THE PROHIBITION QUESTION IN MANITOBA
1892-1928

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Manitoba

In Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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April, 1969

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My first acknowledgment must be to Professor J.E. Rea of St. Paul's College, who provided me with constant and well-considered advice. Professor Rea's attention has encouraged and guided my academic career, and I am sure that I speak for others in my class when I say that many of us owe him a great and unpaid debt.

This study could hardly have been successful had not Mrs. Andrew Moore, President of the Manitoba Chapter of the Canadian Women's Christian Temperance Union, painstakingly collected records and minutes of her organization at my request. Mr. John Bovey and the staff of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba also gave me every assistance in my search for material bearing on my subject.

I also wish to thank Miss Rose Giardino and Miss Carol Clerihew, who typed the manuscript. Without them the task of preparing this thesis for submission would have been much more difficult.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my wife for her patient acceptance of the erratic hours and behaviour which the completion of this thesis necessitated.

ABSTRACT

North American society has long sought a satisfactory answer to the problem of making liquor the servant, not the master, of man. The young province of Manitoba was in the forefront of the Canadian side of this search. This thesis examines the role of liquor control in the political and social life of the province from the year 1892, in which Manitoba became the first province in the Dominion to ask the opinion of her citizens on prohibitory legislation, until 1928, when the sale of beer for public consumption was legalized after an unsatisfactory experiment with both total and partial prohibition.

After two decades of unspectacular existence, the movement for prohibition became part of a general reform impulse which acquired broadly based support in the years after 1912. New support for reform arose in response to the very real difficulties which were created in Manitoba by the large-scale immigration of the first decade of the twentieth century, and prohibition was advocated as one method of confronting the social problems which this influx created. Prohibition became an issue which divided the province along religious, regional and ethnic lines. Its greatest appeal was to those Manitobans of Anglo-Saxon origin and evangelical Protestant background and its strongest opposition was found, not unnaturally, among those non-English elements against whom it was directed. Aided by the emotional drama created to achieve victory in the Great War, the prohibitionist cause was successful in 1916. Prohibition never enjoyed the success that its most ardent advocates had envisioned, however, and during the turbulent 1920's it met opposition in the city of Winnipeg among New Canadians and from veterans' groups. Prohibition gradually lost its reform identification and its supporters became more blatantly nativistic and socially reactionary. Two concerted campaigns were launched against Prohibitory legislation in 1923 and its provisions were replaced by a system of government-controlled sale.

Abbreviations Used in the Notes

MFP	Manitoba Free Press
PAM	Provincial Archives of Manitoba
Telegram	Winnipeg Morning Telegram
Tribune	Winnipeg Evening Tribune
W.C.T.U.	Women's Christian Temperance Union

Important Dates

July 23, 1892:	Provincial Plebiscite: prohibition endorsed in principle.
September 29, 1898:	Dominion Plebiscite: Manitoba again endorses prohibition in principle.
December 7, 1899:	Hugh John Macdonald and Conservatives elected with a prohibition plank in the party platform.
July 5, 1900:	Manitoba Temperance Act (Macdonald Act) passed.
February 23, 1901:	Supreme Court declares Manitoba Temperance Act *ultra vires*.
November 22, 1901:	Privy Council reverses Supreme Court decision.
April 3, 1902:	Macdonald Act defeated in referendum, Temperance movement divides over the non-voting policy of the Dominion Alliance.
July 20, 1903:	Prohibition Candidates lose their deposits in provincial election, which re-elects Roblin Conservative government.
November 15, 1907:	Founding of the Moral and Social Reform Council (later Social Service Council).
March 26, 1914:	Social Service Council endorses temperance platform of Manitoba Liberals.
July 10, 1914:	Roblin Government's majority narrowed to seven seats after a vigorous campaign. Temperance forces support provincial Liberals.
August 6, 1915:	Liberals under T.C. Norris form government, schedule referendum on the Macdonald Act.
March 13, 1916:	Referendum: Macdonald Act enacted by a 24,000 majority.
April 1, 1918:	An Order in Council issued under the War Measures Act creates total prohibition by banning the importation of liquor into Manitoba.
October 25, 1920:	Referendum: majority favours continuation of importation restrictions.
February 8, 1921:	Moderation League of Manitoba formed to oppose prohibition.

June 22, 1923:	Referendum: Government sale of liquor receives a majority and is implemented in the Government Liquor Control Act, 1923.
June 27, 1927:	Plebiscite to determine attitudes to public sale of beer by the glass receives a majority. This provision implemented in the Government Liquor Control Act, 1928.

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INTRODUCTION

> Undoubtedly the historian of the future will describe the body blow to the drink traffic . . . as a social revolution. It is nothing less. For it is a far-reaching change in our habits as a people--one might almost say as a race. It is a definite break with the past in popular behaviour. It is a drastic revision of our social economy . . . it is an inevitable revolution. The arguments which the electors of Manitoba have been actively resolving in recent weeks have been before the public in varying intensity for at least half a century. The step which we are now taking is in the direction of human progress . . . towards a fuller realization of the eternal purpose.[1] (italics supplied) Manitoba Free Press, March 11, 1916.

It was with these words that the Manitoba Free Press, the province's most widely circulated newspaper, anticipated the implementation of the Manitoba Temperance Act, which was to prohibit the sale of all intoxicating beverages. The confident mood of partisan prohibitionists is emphasized when one realizes that the referendum which was to validate the Act was not to be held until two days later! After a struggle which had lasted thirty frustrating years, the temperance forces were certain of victory.

There would be nothing to cheat them of their moment of triumph. The "organized vice" of the "liquor traffic" had been repudiated at the polls during the previous summer, as well as the "machine politicians" who had protected it. The temperance movement had won its victory slowly; restrictive liquor legislation was not about to take the province by surprise. Prohibition did not appear ". . . like a thief in the night to steal away our liberties."[2] The temperance worker had translated his dreams into

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[1] Manitoba Free Press, March 11, 1916 (hereafter cited as MFP).

[2] Peter H. Odegard, Pressure Politics: The Anti-Saloon League, (New York, Octagon Books, first published 1928, reprinted 1966), p. 78. Odegard uses this phrase to describe popular misconceptions held during the 1920's about the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the American Constitution. The support afforded the Manitoba Temperance Act in 1916, and the anti-importation referendum of 1920 justify his contention that prohibition was not ". . . adopted in a fit of civic absentmindedness."

action through conscientious and painstaking application of the "Agitate, Educate, Legislate" formula of the Woman's Christian Temperance Movement.[3] Although the zeal generated by the Great War helped mobilize public sentiment behind prohibition, the Manitoba Temperance Act was not ratified simply because of the absence of many young men in the trenches.[4]

The referendum of 1916 was remarkable because of the manner in which groups which had traditionally opposed prohibition voted for an act which represented "advanced temperance sentiment." The enthusiasm of the Winnipeg Tribune was perhaps an over-reaction:

> The victory cannot be ascribed to any party, race, class, or creed. Capital and labor, professional man and the man in the workshop, Roman Catholic and Protestant and Jew, English-speaking, French-speaking, Icelandic, Russian, Polish, Mennonite-speaking [sic], and all other classes vied with each other in piling up the huge majority of over 23,000 . . . which closes all bars, abolishes wholesale licenses throughout the province.[5]

But this point of view was to some degree justified. The "huge majority" for a form of prohibition provoked even the less sympathetic Winnipeg Morning Telegram to describe the outcome of the balloting as "the dispassionate judgement of the province."[6]

"The historian of the future" has emphatically not described the achievements of the prohibition movement as a "social revolution." Prohibition lasted only seven years in Manitoba before that traditional temperance

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[3] Annual Report of the Manitoba WCTU 1890-91, W.C.T.U. Collection, (P.A.M.), Box 2.

[4] Soldier's polls at Fort Osborne Barracks in Winnipeg gave majorities in favor of the Manitoba Temperance Act. Winnipeg Evening Tribune, March 14, 1916 (hereafter cited as Tribune).

[5] Ibid.

[6] Unsigned Editorial, Winnipeg Morning Telegram, March 14, 1916 (hereafter cited as Telegram).

weapon, the referendum, was used to reintroduce the sale of liquor. The fact that prohibitory laws were in effect for only a short period in no way minimizes the impact or the importance of the prohibitionists and their movement, however. This study attempts to trace the liquor question in Manitoba from the first provincial referendum in 1892 to the resumption of public sale of "beer by the glass" in 1928. Within this context one can examine not only the motivations, objectives, and methods of the temperance movement, but also the fixed or fluctuating attitudes of religious denominations, political parties, ethnic minorities, occupational groups, and rural and urban residents to the problem of liquor control.

The campaign for prohibition, furthermore, provides a case study within which to probe the reaction of the established Anglo-Saxon majority to the expanding and diversifying population of the province. During the first decade of this century, the sudden inflow of an "indigestible mass" of Central and Eastern Europeans caused alarm among this element of society. The young Reverend J.S. Woodsworth expressed their collective fears and frustrations in his two books, Strangers Within Our Gates and My Neighbour. Woodsworth warned that

> . . . we are taking our place side by side with the United States as the Old World's dumping ground. . . . How can our free institutions be maintained? Peoples emerging from serfdom, untrained in the principles of representative government, without patriotism--such peoples are utterly unfit to be trusted with the ballot.[7]

To the prohibitionist, liquor seemed a factor which prevented the immigrant's assimilation. Was it not drink that turned the new arrivals into "demons of license and passions," with the result that "in their feasts and at their

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[7] James S. Woodsworth, Strangers Within Our Gates, (Toronto, Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, 1909) p. 287.

weddings they go mad and break each others heads and destroy property"?[8] Thus prohibition joined unilingual education as a weapon in the struggle to minimize the influence of the "foreigner" in the development of the province.

Temperance reformers also became part of a general thrust for political and social reform which began to manifest itself as a young Manitoba matured and came face to face with the problems of adulthood. By 1914 prohibition had become an integral part of a reform platform which demanded woman suffrage, direct legislation, and "clean" government. This aspect must be constantly borne in mind. Temperance workers were reformers, and not all were elderly ladies or ascetic Methodist ministers. It was the opponents of prohibition whom Nellie McClung pilloried as "powers of reaction,"[9] and its friends who represented "the march of progress."[10] They were reformers of a very particular type, however. Some, like William Ivens and James S. Woodsworth went on to become socialists, but the majority were remarkably similar to the middle class "good citizens" that Richard Hofstadter argues formed the backbone of American progressivism.[11] Concerned about the future of their province and the role which their social group was to fill in that future, they were drawn to reform of a largely moral nature. Most would have been in sympathy with Reverend Salem Bland's warning that

> Society is steeped in unrighteousness. . . . We have the elements of moral destruction among us. . . . We must begin the great work of attacking all the ties of our commercial life, all the rascalities of high finance, all the abominations of our

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[8] Mrs. A. Cook, "Editorial", Manitoba Messenger, November, 1923.

[9] Nellie L. McClung, The Stream Runs Fast, (Toronto, Thomas Allen and Sons, 1945) p. 136.

[10] Rev. John Hogg, untitled sermon, reprinted in Tribune, September 17, 1898.

[11] Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, (New York, Vintage Books, 1955) Chaps. IV, V.

political system.[12]

Few would have followed Bland on his path to radicalism, however. Once its major goals had been accomplished, the reform coalition quickly disintegrated, with prohibition being one of the first casualties of that disintegration.

It is to the origins, development, maturation, and decline of the temperance facet of this reform spirit that this study is devoted.

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[12]Rev. Salem G. Bland, sermon at Grace Methodist Church, reported in Tribune, August 4, 1913.

CHAPTER I

"THE FORCES OF LIGHT AND THE POWERS OF DARKNESS: ORIGINS AND SOURCES OF PROHIBITIONIST AND ANTI-PROHIBITIONIST SUPPORT."

Origins

A temperance movement existed in Canada while what is now Manitoba was still under the jurisdiction of the Hudson's Bay Company. Thomas Talbot, crusty proprietor of a large tract in Upper Canada, cursed the "damned cold water drinking societies" which appeared in his settlement during the 1830's.[1] Talbot's hostility arose largely because of the fact that these societies had been imported from the United States by preachers of the evangelical Methodist and Baptist churches. Had the old Tory lived until 1854, he might have been further alarmed, for in that year the Independent Order of Good Templars, an American Temperance fraternity, formed its first Canadian chapters. Temperance work in Canada maintained close connections with the American Temperance Union, at that time the co-ordinating voice in the North American war against drink.[2]

The first successful attempts to supplement temperance opinion with legislation were the famous "Maine Laws" of 1846 and 1851, which prohibited the sale of alcohol for beverage purposes within the state. These acts became an example for the rest of North America, and in 1864 the Dunkin Act gave the residents of the United Canadas the right to declare their

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[1] Fred Landon, Western Ontario and the American Frontier, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1967), p. 148.

[2] Ibid., pp. 134-38. For a general description of the American temperance movement prior to 1860, see Alice F. Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, (New York, Harper and Row, 1944), Chap. XIII, pp. 308-47.

counties under prohibition by "local option." The first Canadian temperance organization of national significance, the Dominion Alliance, was established in Toronto in 1876, on the principle that ". . . the traffic in intoxicating beverages is destructive of the order and welfare of society, and therefore ought to be prohibited."[3] The Royal Templars of Temperance entered Ontario from New York State two years later, the year in which the Dominion Parliament enacted the Canada Temperance, or "Scott" Act, which revived the system of local option which had lapsed at Confederation.

W.L. Morton attributes the appearance of a temperance movement in Manitoba to the influence of immigration from Ontario, and this generalization is to some extent justified.[4] It overlooks the fact that an indigenous temperance society existed in Red River in the 1850's, however. The society attracted some support, but as William Ross, one of its leading members, complained ". . . our temperance society has been much too recent, and people, generally, are prejudiced against it and therefore [it] has not made much headway."[5] Recruiting was difficult in the frontier community. Reverend John Black described one of the first attempts at a pledge signing campaign:

> We took up the paper for anyone who wished to sign the pledge, four did, and perhaps more would have signed but from fear of being laughed at.[6]

Temperance work was also handicapped by the fact that distilling was one

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[3]Ruth Elizabeth Spence, Prohibition in Canada, (Toronto, Dominion Alliance Press, 1919), p. 72.

[4]W.L. Morton, Manitoba, A History, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 251.

[5]William Ross to James Ross, January 10, 1856, in Alexander Ross Papers, (P.A.M.), Box 1.

[6]John Black to James Ross, August 7, 1856, in Ibid.

of the colony's home industries. The Council officially suggested in 1856 that settlers "drink less imported rum and encourage homemade whiskey [sic]";[7] and most colonists would have agreed with the comment that a Mr. Cochrane made at a public meeting.

> I would have all men take as much [whisky] as will do them good; it makes better neighbours, better farms, better mechanics. . . . Every man of you ought to have your bottle on the table to treat a friend when he comes in.[8]

Temperance sentiment with a more solid foundation did not appear for another twenty years. A Winnipeg branch of the Dominion Alliance was founded in March, 1879, and a "grand council" of the Royal Templars in 1884.[9] The Canadian Woman's Christian Temperance Union, established in 1883, was brought west that same year by Mrs. Letitia Youmans of Picton, Ontario, who chartered unions in Brandon, Portage La Prairie, and Winnipeg.[10] Two of Manitoba's federal constituencies, Marquette and Lisgar, attempted to declare themselves "dry" under the provisions of the Scott Act in 1880 and 1881 respectively, but were unsuccessful. Despite majorities in favour of local option, ". . . it was held . . . these districts not being counties within the meaning of the Act, the voting was of no effect."[11] Manitoba established provincial qualifications for the introduction of local option in 1886, but snarls of red-tape made enactment complicated and uncertain. For a referendum to take place in a municipality, a petition signed by twenty-five percent of the resident electors was required. Three-fifths of the electors (not just three-fifths of those who voted) had to be in favour to enact local option. All this accomplished, another petition of twenty-five

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[8] Ibid.

[9] R.E. Spence, op.cit., pp. 54-55, p. 118.

[10] Ibid., pp. 61-72.

[11] Report of the Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic in Canada, (Ottawa, Queens Printer, 1894-95), Vol. I, pp. 650-51. Cited hereafter as Royal Commission.

percent of the electors could repeal local option, with a provision that no new law be introduced for two years.[12]

An important factor in the growth of a Manitoba Temperance movement was the lawless atmosphere created by the sudden appearance of the railway and the subsequent "boom" of the early eighties. During 1881 the per capita consumption of alcohol in Manitoba began to increase, until by 1883 it was two and one half times the figure for 1880.[13] Drunkenness increased correspondingly, from 534 convictions in 1881 to 2,258 in 1883.[14] The situation returned to normal later in the decade, and by 1888 Manitoba's per capita consumption and her rate of convictions for liquor offences were close to or below the national average. The unsettled conditions of the "boom" period had a lasting impact, however, for they provided the originating force behind a vocal provincial temperance movement.

The social dislocations which liquor created in the Manitoba of the early nineties could not have been of a very serious nature. John W. Sifton, a leading advocate of prohibition, could swear to the Royal Commission that

> . . . We [Manitobans] are the most moral and sober people on this continent. We think we can bear this out by statistics. We think there is no city of the same size as sober as Winnipeg.[15]

The statistics did bear him out. Manitoba's arrests for drunkenness per

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[12] Ibid., pp. 150-51.

[13] Per capita consumption of alcohol rose from .67 gallons in 1880 to 1.65 gallons in 1883. Robert E. Popham and Wolfgang Schmidt, Statistics of Alcohol Use and Alcoholism in Canada, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1958), pp. 20-21.

[14] Ibid., p. 48. This increase was not just an absolute one. The rate of convictions rose from 1,405 to 4,608 per 100,000 population. Ibid.,p. 65.

[15] Royal Commission, Vol. III, p. 160.

thousand compared favourably with the rest of Canada, and total arrests increased more slowly than the population. Breaches of the liquor laws were a mere .18 per thousand population over the years 1890-93, lowest in the Dominion,[16] which in the 1890's was proved the "most temperate member of the empire!"[17] The number of licenses issued in the province declined from 166 in 1890 to 156 in 1891 through a drop in applications.[18] In Winnipeg magistrate's court after the Dominion Day weekend of 1892 ". . . the holiday record of intoxication was, it is satisfactory to note, a very small one; only three drunks having to put in an appearance."[19] Sherriff Colin Inkster of East Kildonan summarized the situation: "Drinking is less fashionable than formerly, owing to public opinion."[20]

The temperance argument of the 1890's became somewhat contradictory, being largely inspired by a social situation which no longer existed, that of the Manitoba "boom." Temperance workers were anxious to claim that their province was "moral and sober", yet paradoxically demanded prohibitory laws to stamp out the "liquor problem." The temperance movement thus had difficulty, and was indeed unable to convince the community at large of the urgency of its program.[21]

In April of 1892 representatives of Manitoba temperance organizations met in convention in Winnipeg to create the Manitoba Prohibitory League, and to elect W. Redford Mulock of the Dominion Alliance as its president.

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[16] Ibid., Vol.I, p. 35.

[17] Joseph Rowntree and Arthur Sherwell, The Temperance Problem and Social Reform, (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1899), p. 79.

[18] Tribune, March 30, 1892.

[19] MFP, July 4, 1892. These three unfortunates "were fined the costs of court."

[20] Royal Commission, Vol. III, p. 931.

[21] Joseph R. Gusfield has discerned two modes of temperance reform, "assimilative" and "coercive". The first takes place when the norms of the

Influenced perhaps by the tactics of their American counterparts, the convention passed a resolution demanding that a plebiscite be taken within the province ". . . to ascertain the moral sentiment of the people on the question of prohibition."[22] On April 5 "a mammoth delegation,--over a hundred influential representatives" appeared before the legislature to present their demand.[23] Disavowing political partisanship, President Mulock, Rev. Joseph Hogg of the Presbyterian Church, and Mrs. L. Chisholm, provincial president of the W.C.T.U., addressed the house. The deputation then departed, assured that their views would be treated sympathetically.[24]

Manitoba's legislators saw no reason to oppose this pressure. Since the Prohibitory League called only for a plebiscite and not for any concrete legislation, and it was possible to grant their demands without either party in the legislature expressing a viewpoint on the question. Both the Liberal government of Premier Greenway and the opposition supported a private member's bill proposing a plebiscite, and the bill passed without a dissenting vote.[25] Balloting was scheduled for July 23, to coincide with the provincial election and eliminate extra expense.

In this mild and seemingly uncontroversial way the "liquor question" was launched into Manitoba political life, and a set of "ground rules"

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temperance worker are accepted as the dominant norms of his society. The object of reform is merely a "deviant" and has only to be assimilated to the predominant norm. The "coercive" mode of temperance reform is operant when the object of reform no longer accepts temperance as a dominant norm. The norm-violater becomes an "enemy" and "must be forced to accept the dominance of the reformer." Joseph R. Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade, (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1963), pp. 65-72. Prior to 1902 and the arrival of a significant foreign-born population, Manitoba temperance reform was of the "assimilative" variety. After prolonged immigration resulted in large-scale violation of temperance norms it became more "coercive" in nature.

[22] R.E. Spence, op.cit., p. 191.

[23] Tribune, April 6, 1892.

[24] Ibid.

[25] MFP, July 6, 1892.

for the "game" established. Each session of the legislature thereafter saw a parade of temperance workers converge upon the premier's office. In addition to the plebiscite of 1892, votes were held under federal auspices in 1898 and 1920, and by the province in 1902, 1916, 1923, and 1927. Recourse to popular vote seemed the safest way of dealing with the volatile question of liquor control, and Premier Greenway and those who came after him must have often regretted his inability to take advice offered to him at the beginning:

> Prohibition and temperance people [wrote a Mr. R.A. Evans] is the meanest lot of hipocrites on the face of the earth. They say one thing and practise another and I am sure your government will make a mistake to have anything to do with them [sic].[26]

The temperance delegations which became a regular feature at sessions of the legislature secured many revisions of existing liquor laws. To a determined prohibitionist, however, mere revisions were never adequate. To such a person the entire license system was

> a compromise with the powers of darkness, under which the liquor traffic has been fostered and developed until it has become a united and mighty power for evil.[27]

For these people such a compromise was out of the question. The struggle could not be ended until complete victory had been won by the establishment and enforcement of prohibition.

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[26] R.A. Evans to Thomas Greenway, April 4, 1892. Thomas Greenway Papers, (P.A.M.). Cited hereafter as Greenway Papers.

[27] Resolution of the Young Men's Prohibition Club, reported in Tribune, May 7, 1892.

Source of Temperance Support and Opposition

Who were the troops who fought the forty year battle for prohibition? Many temperance advocates were first recruited to the cause through their church. Not all religious denominations were equally vocal in their support of temperance work, however, Some were frankly hostile, especially to the idea of total prohibition. During the first plebiscite campaign of 1892, ". . . it was found that voluntary help could be expected only where Protestant churches were established."[1] Even among Protestant bodies, however, support was neither automatic nor unanimous. Despite the temperance leanings of individual ministers, Manitoba's Anglicans remained officially cool to prohibition throughout most of the period under study. Nellie McClung has noted that during the first revivalist--temperance meetings in her home-town of Manitou, ". . . the conservative element, Presbyterians and Anglicans, kept away from the meetings and were outspoken in their disapproval."[2] The Presbyterians were soon brought into the fold, however, and the religious back-bone of the temperance movement in Manitoba, as in the rest of Canada and the United States, was composed of the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches.

Evangelical Protestantism had a heritage of support for temperance work. Wesleyan Methodism had saved many working-class Englishmen from the ravages of gin during the eighteenth century. The Canadian Methodist,

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[1] R.E. Spence, op.cit., p. 245.

[2] Nellie L. McClung, Clearing in the West: My Own Story, (Toronto, Thos. Allen Ltd., 1935), p. 297. Nellie herself was a Methodist, and her father-in-law, Rev. J.A. McClung, a minister in that church.

Baptist, and Presbyterian churches were originally offshoots of American parent bodies, which had entered Upper Canada shortly after the American Revolution.[3] These churches became leaders in the early temperance work in Ontario, and assumed a similar role when they moved west. Their motivation was simple enough; drink came between man and Christ. Intemperance dulled the mind and diminished awe of the almighty, no doubt reducing the chance of a drunkard's awakening in time to attend church! Liquor and Christianity were in direct competition for men's souls.[4] As one prohibitionist phrased it:

> Jesus Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, an no other institution is warring against the Kingdom of God as the saloon is.[5]

Reverend R.G. MacBeth spoke for many Manitoba Churchmen when he announced from his pulpit that "We want this iniquitous traffic stopped. We must destroy it because it destroys life itself."[6]

Another impetus which propelled evangelical protestantism into social reform movements was the growing acceptance of the social gospel, with its ". . . greater emphasis upon the temporal welfare of individuals and society than upon the salvation of particular immortal souls."[7] A strongly non-denominational spirit pervaded the social gospel, and it became especially popular in Western Canada, where the relationships between protestant churches had always been close. Mrs. E.L. Chisholm of the W.C.T.U. expressed the

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[3] Landon, op.cit., Chapter 6 and 7.

[4] See James H. Timberlake, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement 1900-1920, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963) Chap. 1, provides an excellent description of religious motivation.

[5] E.L. Taylor in a speech to a temperance rally at Westminister Presbyterian Church. MFP, September 15, 1898.

[6] Reported in the Tribune, September 14, 1898.

[7] Kenneth McNaught, A Prophet in Politics, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1959), p. 49.

temperance faith in the social gospel when she optimistically commented that

> The modifying of creeds, the prospect of church union . . . the appointment of a temperance secretary by one of our influential denominations [Methodism] would lead us to hope that in the near future we may see a combined effort in this [temperance] reform.[8]

The social gospel doctrines did have a salutary effect on the progress of temperance. They placed protestantism's seal of approval upon social reform in general and prohibition in particular, since prohibition provided a goal toward which both conservative and radical exponents of a social gospel could aspire.[9] The broad appeal of the social gospel and its lack of a specific dogma united reformers with diverse political ideals behind the temperance movement.

The evangelical protestant churches could thus be counted upon to assist and champion the temperance cause, and in Manitoba their involvement came early. During the 1892 referendum campaign, a Baptist Convention

> Resolved that we are convinced that absolute prohibition is an imperative necessity, and that nothing else will banish intemperance from our fair country. . . . We welcome the opportunity to express at the polls at the coming general election our desire for the immediate enactment and enforcement of a Prohibition law.

Methodists and Presbyterians soon followed suit.[10] Methodism adhered strictly

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[8] Mrs. E.L. Chisholm "Presidential Address", in Annual Report of the Manitoba W.C.T.U., 1903, in the W.C.T.U. Collection, (P.A.M.), Box 2. Cited hereafter as W.C.T.U. Collection.

[9] Richard A. Allen, "The Social Gospel and the Reform Tradition in Canada, 1890-1928" CHR, Vol. XLIX #4, December 1968, p. 381; p. 391. Allen divides Canadian followers of the social gospel along the lines used by Henry May to describe the movement in the United States. May saw a "conservative", a "radical", and a "progressive" wing as composing the movement. The centrist "progressive" group united the other two into "a broad, ameliorative program of reform." See Henry May, Protestant Church and Industrial America, (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1949) pp.167-271.

[10] MFP, July 7 and July 17, 1892.

to a policy which refused to allow its members to participate in the liquor trade as manufacturers, retailers, or wholesalers; "If such a man were in the Methodist Church he would have to get out of it."[11] Such severe action was not taken with church members who were known to drink, however. Official endorsement of prohibitory legislation was at first given only by the Methodist provincial conference. An attempt by Methodists of prohibitionist sentiment to secure nation-wide endorsement before the dominion plebiscite of 1898 was unsuccessful.[12] Some members did not agree that temperance reform was a proper concern for their church and its ministry, and protested " . . . against the Methodist Church being degraded to the level of a political institution and against its professors using their high office to injure public men."[13]

Temperance workers felt that their churches were vacillating in the face of such pressure, and criticized them for not doing all they could to attack the liquor traffic. Nellie McClung complained bitterly that

> Although general conferences and assemblies have met year after year and passed resolutions . . . the liquor traffic goes blythely on its way and gets itself licensed. The liquor traffic rather enjoys temperance sermons, and conventions and resolutions. They furnish an outlet for a good deal of hot talk which hurts nobody.[14]

The most effective temperance work was not that of the church as a unit, but the efforts of individual ministers and members as organizers and as

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[11] Royal Commission, Vol. III, p. 45.

[12] MFP, September 14, 1898.

[13] W.G. Graham to editor of the Telegram, February 25, 1907. The letter was prompted by an attack on the liquor policy of Sir R.P. Roblin by Reverends Bland and Osborne of Wesley College.

[14] Nellie L. McClung, In Times Like These, (New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1915) pp. 116-117.

speakers. Information available for the city of Winnipeg shows that during the referendum campaigns of 1898 and 1902 a majority of Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist ministers actively preached temperance from their pulpits.[15] The Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic submitted a questionnaire to Canadian ministers, asking if they regarded liquor as "hurtful morally and socially." Presbyterian ministers said "yes" by a count of 385 to 17, Methodists 955 to 5, and Baptists gave 257 "yes" answers without a single "no"![16] These ministers were often influential members of temperance organizations,[17] and their wives were sometimes active in the W.C.T.U.[18] Churches were the scene of most temperance rallies and conventions. The faculty at Wesley (Methodist) and Manitoba

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[15]Exact figures are illustrated by the following table: (information from reports in Tribune, MFP, and Telegram)

	BAPTIST		PRESBYTERIAN		METHODIST	
	No. of Churches	No. Prohibitionists	No. of Churches	No. Prohibitionists	No. of Churches	No. Prohibitionists
1898	5	3	6	6	7	4
1902	7	3	8	6	8	5

[16]Royal Commission, Vol. I, pp. 48-49. Anglicans gave 224 "yes" votes to 172 "no" votes, while Roman Catholic priests voted "yes" by a larger margin, 232 to 70.

[17]For example, Rev. J.M. Harrison and Rev. J.W. Bell, who were "Grand Privy Councillors" in the Royal Templars of Temperance. Tribune, February 21, 1901.

[18]So many W.C.T.U. officials were also influential Methodists that in May of 1912 the Winnipeg District Executive cancelled its meeting, as ". . . the Methodist Conference prevented many of our members being present." Winnipeg Minute Book, May 21, 1912. W.C.T.U. Collection, P.A.M.

(Presbyterian) Colleges were also valuable assets to the temperance cause. Rev. Dr. George Bryce, Professor Riddell, Professor A.B. Baird, and Dr. Sparling of Wesley, and Principal William Patrick and Professor T.B. Kilpatrick of Manitoba all served as speakers. Their presence on temperance platforms lent an air of scholarly approval which made prohibitionist arguments more persuasive.

A fundamental reason for the hostility of the Catholic and Anglican Churches was the question of fermented wine for the sacraments. Most Prohibitionists would not condone this, even if they themselves were of the faiths concerned. W. Redford Mulock, a temperance leader of Anglican religion was asked if he would recommend that sacramental wine be exempted from prohibitory legislation. Mulock replied "I am strongly opposed to it. I would vote against it [fermented wine] coming in for this purpose."[19] Prohibitionist criticism of the use of intoxicating communion wine could not have created anything but ill-feeling between the churches. One temperance evangelist heaped ". . . thrice shame on any minister of the gospel who will countenance for a moment the use of corrupted fermented elements to represent the blood of the messiah who died on Calvary's cross."[20] The provincial W.C.T.U. maintained a standing committee to encourage the use of unfermented wine at communion, and its members vowed

> . . . Continual, prayerful, educational work, until no church within our influence will place temptation in the way of anyone young or old . . . alcoholic wine is not an emblem of the blood

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[19] Royal Commission, Vol. III, p. 132.

[20] Evangelist Semple White to editor, MFP, December 23, 1922.

of Christ.[21] (italics supplied)

The work met with some success, and by April 1908 the Winnipeg Chapter could report that in its district ". . . every Protestant Church used unfermented wine at Sacrament."[22]

Prohibitionist clergymen maintained that the Bible supported the temperance cause. Reverend Solomon Cleaver, minister of Winnipeg's Grace Methodist Church, argued from his pulpit that

> The wine referred to here [in the Old Testament] did not necessarily mean intoxicating wine. Among the ancients the wines of the greatest value were sweet. Sometimes they were thick, showing they could not have been fermented. In no single instance could it be shown that where wine is approved of in the scriptures, intoxicating wine is mentioned. . . .[23]

Reverend Cleaver's somewhat dubious semantic distinctions did not pass unnoticed, and letters refuting his conclusions reached the newspapers. His best challenger was a Mr. A.H. Nahigan, who pointed out that

> If we take the bible as a temperance guide, we find that nearly all the leading lights . . . were habitual drinkers. . . . Christ not only drank wine nearly every time he had a chance, but on a certain occasion miraculously made vast quantities of if for others to drink.[24]

The temperance worker was quick to stigmatize the "Romish and English" churches for their failure to support prohibition enthusiastically. The most severe criticism was reserved for Roman Catholicism, with its "Beerdrinking bishops who declare that a prohibitory measure rouses opposition in mankind."[25] For their part, the Bishops were quick to protest that it was prohibition, not temperance, that they disliked, and to claim

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[21] Winnipeg District W.C.T.U., Annual Report, 1913, W.C.T.U. Collection. P.A.M.

[22] Winnipeg District W.C.T.U. Minute Book, 1904-09, entry for April 8, 1908. W.C.T.U. Collection.

[23] MFP, September 9, 1898.

[24] A.H. Nahigan to editor, Tribune, September 12, 1898.

[25] N. McClung, In Times Like These, pp. 170-71.

that

> Il n'y a personne qui ait fait plus que nous [the Catholic Church] pour la temperence, dans le Canada entier, mais nous n'approuvons pas ce mouvement [Prohibition]. Nous n'avons aucune confiance dans la prohibition.[26]

The temperance movement was more anxious to be able to include the Anglican Church in its ranks, since it undoubtedly felt a closer affiliation to Anglicanism than to Catholicism. During the plebiscite campaign of 1898, J.K. McLennan, secretary of the Dominion Alliance, announced that the Church of England was ". . . rapidly approaching advanced ground relating to the leading question of the day."[27] His optimism was somewhat premature. During the formative years of the Manitoba temperance movement, only one Anglican minister, Reverend J.J. Roy of St. George's, was counted among the active friends of "advanced temperance." The Anglican Synod did not approve municipal control of the liquor trade until January, 1909, and at the same meeting rejected a proposal that they endorse total prohibition.[28] As late as 1920, the federal referendum to end the right of private liquor importation into Manitoba won Anglican endorsement only by a bare majority after "long and heated" discussion.[29]

Temperance sentiment has often been associated with a rural environment.[30] As early as 1899 a work on the "Temperance Problem" observed that

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[26] Rev. P. Lacombe for Archbishop Langevin, Le Manitoba, September 21, 1898.

[27] Tribune, September 27, 1898.

[28] E.L. Drewry, owner of Manitoba's largest brewery, led the speakers against this motion. Telegram, January 10, 1909.

[29] Tribune, October 30, 1920.

[30] See for example Odegard, op.cit., pp. 30-33, p. 121.

". . . the voting strength of prohibitionists is greatest in the agricultural districts, and in the villages, and smaller towns."[31] Like most generalizations, this one has some validity, but it must be qualified carefully before it can be applied to the situation in Manitoba. As James H. Timberlake has suggested, the residents of urban areas often espoused prohibition in the hope that it would prove a "remedy for the problems created by industrialism, labor, and the growth of the cities."[32]

The urban areas of Manitoba originally lent considerable support to the temperance cause. After the plebiscite of 1892, the Toronto Globe observed that ". . . while in most places cities are strongholds of the liquor traffic, Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie gave large majorities for prohibition."[33] Brandon also endorsed the principle of prohibition, 830 votes for to 321 against. Winnipeg was one of only four official "cities" in Canada to favour prohibition in the Dominion Plebiscite of 1898.[34] The total vote, however, was smaller than in 1892, and the majority was reduced substantially.[35] As Winnipeg's population increased and became less homogenous, temperance majorities began to be reversed. In 1902, with a population of over 42,000,[36] the city voted resoundingly "wet,"[37] and was won

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[31] Rowntree and Sherwell, Temperance Problem, p. 83.

[32] J. Timberlake, op. cit., p. 29.

[33] Toronto Globe, July 25, 1892. City constituencies of North, South, and Centre gave prohibition a 1,414 majority, 2,842 to 1,428. Portage returned a majority of 522, 710 to 188.

[34] Tribune, September 30, 1898.

[35] Dominion of Canada, Report on the Prohibition Plebiscite of 1898, Sessional Paper #20, 1899, pp. 288-89. Winnipeg recorded 1451 votes for prohibition to 921 against, a majority of only 530.

[36] Dominion of Canada, 1901 Census, Vol. I.

[37] The results in 1902 were 5,817 against the implementation of prohibition, 2,450 for, a "wet" majority of 3,367. Tribune, April 3, 1902.

again to the temperance side only during the wartime referendum of 1916.

It would be inaccurate, however, to describe Brandon, Portage La Prairie, or even Winnipeg as urban in the full implication of the term prior to 1900. They were new communities, still closely tied to the agricultural areas around them. Many of their citizens had spent part of their lives in the country. Bitter urban-rural hostility was the product of a later period, and it was not until the 1920's that city-dwellers demanded to know "why . . . the country people have the right to determine what the city people will do?", and joined anti-prohibitionist ranks in large numbers.[38]

Manitoba's smaller towns also tended to be wary of prohibition. Between 1899 and 1913, thirty-six of Manitoba's rural municipalities enacted local option, but eight of the towns within these areas continued to permit licenses under an exemption clause.[39] During the balloting for the 1898 plebiscite the Carberry News reported that, in contrast to the excitement in the countryside, ". . . the prohibition campaign passed off very quietly in town. Nothing approaching the excitement of a political contest marked the day."[40] Economic considerations seem to have been the paramount factor in a town's decision on temperance. A licensed hotel was regarded as an attraction to trade, and towns felt that to be without one would place them at a disadvantage. As one anti-prohibitionist commented, "If the prohibitionists think liquor is bad for business, I say give one town or

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[38] Frank L. Taylor to editor, Tribune, May 4, 1923.

[39] Record of the Roblin Government, 1900-1914, undated pamphlet in P.A.M., pp. 80-81. The towns were Boissevain, Deloraine, Carman, Virden, Elkhorn, Hamiota, Melita, and Neepawa.

[40] Carberry News, Sept. 30, 1898.

province a "wet license" and see where the business will go."[41] An attempt in 1915 to restrict the granting of hotel, club, and restaurant licenses to Brandon, St. Boniface, and Winnipeg brought angry protest from smaller centres. The Liberal-Conservative Association of Virden wrote directly to Premier Roblin, arguing that

> There has never been any complaint whatsoever against the wholesale license as now and heretofore carried on in the town of Virden. . . . The proposed attempt to cancel all licenses outside of the cities will unfairly discriminate against the smaller towns.[42]

Manitoba's rural population was more inclined to accept and champion prohibition than were the residents of its cities and towns. Each time the question was put to a vote, majorities for prohibition were significantly higher in the country. Even in the disastrous plebiscite of 1902, rural areas remained remarkably faithful to temperance. Defeated three to one in the city of Winnipeg, prohibition fell in the rest of Manitoba by a much smaller margin, less than three thousand votes out of the twenty-nine thousand cast.[43] The anti-prohibitionist majority was attributed partially to the fact that because of the effect of Spring on the roads, ". . . the prohibitionist vote, which is mainly rural, cannot get to the polls."[44] Rural Manitoba was to provide prohibition with its most consistent support, and enabled the passage of the referendum of 1920 in the face of a majority of over 6,000 against it in Winnipeg.

Closer scrutiny of temperance attitudes in Manitoba points to something

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[41] "A Worker" to editor, Tribune, October 26, 1920.

[42] J.P. Pritchard to R.P. Roblin, March 2, 1915, Sir Rodmond P. Roblin Papers, P.A.M., Box 1. Cited hereafter as Roblin Papers.

[43] Tribune, April 5, 1902.

[44] Tribune, March 31, 1902.

more specific than simple rural or urban residence as a significant determinant of opinion, however. The solid core of prohibition sentiment corresponded surprisingly well with an area bounded by a line running from Russell, through Minnedosa, Neepawa, and Portage la Prairie, from there south through Treherne and Manitou to the International Boundary, and bordered on the west by the Saskatchewan Boundary. (See Appendix, Map #1.) This Southwestern section of the province consistently supported prohibition at the provincial polls and in its local municipalities.

In the provincial referendum of 1916 and in the plebiscite of 1892, this area gave prohibition majorities well above those for the rest of the province. In 1892 the fourteen provincial constitutencies which comprised this area favoured prohibition with a 77.5% majority, 9,001 for to 2,628 against.[45] The remainder of Manitoba's majority was only 61%, 11,522 for to 7,115 opposed. In 1916 the area was divided into seventeen constituencies,[46] which endorsed prohibition 16,582 to 5,394, a 76% majority as compared to only 65% for the province as a whole, which voted 50,484 for to 26,502 against. For the Dominion Plebiscite of 1898, this area fell within Brandon and Marquette constituencies, which recorded the highest percentage of votes cast, as well as of affirmative votes.[47] Mapping areas under local option and chapters of the provincial W.C.T.U. reveals even more clearly that this area was in the van of the temperance movement. (See Appendix, Maps #2, 2A and #3.)

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[45] These were: Birtle, Brandon, Brandon N., Brandon S., Cypress, Deloraine, Lansdowne, Manitou, Mountain, Norfolk, Portage la Prairie, Russell, Souris, and Turtle Mountain.

[46] These were: Arthur, Birtle, Brandon City, Cypress, Deloraine, Glenwood, Hamiota, Killarney, Lansdowne, Manitou, Minnedosa, Mountain, Norfolk, Portage la Prairie, Russell, Turtle Mountain, and Virden.

[47] In Brandon Constituency 88% voted in favour of prohibition. Marquette's majority was even larger, 93%. Reported on the Plebiscite of 1898, pp. 274-283.

Comparison of these findings with demographic data available[48] reveals that this concentration of temperance sentiment was located in the area containing the greatest percentage of residents of British origin, the area to which the Ontario migration of the 1870's and 80's had largely been drawn. Areas hostile or less enthusiatic toward the objectives of the temperance movement coincide with concentrations of population of non-British origin. W.R. Wood, secretary of the Manitoba Prohibition Alliance realized this in his analysis of the referendum vote of June 22, 1923, which defeated the prohibitory law previously in force. Wood took comfort from the fact that

> . . . older Rural Manitoba, that portion of the province in which the Anglo-Saxon stock predominates, and where English is the prevailing language, the part of the province where the farmers are longest established . . . the part of the province which all through its history has given character to public opinion, still stands practically where it did in 1916 as regards prohibition. . . . If the suburban constituencies around Winnipeg are counted out, and the areas which are generally non-English speaking, rural Manitoba is still overwhelmingly dry.[49]

For many Manitobans, "wet" or "dry" voting patterns were strongly influenced by ethnic origin.

The most notoriously "wet" of Manitoba's minorities was her French-Canadians. After prohibition suffered its first Manitoba defeat in April, 1902, the Winnipeg Tribune disdainfully remarked that the anti-prohibitionist vote was ". . . largely drawn from the floating population and from the French and Mennonite districts."[50] Franco-Manitobans were regarded by

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[48] T.R. Weir, An Economic Atlas of Manitoba, (Winnipeg, Department of Industry and Commerce, 1960)

[49] Tribune, July 10, 1923.

[50] Tribune, April 4, 1902.

temperance sympathizers as the foremost advocates of intemperance. The Manitoba Free Press satirized Aimé Benard, a Conservative politician of French origin who was thought to exercise considerable influence over the granting of liquor licenses, with a poem in dialect, "sung to the tune of Johnny Courteau":

> Aimé Benard, friend of Roblin [Premier R.P. Roblin]
> Aimé de maître d'hotel
> Dat was de boy can sling de booze
> Dat was de boy to get license for youse
> An' sell you de house, an' de bar as well.
>
> Ax dem along de river
> Along de Assiniboine Shore
> Who was de mos' bes' license man
> Sellin' de hotel to beat de ban'
> An' mak all de temperance people sore? Aimé Benard![51]

This derision from the temperance movement probably solidified French resistance, but a more important factor in French opposition to prohibition was the close connection between support for liquor restriction and support for unilingualism. It was during this period that Manitoba's French population was being slowly stripped of its linguistic and cultural rights, and to the English majority prohibition was an important weapon in the arsenal of assimilation. In 1897, the year after the Laurier-Greenway settlement of the Manitoba Schools Question, a Methodist temperance worker wrote to Premier Greenway complimenting him for having "saved the province from the incubus of a separate school" and adding that if he would "relieve it from the drink traffic . . . unborn generations will revere your memory."[52] As temperance reform became associated with the Liberal party in the years

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[51] MFP, February 23, 1907.

[52] F.B. Stacey to Thos. Greenway, April 5, 1897. Greenway Papers. Two other letters express exactly the same sentiment.

preceding World War I, this relationship became institutionalized. In 1916 the Liberal platform juxtaposed ". . . prohibition, the abolition of bi-lingualism [and] the enactment of compulsory education" as it listed the party's goals.[53] During the referendum campaign of 1916, the Manitoba School Trustees Association moved to "denounce bilingualism" at the same meeting at which they endorsed prohibition,[54] and Rev. Dr. Christie of Westminster Presbyterian Church implored the audience at a temperance rally to demand "one national speech."[55]

With prohibition boasting this kind of support, it is hardly surprising that the French regarded it as ". . . une loi d'hypocrisie."[56] The French constituencies of Carillon and St. Boniface returned anti-prohibitionist majorities in 1892, and in La Verendrye only seven votes prevented the same result. The Dominion plebiscite saw Quebec defeat prohibition, and Manitoba's leading French language newspaper, Le Manitoba claimed that ". . . Au Manitoba, les nôtres ont voté dans le même sens que leurs frères de Québec."[57] After an anti-prohibitionist victory in 1902, Le Manitoba announced the results in similar fashion: "Nous sommes heureux de constater que tous les centres français ont voté Non avec éclat."[58]

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[53] Canadian Annual Review, 1916, p. 656.

[54] MFP, March 2, 1916.

[55] Ibid., March 6, 1916.

[56] Le Manitoba, March 19, 1902.

[57] Ibid., Oct. 5, 1898. Provencher, the federal constituency which contained most of Manitoba's French population, was 55% in favour of prohibition, the smallest majority in the province. If only French polls are considered, a 65% majority against prohibition was recorded. Report on the Plebiscite of 1898, pp. 284-285.

[58] Le Manitoba, April 9, 1902.

The referendum of 1916 passed prohibition by a majority of over 65%, but constituencies with large numbers of French Canadians returned a much narrower 53% majority.[59]

Like their church, however, French Canadians were not opposed to temperance as much as to absolute prohibition, which ". . . est contrairie à la liberté et aux droites individuels."[60] Prepared to admit that ". . . l'abus en est deplorable toujours", they felt that ". . . le simple usage, même s'il était habituel, est parfaitment licite."[61] What especially disturbed the French was the crusading zeal of some of the Protestant temperance workers, whom they regarded as fanatics, "les buveurs d'eau." Bad will created during the 1890's and the early years of the new century was almost impossible to overcome later, although some French support was obtained for the sweeping prohibition victory of 1916.

Manitoba's Mennonite population also contributed an anti-prohibition element. Suspicious of attempts to subordinate their communities to government authority, the areas of Mennonite settlement which stretched south from Winnipeg through the Red River Valley to the American Border voted against prohibition in all but the 1916 referendum.[62] It is a strange paradox that

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[59] Spence, Prohibition in Canada, pp. 425-27. The total provincial vote was 50,484 for the Manitoba Temperance Act, 26,502 against. In the constituencies of Carillon, Emerson, Iberville, La Verendrye, St. Clements, St. George, St. Rose, and St. Boniface the results were 5,177 affirmative votes to 4,335 negative ones.

[60] "Le Cardinal Gibbons Denonce la Prohibition," Le Manitoba, March 8, 1916.

[61] Ibid., March 12,1902.

[62] In 1898 for example, the German settlements in Lisgar constituency rejected prohibition by a 65% majority while their Anglo-Saxon neighbours at Killarney accepted it by a vote of eighty to thirteen. Report on the Plebiscite of 1898, pp. 277-278. For a description of Mennonite fear of advancing provincial authority, see E.K. Francis, In Search of Utopia, (Glencoe, Free Press, 1955) pp. 161-176.

a people who make almost no use of alcohol themselves (Steinbach, a town of over 5,000, has no liquor outlets today) would consistently appear as "enemies" of temperance work. A German-language newspaper, Der Nordwesten argued that they did so

> . . . Not merely because trade and commerce will be ruined, and many people reduced to starvation, but because some people presume to prescribe what others shall do, or shall not do, and because in this way a serious inroad is made upon the personal freedom of the individual.[63]

Manitoba's Icelandic minority underwent something of a transformation in their attitudes toward temperance. Originally suspicious of prohibition at the polls,[64] Icelanders gradually began to support the temperance movement. The agent of their conversion was the Independent Order of Good Templars, which came to be an almost exclusively Icelandic fraternity. In 1903 the Order elected an Icelandic "Grand Templar", Arni Anderson, who in his acceptance speech praised ". . . the growth of this lodge . . . and the good influence it was yielding on the Good Templar Cause and the Icelandic people."[65] It was also in 1903 that an Icelandic chapter of the W.C.T.U. was formed in Winnipeg.[66] This increasing support was because of the assimilation of the Icelanders with their Protestant background. By 1915 the Iceland Lutheran Church was in the forefront of temperance work and the Scandinavian Mission Covenant resolved that

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[63] Der Nordwesten, March 7, 1916, translated in MFP, March 10, 1916.

[64] Icelandic settlements rejected prohibition in the plebiscite of 1898 by a 65% majority. Report on the Plebiscite of 1898, pp. 286-87.

[65] MFP, March 11, 1903. W.J. Kristjanson, in his Icelandic People in Manitoba (Winnipeg, 1965) pp. 264-69, credits the Good Templar lodges with an important influence in decreasing problems created by liquor in the Icelandic settlements.

[66] Manitoba W.C.T.U., Annual Report, 1903, W.C.T.U. Collection.

> Whereas the liquor traffic is a curse and an abomination to security . . . and whereas progressive temperance legislation [Prohibition] has been enacted in our sister province, Saskatchewan, we therefore pray that the Government of Manitoba will use its best offices to bring about similar legislation in Manitoba.[67]

Manitoba's French Canadians, Mennonites, and Icelanders had resided in the province in the earliest period of temperance activity. What of the most recent arrivals, the "indigestible mass" that was commonly lumped together under the headings "Gallacian" and "Ruthenian"? The temperance movement feared them. One of the arguments for the 1892 plebiscite had been that it would provide

> . . . an opportunity of expressing an opinion about the liquor traffic and of getting rid of this curse that has never before been given to any province, and with the mixed population that is coming in might never be given again.[68]

These "foreigners" represented a direct challenge to English Canadian social norms. The immigrants indifference to prevailing North American attitudes developed the argument for prohibition into an appeal that could reach all English-speaking Manitobans. Reformers pointed out the significance of the "foreign vote" and warned that ". . . the saloon is the place and the glass of liquor the means very often employed by the politician to secure such."[69] It seemed increasingly evident to Manitobans of British stock that it was ". . . around the bar they [immigrants] get their ideals of citizenship."[70] During their first years in the province, immigrants

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[67]Chas. A. Jacobson to T.C. Norris, July 14, 1915. T.C. Norris Papers, P.A.M., Box 1. Cited hereafter as Norris Papers. Jacobson assured Premier Norris ". . . the hearty support of our people for such legislation."

[68]Rev. G.F. Stephens, address to Baptist Convention at Winnipeg, July 5, 1892. MFP, July 6, 1892.

[69]Manitoba W.C.T.U., Annual Report, 1890-91, W.C.T.U. Collection.

[70]McClung, In Times Like These, pp. 78-79.

from Central and Eastern Europe tended to support the Conservative government of R.P. Roblin, but the potential for political radicalism among the "foreign population" was a cause of concern. When anarchist Emma Goldman spoke in Winnipeg in 1908, the District W.C.T.U. moved that

> . . . we deeply deplore the fact that a foreigner of such character and reputation has been allowed freedom of speech in our city. . . . Such appeals, particularly to those scarcely Canadianized, are detrimental to the best interests of both state and individual.[71] (italics supplied)

Prior to the social unrest of the post-war years, however, relations between the temperance movement and the immigrant, although somewhat strained, did not even approach the open hostility which was to prevail during the 1920's. There was an active attempt made to reach the new immigrant through the Methodist All People's Mission, the Social Service Council, and the Department for Work Among Foreigners of the W.C.T.U. The Loyal Temperance Legion, a W.C.T.U. sponsored children's group maintained chapters in the non-English districts of Winnipeg, and the organizer's reports illustrate the difficulty of achieving rapport. One report complained that

> We find we have to deal differently with these children. They do not fall in line with our teachings as others do. . . . The children tell me at different seasons of the year they all drink wine, and part of our LTL salute is against their religion.[72]

The essence of the W.C.T.U.'s attitude is captured by the remarks of another organizer who bemoaned the "loss of time in calling roll in foreign districts by deciphering the foreign names."[73]

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[71] Winnipeg District W.C.T.U., Minute Book, 1904-09, entry for April 8, 1908, W.C.T.U. Collection.

[72] Winnipeg District W.C.T.U., Minute Book, entry for March 10, 1914, W.C.T.U. Collection.

[73] Ibid., entry for May 12, 1915.

These paternalistic gropings toward assimilation managed to partially neutralize the anti-prohibitionist sentiment of North Winnipeg for a time. During the referendum campaign of 1916 the Slavonic Independent Society was formed to assist the temperance cause, and the Ruthenian Catholic Political Club ". . . spoke fervently in favour of temperance."[74] After a temperance victory had been recorded, the Manitoba Free Press announced with satisfaction that the new immigrants had ". . . voted in surprising numbers for prohibition."[75] North Winnipeg recorded an extremely close vote, 2,820 for prohibition to 2,885 against it. It was the closest thing to a mandate that prohibition was ever to receive in that constituency.

These group responses, and the reasons for them, were not at all clear-cut or simple. There were undoubtedly Ruthenian Catholics in North Winnipeg who supported prohibition, and British-Ontario Methodists in Turtle Mountain who did not. Each generalization supplements and qualified the others. Franco-Manitobans in the city of St. Boniface tended to vote "wetter" than their country cousins in La Verendrye. In a general way, however, the groups discussed responded to temperance reform in patterns which were to become more stereotyped and more consistent. During the 1920's lines of conflict became much more clearly drawn and the controversy over prohibition took on a symbolic aspect and a bitter flavour.

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[74] MFP, March 6, 1916, March 9, 1916.

[75] Ibid., March 14, 1916.

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CHAPTER II

PROHIBITIONISTS AND POLITICIANS: THE FIRST TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT 1892-1903

Having established the various contexts which in a general way predisposed a Manitoban in his attitudes toward temperance reform, one can examine more closely the movement itself, the arguments used to justify provincial prohibition, and the methods temperance agitators used in their attempts to achieve their goal. This also demands a study of the opinions of the political figures of the period toward liquor control, since it was upon them that any decision to enact prohibitory legislation ultimately rested. It was upon them as well that the weight of temperance wrath descended in times of legislative inactivity.

The arguments urging liquor restriction varied with the period and the area in which the temperance movement applied them. Perhaps the first and most effective used in Manitoba were those arguments which emphasized the impact of liquor upon man as a social being, and the adverse effects it had on his ability to function as an individual, a husband and father, or as a member of the community. In pioneer Manitoba, with its primitive conditions and treacherous climate, the consequences of intemperance were liable to be severe. Nellie McClung has described the situation in the small town in which she resided during the 1880's and early 1890's:

> Men were divided into two classes; they either drank or they didn't. . . . Our severe climate and pioneer conditions helped to draw this line. When we knew that a man drank to excess, we regarded him with a curious melancholy interest, knowing that sooner or later he would drop from sight. . . .[1]

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[1] Nellie L. McClung, Clearing in the West, My Own Story, (Toronto, Thomas Allen Ltd., 1935), p. 336.

Women were presented a slightly different aspect of this proposition. To them the temperance worker stressed the havoc a provider's drinking could create within a home, and the consequent destruction of the family unit. A favorite appeal to a wife and mother was the story of the family who lost their home because of the husband's intemperance:

> One day two men drove up to the farm home while the husband was away on a spree. They told the wife that they had bought the farm and everything on it . . . and the family would have to get out immediately.[2]

The susceptibility of a woman to an approach which played on her maternal fears is attested to by the success of patent medicines such as Samaria Prescription, which guaranteed that "a drunken husband could be made sober by a determined wife" if she would only add a few drops of Samaria to his breakfast coffee daily.[3] The temperance movement used this theme in their appeals well into the 1920's. During the referendum campaign of 1923, W.R. Wood, secretary of the Manitoba Prohibition Alliance, urged it as a matter of policy. Said Wood

> Many hundreds of women can yet be won. Our appeal is against the menace of liquor to the home. If we appeal to the maternal protective instinct, the mother principle--we can win them.[4]

The dislocation of the family unit as a result of drink seemed, obviously, to create problems for society as a whole. Temperance workers were inclined to assign to liquor responsibility for everything from mental illness to venereal disease. As one rural newspaper argued, "the granting of [a liquor]

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[2]Lillian Beynon Thomas, "Manitoba Women Voted First", tyed MSS in the Lillian Beynon Thomas Papers, PAM cited hereafter as Thomas Papers.

[3]This advertisement appeared in the Tribune, November 25, 1899, but others similar in content can be found in any newspaper of the period.

[4]Manitoba Messenger, June, 1923.

license means the extension of crime, the making of loafers and idiots, the breaking of hearts and homes, and the lowering of the standard of morals. . . ."[5] The Dominion Alliance had pronounced at its inception in 1876 that absolute prohibition was essential to "the welfare of the community,"[6] and prohibitionists attempted to convince the voter that were a prohibitory law enacted ". . . children will be given a chance physically and mentally, wives will be better cared for, manhood will rise higher, and the women of Cypress River will not be afraid to go along the street at anytime of day or night."[7]

One of the most difficult obstacles for the prohibitionist to overcome was the fear on the part of the public that the introduction of a prohibitory law would destroy a valuable industry and result in a drastic decline in governmental revenues. Their opponents placed constant emphasis upon this Achilles heel of the temperance argument. By 1892, Manitoba had seven breweries, five of them located in Winnipeg, although the province had no distillery.[8] As a deputation of hotel keepers and business men told the Legislature, "The hotel interests are large; $2,000,000 invested, 1600 persons employed receiving $300,000 annually in wages."[9] The prospective loss was made to seem even more dramatic by the fact that most prohibitionists were opposed to any sort of compensation for property rendered useless. In January, 1902, a petition signed by 8000 electors requested that prohibition ". . . not be enforced until reasonable compensation be provided for those

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[5] The Western Prairie, (Cypress River) January 27, 1916.

[6] Spence, Prohibition in Canada, p. 72.

[7] The Western Prairie, (Cypress River, March 2, 1916).

[8] Royal Commission, Vol. I, Appendix A.

[9] Tribune, February 28, 1893.

whose property and interests would be injured by its enforcement."[10] The prohibitionist answered these challenges by pointing out the high cost created by the supposed effects of liquor on the rates of crime, disease, and insanity. A circular distributed by the Prohibition Committee in 1898 argued that ". . . the five or six million collected in that way [through excise taxes on liquor] is a trifle compared with the forty millions of Canada's drink bill." and emphasized "the amount we would save in the administration of justice" if there were no liquor.[11] A more righteous, though less carefully considered answer was a quotation from Gladstone, "Give me a sober country and I will find the revenue."[12] The economic challenge to prohibition was difficult to answer permanently, however, and always remained a justification first for non-enforcement and later for repeal.

The debilitating physical effects of alcohol provided the temperance movement with a medical supplement to their economic and social arguments. During the early years of the campaign in Manitoba, little concern was given to strict physiological accuracy. Nellie McClung's description of one of her temperance talks to school children provides an excellent example.

> I brought out the [temperance] chart, and taught them from it the effect of alcohol on the human system. The colors were bright and lurid, and I think the pictures of inflamed membrane and hob-nailed livers fascinated them. . . . We showed them how alcohol eats up water, thereby rendering the blood unfit for its work of cleansing; we knew why a drunkard has a red nose. . . .[13]

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[10] Ibid., January 29, 1902.

[11] Ibid., September 3, 1898.

[12] Loc. cit.

[13] McClung, Clearing in the West, p. 288.

One wonders how many of our grandfathers became abstainers because of such bizarre medical theory! More important to the physical arguments for temperance were the opinions expressed by two scientists working in Germany. August Forel and Emil Kaepelin became alarmed at the effect of alcohol, even in small quantities, and in 1906 branded it a poison.[14] This decision, coming as it did from medical experts, made "scientific temperance" the vogue, and probably won more converts to abstinence than any number of sermons preached to the faithful. Rev. A.G.Sinclair of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church caught the significance of the work of Forel and Kraepelin:

> The German scientists have wielded a heavy blow against the liquor traffic by their investigation and their disclosures. They have denounced the breweries as poison factories.[15]

The rhetoric of the Manitoba temperance movement, like the medical argument for prohibition, did not always retain its original lack of sophistication. The work of the temperance movement can best be understood if it is viewed as having two stages to its development. During the first stage, which takes in the years before 1903, it was an extremely ingenuous force, using evangelic oratory to present a rather unscientific portrayal of the physical, social, and economic effects of alcohol. This group met bitter failure in the referendum of 1902 and spent several years in confusion until a rejuvenated temperance movement began to appear in 1907, as part of a more general reforming impulse which emerged throughout the province. Copying the methods of the American Anti-Saloon League and ". . . making no use of the old prohibition crusaders' appeals" temperance workers presented ". . . facts in regard to crimes of violence, crimes of debauchery, the political corruption, the waste of wages, and the ruin of families traceable

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[14] Timberlake, Prohibition . . . , pp. 45-51.

[15] MFP, July 11, 1914.

to the saloon."[16] This "second" temperance movement prided itself on its progressiveness. Mrs. H.E. Kelly, President of the Winnipeg District W.C. T.U., synthesized the new image:

> There has been a great revival in temperance circles. . . . Temperance work today is very practical as compared to the the sentimental exhortations of yesterday. These are days of efficiency.[17]

This "practical" temperance movement succeeded in obtaining a prohibitory law in 1916, and in extending the law's provisions in 1920. To understand how and why it was successful, however, one must first examine some of the reasons for its antecedant's failure.

The temperance movement's lack of internal structural co-ordination provided the greatest barrier to its success during the 1890's. The "movement" was composed of church groups and several independent temperance societies, each with different degrees of commitment to the ultimate goal of prohibition. The most dominant of these societies was the Dominion Alliance. The Alliance was dedicated to prohibition with a fervor which the other more fraternal societies lacked. Closely connected with its parent body in Toronto, the Manitoba branch of the Alliance was able to obtain and distribute temperance literature on a large scale, and provided the nucleus and leadership for temperance campaigns within the province. More social and thus less effective as pressure groups were the Royal Templars of Temperance and the Independent Order of Good Templars. The fraternal function of these groups often was emphasized at the expense of their moral one. An I.O.G.T. meeting held at the height of the referendum campaign of 1902 could be described in the Tribune with the statement that "the entertainment

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[16] Ibid., November 16, 1907.

[17] Winnipeg District W.C.T.U., Annual Report, 1913; "President's Address" , W.C.T.U. Collection.

was a success and everyone went home feeling he had spent a pleasant and profitable evening."[18] These two societies were especially anxious to avoid "political friction" which might cause loss of membership.

Manitoba's women temperance advocates could join the Dominion Alliance, but more became members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union if a chapter existed near their home. The W.C.T.U. enjoyed increasing popularity during this period, expanding from nineteen unions in 1891 to thirty-two in 1903.[19] The organization did not have the dynamic character it was to acquire later, however, and their meetings were often little more than tea parties. During the plebiscite campaign of 1892, for example, the Winnipeg District Unions were busy catering to an industrial exhibition and were more concerned with "donations of cake, cut flowers, etc." than with carrying the case for prohibition to the electorate.[20] The W.C.T.U.'s most important contribution to the temperance cause during these formative years was their educational work with children. Most school boards permitted the ladies to give temperance talks in school, at which

> They explained the effect of alcohol on the stomach, and had the children figure out how many pairs of boots and little red sleighs a man could buy with the money he spends on a daily glass of beer. At the Band of Hope [a WCTU children's group which met after classes] they taught the children a marching song, "Tremble, King Alcohol, We Will Grow Up!"[21]

The children were also taught the Francis Willard Pledge: "I promise, by the help of God, that I will not say or listen to anything that I cannot

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[18] Tribune, February 20, 1902.

[19] Manitoba W.C.T.U., Annual Report, 1890-91 and 1903, W.C.T.U. Collection.

[20] MFP, July 20, 1892.

[21] McClung, The Stream Runs Fast, pp. 67-68.

tell my mother."[22] The work done with children in the 1890's would come to fruition in later campaigns, leaving out a prediction made by Mrs. Jessie Main in 1891. "Train our boys and girls in total abstinence principles, . . . and Prohibition for the future is sure and certain."[23]

No permanent central body existed to draw the separate organizations together into an effective pressure group. An approaching plebiscite would result in the formation of an ad hoc committee to deal with the situation. The Manitoba Prohibitory League of 1892 and the Plebiscite Committee of 1898 were established specifically to marshall temperance forces to meet definite situations. As there was no permanent framework in existence, each campaign became an emergency. Secretary J.M. Spence of the 1898 Plebiscite Committee complained that ". . . organization in every part of the province has become a pressing need, and in such a great crisis God and the country expect every man and every woman to do his or her duty."[24] By treating each situation as a "crisis", temperance forces were not able to operate at optimum efficiency. Although they secured majorities in the plebiscites of 1892 and 1898, the total number of votes polled was small.[25] This enabled both federal and provincial governments to respond as Sir Wilfrid Laurier did in 1899:

> The electorate of Canada . . . comprised 1,233,849 voters, and of that number less than twenty-three percent, or a trifle over one-fifth, affirmed their conviction of the principles of prohibition. In our judgement the expression of public opinion recorded at the polls in favour of prohibition did not justify the introduction by the government of a prohibitory measure.[26]

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[22] Manitoba W.C.T.U., Annual Report, 1890-91.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Tribune, September 3, 1898.

[25] In 1892, 25,752 out of a possible 44,573 voted. Only 18,637 supported prohibition however. In 1898 with the eligible voters having increased to 49,304, only 15,322 went to the polls, 12,367 of them to vote for prohibition.

[26] Sir Wilfrid Laurier to F.S. Spence, March 4, 1899. Reproduced in R.E. Spence, Prohibition in Canada, pp. 250-52.

The second major handicap to the "first" temperance movement was its insistence that prohibition remain a non-partisan political issue. W. Redford Mulock made this clear during the first plebiscite campaign, when he announced that ". . . the temperance people belong to no party, it is not a party question in any sense."[27] By withholding temperance endorsement from a party platform and endorsing individual candidates, the temperance vote was immediately fragmented and became a dubious asset, not worth risking party fortunes to obtain. The technique of supporting "friends of temperance" for political office, so effective in the United States, was impossible to adapt to a parliamentary system, in which party discipline was more strictly enforced. A third alternative, independent political action through a "prohibition party" was even less feasible.

From 1892 until the introduction of a prohibitory law in 1916 Manitoba had only four premiers. One of these, Sir Hugh John Macdonald, held office for a ten month period of 1900, and another, T.C. Norris, did not gain office until August, 1915. The remainder of this period was dominated by two figures, Thomas Greenway, premier from 1888 until 1899, and Sir Rodmond P. Roblin, whose term in office extended from November of 1900 until May, 1915. It was primarily from these two men, the former a Liberal and the latter a Conservative, that the temperance movement had to try to gain satisfaction in the form of new legislation and the strict enforcement of existing license laws.

The Greenway Liberals were the first to feel the anger of temperance sympathizers. When the Legislative Assembly met in February of 1893, the

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[27] Tribune, April 6, 1892.

temperance movement was quick to demand action on the plebiscite of the previous July, which had shown a prohibitionist majority of over eleven thousand. They were soon disappointed. Attorney General Clifford Sifton announced that the plebiscite had meant

> No promise, direct or implied. . . . Even if a large majority of the people were in favour of prohibition, the legislature could not take immediate action. The plebiscite must therefore be carried into effect not by immediately passing a prohibition bill, but in the more tedious way which the constitution requires.[28]

The government's official position maintained that prohibition was beyond provincial powers as defined by the British North America Act. After two attempts at prohibition bills proposed by private members had failed,[29] the government presented legislation in the form of a memorial to Ottawa, asking that parliament

> With all convenient speed, enact a law prohibiting the importation, manufacture, and sale of intoxicating liquor as a beverage into or in the Province of Manitoba.[30]

Shouts of protest arose from temperance people, who correctly interpreted this action as "an easy way of getting out of difficulty" by transferring responsibility from a Liberal Provincial government to a Conservative federal one. The Free Press exemplified temperance reaction to "Clifford Sifton's Prohibition Act":

> By memorializing Ottawa our two-penny statesmen hope to shift the blame from their own shoulders, and persuade the people that if they do not get prohibition it is the fault of the Dominion Government.[31]

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[28] Ibid., February 22, 1893.

[29] The votes were on almost straight party lines, and the defeats were by margins of 25-12 and 28-10 respectively. Royal Commission, Vol. I, p. 174.

[30] MFP, March 2, 1893.

[31] Ibid., March 3, 1893.

The jurisdictional question was used by the Greenway government as a hedge against action for the rest of the decade. A Privy Council decision of 1896 failed to clarify the confusion to anyone's satisfaction, and the federal government's response to the provincial memorial was the appointment of a Royal Commission, which reported in 1895. The temperance movement did not devote much of its time to a federal lobby, for as W. Redford Mulock punned

> If Sir John [A.] Macdonald was Lord Tomorrow, Sir John Thompson [then Prime Minister] will prove a Baron Tomorrow for the temperance cause, and the future will be a barren tomorrow if such legislation [Prohibition] is referred to the Dominion House.[32]

During the Greenway administration, temperance people were never pleased with the "laxity of enforcement" of existing liquor legislation by Attorney General Sifton, which, they insisted, "amounted in some instances to a scandal and a disgrace."[33] There were undoubtedly political considerations involved in the granting of licenses in smaller towns. One unsuccessful applicant wrote plaintively to Greenway that

> . . . I have been rongly delt with by the license commissioners by leaving my house out. . . . My house is larger and better than the Ottawa and if White the proprietar did vote right last election is no reason that he should be ahead of me. White has as good as said the reason he got his license was because he knew how to work the party.[34] [sic]

On the whole, however, the granting of licenses does not seem to have been a source of unusual corruption. The license laws contained a provision requiring that sixteen of a hotel's twenty nearest neighbours be in agreement for it to be licensed. A request from a Mr. Caleb Handford asking the

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[32] W. Redford Mulock, speech before the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, February 23, 1893. Tribune, February 24, 1893.

[33] R.E. Spence, Prohibition in Canada, p. 263.

[34] R. Bellamy to Thos. Greenway, May 22, 1891, Greenway Papers.

premier's assistance "on the quiet" to subvert this regulation since "the kickers are Tory" brought a cool reply, and there is no indication that Mr. Handford ever obtained his license.[35] Clifford Sifton seems actually to have sympathized with prohibition, and when federal prohibition was enacted in December, 1917, he wrote John W. Dafoe to tell him that he was "immensely pleased at the prohibition move."[36]

The Greenway Liberals were confronted with somewhat of a dilemma. Uncertain as to the power of the temperance issue to upset traditional voting patterns, they vacillated on the subject of prohibition in the vain hope that it would go away. Some Liberals worried about the effects of this policy. Thomas Nichol, Liberal candidate in an 1897 by-election in Turtle Mountain complained to Greenway that

> I got the nomination as the candidate in the coming contest and it was nearly unanimous except for four temperance cranks and I don't know at the present time how the temperance people are going to go. Some of our party seem to think we can carry this seat easy but I don't think so.[37]

The provincial Conservative Party, twelve years out of power, hoped that he was correct. For the provincial election of 1899, the Conservatives attempted to refurbish their image. R.P. Roblin, leader of the tiny six-member opposition, stepped aside to allow Hugh John Macdonald, former M.P. and popular son of the late Prime Minister, to become the party's chief. "Feeling the popular pulse correctly," the Conservatives

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[35] Caleb Handford to Thos. Greenway, September 20, 1893, Greenway Papers.

[36] Sir Clifford Sifton to John W. Dafoe, December, 1917. J.W. Dafoe Papers, University of Manitoba, Box 9.

[37] Thomas Nichol to Thos. Greenway, October 18, 1897. Greenway Papers. Nichol's fears were well-founded. He was defeated by Conservative James Johnson by 141 votes. Liberal Cabinet minister C.J. Mickle explained the result by commenting that "The temperance people were against Mr. Nichol." MFP, November 29, 1897.

included a carefully worded temperance plank in their platform, promising if elected

> That a measure [would] be adopted to give effect to the will of the people regarding prohibition of the liquor traffic, which measure shall go as far in the direction of prohibition as the powers of the province will allow.[38]

The Conservatives received no temperance endorsements for their trouble, and the temperance issue does not seem to have been a crucial one.[39] The Conservatives, however, were placed in power, with a majority of six seats.

The new premier took his platform seriously, despite the fact that some of his followers regarded the temperance plank as ". . . a gangplank to get aboard the ship of state, not as a plank to be built into the deck of the ship."[40] Macdonald retained a group of prohibitionists, J.A.M. Aikins Q.C., W. Redford Mulock Q.C., W.W. Buchanan, and E.L. Taylor to draft the Manitoba Temperance or "Macdonald" Act. Although this Act did not prohibit the importation of liquor or its production for export, it completely outlawed its sale in Manitoba. Taken later as a model for almost every provincial prohibitory law in Canada,[41] it was not to be enforced in the province of its origin until 1916.

The government easily passed the bill, although ". . . it was not assumed that every member of the Conservative Party ardently favoured the cause. In fact, the Conservatives were divided."[42] Embarrassed by a

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[38] PAM, Record of the Roblin Government, (Winnipeg, N.D.) pp. 7-8.

[39] See John A.L. Holmes, "Factors Affecting Politics in Manitoba, A Study of Provincial Elections, 1870-1899", unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1936, p. 93.

[40] Roy St. George Stubbs, Lawyers and Laymen of Western Canada, (Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1939) p. 56.

[41] R.E. Spence, Prohibition In Canada, pp. 264-66.

[42] Sir Rodmond P. Roblin as told to Hugh G. Ross, Thirty-Five Years in the Limelight, (Winnipeg, Farmers Advocate, 1936) pp. 78-79.

leader who responded more to his campaign promises than to his caucus, the party persuaded Macdonald to contest the federal constituency of Brandon against Clifford Sifton. On November 7, 1900, Macdonald resigned and R.P. Roblin became premier. On November 20, Attorney General Colin H. Campbell submitted the Macdonald Act, still unenforced, to the Supreme Court of Canada with the question ". . . has the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba jurisdiction to enact the Liquor Act. . . ."[43] This remarkable example of an Attorney-General challenging his own party's legislation was not lost on the province's prohibitionists.

A legal battle ensued, the details of which are unimportant. The Macdonald Act was declared ultra vires by the Supreme Court on February 23, 1901, and was promptly placed before the Privy Council by lawyers representing the Manitoba Temperance Movement. On November 22, the Privy Council ruled "that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba had the jurisdiction to enact the Liquor Act." Temperance joy was unbounded. W.W. Buchanan of the Royal Templars called the decision ". . . a magnificent vindication for those who directed the movement . . ." and W.R. Mulock of the Dominion Alliance claimed that "The Lord has answered the prayers of the thousands who have suffered from the effects of strong drink."[44] The Tribune commented that ". . . the rejoicing among prohibitionists will be equalled by the strictly private grief of professional politicians. The prohibitionists now have the politicians where they want them."[45] But "a prominent liquor dealer" who refused to be identified proved more prophetic:

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[43] Telegram, November 21, 1900.

[44] Tribune, November 22, 1901.

[45] Ibid.

> The Act will never be enforced. Mr. Roblin was not the premier when it became law, and he will not stand by it. The liquor interests are so strong they can wipe out any government which would dare to enforce such a law. Another plebiscite should be taken.[46]

It was "another plebiscite," taken April 3, 1902, that divided the Manitoba temperance movement into warring factions, revealing and underscoring the inadequacies of the "first" temperance movement.

As soon as a government bill providing for a referendum on the Macdonald Act passed the legislative, the Dominion Alliance met to decide upon a course of action. Instead of making preparations for an attempt to secure a majority in favour of the act, the Alliance resolved that

> . . . we recommend to the temperance people of this province that they ignore this referendum and abstain from polling their votes thereon.[47]

They reasoned that "the referendum scheme is a deal with the liquor men for the undoing of prohibition" and that "a courageous repudiation of the referendum on the part of the prohibitionist forces" was "the only salvation."[48] By maintaining a policy of strict non-participation, the Alliance hoped to somehow invalidate the referendum as an expression of public opinion; any-other decision would have made them "accomplices in the wrong doing of government."[49] In past campaigns other groups had usually followed the Alliance, and most did so again. The Royal Templars endorsed non-participation at the personal urging of Alliance President W. Redford Mulock, and after a

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[46] Ibid.

[47] J. Castell Hopkins, The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1902, (Toronto, Annual Review Publishing Co., 1902) p. 371.

[48] W.W. Buchanan, member of Dominion Alliance Executive, quoted in Tribune, February 2, 1902.

[49] Tribune, February 3, 1902. This program of inaction was perhaps motivated by the fact that in the plebiscites of 1892 and 1898, governmental interpretation had counted a non-vote as a vote for the status quo, i.e. the license system. The Dominion Alliance undoubtedly hoped that since the Macdonald Act was theoretically valid provincial legislation, a non-vote would count in its favour.

period of hesitation were joined by the Good Templars and the W.C.T.U.[50] Using the slogan "Shall the Dominion Alliance hold the clothes of the executioners?", the groups then attempted to convince the public that an abstention meant a vote for temperance.

But they could not convince some of their own members. E.L. Taylor, secretary of the Alliance, ". . . did not think that Temperance People should stay at home and refrain from voting, thus allowing the Act to be killed," and was relieved of his position for declaring these sentiments.[51] Taylor protested that "the resolution that was adopted by the Dominion Alliance was drafted by a packed committee and the vote that carried it was not by any means unanimous."[52] In company with J.K. McLennan, an Alliance vice-president, J.W. Sifton of the Good Templars, Professor Riddell and Dr. Sparling of Wesley College, and T.H. Greenwood, a Liberal M.L.A. he formed a Prohibition Campaign League. This was the usual temperance response to a plebiscite, and the League was determined to rally a large temperance vote, since ". . . any man of common sense would see that the Alliance was wrong."[53]

The result was chaos for the temperance movement. Denunciations usually reserved for the "demon rum" were levelled against each other, and rifts created during the campaign were not easily closed. The Prohibition Campaign League accused the Alliance of "holding out stubbornly for an unprofitable and workable position . . . like a foolish ostrich,"[54] while A.M. Fraser, new secretary of the Alliance announced to the newspapers that

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[50] Tribune, February 19 and March 3, 1902.

[51] Ibid., February 20, 1902.

[52] E.L. Taylor to a meeting of the Prohibition Campaign League, March 3, 1902. Quoted in Tribune, March 4, 1902.

[53] Dr. Sparling, quoted in Ibid., March 4, 1902.

[54] J.K. McLennan, Secretary of Prohibition Campaign League, Letter to the MFP, April 9, 1902.

> The Prohibition League seems to be some sort of bastard offspring of the two political parties, organized and abetted for the purpose of frustrating the wishes of the Alliance and getting the Manitoba Liquor Act strangled by the vote of the people instead of either political party.[55]

Winnipeg's Presbyterian and Methodist ministers were divided on the issue, and at Wesley College Professor Riddell and Dr. Sparling were opposed by Dr. Stewart, who insisted upon non-involvement.[56] The W.C.T.U. ". . . lost members because the Executive endorsed the action of the Dominion Alliance re the referendum."[57]

Warring factions neutralized the temperance voice. On March 24, 1902, the League and the Alliance issued a joint declaration which recommended the ". . . cessation of all further organized effort to influence the vote . . . and that each man be left to the exercise of his individual judgement."[58] The "Liquor Men," despite the temperance confusion, were not sitting idle. The Manitoba License Holder's Benevolent Association, headed by E.L. Drewrey, campaigned vigourously and employed a general organizer with "a large and competent staff."[59] The result could hardly have surprised anyone. The loosely conducted referendum defeated the Macdonald Act by almost seven thousand votes,[60] although prohibitionists

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[55] Tribune, April 4, 1902. Fraser's accusation that the Campaign League was politically controlled do not seem to be well founded. Although Greenwood was a Liberal and Taylor a Conservative, both were sincere temperance men. Conversations with Dr. Andrew Moore, 187 Queenston St., Winnipeg, who has been a life-long resident of the province and an employee of Mr. J.K. McLennan, have convinced me that McLennan would not have become involved with a corrupt organization. Sparling's and Riddell's reputations are above reproach.

[56] Three Methodist ministers were for non-participation and three backed the League, while the Presbyterians were split five to three. Information based on campaign reports and church columns in Tribune and MFP.

[57] Mrs. E. Chisholm, President's Address, WCTU Annual Report, 1903, W.C.T.U. Collection.

[58] Tribune, March 25, 1902.

[59] Ibid., March 4, 1902.

[60] The final results were 15,607 for the Act, 22,464 against it.

accused the "liquor interests" of corrupt work at the polls.

Prohibitionists argued as to which group was responsible for their defeat. It was their looseness of organization, lack of co-ordination, and an all-pervading moralism that compelled so many of them to "touch not the unclean thing"[61] that had done the real damage. A poetic temperance worker tried to compare the stand of the Dominion Alliance to the heroic though futile

> Charge of the Light Brigade:
> [R.P.] Roblin to the right of them
> [Thomas] Greenway to the left of them
> [Colin H.] Campbell in front of them
> Bullied and blustered
>
> When can their glory fade?
> O the wild charge they made,
> Canada wondered.
> Honor the Charge they made
> Down with the Liquor Trade
> Noble six-hundred.[62]

Another poet, a commentator for the Manitoba Free Press, caught the significance of the referendum results more accurately, however, in "An Epitaph for the Liquor Bill":

> Here lies what's left of Liquor Bill
> His life was short and stormy till
> Both friends and foes combined to end him
> With a strong dose of referendum.[63]

As The Voice, a Winnipeg Labour newspaper commented,

> . . . prohibitionists are proving that they are no exception to the law of disintegration. Instead of a solid party with prohibition first as its central doctrine . . . it [the temperance movement] is found to be an agglomeration of many factions, and some conflicting interests, whose cohesion is shattered on the first shock of battle.[64]

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[61] The Northwest Baptist, March 1, 1902, described non-participation with these words.

[62] Unsigned, untitled poem, Tribune, March 10, 1902.

[63] MFP, April 6, 1902.

[64] The Voice, February 28, 1902.

The "Roblin-Rogers Riffyrandum" of 1902 strengthened the temperance movement's abhorrence of political parties. Temperance sentiment began to turn toward independent political action, since it seemed apparent that both Greenway Liberals and Roblin Conservatives were ". . . bent on using them and their cause to serve their own ends."[65] Rev. C.W. Gordon (Ralph Connor) maintained that

> Both parties in politics are equally guilty, for both parties remained silent when the question should have been freely discussed, and for this reason they both deserve our contempt and shame.[66]

The Roblin Government called a provincial election for July of 1903, and the temperance movement saw an opportunity for independent political action.

Six prohibitionist candidates were nominated, and five Liberal nominees campaigned as advocates of prohibition, although they did this without party sanction. The temperance forces, still feeling the dissentions of the previous year, refused to grant the limp temperance plank in the Liberal platform an endorsement. The election proved a disaster. One Liberal prohibitionist was elected from Hamiota, and H.L. Montgomery placed second in nearby Deloraine, throwing the election to the Conservative.[67] The remainder, including W. Redford Mulock of the Dominion Alliance, lost their deposits as the Conservatives swept to a twenty-one seat majority.[68]

Independent political action failed the temperance movement, and was never again regarded as a viable program. In a province like Manitoba

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[65] Russell Banner, January 30, 1902.

[66] Rev. C.W. Gordon, interviewed in the Tribune, January 27, 1902.

[67] MFP, July 14, 1903.

[68] CAR 1903, pp. 194-95. Mulock, running in the constituency of Emerson, polled only 77 votes!

in 1903, concerned largely with rapid economic development, one-issue candidates were not likely to obtain much success. After the election results were completed, both Liberals and Conservatives felt that "prohibitionists as a political force are hardly . . . to be reckoned with in Manitoba."[69] The temperance cause in Manitoba had reached the nadir of its influence.

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[69]"The Election and the Prohibitionists," MFP, July 22, 1903.

CHAPTER III

THE "SECOND" TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT AND THE REFORM COALITION 1907-1916

> The cause on behalf of which we labor is the cause of righteousness, the cause of humanity, and must ultimately triumph. The Act may be killed, but the cause is not dead: Phoenix-like it will rise purified and strengthened from the tribulations through which it has passed.
> Rev. D. Stewart, Wesley College, interviewed by the Winnipeg Tribune, April 4, 1902.

Coming as they did after the temperance disaster of April, 1902, Dr. Stewart's words must have seemed little more than the bravado of an unrealistic zealot. Prohibition had just been resoundingly rejected by the electorate, and temperance organizations were rent by factional strife. The temperance argument seemed incapable of ever gaining the allegiance of a significant proportion of the public. Nonetheless, Dr. Stewart was more prophetic than he realized. Factors which were to propel the liquor question into the forefront of provincial affairs were already at work, although fourteen years were to pass before the Macdonald Act was resurrected.

Foremost among the sources of a temperance revival was the re-emergence of problems which were complicated in a large measure by liquor. The population of Manitoba almost doubled during the first decade of the new century, increasing from 255,000 in 1901 to more than 461,000 in 1911.[1] While provincial population nearly doubled, the population of the city of Winnipeg more than tripled, going from 42,340 to 128,157.[2] These dramatic increases were largely attributable to immigration, and because of this immigration, Manitoba was undergoing a profoundly unsettling experience.

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[1] Dominion of Canada, 1911 Census, Vol. I.

[2] Ibid., Vol. I.

Many of the immigrants were young single men, attracted by the economic opportunity in a rapidly developing area. The result was a partial re-creation of the "boom" atmosphere of the 1880's, with an accompanying increase in the consumption and abuse of alcohol. Statistics illustrate the situation well. The rate of convictions for drunkenness began suddenly to increase, from 590 convictions per 100,000 population during 1902 to 792 in 1903. The next year the change was more marked, and was accompanied by an absolute and a proportional increase in crime in general. A trend was established which was to persist, with slight downward fluctuations in 1908-09 until it reached a peak in 1913.[3]

Unlike most earlier immigration, the influx after 1900 contained significant numbers of a group enumerated by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics under the classification "other Europeans." Of Catholic or Hebrew faith, largely unable to speak English, many never reached the farms that had been their original objective, and poured instead into Winnipeg's North End. Symbolizing an entirely different system of social norms, these immigrants presented a challenge to the dominant British-Ontario values of the community, a challenge that could be answered only by assimilation. One of the more obvious ways in which the newcomer was different was in his attitude toward liquor; an equally obvious method of "Canadianization" was to require, by the passage of a prohibitory law, that he conform to the conventions of rural Protestantism with regard to alcohol. By 1911, "other Europeans" made up fifteen percent of the provincial population, while Manitobans of British origin had declined from sixty-five to fifty-seven percent in the

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[3]Popham and Schmidt, Statistics of Alcohol Use, pp. 48-49, pp. 65-66.

ten year interval.[4] As the foreign "challenge" became more pronounced, prohibition gained acceptance as one of the majority's responses.

The "second" temperance movement which arose to direct this response corrected some of the weaknesses of its antecedent. The most obvious problem,--lack of a centralized organizational structure,--was dealt with by the formation of the Moral and Social Reform of Manitoba in November, 1907. Its origins were in the Moral and Social Reform Departments of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, the secretaries of which provided the impetus for its formation.[5] Designed as ". . . a permanent federation of moral and social reform forces, a sort of clearing house, that would produce common and united action to secure legislation and administration favourable to social uplift," the Council brought together Manitoba's Churches, the Royal Templars, the Good Templars, the Salvation Army, and the Trades and Labor Congress.[6] Succeeding years saw the affiliation of the W.C.T.U., the Scandinavian Anti-Saloon League, and the Polish and Ruthenian Catholic Churches.[7] Although non-evangelical churches did become affiliated with the Moral and Social Reform Council, those most active on the Council's behalf, especially in the cause of prohibition were of evangelical faiths. A survey of the 1913-14 Executive of the Council reveals one Anglican, one Roman Catholic, three Presbyterians, three Methodists, and one Congregationalist.[8]

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[4] Dominion of Canada, 1911 Census, Vol. III.

[5] Spence, Prohibition in Canada, pp. 410-11.

[6] The Statesman, (Winnipeg) August 28, 1913. It was renamed the Social Service Council in 1913.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Information as to religious background taken from C.W. Parker, ed., Who's Who in Western Canada, (Winnipeg, Canadian Press Association, 1911).

The Council was not solely dedicated to prohibition; other social work formed part of its program. It was alcohol which they regarded as the major cause of social distress, however, and as Dr. Patrick, the new organization's first president made clear, "The first reform we are after is temperance reform."[9] But rather than a diffuse attack on alcohol and the liquor trade in all its forms, the Moral and Social Reform Council concentrated on an important link in the chair of distribution, the hotel bar.[10] The drive to "Banish the Drinking Place" became a Council objective at its organizational meeting. Secretary W.W. Buchanan moved that ". . . the whole force of the movement for sobriety should be concentrated for the outlawing of the bar-room."[11]

This revised orientation for temperance work gave it a more specific and more easily attainable goal, and supplemented the local option program, which had many disadvantages. As Rev. Eber Crummy pointed out, "There are difficulties in the way of carrying local option in large cities, but the abolition of the bar would bestow great benefits upon the community without causing great inconvenience to any portion of it."[12] The Council's newspaper, The Statesman, was less inclined to be charitable:

> the local option law is designedly defective. Local option is not a measure dictated or demanded by organized temperance reformers. Local option is a politician's device to stare off an embarrassing question.[13]

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[9] Dr. W. Patrick, address to M. and S.R. Council Convention, February 19, 1908. Reported in MFP, February 20, 1908.

[10] Before 1916, a hotel bar license entitled the holder to dispense all forms of liquor, spirits, wine, and beer, in quantities of one glass.

[11] MFP, November 16, 1907.

[12] Rev. Eber Crummy, address to Manitoba Legislative Assembly, February 16, 1911. Canadian Annual Review, 1911, p. 544. Only the less fortunate classes economically would be "inconvenienced."

[13] The Statesman, August 28, 1913. The temperance movement had justification for this comment. In the sixty-one local option referenda in 1908, sixteen municipalities enacted it, eight rejected it, and thirty-seven

"Banish the Bar" made an effective slogan, and provided a focal point for new temperance converts. A popular temperance rhyme listed the bar-room's evils:

> A bar to heaven, a door to hell,'
> Whoever named it, named it well.
> A bar to honored, useful life,
> A door to brawling, senseless strife.
> A bar to all that's true and brave,
> A door to every drunkard's grave.[14]

The revitalized temperance sentiment exemplified by the Moral and Social Reform Council was only one segment of a broader and more diverse movement which had as its general objective ". . . the uplift of the moral tone of government."[15] Like the American progressives who were their contemporaries, these reformers sought to counteract "the negative or reactionary forces which have been in the ascendancy" and to restore "the influence of the people which has been growing steadily less."[16] This end was to be accomplished through several specific methods, most notably direct legislation, female suffrage, anti-monopoly legislation, and prohibition.

Direct legislation, the initiative, referendum, and recall, was considered an obvious prerequisite if the "rule of the people" were to be restored in Manitoba. A Political Reform Union had included direct legislation in its platform in 1902, and in 1910 the Manitoba Federation for Direct Legislation was established with the Royal Templars of Temperance as a charter affiliate.[17] Despite misgivings created by the unsuccessful

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contests were declared void on technical irregularities. Canadian Annual Review, 1908, p. 468.

[14] MFP, March 14, 1916.

[15] Grain Growers Guide, July 13, 1910.

[16] D.W. Buchanan, Toward Democracy, (Winnipeg, Grain Growers Guide, 1913) p. 36.

[17] W.L. Morton, "Direct Legislation and the Origins of the Progressive Movement," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XXV #3.

referendum of 1902, the temperance movement recognized that direct legislation ". . . would place a weapon in the hands of progressive men, which would greatly assist them in educating the people and leading them in the fight against injustice and privilege."[18] A.M. Fraser, secretary of the Dominion Alliance, assured the Political Reform Union that his organization was ". . . in entire sympathy with direct legislation which will enable all reformers to co-operate in order to bring about a better condition of political affairs."[19]

The woman suffrage and temperance movements had been closely connected since the foundation of the Canadian Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1883. The provincial W.C.T.U. passed a resolution on the subject in 1891,[20] and in 1893 its president attempted to convince the Legislative Assembly of the ". . . righteousness of prohibition and woman's suffrage."[21] Prohibitionists were certain that "if women had votes they would not be selling them to the liquor traffic,"[22] and it was a mystery to them why

> an educated, sensible woman . . . should not be allowed the privilige of voting against the most deadly enemy of her household [liquor] while a young man who is only twenty-one and a recent arrival, even though he may be a saloon sot, may go out and cast his vote.[23]

Nellie McClung noted that in Manitou "the wife of the town drunkard" was the only woman who argued that it was "an insult to our husbands to even ask for the vote."[24] The Political Equality League, which organized the Manitoba

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[18] Buchanan, op. cit., p. 68.

[19] Tribune, May 5, 1902.

[20] Manitoba W.C.T.U., Annual Report 1890-91, W.C.T.U. Collection.

[21] Mrs. Manahan, address to Manitoba Legislative Assembly, reported in Tribune, February 24, 1893.

[22] Loc. cit.

[23] Unsigned letter to the Editor, Tribune, April 1, 1902.

[24] McClung, Clearing in the West, p. 287.

campaigns for equal franchise, worked closely with the W.C.T.U. and with the Royal Templars, who ". . . look ed with interest on the movement as it will assist materially in the temperance movement."[25] Dynamic suffragettes such as Nellie L. McClung and Lillian Beynon Thomas turned their voices and pens just as often to temperance work.[26] The temperance cause aided the progress of woman's suffrage, since women were often more anxious to obtain the vote in liquor referenda than in provincial and municipal elections.

Reform movements were morally outraged by the graft, corruption, and bribery that they seemed to uncover at every level of government. Honest administration was a necessity if temperance legislation were ever to be enacted, and it did not seem likely to come from the Conservative government of R.P. Roblin. The Conservative's use of "machine politics" upset the reform-minded, who noted with displeasure the careful deployment of patronage and public works funds and the incidence of such tactics as falsifying immigrant's naturalization papers to enable them to support government candidates.[27] "Liquor interests" were thought to be a major source of this corruption, and reformers were certain that ". . . in spite of all professions and pretensions to the prohibitionists, the government is doing all it can to help the licensed victuallers."[28] Thus reformers

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[25] PAM, Minute Book of the Political Equality League, 1912-1914, entry for June 27, 1912.

[26] Mrs. McClung was an active member of the WCTU, both in her home town of Manitou and later after she moved to Winnipeg. She chaired and completely dominated the WCTU's 1914 Convention, which resolved for Woman's Suffrage, Direct Legislation, and prohibition. Manitoba WCTU Recording Secretary's Book, entries for May 24-27, 1914.

[27] See Lionel Orlikow, "Some Aspects of the Reform Movement in Manitoba, 1910-1920," unpublished M.A. Thesis, (University of Manitoba, 1955), pp. 139-40 for a description of some of the Conservatives more unsavoury techniques.

[28] A.J. Andrews, address to the Political Reform Union, reported in Tribune, January 25, 1902.

begin to insist that

> We must make our political house-cleaning complete by demonstrating that no class or interest which will tamper with the integrity of our public men can be allowed to exist.[29]

Since the "liquor interests" fitted into this category, prohibition became a necessity if honest and effective government was to be ensured.

Thus, in the context of the time prohibition became "progressive," a step in the "advance movement of civilization," but a step which illustrates Hofstadter's contention of ". . . the coexistence of illiberalism and reform" during this period.[30] Like the Provincial W.C.T.U., the reform movement in Manitoba was "not composed either of the very wealthy or the very poor," but of those people "in moderate circumstances"[31] who saw their traditions and way of life threatened by an influx of "foreigners" and by the domination of corrupt politicians who ruled the province "almost as effectively as if there had never been a meeting of the legislature."[32] Their response was the creation of a reform coalition which fought to purge Manitoba's political and social life of these threats. The vehicle for this coalition was to be the provincial Liberal Party.

The Roblin Conservatives had alienated temperance sympathizers with their "riffyrandum" of 1902, but Greenway Liberalism had hardly seemed to offer an attractive alternative. Conservative enforcement of existing liquor laws did not regain any of this lost support, and Attorney-General Colin H. Campbell became a favorite object of prohibitionist wrath:

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[29] M.L. McManus to the Editor, MFP, March 1, 1916.

[30] Hofstadter, Age of Reform, pp. 16-20.

[31] Mrs. L. Chisholm, "President's Address," in Manitoba W.C.T.U., Annual Report 1890-91, W.C.T.U. Collection.

[32] Buchanan, Toward Democracy, pp. 56-57.

> He forces the licenses in where they are not wanted, and takes them out where they are run by Grits. He forces the temperance people to bow down their heads to the heels of his license commissioners.[33]

Premier Roblin's justification for his government's inaction failed to impress the temperance movement. Sir Rodmond told prohibitionist delegations that he had "gone a hundred miles to vote for local option," but argued that the Social Service Council's policy of closing the bars would "open the shop so that men might obtain liquor by the bottle or the case," with a resultant increase in drunkenness.[34] When the opposition introduced a motion in February, 1912, to end bar-room sale, Conservatives rejected it unanimously, the Premier protesting that it was ". . . a matter not to be hastily argued or acted upon."[35] Anxious to remain ". . . abreast, not ahead of, public opinion," the Conservatives were actually falling behind it, and they confined their liquor legislation to minor revisions of license and local option laws.[36]

Temperance sympathizers began to move away from the Conservative Party as it failed to give them satisfaction. With a provincial election approaching in July of 1907, several clergymen prominently connected with social reform became openly disenchanted, and attempted to form an entente with the Liberals. Rev. O. Coleman of Treherne expressed his disappointment to the Free Press.

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[33] MFP, November 6, 1906.

[34] Record of the Roblin Government, pp. 82-84.

[35] Canadian Annual Review, 1912, p. 257.

[36] Record of the Roblin Government, p. 73. The Conservatives were particularly fond of pointing out that in Manitoba local option required only 50.5% of votes actually cast to be enforced, while in most other provinces a three-fifths majority was necessary.

> I know many men who are as disgusted with it [the Roblin Administration] as I am myself. These are men of the higher class, who are not entangled in any way with the whiskey element; neither are they foreigners who have little or no interest in British justice, equality, and liberty.[37]

Contending that the Conservatives' treatment of the temperance people had been "simply vile," a group of ministers and educators, most notably C.W. Gordon, J.A. McClung, Salem G. Bland, and Professor W.F. Osborne, supported the weak temperance plank in the Liberal platform, which promised ". . . an honest, moderate, and just administration of the liquor traffic in accordance with the wishes of the people."[38] The Liberals were fence-sitting, and although their leader, Edward Brown, declared himself a "temperance man," he carefully added that he was "no fanatic and no prohibitionist."[39] Most temperance supporters noted this "timid, shrinking, fearfulness, on the part of the opposition," and did not join the Methodist ministers in their endorsement of the Liberals.[40] As the Royal Templar paper, The Pioneer, observed, "The Liberal Party . . . went too far to retain the support of the liquor element, but did not go far enough to obtain the support of temperance people."[41] The Liberals won only twelve seats, and their leader met personal defeat in Portage la Prairie.

An important shift in political opinion was taking place, however. Despite the insistence of the temperance Methodist Clergymen that they were not Liberals "in the partisan sense," [42] Premier Roblin strongly resented

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[37] Rev. O. Coleman, letter to the Editor, MFP, February 25, 1907.

[38] Canadian Annual Review, 1907, p. 582.

[39] MFP, February 13, 1907.

[40] The Pioneer, March 22, 1907.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Rev. A. McMillan to the Editor, MFP, February 23, 1907.

their participation in the campaign. After his party's victory, Sir Rodmond denounced "the intervention of certain clergy in the contest," and one of his newly-elected followers singled out Professor Osborne as ". . . a blatant, flannel-mouthed individual, who chums with shady politicians and is used as an apologist for their misdeeds."[43] The Liberal position on temperance was not as decisive in winning them the support of temperance leaders as was Conservative criticism in alienating that support. Another provincial election and seven years were to pass before Manitoba's reform sentiment moved completely into the Liberal fold, but the campaign of 1907 provided the original initiative for that movement. During the interval prohibitionists at last realized that ". . . temperance sentiment cannot be transformed into law; nor into successful administration of law until some political party assumes responsibility for it."[44] Unlike the "first" temperance movement, the "second" was ". . . ready to put moral enthusiasm behind political leaders who will courageously commit themselves to the abolition of the bar-room."[45]

Reform success came slowly, however. To Manitobans still actively concerned with provincial development, Premier Roblin represented the struggle with the Liberal federal government for boundary extension, provincial control of natural resources, and the rail-route to Hudson's Bay. Liberal attempts to win temperance and reform support were somewhat half-hearted, and "the temperance question was not very conspicuous" during the provincial election of 1910, which gave the Roblin government its third consecutive mandate.[46]

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[43] Canadian Annual Review, 1907, p. 578, Telegram, January 30, 1907.

[44] H.L. Montgomery, address to a temperance rally at Deloraine, June 7, 1910, reported in MFP.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Canadian Annual Review, 1910, p. 491.

These Conservative advantages were partially lost during the next two years. The federal Conservative victory in 1911 and the subsequent expansion of provincial boundaries in 1912 eroded Roblin's position as the defender of Manitoba against the central government. Manitoba's preoccupation with development began to change into a desire for consolidation of gains already made. Social questions replaced economic ones, and the Conservatives refused to confront them. With a provincial election a certainty during 1914, reform groups saw an opportunity to place sympathetic legislators in office.

The Social Service Council provided the medium for grouping temperance support behind the Liberal Party. During 1913 the Council concentrated upon

> the organization of the electoral districts of the province so that in each riding friends of the cause might realize their responsibility, particularly with respect to political action.[47]

The President, Dr. C.W. Gordon, was one of the temperance clergymen who had opposed the Conservative government in 1907, and as a consequence the Council's relations with Premier Roblin were less than cordial.[48] Sir Rodmond's reply to reform delegations in January and February of 1914 ended any hopes of improving them. The Premier refused to consider either closing hotel bars or implementing woman suffrage, and complained in an election pamphlet that ". . . like perennials that grow in the fields, we will always have the temperance or intemperate crank and clerical politician with us."[49]

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[47] The Statesmen, August 28, 1913.

[48] Gordon, Rev. F.B. DuVal, and Rev. Salem G. Bland had become active Liberals by 1913. They gave as their reasons "love of democracy, temperance sentiment, and fear of Roman Catholic Supremacy," (Canadian Annual Review, 1913, p. 547) a combination revealing the ultra-Protestant and nativistic streak in Manitoba reform.

[49] Record of the Roblin Government, p. 73.

The Liberal Party's 1914 platform failed to promise total prohibition, despite the fact that a Social Service Council delegation had attended the convention. It did, however, promise a referendum on the abolition of the bar which, ". . . if endorsed by the electors, shall be put into operation and shall have the hearty support of the Liberal party in its thorough enforcement."[50] The platform promised direct legislation, woman suffrage, and unilingual education, and the temperance plank was supplemented by a personal statement by opposition leader T.C. Norris assuring Liberal sincerity. The executive of the Social Service Council decided that this was evidence enough of good faith, and announced to members that "the temperance resolution of the Liberal Convention as interpreted by the leader of the party is acceptable and satisfactory to the Social Service Council."[51]

The campaign which followed was the most bitter in provincial history, with the liquor question joining unilingual compulsory education as a paramount issue. Dr. Gordon described the polarization of the electorate

> . . . the issue is clear cut . . . a bar or no bar for Manitoba. On the one side are the Christian Churches, various organizations, social workers, and all decent citizens, on the other . . . the Roblin Government, the Liquor traffic, and every form of organized vice and crime. Our objective stands clearly visible--the elimination of Premier Roblin and his Government that back the bar.[52]

The Social Service Council skillfully co-ordinated temperance campaigning with the Liberal cause. Dr. Charles Stelzle, noted American prohibitionist,

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[50] Cited in Ibid., p. 105.

[51] Spence, Prohibition in Canada, p. 419.

[52] Canadian Annual Review, 1914, p. 598. The Roman Catholic Church supported the Roblin government, but Gordon did not see fit to describe them as "Christian."

was obtained for a series of addresses.[53] Mrs. Nellie McClung joined the Council executive on a speaking tour of the province which "reviewed the temperance or rather intemperance record of the Roblin government."[54] As Mrs. McClung told an overflow crowd at the Walker (now the Odeon) theatre in Winnipeg,

> I hope to see a rebuke administered to the government. Its political ideals are too low. Every year Canada sacrifices 6000 boys to the drink habit. I haven't one to spare! Before I would give them up, I would fight.[55]

The Conservatives realized that they were fighting for their lives, and replied in kind. The Winnipeg Morning Telegram, journalistic voice of the government, concluded that

> The more the conspiracy between the Grits and the alleged social reformers is considered, the greater does it become apparent that the sole objected aimed at is to accomplish the downfall of the Roblin government at all costs.[56]

The Premier himself, with a great show of indignation, confided to an election rally that it was

> . . . simply shocking to find this so-called Social Service Council, of which Dr. Gordon is the head, linked up with these political thugs and crooks with their whiskey [sic] and other influences, both working together, as they say, to "Banish the Bar."[57]

In addition to personal vilification of temperance leaders, the Conservatives attempted to portray themselves as the party of the British connection, branding the reform platform of the Liberals "degenerate republicanism."

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[53] Winnipeg District W.C.T.U. Minute Book, entry for April 13, 1914. W.C.T.U. Collection.

[54] MFP, June 30, 1914.

[55] Tribune, June 7, 1914.

[56] Telegram, July 1, 1914.

[57] Ibid., July 3, 1914.

In an impassioned address widely circulated as Conservative campaign Literature, Premier Roblin warned Manitobans that

> Never were our institutions threatened by parties so directly as now. Never were men so unscrupulous in their efforts to defeat those who are British, and I appeal to you as citizens worthy of your heritage to stand together. Be always Manitobans, be always Canadians, be always British, be always Conservative.[58]

Conservative rhetoric won out. Despite a vigorous campaign, the reform coalition was defeated in the July 10th balloting. The Liberals obtained a plurality in the popular vote of over 2500, but the Conservatives placed their support more strategically to gain a seven member majority. Faced with a contest fought largely on temperance lines, the reform forces had fallen short of victory. The Roblin regime was crumbling, but the long-sought goal of prohibition was not yet within the reform grasp. The temperance forces did not realize that events of August, 1914, would prove much more favourable to their cause than those of July.

The Great War provided the catalyst in the public reaction which created prohibitory liquor legislation, not only in Manitoba, but throughout North America. Prohibitionists had always thought of their cause as "warfare waged against ignorance, selfishness, darkness, prejudice, and cruelty"[59] and of themselves as "great souls who endure, strive, sacrifice, and even though wounded, "Carry On"."[60] The war with Germany made this analogy almost real, and the liquor trade and Prussian militarism were described as equally dangerous enemies of Canadian society. Nellie McClung noted that

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[58] Ibid., July 6, 1914.

[59] McClung, In Times Like These, p. 5.

[60] Nellie L. McClung to Lillian B. Thomas, April 21, 1917. Lillian B. Thomas Papers, PAM Box 1.

> We despise the Kaiser for dropping bombs on defenseless people, and shooting down women and children. . . . The liquor traffic has waged war on women and children all down the centuries. Its shells have dropped on unfortified homes.[61]

Rev. J.E. Hughson of Grace Methodist Church urged Manitobans to "use ballots for bullets and shoot straight and strong in order that the demon of drink might be driven from the haunts of men."[62]

Temperance workers argued that the "fifth column" created by liquor was an obstacle to a successful conclusion of the war. Production of alcoholic beverages was not vital to the war effort, and the grain consumed in the process was a waste of precious food. With thousands of men in uniform the most important anti-prohibitionist argument, the economic, no longer applied. Labour and plant displaced by prohibition could readily be absorbed elsewhere in the economy. The effect of liquor upon the health, morality, and efficiency of the individual soldier provided another temperance argument. The Manitoba W.C.T.U. had provided Bibles for the Canadian contingent during the South African War[63] and were not about to fail Canada's young men in this new crisis. The Winnipeg District urged Premier Roblin to close the bars, since

> . . . at this time of war when the soldiers are sacificing home comforts for the sake of country, no protection extended to them would be too much.[64]

An article published by most papers in the province cautioned soldiers to avoid liquor, which

1. Slows the power to see signals
2. Spoils accurate shooting

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[61] McClung, In Times Like These, p. 165.

[62] MFP, March 3, 1916.

[63] Tribune, November 7, 1899.

[64] Winnipeg District W.C.T.U., Minute Book, entry for December 9, 1914, W.C.T.U. Collection.

3. Confuses prompt judgment
4. Hastens fatigue
5. Lessens resistance to disease and exposure
6. Increases shock from wounds.[65]

Temperance groups seized on the wartime situation as an occasion to increase political pressure. In a letter to Premier Roblin, W.W. Buchanan, secretary of the Social Service Council, urged that ". . . the time is ripe for the re-enactment of the Manitoba Liquor Act of 1900 as a war measure, and for its immediate enforcement throughout the province."[66] Pressure was not confined to the provincial level. The W.C.T.U. resolved that members ". . . write our federal members urging them to support a measure to abolish the sale and manufacture of alcoholic liquors during wartime."[67] These organizations justified such use of wartime powers on the ground that ". . . the present grave crisis demands the highest efficiency in the nation and the conservation of food stuffs as well as man power for the successful prosecution of the war."[68]

The temperance movement's objective was to make prohibition a synonym for patriotism, and it was remarkably successful in accomplishing that end. Capitalizing on the fervor which is created to weld a democracy together in wartime, prohibitionists argued that their program was a necessary step toward victory; "the individual who opposes it . . . reveals himself as a selfish egotist, to be regarded with contempt."[69] A rural newspaper was more blunt. "Anymore who will vote in favour of liquor," said The Western Prairie, "might as well enlist under the Kaiser as far as patriotism

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[65]"Soldiers, Attention! Follow the King." MFP, March 8, 1916.

[66]W.W. Buchanan to Roblin, February 25, 1915. Roblin Papers, Box 1.

[67]Manitoba W.C.T.U., Recording Secretary's Book, entry for February 16, 1916.

[68]Alex Hamilton D.D. to T.C. Norris, November 22, 1917, T.C. Norris Papers, PAM, Box 1.

[69]MFP, March 7, 1916.

goes."[70] The fact that recent immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire were openly "wet" in their habits provided temperance agitators with still another opportunity to connect prohibition with the Allied War effort, and those opposed to it with subversion. Carefully exploited by the temperance movement, the wartime mentality gave prohibition a following which it had not been able to attain in time of peace.

One further step needed to be taken to ensure the success of prohibitionists in Manitoba. In May, 1915, the Conservative government, which eight years of temperance rhetoric had failed to budge, collapsed under the weight of the parliament buildings scandal.[71] Following R.P. Roblin's resignation, the Conservatives attempted to refurbish their badly tarnished image for the election campaign. Selecting J.A.M. Aikins, a life-long temperance sympathizer, as their leader, the Conservatives pledged themselves to

> Total prohibition so far as is possible by re-enactment of the Hugh John Macdonald Act of 1900, with no provisions for referendum or repeal.[72]

This attempt to make prohibition the campaign's major issue was singularly unconvincing. Nellie McClung warned temperance workers not ". . . to be fooled as easily as that. Don't let us be cheated again."[73] The shock of scandal doomed the Conservatives, and the Liberal temperance plank of 1914 was again given Social Service Council endorsement. "The disappearance of the Roblin machine . . . had the effect of robbing the campaign of some of its exciting features,"[74] and the Liberal party swept all but five seats,

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[70] The Western Prairie, (Cypress River), March 2, 1916.

[71] See Alexander Inglis, "Some Political Factors in the Demise of the Roblin Government, 1915", unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1968.

[72] Cited in Spence, Prohibition in Canada, p. 424.

[73] MFP, August 5, 1915.

[74] Ibid., August 2, 1915.

four of them in French Canadian areas.[75] Temperance legislation was not the deciding issue, but the temperance vote "refused to support the party [the Conservatives] that had worked hand in hand with the enemies of temperance reform."[76]

Working closely with members of the Social Service Council executive, T.C. Norris, the new premier, decided to resurrect the Macdonald Act of 1900 as Manitoba's prohibitory law. The referendum to decide on its enactment was scheduled for March, 1916. The government did not take an official position. In best progressive tradition, Norris announced that

> the government will act as the referee, and if the people vote to abolish liquor from this province nothing will be left undone by the government to carry out the expressed will of the people.[77]

With supreme confidence, the temperance movement mounted the most vigorous campaign in its history in hopes of recording an overwhelming majority for the act.[78] The Social Service Council provided the organization and enthusiastic sympathizers served as volunteers. The Council obtained Mrs. Nellie McClung from the W.C.T.U. and F.S. Spence of the National Dominion Alliance for speaking tours. It also retained Mr. Percy Hagel, a "reformed drunkard" to stump the province, making two speeches a day

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[75]The seats and members were: Carillon: Albert Prefontaine, Iberville: Aime Benard, Morris: Jacques Parent, Roblin: F.Y. Newton, and St. Rose; Joseph Hamelin. For Franco-Manitobans the issue was the Liberal advocacy of compulsory unilingual education.

[76]Spence, Prohibition in Canada, p. 425. See Inglis, op. cit., pp. 130-39 for a well-considered statement of the causes of Conservative defeat.

[77]MFP, March 8, 1916.

[78]One indicator of prohibitionist confidence is the fact that they pressed for an early vote on the Macdonald Act even though a delay of several months would have enabled women to cast ballots on the issue. W.L. Morton in Manitoba, A History, p. 349, suggests that women voted in this referendum, but this is not the case. Although woman suffrage was established by the Legislature of January 27, 1916, there was not enough time to prepare new lists of electors for March 13. See Canadian Annual Review, 1916, p. 679.

during the closing weeks of the campaign.[79] Hagel would shock his audiences with descriptions of alcoholic debauchery before concluding solemnly that

> They all go, boys, and no man who ever tried has beaten the game, and no man ever will. I know because I have been in it. Boys, I put twenty years in the business, and I want to tell you that you will come a cropper sooner or later.[80]

Since the Council executive felt that "the possibilities for crooked work at the polls are very great, it created a "camera squad" which was issued photographic equipment and description sheets to travel from poll to poll to make certain that paid "pluggers" of the "liquor interests" voted only once.[81]

The "liquor interests" did not launch a strong counter-attack. The brewers and hotel owners organization, paradoxically named the Manitoba Prohibition Electors League, co-operated half-heartedly with the Bar-tender's Union to fight the Temperance Act. Their most notable effort was the sponsorship of a speech by Clarence Darrow which presented the civil liberties aspect of the argument against prohibition.[82] With the assistance of the wartime emotion, and with its carefully structured organization working overtime, the Social Service Council made surprising converts to the temperance cause. French Canadians in The Pas declared that "un vote pour la temperence est un vote pour le bonheur des individus, pour la paix et l'aisance dans tes familles, pour la prosperité de commerce,"[83] and the Rural Deanery of the Church of England resolved that the Macdonald Act was

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[79] MFP, March 3, 1916.

[80] Brandon Daily Sun, March 9, 1916.

[81] MFP, March 11, 1916.

[82] Ibid., March 8, 1916.

[83] The Pas Herald and Mining News, March 10, 1916.

". . . the best way of dealing with the liquor traffic at the present time."[84] The Council's workers campaigned in the North End of Winnipeg, and secured the endorsements of the Ruthenian Catholic Political Club and the Slavonic Independent Society.[85] Their investment of effort returned a dividend. The vote of traditionally anti-prohibitionist ethnic and religious groups split almost evenly, and "in no place was it strong enough to affect the results appreciably."[86]

The temperance act won a decisive victory, losing only three constituencies, and those by tiny margins.[87] The popular vote was 50,484 for to 26,502 against, a majority of over 23,000, almost two to one. The "second" temperance movement had obtained a prohibitory law, and they congratulated themselves on their success. They did not realize that the equally difficult task of enforcing it still lay ahead of them.

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[84] Tribune, March 1, 1916.

[85] MFP, March 6, 1916, March 9, 1916.

[86] Ibid., March 14, 1916.

[87] These were: Churchill-Nelson, St. Boniface and Winnipeg North, with majorities of thirty-two, twenty-eight, and sixty-five votes respectively.

CHAPTER IV

THE VOICE OF MODERATION:

PROHIBITION ON THE DEFENSIVE AND IN RETREAT 1916-1928

Prohibition Enforced and Extended, 1916-1920.

Despite its massive majority in 1916, prohibition lasted only seven years in Manitoba. During those seven years its effectiveness as a deterrent to alcohol consumption and as an agent of social good was a subject of constant debate. The year 1916 brought a marked reduction in convictions for drunkenness, in both absolute and relative terms.[1] Since the Macdonald Act made retail purchase illegal, it was undoubtedly a contributing factor in this decrease, but an examination of statistics available reveals that a general downward trend had started two years earlier in 1914.[2] During the first year of its operation, however, "the support accorded the [Macdonald] Act . . . surpassed the most sanguine expectations of its friends."[3] Government officials recognized, nonetheless, that this support was due in part to "the unusual conditions obtaining at the time" which kept most of the province's single men in uniform.[4]

Yet the Manitoba Temperance Act was handicapped because it did not provide absolute prohibition. Constitutional limitations upon provincial

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[1] Popham and Schmidt, op.cit., pp. 48-49, p. 65. Total convictions fell from 3,958 in 1915 to 2,905 in 1916 and only 975 in 1917. Convictions per 100,000 population dropped from 1,177 in 1915 to 872 in 1916 and 302 in in 1917.

[2] Loc.cit. The 1913 total of 7,493 convictions decreased to 6, 193 in 1914.

[3] Province of Manitoba, Sessional Paper # 13, 1917.

[4] Ibid.,

legislation forbade interference with interprovincial trade. Although the Act prevented the sale or purchase of alcohol for beverage purposes, private citizens could import liquor from outside the province for their own use, and Manitoba's seven breweries could manufacture beer for export. The owners of now-illegal liquor outlets were quick to take advantage of these loopholes in the law by establishing depots in Saskatchewan, and at Kenora, Ontario, through which liquor could be brought into Manitoba. Because of this method of evading the spirit, though not the letter, of the law, only twenty-nine liquor stores actually closed. The remaining fifty-two became "warehouses" at which shipments could be received.[5]

The same provision allowed breweries to remain in operation. Brewers shipped their product outside the province, from where it was imported by private citizens.[6] Beer with an alcohol content of less than two and one-half percent was not considered an alcoholic beverage, and could be sold freely. Police were faced with the difficult task of ensuring that a beer sold met this requirement. "Near beer" was used as a screen, behind which the stronger variety was produced and distributed.

Another method by which the prohibitory laws could be evaded was the use of alcohol prescribed by a doctor for "medicinal purposes." Unscrupulous physicians interpreted this clause of the Temperance Act as an opportunity to add a valuable side-line to their practices, and thousands

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[5] Canadian Annual Review, 1916, p. 680.

[6] Report of the Manitoba Liquor Enquiry Commission, (Winnipeg, 1955) Vol. 9, p. 15. Cited hereafter as Bracken Report.

of such prescriptions were freely written. It was difficult to prove that a doctor was abusing his privileges, and convictions were difficult to obtain. In August, 1920, a doctor co-operated with a pharmacist to write and fill 5,800 liquor prescriptions, and on one occasion, "two men had 186 prescriptions filled in as many minutes."[7] In 1920, the Temperance Act was amended to restrict doctors to one hundred prescriptions a month, in quantities of no more than twelve ounces. Sixteen physicians were suspended from practice under this section in 1921.[8]

Prohibitionists also moved quickly to plug the importation loophole. They continued their pressure on the Dominion Government urging federal action as a wartime emergency measure. On December 24, 1917, an Order-in-Council issued under the War Measures Act announced that the importation of liquor into a province in which a prohibitory law was in force would be unlawful. This measure came into effect on April 1, 1918, and was to last until one year after the conclusion of hostilities. This provision lapsed in December, 1919, but an amendment to the venerable Canada Temperance Act passed in November of that year provided enabling legislation through which a provincial government could put a permanent halt to importation if a referendum affirmed this to be the will of the electorate.

Manitoba's prohibitionists were anxious that restrictions against importation should come back into force, and urged a referendum on the Canada Temperance Act. To justify the adoption of more restrictive

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[7] Tribune, October 20, 1920.

[8] MFP, February 24, 1921.

measures, temperance workers were forced to dramatize the evils drink was creating within the province. To do this, they were forced to criticize their own beloved Macdonald Act, and hold it responsible for bootlegging and illicit distillation, just as their opponents were doing. The temperance argument maintained that

> . . . the act passed in 1916 was not full prohibition. Hence we have the shameful condition of bootleggers that exists today. What we ask for now is for the ultimate good of the citizen and the community as a whole.[9]

The Norris Government requested a referendum, as did the governments of Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Nova Scotia. October 25, 1920, was established by Federal Authorities as polling day in all four provinces. Temperance organizations made preparations to campaign for what was to be their last significant victory, and a victory which carried within it the seeds of its own defeat.

Temperance efforts were once again co-ordinated by the Social Service Council, assisted by the newly-organized Manitoba Prohibition Alliance, and prohibitionists were confident of success. The Council's Secretary told reporters that "There is only one thing that can beat us--indifference of what I may call the clean vote of this province as to the issue."[10] This "clean vote" was to be drawn from traditional sources. Protestant churches became "storm centres of propaganda for the proposal",[11] and the United Farmers directed "the whole weight of [their] influence" to the

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[9] J.H. Thomson to editor, Tribune, October 23, 1920.

[10] Thomas Neville, interviewed by the Tribune, October 2, 1920.

[11] Ibid.

campaign.[12] Even after a vigorous campaign, however, prohibitionists were able to arouse little public enthusiasm. The Winnipeg Tribune commented that "In city and country, much less interest is being taken in the vote than in local municipal elections."

In past referenda, the activity of the "liquor interests" had stimulated prohibitionists to greater efforts to bring temperance voters to the polls, but in 1920 liquor dealers made no attempt to mount a counter-campaign. The defeat of the referendum would have still left them saddled with the Macdonald Act, and they no longer had licensed hotels as a base of operation. "Our Enemy", smouldered Reverend Thomas Neville, "is a spineless jellyfish."[13] One Winnipeg daily begged "some of the thirsty folk in Manitoba" to "kindly oblige a group of fighting pastors by organizing a personal liberty league or something like that", but no such organization appeared.[14] What criticism of prohibition there was came not from the liquor trade, but from responsible citizens who were upset with its effect on the province. These critics advocated a system of government control, under which "the law-abiding section of the community could obtain what liquor they reasonably required [without] . . . temptation to resort to the bootlegger and illicit dealer."[15] Labour leader W.H. Hoop praised the recently introduced government control system of British Columbia as "the language of reason", since it would "drive out the dangerous element."[16]

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[12] United Farmers of Manitoba, Year Book, 1921, in United Farmers of Manitoba Collection, P.A.M., Box 2.

[13] Tribune, October 9, 1920.

[14] Ibid.

[15] R.B. Graham K.C., Crown Prosecutor of Manitoba, cited in Canadian Annual Review, 1920, p. 737.

[16] Tribune, October 21, 1920.

The Pas Herald and Mining News, which had supported the Macdonald Act in 1916, refused to take the anti-importation referendum seriously, noting facetiously that

> As most of us expect to go on the wagon soon, we cannot understand the desire of these wicked prohibitionists to hasten the day. Let's tarry for a couple of years and then see about it![17]

On October 25, the question "Shall the importation and the bringing of intoxicating liquors into the province be forbidden?" received an affirmative majority of 13,775 from the fifty-six percent of the electorate which went to the polls.[18] The victory was not clear-cut. Both Winnipeg and Brandon returned majorities in favour of continued importation, and the rural constituencies of St. Boniface, Provencher, and Springfield, with non-Anglo-Saxon majorities, also supported importation.[19] Elsewhere in the province, "the non-Canadian vote was decidedly moist."[20] Huge dry majorities in the South-western part of the province won the day for the prohibitionists, however. Souris, for example, recorded 7,424 votes against importation and only 2,402, in favour.

Prohibitionists seemed to draw satisfaction from their defeat in urban and non-British areas. Reverend Thomas Neville of the Social Service Council boasted that prohibition had

> . . . won a great victory. We had large majorities with us in

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[17] The Pas Herald and Mining News, October 15, 1920.

[18] Of 218,908 eligible voters, only 123,977 cast ballots. MFP, October 28, 1920.

[19] The results from the city of Winnipeg were 25,291 for continued importation to 18,899 against it. Tribune, October 26, 1920. In Brandon (the city, not the constituency) there? 1914 in favour of importation, 1,885 against. Brandon Daily Sun, October 25, 1920. Springfield, Provencher, and St. Boniface voted as the cities did, 3,289 to 1,866, 1,176 to 1,019, and 1,834 to 674 respectively.

[20] Dauphin Herald, October 28, 1920. The term "non-Canadian" is inaccurate, since one had to be a citizen to vote, but it serves to demonstrate the hostility directed toward those of foreign-birth because of the prohibition issue.

> Anglo-Saxon centres and we had large majorities against us in foreign-speaking centres.[21]

He concluded that Manitoba had "given [the Social Service Council] a mandate to continue in our efforts." The Killarney Guide dismissed the urban vote, declaring sanctimoniously that "To the rural constituencies throughout Manitoba belongs the credit for passing the prohibition referendum."[22] This willingness to repudiate large segments of the community was evidence of an intolerance which was to mark the temperance movement of the 1920's. The refusal to appeal to the immigrant, the city-dweller, and the working man, as the Social Service Council had in 1916, reduced sources of potential "dry" votes to the hard-core areas of temperance sentiment. In the absence of a wartime emergency the foreign born no longer regarded a vote for prohibition as a sort of loyalty test. R.T. Ferguson of the Distiller's Association of Canada, was optimistic in his assessment of the referendum results. He told reporters to consider carefully the fact that "every bone-dry prohibitionist who could creep, crawl, or be carried to the polls voted."[23] Once this had been considered, he said, "it will readily be seen to what small proportions the bone-dry vote of the province has shrunk."[24] In the northern town of The Pas, which had rejected the referendum 299 to 128, the Herald and Mining News prophesied that

> . . . it is unlikely that the people will be content to sit by the result, and it is more than likely enough that another vote will be taken [on] whether the people want government control and sale.[25]

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[21] Tribune, October 26, 1920.

[22] Killarney Guide, October 28, 1920.

[23] Tribune, October 26, 1920.

[24] Loc.cit.

[25] The Pas Herald and Mining News, October 29, 1920.

The Assault on Prohibition 1921-1923

Even with the ban on importation enforced, prohibition did not seem to be prohibiting. Convictions for illicit distillation for sale, never previously a problem, increased from eight in 1920 to fifteen in 1921, then soared to fifty-one in 1922.[1] During May of 1923, "dry" Winnipeg obtained convictions for sixty-one breaches of the Temperance Act, ten charges of drunken driving, and one hundred and fifteen charges of public drunkenness.[2] The main source of liquor was from illicit distillation by bootleggers. Bootlegging was extremely lucrative, since large profits could be made quickly on a small capital investment, and fines were so small as to be ineffective as a deterrent. One moonshiner, who admitted having grossed $7,150 in one month of operation, was fined $300.00, an "operating tax" of less than four percent.[3] The Regina Leader investigated the situation with regard to prohibition in Winnipeg, and concluded that

> The breweries in Manitoba are working at capacity upon the 6 to 11 percent beer which makes its appearance at hotel bars, grocery stores, refreshment booths, and at convivial gatherings. . . . The illegal sale of beer and more potent drinks is being conducted in no underground, concealed, or devious manner. The hotels vending strong drink are located in many parts of the city. Clubs are well-stocked with drinks. The open bar is an actuality in Winnipeg.[4]

A wave of bank robberies in Southern Manitoba during the summer of 1922 was taken as evidence of the crime spawned by prohibition. Anti-prohibitionists

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[1] Popham and Schmidt, op.cit., p. 71.

[2] MFP, June 2, 1923.

[3] Tribune, April 16, 1923.

[4] Regina Leader, December 2, 1922.

[5] J. O'Knolly to editor, Tribune, June 2, 1923.

began to protest that

> By stopping licensed breweries domestic brewing is set up, and whole hosts of contrabandista arise as if from the ground and the world is turned upside down by bootleggers, bandits, and bankrobbers. . . . The cure is ten times worse than the disease.[5]

Disrespect for prohibition was held to produce a disregard for law in general. An increasing number of Manitobans were coming to the conclusion that the Manitoba Temperance Act had "no more effect in prohibiting liquor from the people than a similar mandate against the house fly."[6]

The lack of success of prohibition worked in conjunction with the importation ban to move a class of citizens formerly undisturbed by prohibitory liquor legislation into the anti-prohibitionist camp. Before October, 1920, those with sufficient income to finance large-scale purchases had been able to indulge their taste for good liquor through importation from Ontario. Without the federal importation restriction, the Manitoba Temperance Act had denied alcohol only to the less affluent; thus the anticipated social ends of prohibition were obtained without undue personal inconvenience. The hypocrisy and flagrant class bias of this upper class attitude is illustrated by Chief Justice Mathers, who advocated liquor restriction in 1916 while confiding to his diary that his private cellar contained

> 5 gallons Scotch, 1 case Sparkling Burgundy, 1 case Saturne [sic], 1/2 case Sparkling Mouselle, 2 bottles brandy, [and] two bottles sherry.[7]

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[6] The Pas Herald and Mining News, October 29, 1920.

[7] Chief Justice Mathers, Diary, IV, p. 95, cited in A.I. Inglis, "Some Political Factors in the Demise of the Roblin Government: 1915", unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1968. p. 61.

The 1920 legislation extended to these people as well, making the replenishment of such private stocks illegal. As prohibition began to effect their own habits, and failed to produce the social benefits originally expected from it, the leadership of an anti-prohibitionist movement emerged.

Opposition to the Manitoba Temperance Act was centered in the Manitoba Moderation League, organized in February of 1921. The League defined its objective as

> the securing of such legislation and law enforcement as will assure to the people the enjoyment of moderate, sane and moral social conditions . . . emancipated so far as possible from the abuses that arise from extreme laws tyranically enforced or openly defied because their enforcement is impractical.[8]

This was to be accomplished by means of a system of government control, which would allow ". . . the temperate man to exercise his undoubted rights and provide security for individual rights properly used."[9] League Secretary, J. Kensington Downes, spent the Spring and Summer of 1921 canvassing for members, and at the annual meeting in October announced that more than 16,000 Manitobans had paid the affiliation fee of one dollar.[10] Those who attended the annual meeting heard Lt. Col. William Grassie, D.S.O., denounce prohibition as "oppressive, absurd, illogical, and absolutely wicked" since "it made a man a criminal when extending hospitality to a friend."[11] Colonel Grassie

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[8] The Moderation League of Manitoba, "Aims, Objectives, and Campaign Ethics", (Winnipeg, N.D) in W. Sandford Evans Papers, P.A.M., Box 6.

[9] J. Kensington Downes, interviewed by the MFP, August 6, 1921.

[10] Canadian Annual Review, 1921, p. 742.

[11] MFP, October 6, 1921.

also announced that the League's petition asking for repeal of prohibition had 18,000 signatures.

Prohibitionists were alarmed at the League's rapid growth, but their first reaction was to dismiss it as ". . . a smoke screen, which might be effectively reduced to four words; We Want the Booze", and its members as ". . . all the rag-tag and bobtail of the old liquor traffic trying to come back to life."[12] Both the W.C.T.U. and the Social Service Council denounced the League, and in September, 1921, organized a "Better Citizenship League" to "offset the activities of the Moderation League."[13] The 'Better Citizens" were unable to substantiate their charges that the Moderationists were the liquor trade "dressed in the same garb as Mary's little lamb."[14] J. Kensington Downes answered such criticism by snorting that the Moderation League ". . . was certainly not originated . . . by persons interested in the manufacture of liquor, no more than was the W.C.T.U. originated by those who seek to manufacture Christians."[15] The League executive contained several prominent Manitobans, including M.J. Stanbridge, M.L.A., Edmund Partridge, former Reeve of West Kildonan, A.J. Andrews, former mayor of Winnipeg, and George F.R. Harris, a respected Winnipeg realtor. The 1923 executive of the League included ten members who had served at the rank of major or above during the Great War.[16] The Tribune warned the Manitoba Temperance Alliance that

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[12] W.D. Bayley, M.L.A., to Manitoba Legislature, Tribune, March 4, 1921.

[13] Winnipeg District W.C.T.U., Minute Book, entry for September 14, 1921, W.C.T.U. Collection.

[14] C. Longman to editor, MFP, September 10, 1921.

[15] MFP, September 3, 1921.

[16] This information is taken from the Manitoba Biography Collection, P.A.M. Names of executive members were obtained from reports published in the MFP and the Tribune.

> It would be a mistake . . . to assail the Moderation League as a creature of the brewers and distillers, or as a body seeking to selfishly indulge an unwholesome appetite. . . . The Moderation League contains in its membership a great many estimable citizens, who are neither intemperate themselves nor insensible of their obligations to the state.[17]

The Moderation League was careful to cultivate and maintain an image of respectability. Its arguments were not phrased in such a manner as to encourage drinking, and the League went on record in 1921 as being "unalterably opposed to the sale of alcoholic beverages through the public bar or any similar agency."[18] Moderationists refused "to invite or encourage the support of the so-called 'sporty' element,[19] and pointed out that their position, not that of the prohibitionists, represented true temperance, since ". . . when you cannot get a thing, you cannot be temperate in the use of it."[20] They used an old prohibitionist technique to secure their goals, as well.

Just as the prohibitionists had before them, the Moderation League circulated petitions demanding a referendum, in this case, however, on government controlled sale of liquor. By January, 1922, they had collected 53,000 signatures, which were presented in the Provincial Legislature by Conservatives Joseph Bernier and Joseph Hamelin.[21] In presenting the petition, Bernier employed a popular Moderationist argument. Manitoba was in the midst of a business depression, and the government had incurred a deficit in the previous year. Bernier pointed out that

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[17] Tribune, April 19,1923.

[18] Moderation League, ". . . Campaign Ethics", p. 2.

[19] Ibid., p. 3.

[20] "A Briton" to editor, MFP, December 2, 1922.

[21] MFP, January 25, 1922. It is interesting to note that both Bernier and Hamelin were French-Canadians.

> The bootleggers are making fortunes. . . . Why should it not go to the provincial treasury rather than to these men and help the government to change its deficit into a surplus and put it in the position to relieving the people of the terrible burden of taxation from which they are suffering?[22]

Despite the petition's rejection as technically unacceptable, the Moderation League won immense publicity. A provincial election in July of 1922 gave the League a chance to test its strength. Candidates in city ridings were invited to state their views on the prohibition question before a meeting organized under League auspices. Although not all candidates were in favour of government sale, all promised to advocate a referendum on the question.[28] League Secretary Downes ran as an Independent on a Moderationist platform, and gained election to one of the city seats. A referendum seemed almost a certainty for 1923, and the groundwork for still another campaign began.

The Manitoba of 1923, in which the new campaign was to be fought, had changed from that of 1916. Fundamental divisions were becoming apparent which had in the past been obscured. Winnipeg was no longer just one step from a town, but was acquiring a cosmopolitan spirit of its own. The effects of growth and diversity had created a gulf between the city and the rest of the province. The Winnipeg General Strike had been the most dramatic confrontation, but rural-urban tensions rested in part on the farmer's traditional distrust of the city as the defiler of the virtues instilled by country life. During the Great War R.C. Henders of the Grain Growers had protested the manner in which farmer's sons who enlisted were sent "to train

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[22] MFP, January 25, 1922.

[23] MFP, July 15, 1922.

in a city . . . where boys from religious homes are led to drink and sin."[24] Prohibition had been to rural areas a broom to "make a great sweep and housekeeping of cities,"[25] and cities were beginning to resent the standard of housekeeping demanded of them.

This fear of Winnipeg on the part of those of agricultural background and a British descent was inextricably intertwined with hostility towards the non-Anglo-Saxon immigrant, and after 1919, the labour movement. The United Farmers of Manitoba, who endorsed prohibition at their 1921 convention, also resolved that ". . . any attempt to settle the West with peasantry must be opposed."[26] W.L. Morton has styled the years from 1917 to 1922 as "The Years of Social Crisis",[27] and this characterization is essentially accurate, although perhaps the terminal date should be extended. The people who made up the mainstream of the prohibition movement had no sympathy for the habits of the working classes, especially their use of the Sabbath for recreational purposes. Mrs. George R. Belton, Provincial President of the W.C.T.U., expressed the division that had appeared between labour and temperance. She felt that

> If people kept that part of the Commandment that says "Six days shalt thou labour", they would need a quiet restful Sunday. But the generosity of our regulations for working hours that give a half day per week off has been taken advantage of by some classes of people as a time to loaf and be sorry for themselves. If they are poor they wish themselves rich. There is no excuse for the

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[24] The Western Prairie, (Cypress River), March 9, 1916.

[25] Loc.cit.

[26] Gerald Panting, "The United Farmers of Manitoba to 1928", unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1954, pp.163-64.

[27] Morton, Manitoba: A History, p. 357.

people who spend Sunday as a public holiday.[28]

An editorial in the Prohibition Watchword attributed unemployment to the fact that "the majority of people regard manual labour as a disgrace [and] would rather flock to the cities to be fed by charity than do honest farm work."[29] An attitude which had formerly merely been implied was becoming explicit and stood as a barrier to rapport between prohibitionists and non-English and lower-class elements.

Moderation League tactics reflected and exploited the divisions within the province's society. Moderationist speakers branded prohibition a discriminatory law that had one application for the poor and another for the rich, and told lower class Manitobans that "the people who took away beer" were the same people who "did not allow parents to take their children to the beaches on Sunday."[30] Government sale would give "equal rights to all, the drunkard excepted."[31] The League asked rhetorically "why should the country people have the right to decide what city people will do?";[32] and answered their own question by declaring that urban-dwellers "should not be subject to the dictates of any one horse town in the country."[33]

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[28] Mrs. George R. Belton, "President's Message", Manitoba Messenger, November, 1923.

[29] Mrs. Mary Playfair, "Christian Citizenship", Prohibition Watchword, August-September, 1924.

[30] J. Kensington Downes, reported in Tribune, July 12, 1922. This statement was made in reference to a law then in force which prevented the operation of a train to the Lake Winnipeg Beaches on Sunday. The law operated to eliminate working class families, who lacked private transportation, from using the beaches. Attempts to repeal the law were at that time meeting with resistance from the Winnipeg District W.C.T.U., who attacked the "laxity and frivolity at the various beaches over the week-ends." Prohibition Watchword, January, 1925.

[31] "Moderation League Aims", MFP, August 6, 1921.

[32] F.L. Taylor to editor, Tribune, May 4, 1923.

[33] J. Kensington Downes, reported in MFP, July 12, 1922.

Emphasizing the civil liberties aspect of the anti-prohibitionist argument, Moderationists told rallies that "The most autocratic countries of Europe . . . were unable to pass such legislation as the liquor Act in Manitoba."[34]

Rodmond P. Roblin had assailed the Liberal-reform program of 1914 as a "Yankee" measure, and the Moderation League revived this argument as a weapon against prohibitionists. Manitoba's women were told that they ". . . should be ashamed of the Manitoba Temperance Act because it is un-British" and that "British parents know how to be moderate. Red-blooded Britishers are not afraid of temptation."[35] Government control was described as bearing ". . . the unmistakable imprint of adherence to the political institutions of Great Britain."[36] Colonel Grassie, the Moderation League's past president, reversed the prohibition-patriotism identification of wartime. He had, he said,

> . . . the same feeling for the prohibitionists as I had for the conscientious objectors in France. It was a pathetic sight. They were seized by a sort of fanaticism.[37]

Anxious to appeal to all backgrounds, moderationists hoped that this argument would build strength among veterans and recent immigrants from the British Isles. They justified this tone to the immigrant by maintaining that British liberty was his only real protection against the oppression of dominant groups.

With the exception of the wartime campaign of 1916, economic arguments had always been effective against prohibition, and these were revived in

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[34] B.B. Dubienski, reported in Ibid.

[35] Mrs. Jessie Kirk, reported in Tribune, June 14,1923.

[36] Reginald E. Hose, Prohibition or Control?, (New York, Longmans and Co.) p. 146.

[37] Col. Wm. Grassie, reported in Tribune, June 14, 1923.

slightly altered form by the Moderationists. Under their proposed scheme of government sale, all profits accrued to the provincial government, which would then distribute one-half of them among the municipalities. The province was undergoing a recession, and with the Eighteenth Amendment in force in the United States, Manitobans felt that the availability of liquor would attract American tourists."[38] As the The Pas Herald and Mining News observed, "They are great spenders, those American folk."[39] Government liquor stores would attract business from "dry" Saskatchewan as well.[40] Moderationists also felt that prohibition harmed the economy by acting as a deterrent to the "right" kind of immigration. They pointed out that British immigrants would not ". . . stand for prohibition near-beer",[41] and that Australia, New Zealand and South Africa had rejected prohibition as harmful to immigration.[42] Charles A. Millican of the Moderation League executive capsulized the economic case for government sale. "Apart from righting a social blunder", he said, "we shall never perhaps have such a chance to break the bonds of commercial stagnation and deal a situation almost akin to provincial bankruptcy a blow in the solar plexus."[43]

In 1923, the provincial government responded to Moderation League petitions. A referendum was scheduled for June 22 on a government control act drafted by the League and described on the ballot as the "Moderation

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[38] The Pas Herald and Mining News, October 29, 1920.

[39] Loc.cit.

[40] Dauphin Herald, June 28, 1923.

[41] Fred Kirkham to Tribune editor, October 8, 1920.

[42] A. Thomas to editor, MFP, December 16, 1922.

[43] Reported in Tribune, April 20, 1923.

League Bill." This Bill provided for a provincial monopoly on all liquor sales, to be regulated by a permit system. No provision was made for sale of beer or spirits by the glass for public consumption. Thus a second anti-prohibitionist group, the Beer and Wine League, closely connected with Manitoba brewers and hotel-keepers, requested a referendum on a bill of their own, which would legalize the sale of beer and wine by the glass with meals in hotel dining rooms. Their request was also granted, and a referendum date of July 11 established.

The three-cornered campaign was a situation tailor-made for the Moderation League. Their position between the Beer and Wine League and the prohibitionists lent further support to the argument that their program was the only road to true temperance. Moderationists carefully dissociated themselves from the Beer and Wine League and their Bill. When prohibitionists stigmatized the Moderation League as "the old booze crowd,"[44] the League pointed to the Beer and Wine Bill as the program of the "liquor traffic". Moderation League President F.W. Russell wrote Manitoba legislators, demonstrating that

> The only conclusion you can come to, it seems to me, is that the proposed Government Liquor Control Act of the Moderation League is the result of an earnest effort to supply an actual control to this business, and by the same process of reasoning you are inevitably brought to the conclusion by a study of the Beer and Wine League Bill that it is a determined effort to bring about exactly the opposite.[45]

Moderation was thus presented as a sincere attempt to foster the temperate use of alcohol; the Beer and Wine organization was, on the other hand ". . . widespread, virile and resourceful [and] actuated by the most

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[44] F.C. Middleton to editor, Tribune, June 9, 1923.

[45] F.W. Russell to W. Sanford Evans, March 13, 1923, in W.S. Evans Papers, P.A.M., Box 5.

powerful of all incentives, self-interest."[46]

The Beer and Wine League was bitter at this use of their proposal as a straw man,[47] but helpless to counteract it. No brewers' organization could side with prohibition against legalized sale of their products. On June 22, Moderationist tactics combined with financial depression and sincere doubt as to the effectiveness of prohibition to produce a majority of 38,730 in favour of government sale, 107,609 affirmative votes to 68,879 negative ones. The growing urban dissatisfaction manifested itself dramatically. Winnipeg cast 45,863 votes for the Moderation Bill and only 20,158 against it. In Winnipeg North, where non-English elements were predominant, the Moderationist majority was 14,053 to 3,711, almost eighty percent in favour. More well-to-do South Winnipeg returned a 5,000 vote majority.[48] Brandon was also in the "wet" column, 2,664 to 1,850.[49] Outside Winnipeg, the Moderation Bill received fifty-six percent of the vote cast; in Winnipeg it received over seventy percent. Without considering Winnipeg and St. Boniface, the Government Sale majority is reduced to 9,500. But the Southwest held for the Manitoba Temperance Act. Thirteen provincial constituencies in this area rejected the sale of liquor, 21,675 votes to 14,450.[50] However, they no longer carried as much weight in the total as they had in 1916 or even 1920. The Winnipeg turnout was an amazing eighty-nine percent of those

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[46] C.A. Gallagher to editor, Tribune, July 7, 1923.

[47] T.J. Murray to W.R. Wood, June 6, 1923, in United Farmers of Manitoba Collection, P.A.M.

[48] Tribune, June 23, 1923.

[49] Brandon Daily Sun, June 23, 1923.

[50] These constituencies were: Arthur, Virden, Birtle, Russell, Minnedosa, Lansdowne, Deloraine, Turtle Mountain, Killarney, Beautiful Plains, Manitou, Mountain, Norfolk, Cypress.

eligible, as compared to fifty-three percent in 1920.[51] Urban voters had issued a roar of protest. F.W. Russell, President of the Moderation League announced satirically to the Press that

> The decent men and women of this province have risen in their might to protest against the demon prohibition which has so long menaced the family and home life of the province.[52]

Two weeks later, the Beer and Wine League Bill was defeated 68,072 to 27,016. The Winnipeg Tribune, which had given strong support to the Manitoba Temperance Act, editorialized that

> The people of Manitoba know what they want and what they do not want. They want government control of the liquor business. . . . They do not want anything approaching the old system of public drinking. . . . On one point they are just as emphatic as they are on the other.[53]

But the lack of success of the Beer and Wine Bill was attributable in large measure to the attacks on it by the Moderationists. Neither the Tribune nor the prohibitionists realized the extent to which their movement had declined, both in a physical sense and in its influence, since 1916. This would not be revealed to them for another four years.

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[51] Tribune, June 13, 1923.

[52] F.W. Russell, cited in Virden Empire Advance, June 26, 1923.

[53] Tribune, July 12, 1923.

The Second Assault, 1923-1928.

Where had the prohibition majorities of 1916 and 1920 gone? Many of the votes which contributed to the Moderationist victory must have gone the other way in previous referenda.[1] One reason for the loss of these votes was the fact that the emotional wartime atmosphere which had contributed so much to the success of prohibition was eroded by the more cynical atmosphere of the 1920's. Prohibitionists had "talked about the war to end war" and had "earnestly believed [they] were fighting the last great battle."[2] When decisive victory failed to appear, either in Europe or over alcohol, many lost enthusiasm. The "reaction which followed the war" had resulted in "a revolt of men and women against restraint and authority" which found an outlet in "loose thinking, loose speaking and writing, and . . . loose living."[3] "Truly", wrote a W.C.T.U. member, ". . . it is a lovers of pleasure more than a lovers of God age."[4]

The moral letdown in society was evidenced within prohibitionist circles as well. The fire and conviction of the previous forty years weakened. Some former prohibitionists realized that prohibition had simply not succeeded, and had little prospect of doing so. J.W. Dafoe still thought that "drinking whiskey is about the most foolish thing man does", but by 1926 he had come to the conclusion that "human nature, at least Canadian human

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[1] J. Kensington Downes of the Moderation League claimed to have voted for prohibition in 1916. Tribune, June 23, 1923.

[2] Mrs. R.F. McWilliams, address to a Prohibitionist rally, reported in Tribune, May 15, 1923.

[3] Rev. Louis Moffit to W.C.T.U. Convention, reprinted in Manitoba Messenger, December, 1923.

[4] Mrs. Mary Playfair, "Christian Citizenship", Prohibition Watchword, August-September, 1924.

nature, will not as yet stand for prohibition."[5] Some temperance organizations almost disappeared. By 1925, the Royal Templars had only one lodge in operation, and the Good Templars had just two chapters in the Icelandic district on Lake Winnipeg.[6] The once powerful W.C.T.U. was still province-wide, but its membership was becoming limited to those women who had joined before the war. The provincial executive asked "who will carry on when these veterans of many conflicts are passed beyond the battleground into eternal peace?",[7] but they received no answer. The struggle for female suffrage had provided the W.C.T.U. with much of its dynamism, and once this was a reality the Union lost some of its attraction for women with the zeal of a Nellie McClung.

Neither the Social Service Council nor the Manitoba Prohibition Alliance was able to galvanize prohibitionist sentiment into united action, as the Council had done in 1916. In its Annual Report for 1922, the Council complained of

> . . . the appalling amount of apathy in the members of churches and even in the members of professed temperance societies. This is especially marked in the city of Winnipeg. Your executive cannot spend the bulk of its energies in keeping up the morale of its own units and still be able to meet the opponent at every turn of the battle.[8]

The Council's affiliated organizations, financially weak themselves,[9] refused contributions to central campaigns on the ground that "We cannot impoverish

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[5] J.W. Dafoe to Harry Sifton, December 4, 1925, in Dafoe Papers, University of Manitoba.

[6] Prohibition Watchword, April, 1926.

[7] "A Call to Young Women", Ibid., May, 1925.

[8] D.B. Harkness, Annual Report to the Social Service Council, cited in MFP, July 1,1922.

[9] In 1925 the W.C.T.U. Yearbook could not be published, ". . . owing to lack of funds." Prohibition Watchword,December, 1925.

ourselves."[10] Publicity also became a problem as funds dried up. In October, 1926, the Prohibition Watchword, the only temperance paper in the province, ceased publication. Although the Tribune supported prohibition in 1923, the Manitoba Free Press, which had supported the 1916 referendum, refused to take sides.[11]

Defending prohibition was proving much less exciting than crusading for its implementation had been, and the W.C.T.U. began to turn its back on temperance work to devote its rhetoric and energy to other "causes". Film censorship became one of their new concerns; and in 1920 the Winnipeg District petitioned the Attorney General to protest ". . . the increasing use of coco [sic] cola among children."[12] Placing the emphasis on the "Christian" rather than the "Temperance" facet, Unions did less active campaigning and concentrated upon ". . . the possibility of obtaining our objectives by prayer."[13] This ethereal approach to a problem which required diligent campaigning as a solution made the Manitoba Prohibition Alliance furious. The Alliance told the W.C.T.U. that

> When a law is put on the provincial statute books by a majority of 38,000 [The Government Control Act of 1923] one does well to remember that he does not secure change or repeal of it by pious wishing, or by frequent prayer alone. . . . If you are praying about this matter, get the facts into your head and go to work.[14]

Such disagreements did little to foster prohibitionist unity.

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[10] Winnipeg District W.C.T.U., Minutes, entry for January 10, 1923. W.C.T.U. Collection.

[11] MFP, June 23, 1923.

[12] Winnipeg District W.C.T.U., Minutes, entry for March 10, 1920. W.C.T.U. Collection.

[13] Ibid., entry for January 4, 1928.

[14] W.R. Wood, secretary, Manitoba Prohibition Alliance, to Manitoba Provincial W.C.T.U., reprinted in Prohibition Watchword, 1925.

The victory of 1916 had been of such proportions as to create prohibitionist over-confidence, and they had largely ". . . abandoned their educational program, depending entirely too much upon legislation."[15] The defeat of prohibition in 1923 drove this fact home, and prompted resolutions to "begin all over again to train up a generation intelligently committed to a life of total abstinence and to a policy of prohibition."[16] Neither the Norris Liberal government nor the Bracken Progressive government would allow the W.C.T.U. to present their case in schools, as they had in the past. Norris' Deputy Minister of Education informed the ladies that it was ". . . the policy of the Department to refrain from having schools used for propaganda in any contentious matters"[17]; while Bracken refused to grant the W.C.T.U. a position on the Committee to select textbooks since he did not want "persons to represent any particular point of view," and was "not disposed to have specific organizations represented on the committee."[18] Thus the temperance movement during the 1920's had difficulty gaining the attention of Manitoba's children, whom they had used in the earlier period as both a means to influence their parents and as a source of future "dry" voters.

But the most dramatic failure of the temperance movement during the post-war period was its inability to appeal to the immigrant and the working man. This is, perhaps, hardly surprising, since the assimilation of the

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[15] Killarney Guide, June 28, 1923.

[16] Manitoba Messenger, January, 1924.

[17] Manitoba Provincial W.C.T.U., Executive Minutes, entry for March 3, 1922, in W.C.T.U. Collection.

[18] John Bracken to Mrs. G.R. Belton, December 18, 1924, in Bracken Papers, P.A.M., Box 7.

immigrant had been a strong motivation in the demand for prohibition. The fact remains, however, that in their victorious campaign of 1916 the prohibitionists had made a sincere effort to secure the support of the foreign-born, and despite the patronizing tone of their arguments, had succeeded in reducing the vote in North Winnipeg to a virtual draw, and in winning majorities in rural districts with large non-English populations. During the 1920's, however, the pressures created by the war and the fears aroused by the general strike turned the prohibitionist attitude to the immigrant into naked xenophobia. In 1921, twenty-one percent of Manitoba's population was of Hebrew, Polish, or "other European" background,[19] as compared to only fifteen percent in 1911. Yet a month before the referendum on the Moderation Bill, J.S. Cormie of the Social Service told the press that the prohibitionist campaign was finished, since ". . . the Anglo-Saxon districts have all been covered."[20] In 1916 the W.C.T.U.'s Department for Work Among Foreigners had distributed temperance literature printed in "Ruthenian".[21] In 1920 the Department was discontinued completely.[22] Mrs. A.E. Cook, one of the few prohibitionists to protest the movement's nativism, observed sadly in 1923 that "We have not even established a point of contact with thousands of our new Canadians."[23]

Labouring classes in general also rejected prohibition during the 1920's. They recognized the validity of the Moderation League's argument that prohibition

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[19] Dominion of Canada, 1921 Census, Vol. IV. "Other European" referred mainly to those from Eastern Europe, since all Western European countries had headings of their own in Census reports.

[20] Tribune, April 16, 1923.

[21] Manitoba Provincial W.C.T.U., Executive Minutes, entry for November 29, 1916. W.C.T.U. Collection.

[22] Ibid., entry for May 12, 1920.

[23] Manitoba Messenger, October, 1923.

was "class legislation, pure and simple." William Ivens, popular M.L.A. of the Independent Labour Party, won huge majorities at provincial polls. When speaking in favour of prohibition at the Canadian Pacific's Weston Shops, however, he drew only three hundred of two thousand workers. Even with this small audience, "he was heckled considerably by returned soldiers."[24] This lower class realization of the objectives of middle class prohibitionist leadership strengthened and sustained urban attacks upon the function of the Manitoba Temperance Act.

After its popular victory in June, 1923, the bill which the Moderation League had proposed was adopted as the Government Liquor Control Act. The special legislative session called to implement the Act did so "without division and without amendment."[25] A three-member commission was established under the Act, and allocated $700,000 to launch Manitoba into the liquor business. Government stores were established in Brandon, Portage, Dauphin, The Pas, and Winnipeg, and eight brewer's depots were opened to vend beer at smaller points.[26] The new Act did not realize the Moderationists hope of eliminating bootlegging, however, Liquor bought at a Government Store had to be delivered to the purchaser at his residence, thus creating as much as a two-day delay between time of purchase (and thirst) and time of consumption. Public sale of beer or liquor by the glass was still unlawful, and beer could not be purchased in quantities smaller than one dozen. Thus

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[24] Tribune, June 4, 1923.

[25] Canadian Annual Review, 1923, p. 476.

[26] Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission, 1923, p. 30.

the operator of the "Blind pig" or "Speakeasy" was actually given an advantage, since a government commission assured him a steady supply of good quality liquor.

Enforcement of legislative restrictions was difficult. The Government Control Act allowed brewers to deliver beer directly to permit holders, and this privilege was speedily abused. Brewers became a primary source of supply for bootleggers, and during 1925, 61.5% of all beer on which the manufacturing tax was paid could not be accounted for to the Liquor Commission.[27] Provincial policemen who attempted to enforce restrictive provisions received little sympathy from municipal officers and still less from individual citizens. Winnipeg Civic Officials spoke out openly for a liberalization of liquor legislation. Mayor Webb maintained that the lack of facilities for public sale by the glass was". . . responsible for a good deal of the trouble and builds class hatred."[28] The city refused to accept a $10,000 provincial grant designated for enforcement of the Government Control Act. Labour Alderman Flye commented bitterly that the money would be spent ". . . using stool pigeons to raid the little places [while] the big places will go scott-free."[29] This abnegation of responsibility on the part of civic authorities was evidence that a realistic solution to the liquor question had not yet been achieved.

Organized opposition to the new liquor laws was not long in appearing. The Moderation League's own Act had been in force only slightly

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[27] R.W. Craig, "The Liquor Situation in Manitoba", (Portage la Prairie, 1927), p.22.

[28] Reported in MFP, October 23, 1925.

[29] MFP, June 1, 1927.

more than a year when the League's annual meeting, in a reversal of their position of 1923, suggested the sale of beer by the glass for public consumption. This could be accomplished "without the bar", and ". . . would make for sobriety and curtailment on the sale of hard liquors."[30] The Moderation League was not the sort of organization to lead a campaign for the beer by the glass, however. The beer parlour appealed to a different class, whose members worked until 6:00 P.M. and thus had the government store ". . . close in his face in the evening."[31] The organization for the attempt to legalize public beer drinking was provided by veteran's groups. The Moderation League had contained a large number of ex-officers; the campaign for beer by the glass was a movement of the "other ranks".

Backed by "brewery and malting interests",[32] a Joint Veteran's Committee was formed under the chairmanship of A.E. Moore, M.L.A. for Springfield. The veterans attacked restrictive liquor legislation as something imposed upon the community while they themselves had been overseas. They maintained that "What the ordinary man wants is some place where he can lawfully get a glass of beer in decent surroundings",[33] and that "beer by the glass [was] the only way to prevent the wholesale bootlegging joints."[34] The "decent surroundings", of course, were meant to include the clubrooms of their associations. The Canadian Legion requested that ". . . a plebiscite should be taken with a view to ascertaining the feeling of the people of the

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[30] J. Kensington Downes, reported in MFP, Nobember 18, 1924.

[31] J. Watson to editor, MFP, June 25, 1927.

[32] Canadian Annual Review, 1926-27, p. 407.

[33] A.E. Moore, interviewed by MFP, March 18, 1927.

[34] F.W. Bentley to editor, MFP, June 23, 1927.

province as to the legal public sale of beer and light wines;"[35] and the Committee employed canvassers to secure signatures to petitions confirming this request. Over 128,000 signatures supported the petition when it was tabled in the provincial Legislature by C.A. Tanner,[36] Labour member for Kildonan St. Andrews. The Bracken government was committed by its Progressive background to respond to such petitions, and a plebiscite was scheduled for June 28, to coincide with the provincial election. All that remained was determination of the questions to be placed on the ballot.

One thing was agreed upon by both the Veterans and the Manitoba Temperance Alliance. Prohibition was no longer an issue. W.R. Wood, secretary of the Alliance, admitted to Premier Bracken that since ". . . opinion has been practically unanimous that prohibition cannot be obtained at one step, the introduction of the prohibition question [into the plebiscite] would not be advantageous but detrimental."[37] Although in theory prohibition remained as a distant goal, the temperance movement realized that ". . . there is no thought that prohibition status can be restored at one move," and that "prohibition without a majority opinion behind it is subject to handicaps which may . . . prove fatal to its continuance."[38] The ballot finally chosen posed three separate questions. The first was clear cut, and asked the voter if he favoured an extension in the facilities for the sale of beer.

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[35] Royal Canadian Legion, Manitoba Command, Report of the First Annual Convention, in Bracken Papers, Box 3, 1926. The other organizations represented on the Joint Committee were the War Amputations, Imperial Veterans, the Guard's Association, and the Great War Veteran's Association.

[36] MFP, March 2, 1927.

[37] W.R. Wood to John Bracken, March 25, 1927. Bracken Papers, 1927, Box 5.

[38] Manitoba Temperance Alliance, "The Challenge of 1927", in Ibid., Box 6.

The second was more confusing. It contained two alternatives, described as "beer by the glass" and "beer by the bottle". The first meant sale for public consumption, the second sale in government stores of quantities as small as one bottle of beer for home consumption. The Temperance Alliance supported part two, the Veterans part one. The third question required a simple yes or no answer to the question of eliminating brewer's privileges of delivery.

The most satisfactory yardstick of temperance sentiment was obviously question one. The returns to this question dramatized the divisions which existed between city and country, labourer and farmer, British-Canadian and recent immigrant. The provincial total favoured extension, 79,129 to 62,464. But while Winnipeg and St. Boniface registered 34,889 votes for extension and only 17,049 against, twenty-one constituencies in the Southwest, "older, rural, Anglo-Saxon Manitoba" rejected extension, 29,918 votes to 14,837.[39] On question two, which meant a vote for or against public drinking, this area rejected beer by the glass by almost the same vote, 29,623 to 14,923. Provincially, beer by the glass was successful, 76,687 to 67,092. On the question of brewer's delivery rights, the vote was almost a draw, 64,796 against it and 65,610 in favour.

Premier John Bracken recognized that compromise was necessary, expecially since his government relied on "dry" constituencies for many of its members. The plebiscite had not been made a referendum so that the government was not committed to any specific proposal. The Government Liquor Control Act of 1928 consolidated all previous legislation into one

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[39]These figures are from Tribune, July 7, 1927.

code and added innovations designed to concur with the opinions expressed in the plebiscite. Hotels were allowed to open parlours in which beer could be sold by glass or bottle. Stringent regulations were placed on this privilege in the form of specifications as to numbers of rooms, decor of the parlours, and the conduct of patrons. A bar was not permitted, and neither was entertainment or the serving of food. Women were forbidden to enter mens parlours, although there was nothing in the Act to prevent the establishment of separate parlours for ladies. Brewer's rights to direct sale were abolished. Local option was maintained on a municipal level, and none of the constituencies which had rejected liberalization of the law could have licenses granted within their boundaries until the municipalities had a chance to implement local option.

This new legislation thus extended to rural areas concessions not granted urban ones during the period of prohibition. But despite protests that it represented ". . . a law that is simply based on prohibition sentiment,"[40] it struck a reasonable balance between divergent opinions which existed in Manitoba with regard to liquor control. Any more widespread sale of liquor would have been unacceptable to the agricultural districts of the Southwest, any greater degree of restriction would have been equally unacceptable to the urban working class. No significant group advocated a return to the pre-war situation, and the provincial government was not prepared to yield the ground it had gained with regard to liquor control. The success of the Government Liquor Control Act of 1928 as a compromise is testified to by its endurance. Its general principles were to remain in force for over twenty-four years.

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[40] Joseph Bernier, reported in the MFP, December 9, 1927.

CONCLUSION

The defeat of 1927 rang the death-knell of prohibition in Manitoba. The Manitoba Temperance Act became little more than an unpleasant memory of bygone days when the zeal for reform had been stronger. Even those most committed to temperance reluctantly abandoned prohibition as part of their program. The Manitoba Prohibition Alliance became the Manitoba Temperance Alliance, and concentrated its efforts on such tangential measures as the elimination of liquor advertising. As a measure for the control of liquor, or for the achievement of social stability, prohibitory legislation was judged a failure.

The rapid demise of the Manitoba Temperance Act should not be taken as evidence that the movement for prohibition was a peripheral phenomenon, however. Although wartime emotion played an important part in its inception, prohibition was, in its advocate's eyes, a logical and necessary step toward the perfection of humanity, a blow struck for the progress of the world. Perhaps these exalted expectations, which made reality all the more bitter, were responsible for the swiftness of the collapse. Prohibition and prohibitionists were a significant force in the political and social life of the province, and made an impact which outlived both their legislation and their movement.

In its attempt to weaken the "liquor traffic" and reduce alcohol consumption, prohibition had mixed success. Manitoba's proportional consumption of spirits declined from pre-prohibition levels, since outlets for the sale of spirits were first made illegal and then severely limited. Beer consumption, favoured by the legislation of 1928, underwent a corresponding

increase. The years of prohibition had reduced provincial hotel keepers to near destitution. Loans from brewers became the primary source of capital for the re-establishment of beer parlours, with the result that the breweries gained on even tighter rein over the distribution of their products than they had enjoyed before 1916. The prohibitionist influences on the Government Liquor Control Act of 1928 were responsible for the character, (or lack of it), of Manitoban beer parlours, in which entertainment and the serving of food and non-alcoholic beverages were illegal. These provisions, designed to discourage consumption, served instead to create ". . . a place where men may drink, and drink, and may do nothing else."[1]

The Manitoba Temperance Act, however, did provide a context for the system of government control now used in the province. Alcoholic liquor is not just another product, to be sold freely to anyone who may desire it by anyone who wishes to sell. The gradualness with which Manitoba moved from prohibition to government control and to the system employed today may have annoyed and inconvenienced some of her citizens, but it prevented "the Blight of Repeal"[2] which took place in the United States, under which many state governments rejected liquor control entirely.

The most serious implications of the prohibition movement do not concern the question of liquor control so much as they concern the relationships of Anglo-Saxon and immigrant in Manitoba, however. In a widely-circulated essay entitled "The Relevance of Canadian History," W.L. Morton has attempted

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[1] Bracken Report, pp. 403-04.

[2] Andrew Sinclair, Prohibition: Era of Excess, (Boston, Little, Brown, and Co., 1962). Sinclair uses this phrase to describe the period which followed the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment in the United States.

to delineate some of the aspects of a Canadian national personality which grant our existence singularity, at least in a North American context. Professor Morton postulates as his most important distinction the idea that "there is no Canadian way of life, much less two, but a unity under the Crown admitting of a thousand diversities."[3] This image of a "cultural mosaic," in which each ethnic group is awarded an independent and equal place in the formation of a harmonious whole, is somehow more flattering than the American analogy of the "great melting pot," which reduces new elements to the common amalgam. A study of the prohibition movement in Manitoba raises grave doubts about its validity, however, at least with regard to Western Canada.

The unconcealed nativism which marked those dedicated to prohibitory legislation, especially during the post-war period does not seem evidence of a country "admitting of a thousand diversities"; but of a country whose virulent xenophobia parallels that found in the United States by such historians as John Higham[4] and Richard Hofstadter.[5] To a significant number of its proponents, prohibition was an instrument of repression and assimilation designed to strip the immigrant of his original culture and force him into a preconceived mould of "Canadianization." Western Canadian nativism as yet lacks an historian, but this hardly proves it did not exist.[6]

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[3]W.L. Morton, "The Relevance of Canadian History," in The Canadian Identity, (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1961), p. 111.

[4]John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, (New York, Atheneum Press, 1963) passim.

[5]Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, (New York, Vintage Books, 1955) passim.

[6]See J.E. Rea, "Prairie Culture: Theory and Reality," in Essays in Western Canadian Studies (forthcoming from Dorsey Press).

These comments should not be taken as an indictment of the prohibition movement. Its sincerity and its dogged persistence are in some ways admirable in an age like ours which tends to dismiss all such zeal as hypocrisy.[7] But the role of the historian is to understand, not to judge. For good or evil, prohibition forms a uniquely North American part of our Manitoba heritage.

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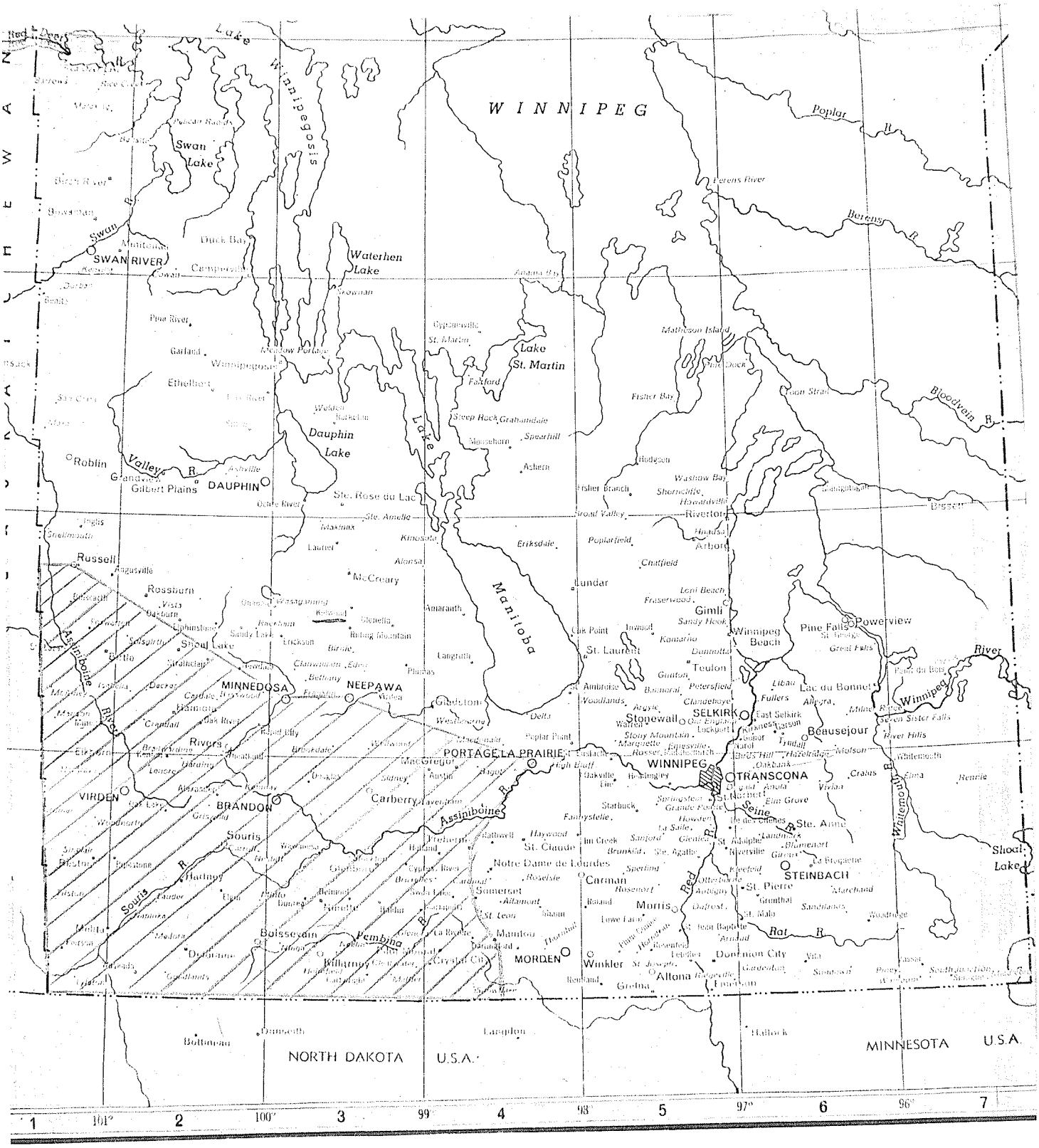
[7] See Alexander I. Inglis, "Some Political Factors in the Demise of the Roblin Government, 1915", unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1968, p. 61.

APPENDIX

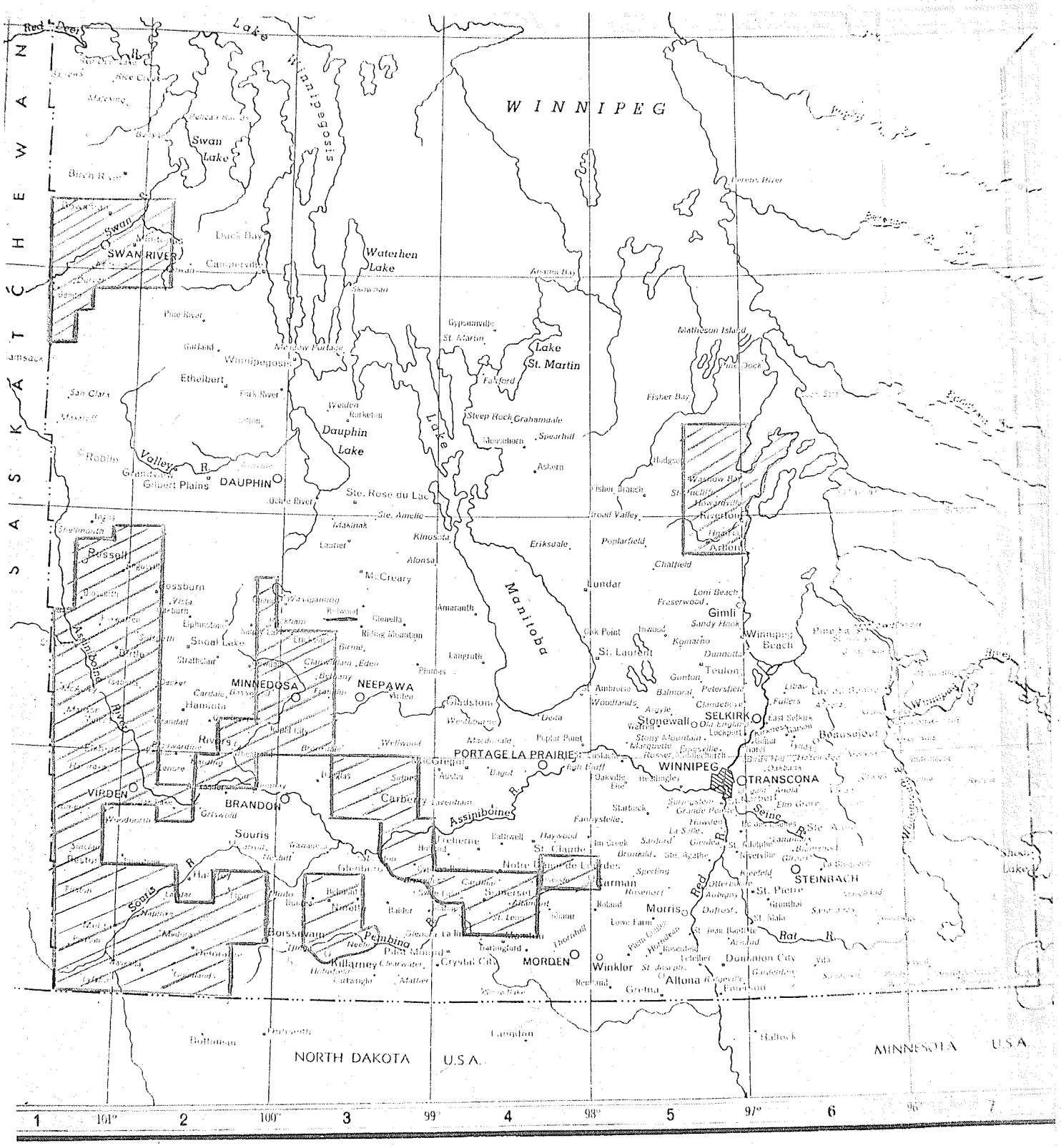
Map #1 Area of Strongest Temperance Sentiment in Manitoba

Indicated by ///////



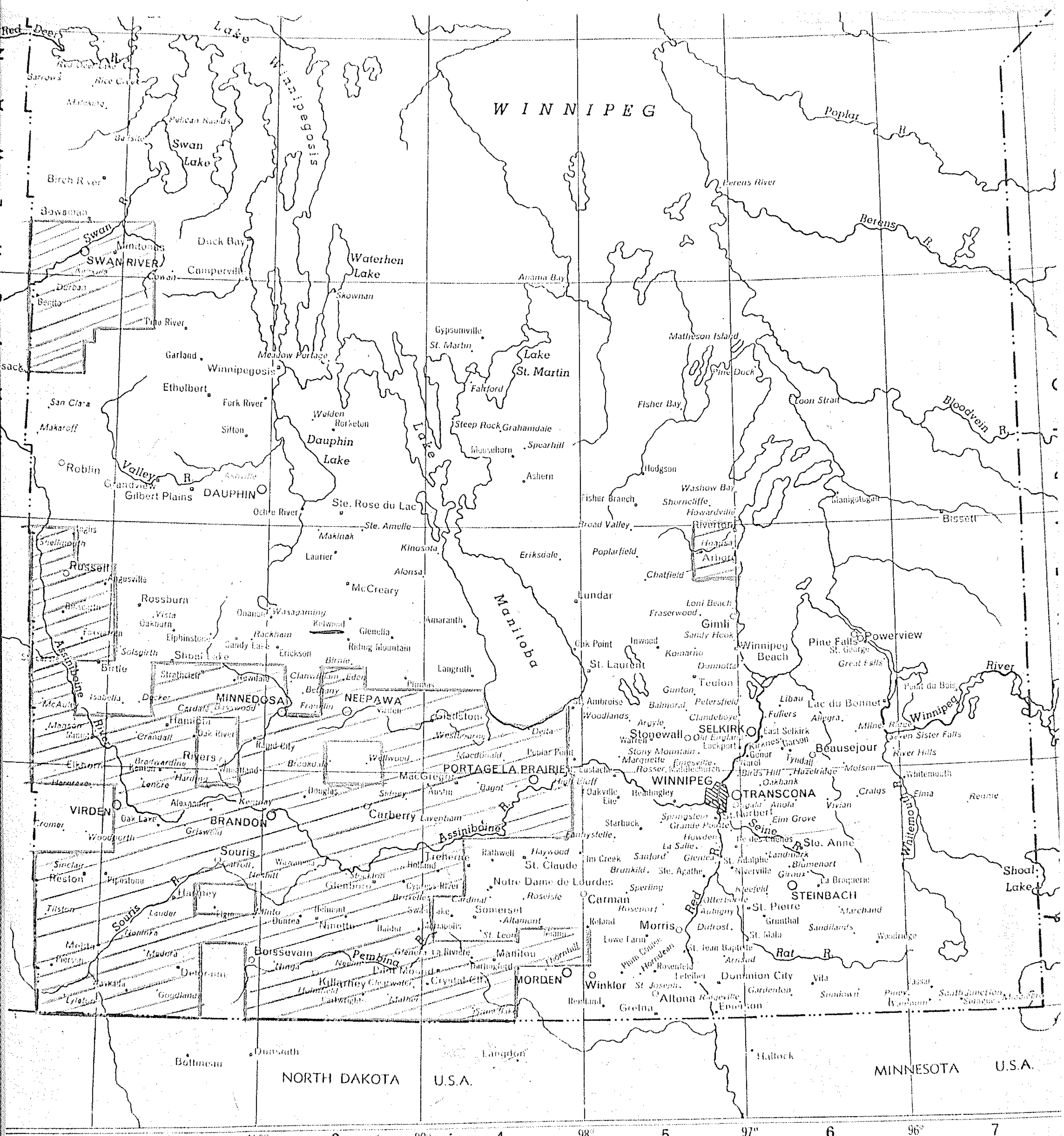
Map #2 Municipalities Under Local Option, 1914

Those Areas under prohibition by local option indicated by //////



Map #2a   Muncipalities Under Local Option, 1928

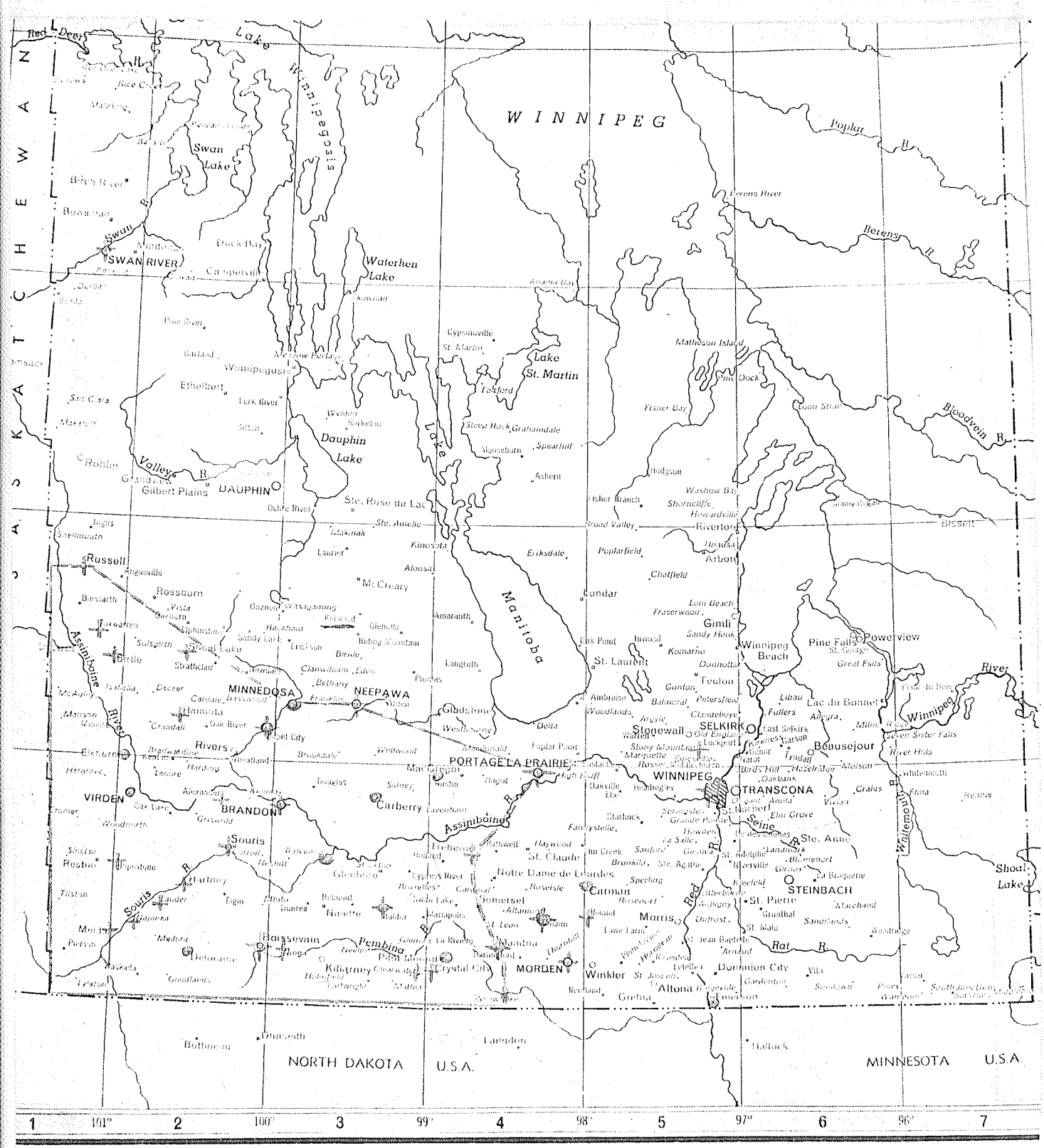
Those Areas under prohibition by local option indicated by /////



Map #3 Manitoba Chapters of the W.C.T.U.

1891 •

1903 +



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