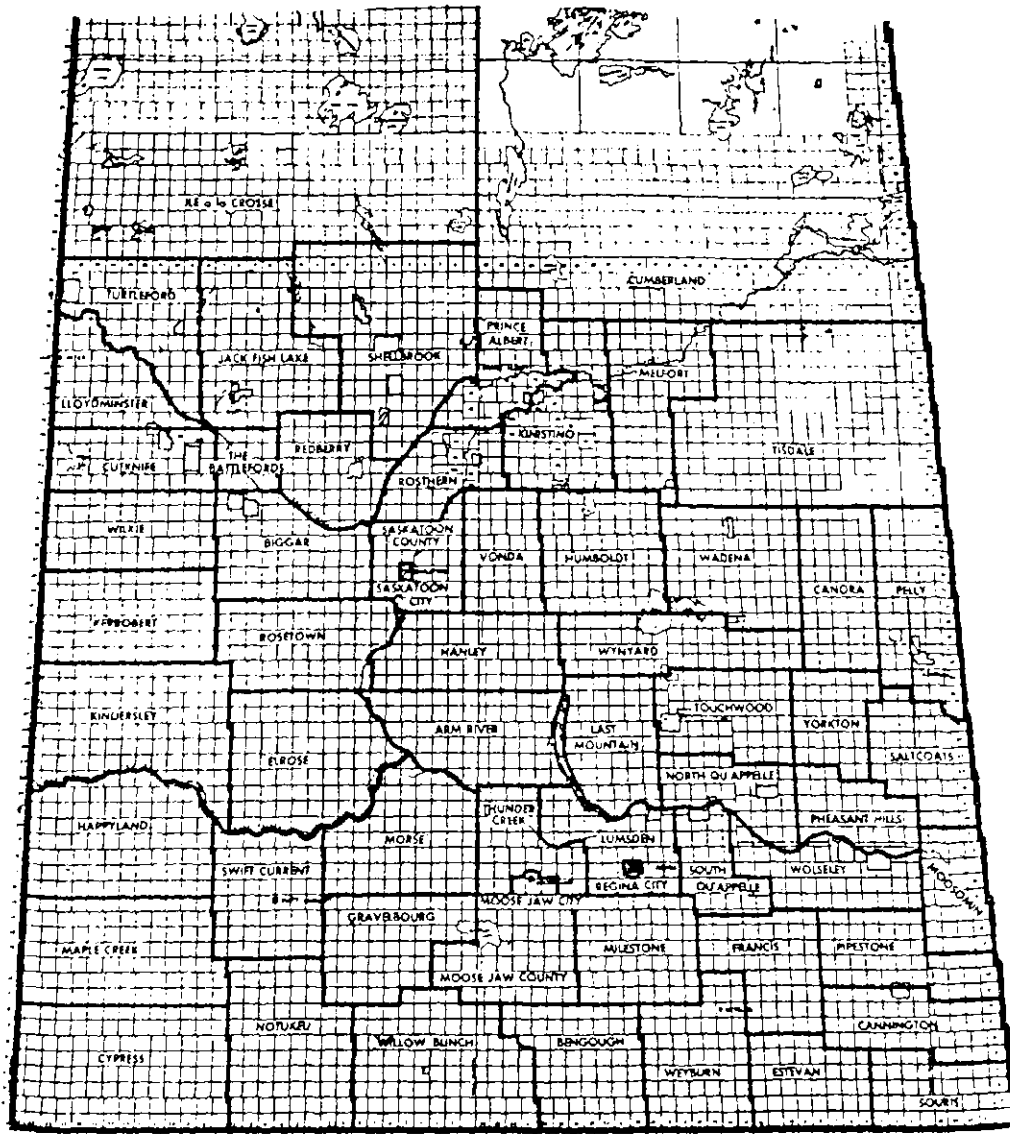
By-Elections held during the *Fourth Legislature*

Electoral Division	Date	Member
Estevan	Oct. 24, 1918	Robert Dunbar (Liberal)
Kindersley	Nov. 13, 1919	Wesley Harper Harvey (Farmer-Independent)

MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEGISLATURES

Electoral Division	Date	Member
Last Mountain	Nov. 6, 1917	Hon. Samuel John Latta (Liberal)
Moose Jaw City	June 10, 1918	Hon. William Erskine Knowles (Liberal)
Pelly	July 29, 1919	Sarah Katherine Ramsland (Liberal)
Saltcoats	July 11, 1918	George Williams Sahlmark (Liberal)
Weyburn	July 22, 1919	Charles McGill Hamilton (Liberal)
Weyburn	June 15, 1920	Hon. Charles McGill Hamilton (Liberal)

1921 ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES



1921 ELECTION: 63 Members

Liberals	45
Independents	8
Progressives	6
Conservatives	3
Labour	1

MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEGISLATURES

Members returned at the General Election held on June 9, 1921,*to
serve in the *Fifth Legislature* (Dissolved May 9, 1925)

Electoral Division	Member
Arm River - - - -	- George Adam Scott (Liberal)
Battlefords, The - - - -	- Allan Demetrius Pickel (Liberal)
Bengough - - - -	- Thomas Evan Gamble (Liberal)
Biggar - - - -	- John Meikle (Progressive)
Cannington - - - -	- Robert Douglas (Liberal)
Canora - - - -	- H. P. Albert Hermanson (Liberal)
Cumberland - - - -	- George Langley (Liberal)
Cut Knife - - - -	- William Hamilton Dodds (Liberal)
Cypress - - - -	- Henry Theodore Halvorson (Liberal)
Elrose - - - -	- Wilbert Hagarty (Liberal)
Estevan - - - -	- Robert Dunbar (Liberal)
Francis - - - -	- Walter George Robinson (Liberal)
Gravelbourg - - - -	- William James Cummings (Independent)
Hanley - - - -	- Ernest Redford Ketcheson (Liberal)
Happyland - - - -	- Stephen Morrey (Liberal)
Humboldt - - - -	- Henry Mathies Therres (Liberal)
Ile à la Crosse - - - -	- Joseph Octave Nolin (Liberal)
Jack Fish Lake - - - -	- Donald M. Finlayson (Liberal)
Kerrobert - - - -	- John Albert Dowd (Liberal)
Kindersley - - - -	- Wesley Harper Harvey (Progressive)
Kinistino - - - -	- John Richard Parish Taylor (Liberal)
Last Mountain - - - -	- Hon. Samuel John Latta (Liberal)
Lloydminster - - - -	- Robert James Gordon (Liberal)
Lumsden - - - -	- William John Vancise (Liberal)
Maple Creek - - - -	- Peter Lawrence Hyde (Liberal)
Melfort - - - -	- George Balfour Johnston (Liberal)
Milestone - - - -	- Bernhard Larson (Liberal)
Moose Jaw City - - - -	- William George Baker (Labor)
	James Pascoe (Independent-Conservative)
Moose Jaw County - - - -	- Hon. Charles Avery Dunning (Liberal)

*Except in Cumberland where the member was declared returned by acclamation on August 9, 1921 and in Ile à la Crosse where date of polling was August 18, 1921.

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURES

Electoral Division	Member
Moosomin - - - -	- John Louis Salkeld (Conservative)
Morse - - - -	- Hon. John Archibald Maharg (Independent pro-Government)
North Qu'Appelle - - - -	- James Garfield Gardiner (Liberal)
Notukeu - - - -	- George Spence (Liberal)
Pelly - - - -	- Sarah Katherine Ramsland (Liberal)
Pheasant Hills - - - -	- James Arthur Smith (Liberal)
Pipestone - - - -	- William John Patterson (Liberal)
Prince Albert - - - -	- Charles M. McDonald (Liberal)
Redberry - - - -	- George Cockburn (Independent)
Regina City - - - -	- Hon. William Melville Martin (Liberal) James Albert Cross (Liberal)
Rosetown - - - -	- John Andrew Wilson (Liberal)
Rosthern - - - -	- John Michael Uhrich (Liberal)
Saltcoats - - - -	- George William Sahlmark (Liberal)
Saskatoon City - - - -	- Harris Turner (Independent) Hon. Archibald Peter McNab (Liberal)
Saskatoon County - - - -	- Charles Agar (Progressive)
Shellbrook - - - -	- Edgar Sidney Clinch (Liberal)
Souris - - - -	- John Patrick Gordon (Conservative)
South Qu'Appelle - - - -	- Donald Hogarth McDonald (Independent)
Swift Current - - - -	- David John Sykes (Independent)
Thunder Creek - - - -	- William John Finley Warren (Progressive)
Tisdale - - - -	- Hugh Evan Jones (Liberal)
Touchwood - - - -	- John Mason Parker (Liberal)
Turtleford - - - -	- Archibald R. Gemmell (Liberal)
Vonda - - - -	- James Hogan (Liberal)
Wadena - - - -	- William Henry McKinnon (Progressive)
Weyburn - - - -	- Hon. Charles McGill Hamilton (Liberal)
Wilkie - - - -	- Sydney Bingham (Progressive)
Willow Bunch - - - -	- Abel James Hindle (Liberal)
Wolseley - - - -	- William George Bennett (Independent)
Wynyard - - - -	- George Wilson Robertson (Independent)
Yorkton - - - -	- Thomas Henry Garry (Liberal)

By-Elections held during the *Fifth Legislature*

Electoral Division	Member
Cannington	June 9, 1924 Albert Edward Steele (Liberal)
Cumberland	Aug. 21, 1922 Deakin Alexander Hall (Liberal)

MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEGISLATURES

Electoral Division	Date	Member
Happyland	June 26, 1922	Franklin Robert Shortreed (Liberal)
Milestone	Oct. 29, 1923	Fredrick Birthall Lewis (Liberal)
North Qu'Appelle	June 5, 1922	Hon. James Garfield Gardiner (Liberal)
Regina City	Apr. 25, 1922	Hon. James Albert Cross (Liberal)
Regina City	Sept. 19, 1922	Donald Alexander McNiven (Liberal)
Rosthern	June 5, 1922	Hon. John Michael Uhrich (Liberal)
Wynyard	Oct. 20, 1924	Wilhelm Hans Paulson (Liberal)

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