FROM RULE TO RUIN: THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1928-1954

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ABSTRACT

In 1928 the Conservative Party of British Columbia won an impressive electoral victory, taking 35 of the 48 seats in the legislature. The victory was a comeback for Conservatives since after forming consecutive governments during the years 1903-1916, they remained in opposition from 1916-1928. The comeback, however, was not to be permanent. Five years later, in the 1933 election, the Conservative Party met disaster. Not a single candidate running with the Conservative label was elected. Although their fortunes improved in the 1937 and 1941 elections, Conservatives would not again form a government on their own in British Columbia. Throughout the 1940s they shared power in a coalition government, but in so doing the forces were set in motion which culminated in the party's collapse in the early 1950s. The party suffered a massive defeat in the 1953 election, an event which marked the end of the Conservative Party as a serious contender in the province's electoral politics since Conservatives have been unable to make a showing in provincial elections in the 21 years since.

What happened to the provincial Conservatives is the question addressed in this study. How did a party which has enjoyed a history of success in both the province's federal and provincial arenas lose, almost entirely, its support base in the early 1950s?

The general approach of this study is historical-interpretative. An account and interpretation of the Conservatives' fate is given through a detailed analysis of the party's internal politics. The focus is on
politicians (party leaders) and their efforts to build and maintain a party clientele, their definition of goals and the strategies devised to attain them. The major theme which emerges is that the party's ultimate failure to survive as a contender in provincial politics is inextricably bound up with the internal fractionalization that continued to plague it.

This study begins by examining the period when the Conservative Party was one of two major parties in British Columbia. The background of this early period is important in understanding the principal actors and political conflicts which set the context for later events. The main body of the study examines the personalities and conflicts in the party during the years 1933-1954. The years of coalition government (1941-1952) are singled out for special treatment because the chain of events precipitated by the coalition ultimately led to the party's disintegration and collapse.

Chairman:
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INTRODUCTION

Among Canadian provinces British Columbia is unique because the two
dominant parties on the provincial scene are minor parties on the national
scene. This fact dominates most studies of B.C. party politics written
during the last twenty years. In one way or another most party research
has attempted to explain the uniqueness of this contemporary party alignment.
The studies are typically of two kinds: 1) Voting behavior studies which
focus on the support bases of each party;¹ and 2) "Political culture" studies
which attempt to explain the party system using such themes as B.C.'s re­
gional outlook, the province's isolation from the political center of Canada,
B.C.'s political economy, and the existence of a culture experience charac­
terized by such attributes as "anti-traditionalism" and "anti-partisanism."²
These studies, although extremely valuable, usually pay too little attention
to the fact that until quite recently, the two traditional parties and the
C.C.F. dominated B.C. politics, and that only in the postwar period did a new
party system come to supplant the old one.

In studying the contemporary party system in British Columbia the
particular political events and circumstances which gave rise to this party
system should not be ignored. Prior to 1952, the Liberals and Conservatives
were the only parties that had ever formed governments in British Columbia.
Since 1952, both have been nearly eclipsed by Social Credit and the C.C.F/N.D.P.
Although the Liberals, by averaging approximately 21.5 percent of the vote
in post-1952 elections, have fared considerably better than the Tories, they
still have been relegated to minor party status. The post-1952 history of

¹
²
the provincial Conservative Party is well known. Only twice since 1952 did they attract more than 10 percent of the vote (11.27 percent in 1963 and 12.6 percent in 1972), and on only two occasions did they win seats in the legislature (1 seat in 1953 and 3 seats in 1972). Given this sudden and radical alteration in the provincial party system after 1952, provincial party politics in the preceding years takes on added importance for those who wish to understand the present.

In the literature on Canadian political parties there is a tendency to concentrate excessively on new or "third" parties. Sometimes in the eagerness to explain the new, students are not adequately concerned with what happened to the old. We should not lose sight of the fact that the rise of new parties and accompanying changes in party systems are usually directly related to the decline or disappearance of existing parties. In British Columbia this is especially true of the rise of Social Credit and the changed post-1952 party alignment.

Even the most cursory glance at British Columbia history suggests an intriguing and important question: What happened to the provincial Conservatives, a party which was a major political force throughout the province's history? This question merits investigation for at least three reasons. First, an understanding of what happened to the Conservative Party during the period in which it went from being a major party in the province to a tiny remnant party is a necessary complement to the very limited political knowledge so far gained about British Columbia. Second, the emergence of Social Credit and the accompanying transformation in the B.C. party system after 1952 was closely related to the fortunes of the Conservative Party. To explain the rise of Social Credit without an understanding of the
disintegration of the Tory Party in the early 1950's is difficult, if not impossible. Third, the collapse of a party which played a major role in the province's history and continues to be a major force in the federal arena is worthy of investigation in its own right. What happened to the provincial Conservatives is the subject matter of this study.

Historically British Columbia has never lacked a strong Conservative Party. From the introduction of party lines in 1903 to the collapse of the Tolmie-led Conservative government in 1933, the Tory Party ruled the province for 18 of 30 years and averaged approximately 40 percent of the vote in the eight elections. During that same period federal Conservatives in B.C. fared even better. In the seven general elections between 1904 and 1930, federal Conservative candidates averaged 49.3 percent of the vote. Except in 1904 when they failed to win a seat, in the six elections since 1903 the federal Tories never won less than 50 percent of the seats in B.C. In 1911 they captured every seat and three other times (1908, 1925, 1926) they won over 70 percent of the province's federal seats.

In the 1933 election the provincial Conservatives met disaster. The depression-ridden, internally split government of Simon Fraser Tolmie collapsed so completely that not a single candidate running with the Conservative label was elected. Fragmented and without representation in the legislature, the party was a minor force in provincial politics during the next four years. By 1937 the Conservatives had reorganized and under the direction of an energetic new leader made a comeback by regaining the role of the official Opposition. From 1941 to 1952 they shared power in a Liberal dominated coalition government. The Tory comeback, however, was not to be permanent. Eleven years of being the "junior partner" in coalition
government led to severe internal strains. In 1950, party leader Herb Anscomb was challenged for the leadership by rebel Tory W. A. C. Bennett. In 1951 two Conservative MLAs openly disassociated themselves from the caucus and shortly thereafter joined the upstart Social Credit Party. In 1952 coalition ended and the strife-torn Conservatives were faced with a four-party contest. Disunited and discredited (both Liberals and Conservatives left coalition tainted by bungled policies and political infighting), the Tories emerged from the election with only three seats, their worst showing since 1933. In the election the following year, the party met further disaster when just one Tory was elected and Conservative candidates received less than six percent of the vote. From 1953 to the present, the party has failed to win more than two seats in a single election (they were blanked five times) and did not receive more than 13 percent of the vote in any election.

This study examines the fortunes of the Conservative Party by focusing on its politicians, their activities and manoeuvrings in the struggle of personalities and power. Accordingly, an account and interpretation of the party's fate is given through a detailed analysis of its internal politics, the doings of party leaders and their colleagues—viewed as enemies or supporters—pursuing their goals and the goals of the party. This approach is adopted because the party's ultimate failure to survive as a major party is inextricably bound up with the recurring internal chaos afflicting it. Factionalism, prevalent in the Conservative Party from the beginning, produced in the end the internal disorder which above all else led to the party's loss of support and ultimate collapse.
The activities of politicians take place in a political environment which includes the party (as an organizational structure) and the larger political system (in which parties operate). Both the party and the political system are related in that what happens in each affects the other. The external party environment impinges most directly on the parties by shaping demands for what they do and how they do it. What the parties do (more specifically what the politicians who comprise them do) depends on how goals are perceived, what strategies are used to attain them, and how the demands of their various clienteles are met. The effects of the environment, then, are mediated through politicians, individuals who must recruit a clientele, contest elections, take positions, make policies, and educate on issues. For this study the actions of parties are conceptualized in terms of the behavior of the politicians who comprise them.

This adoption of a "politicians focus" is not meant to attribute the whole process of the party's downfall to some particular group of individuals. The study would be seriously lacking if it failed to include a discussion of what was going on in the opposing parties, the impact of unusual events such as depression and war, the changes in public opinion over a twenty-five year period and the political consequences of social changes such as urbanization, population growth, transportation and communication. The political story takes place in a welter of circumstances which in themselves make one or another course of events possible.

In addition there is the role of ideology. Is it possible that the decline of the Conservative Party was due to the inapplicability of conservative remedies to the issues of the day? Perhaps this is true, at least in part. It is assumed, however, that a conservative constituency has
always existed in B.C. and still exists as manifested by federal voting patterns and the persistent strength of Social Credit. The key to understanding why the party's clientele (both organizational cadre and voters) abandoned it is found not so much in its ideological stance as in its internal politics. What failed ultimately was not conservatism but Conservatives.

This study examines a political party during the most critical period in its history. The central problem is to account for its downfall after a long history of being a major actor in B.C. politics. The claim of the study to make a contribution lies first in its detailed treatment of the life of a political party during an extremely important historical period, and second to show for the first time how and why the Conservative Party declined, an event which made it possible for a wholly new political force, Social Credit, to emerge on the B.C. political scene.

This study is organized into two main parts. Chapters I and II trace in fairly general terms the party's history during the period when it was a major party alternating with the Liberals as the government of British Columbia. In addition to providing an overview of the party's early history, this part examines the roots of conflict in terms of organizational structure, federal-provincial strains, and the performance of its leaders. This section makes no presumption of inevitability, which is to assert that because there was early evidence of the kinds of strains which later caused the party unending difficulty, the Conservative Party was necessarily "doomed" from the beginning. The party's early history is discussed because of what it reveals about the party's nature and because it was then that many of the forces were set in motion which led to the party's disruption
Part two, Chapters III through VI, is the main body of the study. This part covers the period when Conservative politicians were struggling first, to bring the party back as a major force in provincial politics after the electoral disaster of 1933 and second, to survive as a major party in the face of stiff competition from the dominant Liberal Party and the powerful and persistent Socialist opposition (1937-1952). The years of coalition government are singled out for special treatment because the chain of events precipitated by the coalition ultimately led to the party's disintegration and collapse.
FOOTNOTES

Introduction


3Federally, the party waned between 1935 and 1957, but it always placed at least three persons in parliament. Today, 1975, the Conservatives are the strongest party federally in B.C.

4The 1917 "Unionist" election is excluded since the result was reported in terms of votes cast for Government and Opposition candidates rather than the usual Liberal and Conservative breakdown.

Obviously Social Credit doctrine (as preached by British Columbians such as Bennett) and B.C. Conservatism are not the same. There are nonetheless many areas of similarity, in particular their strong defenses of free enterprise and antipathy to excessive statism. It appears that Social Credit's appeals became increasingly similar to traditional Conservative appeals as Conservatives gradually became a larger part of the new party's constituency after 1952. This is seen especially in its anti-socialism, appeal to the farming community and emphasis on balanced budgets and promotion of a favorable investment climate for private capital by maintaining restrictive labour legislation, keeping the taxes on resource industries to a minimum and solicitation of foreign investment.
The results of the 1916 election marked the beginning of a rough and frustrating path for the Conservative Party of British Columbia. In the thirteen years since party lines were drawn in provincial politics the Conservative Party under the leadership of Sir Richard McBride had dominated British Columbia politics. In December, 1915, with his government internally divided, confronted with economic difficulties, and tainted by "scandalous" railroad dealings, Sir Richard resigned the leadership and retired to London to become the Agent-General for British Columbia. The leadership of the party and the premiership were assumed by McBride's chief lieutenant, William J. Bowser, then Attorney-General, and for the past year the acting-Premier of British Columbia. Within eight months after McBride's departure, his party entered a general election. In that election the Conservatives, who had never known provincial defeat, and who had just four years earlier won 40 of 42 seats, were trounced by the Liberals, thirty-seven seats to ten. In 1920 the Tories were again defeated by the Liberals. Moreover, they failed to significantly increase their popular vote despite a marked decline in the Liberal government's popularity. Again, in 1924 with the Tory party divided and the addition of a third party composed of many disaffected Conservatives, the Tories suffered a third consecutive defeat. Bowser lost his seat in the election. Officially leaderless, the party drifted under the interim leadership of W. H. Pooley (Esquimalt) until 1926 when Conservatives, in a desperate attempt to restore unity and get back into power, chose as leader the popular M.P., Simon Fraser Tolmie.
A lengthy examination of the early history of the Conservative Party and its defeat in 1916 is provided elsewhere and will not be dealt with here. This chapter examines the party during its first twelve years in opposition (1916-1928), an important transition period in which can be found the roots of the conflict and problems that would plague the Tory Party for the next quarter of a century.

The accession of William John Bowser to the leadership of the Tory Party in 1915 led to an intense factionalism which was both personal and organizational in nature. Bowser, dubbed by his enemies the "Little Kaiser" and the "czar" of the Conservative Party organization, manipulated the party apparatus in British Columbia for the first quarter of this century. An old friend of McBride's since their days together at Dalhousie University, he was first elected to the legislature from Vancouver in 1903. In the 1907 election he headed the poll and that same year he became Attorney-General. During his apprentice years as M.L.A. from Vancouver he had already begun constructing a powerful political machine in the province's fastest growing city, using his position as Grand Master of the Free Masons as a convenient lever. Upon assuming the portfolio of Attorney-General, which regulated the police and liquor trade, he quickly built the most powerful political machine in the province's history. One contemporary observed: "The Conservative machine in British Columbia is as near perfect as anything can be, short of perpetual motion." 

Bowser was in firm command of the party apparatus, but had none of the qualities of the popular politician. As one who preferred power to fame, he seemed content to remain "behind the throne" as long as McBride was Premier. Britton Cook's description is revealing:
He is a curious machinist. The grim little boss seems to take no material reward for his bossing. He is the taciturn guardian of several thousand votes, yet never uses them for securing to himself more than he already holds. Just operating his machine is said to be that one joy of his life. For praise, glory and publicity he has no stomach. While McBride swims in it, Bowser jerks on his overalls and oils the machine. Only when criticism assails the government he emerges and stands doggedly in front of McBride taking it all and snarling back.5

While the government probably would have been defeated in 1916 even if McBride had not stepped aside, the accession of Bowser to the leadership made it a near certainty.6 His image of a machine politician and unpopular appeal drove many out of the Conservative camp and led to a split in the Tory Party. To many, he seemed to epitomize everything that was deemed wrong with the Conservative Party—its traditional dominance by old financial and industrial magnates and machine politicians, and its failure to take up the cause of reform. To reformers, who by the War's end were demanding temperance, prison reform, and the franchise for women, the end of patronage, and direct legislation, Bowser and the Conservative Party were out of step. He became the public scapegoat for Conservative patronage, provincial debt, party arrogance and extravagant railroads.7 "Even as Opposition leader," noted one who knew him, "Mr. Bowser only succeeded in further antagonizing powerful sections of the public."8

If Bowser's style and reputation were distasteful to a growing number of Conservatives, it was the "reformist" element in the party which, by 1920, began to organize against him. The reform movement which had captivated a segment of the electorate during the war was spreading rapidly throughout the Tory ranks. Many Conservatives, especially the younger, more idealistic members, expressed concern that the machine politics which Bowser symbolized and the old guard in the party which he represented, needed to
be overthrown. When the Conservatives again failed to regain power in 1920, demands were made that the machine be broken up, the reform element be paid more attention, and Bowser resign the leadership.

In 1922, Vancouver Young Conservatives made known they would attempt to wrest the leadership from Bowser at the upcoming party convention. Some constituency associations followed suit by preparing resolutions demanding Bowser's resignation. The press was filled with reports of the pro- and anti-Bowser forces struggling for convention delegates in the months preceding the fall meeting. However, despite the swelling opposition, the veteran Tory won re-election, but only by the slim majority of 51.8 percent. One of the reasons for Bowser's victory in 1922 was the failure of the dis-sidents to recruit a strong challenger. They were faced with a dilemma. On the one hand they needed a candidate who would be responsive to change. But most of the reformists were young and this raised the problem of alienating the party regulars. Simon Fraser Tolmie was approached but refused to run. The rebels finally turned to the Vancouver M.P., H. H. Stevens, long a Bowser antagonist who, despite serious reservations that his candidacy would further disunite the party, accepted the job. In the end Bowser won by a vote of 252 to 201 for Stevens. A third candidate, S. L. Howe, president of the Conservative association, gained 27 votes.

Bowser continued to lead the divided party for two more years. In the 1924 election the Tories were defeated for the third consecutive time. The entrance of the newly formed Provincial Party not only siphoned off large numbers of traditional Conservative voters—and even some candidates—but by splitting the anti-Liberal vote, insured that the Tories would remain in opposition. Bowser lost his seat and thus had little choice but to
resign the leadership.

That a figure as controversial as Bowser could survive as the head of the party for as long as he did attests to the overwhelming power that he wielded. Bowser's power emanated from two sources. The first was his position of dominance in the regular party organization—particularly in the city of Vancouver—which, for the most part, he retained until his death in 1933. Said one person who knew Bowser personally: "Bowser kept the party machine in motion, well oiled, and profitably productive . . . while Dick (McBride) was out through the country making votes, Bowser was in his office counting them." During the years the Tory party was in power, his control was described this way:

William John Bowser can almost control the names on the wage role of all the important employers in the interior. . . . The big timber companies indulge Bowser's political whims to the extent of allowing their camps to come under the role of petty bosses. . . . He (Bowser) controls the machinery that causes the British Columbian voter to make governments.

Bowser saw to it that almost no potential political resource was immune from the leverage of provincial administration—railroads, mining, timber, liquor, the municipalities, and even the police. "Bowser systematically built up an organization that not even Tammany Hall could rival." Bowser had the responsibility for raising the big money for the party's election coffers. His long years in politics and his reputation as a "king-pin" brought to him numerous "big money" people in the business world, especially in timber.

The second source of Bowser's power was largely a derivative of the first. Bowser built up a coterie of solidly loyal followers who never veered in their support. This group tended to include most of the "old-guard" Tory politicians. It was this group, the old guard, and their
proteges who could never find common ground with the party's so-called reformers. If any generalization can be made about the Bowser group it is that they resisted all suggestions that the Conservative Party should operate differently than it had during the "glorious" years of McBride. Reform according to them was not the business of political parties and they deeply resented the so-called rebels' efforts to rock the boat.

The schisms which developed in the party during its years under Bowser's leadership laid the groundwork for the factional divisions which would plague the Tories for many years hence. Essentially they grew out of the traditional structure of control in the party—a small autocratic ruling group primarily interested in retaining an iron fist control over the party organization while remaining insensitive to party reform, and the personality of Bowser himself—a political tactician apparently more concerned with maintenance of "boss rule" than with building party consensus.

There was also evidence of federal-provincial difficulties in the party during this period. Much of it was based on personalities, for example, the antagonism between Stevens and Bowser. But it also manifested itself in a split between Conservatives primarily interested in bolstering the British Columbia Tory organization for the election of M.P.'s—the "Tupperites"—and the provincial oriented team of McBride and Bowser. In 1916 Tupper swung his support solidly to the Liberal side and worked actively against Bowser in the election campaign.

In 1923 a splinter group of Conservative businessmen, Young Conservatives, and farmers joined with a farmer political action group (United Farmers of British Columbia) and organized a new political party—the Provincial Party. While a broad coalition of the disaffected—farmers,
businessmen, progressives, soldiers groups, and reformist organizations—the common thread uniting the group was the feeling that the present system of party politics was self-serving and insensitive to the public interest. They were of the feeling that government in the province had been made to serve the interests of party politicians, reflected in the dispensation of spoils, the petty "deals" with the railway interests, and the general lack of concern with the people's problems. Significantly, it was a group of dissatisfied Conservatives who, after the selection of Bowser as party leader in 1922, approached members of the U.F.B.C. in an attempt to join forces and start a new party. A key individual in the movement's founding was John Nelson, editor of the United Farmer, the official journal of the U.F.B.C., and a former member of the Conservative Party's provincial executive. Nelson, like many others, abandoned the Tories after Bowser's reelection as leader in 1922. When sounded out on the idea of a new party, Nelson got the ball rolling by soliciting financial support from a group of 40 sympathetic Vancouver businessmen (mostly old Tories), among them General A. D. McRae and maverick Conservative, Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper. Additional support came from the Vancouver Young Conservative Association. Plans were made to join forces with the United Farmers in the hope of using the reformist-businessmen-farmers alliance as the core of the new Provincial Party.

At the U.F.B.C. Convention held in Vernon in January 1923, a proposal was introduced to merge the two groups. However, the Political Committee of the U.F.B.C. did not accept the manifesto of the proposed Provincial Party as drawn up by McRae's Vancouver group. The farmers were suspicious that McRae, who had supplied most of the new party's funds, was mainly interested in buying his way to power. Thus no firm alliance
between the groups came out of the Vernon Convention. But as the McRae group rapidly gained strength, it later absorbed many farmers and most of the U.F.B.C. organization into its ranks.27

The Provincial Party's "reform" platform was hammered out at a convention in December, 1923.28 It called for an end to "government for party" and demanded a non-partisan "union government" which would concentrate its efforts on governing efficiently. It attacked what it called the "politics of waste" and urged a drastic reduction in the provincial debt. Specific planks in the platform included: the reduction and more equitable distribution of taxes, abolition of patronage, replacement of the "political" Liquor Board with a non-partisan independent commission, abolition of the personal property tax, and rational development of the province's natural resources.29

The platform's theme could be summed up as follows: "Traditional political parties were corrupt, self-interested, and impediments to government in the public interest." With its slogan, "Put Oliver out and don't let Bowser in," the voters were urged to defeat a system of politics driven by the cynical bargaining for votes by political parties to control the spoils of power. Free from the obligations and preferments which party government spawns, a new "provincial government," it was argued, would attract the best men and govern in the interests of all. Clearly the movement was not non-partisan but anti-partisan. And it bore a remarkable resemblance in appeal and philosophy to another anti-party movement which would emerge in the early 1950s.30

The new party quickly grew. Under the able chairmanship of McRae, an effective grass roots organization was built, supported by active local
committees. To the chagrin of Liberal and Tory politicians it was becoming evident that the party was not merely a spur-of-the-moment political revolt but a well financed and carefully organized political force, with backing from a wide range of groups. As the campaign heated up the Provincial Party began to regularly grab headlines in the press and even began to get some attention outside of British Columbia. Especially important was the appearance of The Searchlight, the party's broadsheet which highlighted every thing from government boondoggles in the Pacific Great Eastern Railway project to the intricacies of patronage appointees "kicking back" to the old party machines. 

There was no doubt that Liberals and Conservatives were becoming a bit uneasy, as illustrated by the fact that they began to concentrate their attacks more on the Provincial Party than each other.

The 1924 election resulted in considerable success for the new party. In addition to contributing to the defeat of both Oliver and Bowser, the Provincial Party won an impressive 24.2 percent of the vote, elected three members, and was credited with being the decisive factor in 70 percent of the ridings.

For Conservatives, the new party's strength and main support base signified the serious disarray within their own ranks. It was no secret that the core of the party's financial and organizational strength was composed of ex-Tories. As the Vancouver Province commented just prior to the election, "Make no mistake about it--the Provincial Party is just as Tory as the party led by Bowser. Who are the leaders of this Provincial Party? McRae, a Tory; Tupper, a Tory; McPhillips, a Tory; McNeil, Ernie Burns, Rounsefell, John Nelson, Whiteside--all Tories!"

If the Provincial party had garnered support from a fairly broad cross
section of the electorate, the fact was inescapable that Conservatives made up its central core. 39

The Provincial Party's days as a political force were numbered, however, despite its respectable showing in the election. With Bowser's defeat the Tory Party now seemed ripe for internal change. The conservative nature of the Provincial Party's program appealed largely to the farmer, property owner and businessman, and for their vote, the new party was competing with both the Conservatives and Liberals. 40

Moreover, the election of three Labour and Independent M.L.A.'s relegated the three Provincial members to merely part of the large diverse opposition. Failing to hold the balance of power, the party's political clout was severely lessened.

About a month after the election, McRae circulated a questionnaire to the local Provincial associations suggesting the possibility of coalescing with another party while retaining the party's popular support. 41 As it was generally known that a merger with the Tories was planned, McRae's action infuriated many Provincial Party supporters. To many it confirmed the earlier misgivings of the U.F.B.C. members who refused to join the new party in the first place on the grounds that it was a vehicle to satisfy the interests of the ambitious McRae. Some felt that it was an outright act of "treason" and that McRae in actuality always had been a Conservative who used the Provincial Party for a power play to advance his own ambitions within the Conservative Party.

Ironically, the party was placed in further jeopardy because Bowser was defeated. Shortly after the election, Bowser, under pressure from the Conservative Caucus, tendered his resignation as Conservative leader. The effect of this action was to pave the way for a reconciliation in the
Conservative Party, since many who had joined the Provincial Party were
Conservatives who had done so out of protest against the continued leadership of Bowser.

The final blow which assured the party's collapse was dealt in December, 1924, when the Provincial association in a general meeting at Victoria introduced a resolution censuring the three sitting M.L.A.s for continually siding with the Oliver government.42 The chairman called the resolution out of order and refused to allow a vote on it. A large number of the convention delegates walked out of the meeting in protest.43 Tensions were further heightened when it became known that McRae intentionally boycotted the Victoria meeting, even though he was in the city at the time. Many members viewed this as a sign that McRae was through with the party and by implication that the party was experiencing its last gasps.44

This proved to be the case. Despite the party's continued formal existence until 1928, the seeds of destruction had been thoroughly planted. Such influential members as Beaumont Boggs and Captain H. S. Thain made it known they were returning to the Conservative Party.45 Both Thain and Boggs appeared on the Conservative platform in November, 1924, during Arthur Meighen's visit to Victoria. McRae joined Tory House Leader, R. H. Pooley, to campaign for W. H. Houston, who was supported by Conservatives, in the Nelson by-election shortly after the general election.46 In addition many prominent Provincials actively campaigned for the Tories in the 1926 federal election. Within a year the Provincial Party's organization throughout the province had severely dwindled. The Vancouver headquarters, deeply split after the 1924 election, remained divided and incapable of functioning effectively.47 The party's three M.L.A.s showed little unity in their
voting in the legislature, and McRae formally withdrew from the party in 1926 when he was elected Conservative Member of Parliament for North Van­couver. Finally, in 1928, the executive committee announced it would not nominate any candidates under the Provincial label and formally released its three elected representatives from any further obligations.49

The Provincial Party was the first but not the last minor party which primarily owed its existence to division within the Tory ranks. While difficult to say what extent dissatisfied Conservatives made up the Provincial Party, it is clear that its financial and organization base was mainly composed of ex-Tories. Had it formed the official Opposition or even represented the balance of power in the legislature, it might have been able to survive. As it was, with only three elected members who could not take a unified position, there existed no focal point from which the party could build in preparation for the next election. As a political force, it had not defeated the traditional parties, it had only stunned them. In helping to defeat Bowser, it undercut its own future prospects by paving the way for many of its own supporters to return to the Conservative fold.

Probably more than anything else, it vividly presented the case for renovating the Conservative Party. It raised the storm warnings which were headed two years later at Kamloops when provincial Conservatives temporarily laid aside their swords and chose the popular M.P., Simon Fraser Tolmie to lead them back to power.

The Kamloops Convention, which convened on November 26, 1926, faced the difficult task of choosing a leader who could unify and offer a new élan to a party which had been deeply split for ten years. The legislative caucus had offered the top position to Simon Fraser Tolmie, federal M.P. since 1917,
and Minister of Agriculture in the Meighen government. But Tolmie turned the offer down, explaining he had no desire to leave Ottawa, he had obligations to fulfill as federal organizer, and personal reasons would not allow him to accept. With no other person emerging as a party favorite, the leadership of the caucus fell in 1924 to Robert Henry Pooley, the son of an Esquimalt Tory who had been a member of the legislative assembly of British Columbia for twenty years.

Pooley was only an interim chief until a permanent leader could be selected. While Pooley was not ineffective, and enjoyed a fair amount of popularity throughout the party, he did not use his position as a stepping stone to the leadership, expressing no real interest in it.

By autumn of 1926, the press was filled with speculation about who would emerge as party leader. Among the rumored candidates were H. H. Stevens, M.P. (Vancouver-Center), A. D. McRae (by then McRae had formally rejoined the Conservative Party), and Arthur Meighen, former prime minister and leader of the federal Conservative Party. However, the contest was shaping up as a battle between ex-leader Bowser and Leon J. Ladner. It became quickly evident that Bowser, who was the candidate of the regular party organization, and was the favorite of the businessmen in Vancouver and Victoria, still had a substantial following in the party. To many Conservatives he was considered the most experienced legislator, the man with the longest service to the party, and because of his control of the Vancouver machine, the only candidate in a position to generate substantial resources for the Conservative campaign. In addition, Bowser had the support of numerous "old line" party loyalists, many of whom had obligations to him personally, and many who considered the opposing front runner,
Leon J. Ladner was one of the principal movers of the then so far unsuccessful attempt to persuade Tolmie to run. A member of the House of Commons from South Vancouver since 1921, he was returned with increased majorities in both 1925 and 1926. The son of a pioneer family—his father was one of the original settlers of the lower mainland—Ladner was a well known lawyer and had strong ties with the federal wing of the party. As one of the party's younger members, his selection would add a youthful dimension to a party long identified with professional politicians. Furthermore, he had not been directly involved in the party schism which produced the Provincial movement. Thus he had not antagonized either the party regulars or the reformers. Ladner's support was centered in the legislative caucus, but he was also the candidate favored by the Young Conservatives, and large numbers of regular members who did not think Bowser could unite the party or win the election.

As the convention approached neither Bowser nor Ladner had the support of a majority of the delegates. The danger of a wide open split in the party, reminiscent of 1922, was widely rumored in the press. By convention eve no compromise candidates emerged and a deadlock seemed inevitable.

On the second day of the convention the fireworks began. It quickly became obvious that neither Bowser nor Ladner would have the required majority needed for election. The Bowser forces were dealt the first blow when the convention voted down a resolution to seat a contested pro-Bowser delegation from Saanich. The Saanich voted indicated that the Bowser forces did not have the votes needed to take command. A deadlock now seemed
imminent.

Shortly after the Saanich vote was taken, Bowser sent a shock wave through the convention hall by announcing he was withdrawing from the leadership contest. He expounded on his devotion and service to the party but confessed to the delegates that the friction that existed over his candidacy might split the convention if his name was allowed to be placed in nomination. After explaining that he did not wish to be held responsible for disrupting the party, he concluded:

I must therefore retire from the position of one seeking to be your leader. It is in the best interests of the party that I should do so; it is better for the unity of the party. This, then, is my political valedictory.61

It is difficult to know what led Bowser to his startling and unexpected decision.62 Certainly the preceding Saanich vote dimmed whatever hopes he may have had for majority support. But his address was more structured than spontaneous, suggesting that he must have known beforehand the likely outcome of the Saanich vote.

The immediate effect of Bowser's withdrawal was to leave the Ladner candidacy in doubt. Since much of Ladner's support was from party members who personally disliked Bowser, and felt an initial concerted effort was needed to block his chances, there existed a real possibility of a new candidate emerging and splitting the Ladner vote. A deadlock would probably result and the convention would then be forced to find a compromise candidate. One student of the Tolmie years has suggested that part of Bowser's strategy was to insure a deadlock with the hope that the convention, in desperation, would be forced back to him as the compromise candidate.63 This seems quite unrealistic since Bowser was the candidate who polarized
the convention initially and deadlock usually results in the emergence of non-controversial "dark horse" candidates which all sides can support without severe compromise of their positions.

In any event, Bowser was out of the race. His followers shifted their support to Senator J. D. Taylor, publisher of the *New Westminster Columbian*.

Prior to the beginning of the nominations, when the convention reconvened for the evening session, the Bowser forces engineered a plan to change the percentage of votes a candidate would need to be elected. Ultimately it would insure that Ladner would not win. It was moved that a 60 percent majority be required for election. Curiously, it carried unanimously. While on the face of it the change from simple majority to 60 percent seems sensible on the grounds of party unity, it was clear to all the delegates, especially after the Saanich vote, that it might be a long while before any candidate could reach that figure. By agreeing to such a requirement, the delegates seemed to be expressing the belief that the convention at all costs must avoid the danger of electing a candidate who did not have wide and thorough support throughout the party. In other words, they must avoid a repeat of the situation arising from the 1922 convention.

After four candidates were nominated—J. D. Taylor, L. J. Ladner, C. F. Davie, and Nelson Spencer—the delegates began the tedious process of voting. At the end of the first ballot, Ladner was 43 votes short of the required 60 percent needed for election. The balloting droned on. After seven successive ballots (the sixth ballot was declared void as more ballots were cast than there were delegates) no candidate could get over the top. Ladner led on every ballot and was persistently within a few votes of winning. On the third ballot he moved to within six votes of the needed
60 percent. But after that highpoint his support began to slowly dwindle. By the end of the seventh ballot, Ladner was short by 26 votes. By evening it was apparent to all that a stalemate had been reached.

With the stalemate apparently firm, Ladner took the initiative. He moved to offer the leadership to Simon Fraser Tolmie, who had refused it twice before. The motion was quickly seconded by Taylor. In view of the circumstances it seemed to be the only way out. According to Ladner,

Because of the deadlock, when the dinner adjournment came, I got together my committee composed in part of Major General McRae, Mr. Loutit, Mayor of North Vancouver, Mr. W. C. Shelly, later Minister of Finance, and some others. In the interests of unity of the party, knowing that the Hon. S. F. Tolmie was popular although he would not enter the contest, I asked my committee to allow me to ask the convention to unanimously offer the leadership to Dr. Tolmie, who was sitting nearby. He knew absolutely nothing about what I was going to do. I made the proposal and there was a tremendous out-burst of enthusiasm with one exception, the Honourable W. J. Bowser.

Simon Fraser Tolmie was the perfect compromise candidate. A veterinarian, he was first elected to Parliament in 1917 when he ran as a Unionist and won the Victoria seat. He was subsequently reelected in 1921, 1925, and 1926, winning over 60 percent of the vote in the latter two contests. He served as Minister of Agriculture under Meighen and as Dominion Organizer during the 1926 federal campaign. Disassociated from provincial politics and, more important, removed from schisms that had plagued the provincial Conservatives, Tolmie had stood clear of conflict and made no real enemies in the party. In 1924 the Conservatives first approached Tolmie to offer him the leadership but he refused. But the party was persistent:

Again and again were approaches made to him in those first few months after the 1924 election. Half a dozen sitting members tendered him their seats if he would only consent to become "the white hope" of Toryism in provincial affairs. Embassies were sent to Ottawa when he fled there to escape the importunities of his
friends. Never did gallant swain pay greater court to a lady of his affections than did the Conservatives of B.C. to the portly person of this native son of the province, and never did fair lady more consistently refuse the pleadings of her admirer than did Dr. Tolmie reject the advances of ambassadors of the Opposition.69

With the delegates deadlocked and another day of voting in prospect, it is quite understandable that they would turn once again to the popular Tolmie. But he had not changed his position and again refused. Speaking to the convention he said:

Again and Again I've refused, and I do so again. Why, do you know, I've been pestered to death upon this subject ever since I left the Coast and one chap came to my room at four o'clock this morning almost climbed into bed with me in his endeavors to make me consent to allow my name to go before this convention.70

With the impasse seemingly unresolvable, Tolmie suggested that a committee be formed, composed of top officials in the party, and be charged with resolving the deadlock. It was agreed that the committee would include the party's M.P.s, M.L.A.s, Senators, President of the Association, and the federal and provincial executives.71 They agreed to leave the floor, caucus alone, and return within the hour with some kind of resolution to the deadlock.

What exactly occurred in the conference and how Tolmie was persuaded to accept the nomination is not altogether clear. The committee apparently had no intention of discussing any candidate other than Tolmie.72 According to Ladner, the group appealed to Tolmie's sense of loyalty, arguing that no one else could avert a split in the party. They appealed to his patriotism, his obligation to "save the party so that the province which had given him and his family so much, would be saved."73

Tolmie reacted to the pressure initially by continuing to refuse. Expressing his concern for the health of his wife, who was a semi-invalid,
Tolmie told the committee that he had made her a "sacred promise" that he would not accept the nomination. He further expressed his desire to stay in Ottawa. He enjoyed the life of an M.P., he said, and had no real interest nor did he feel qualified for the "bothersome and burdensome" job of being premier.

What persuaded Tolmie to change his mind? Ladner suggests that the imperative need to revive the party placed so much pressure on him that he felt he could not in good conscience refuse. In addition he was given assurances that he would get the necessary financial help (from the federal party) to insure a "full-blown campaign." Also, one rumor had it that the group offered "every bit of assistance possible" to Tolmie so that his "non-familiarity with the B.C. administrative problems would create no problems."

Whatever the reason, Tolmie finally agreed. The select committee returned to the convention floor and submitted Tolmie's name to the tired delegates. The response from the floor was an immediate outburst of approval. No balloting was necessary. The selection was spontaneous and unanimous.

The new leader's acceptance speech was perfectly tuned to the situation. Its tone was conciliation and unity. Tolmie acknowledged the "sportsmanlike" spirit of the men who had withdrawn their names in order that his election could be made unanimous. After paying tribute to the factionalized wings of the party, including an overture to Bowser, Tolmie called for an all-out organizational effort in the ridings so that the party would be prepared for an election at the earliest possible moment. And, in his final remarks, he expressed the "statesmanlike" qualities which had won him so much popular favor:
I always endeavor to remember that I am the servant of the people of the country and I try to give them equal service, whether they be Conservatives, Liberals, Socialists, Holy Rollers, or any other political or religious faith. I try and serve equally well all the citizens—and such I will continue to do.78

The drafting of Tolmie as party leader met the needs of the Conservative Party at the time. As the member of the House of Commons since 1917, Tolmie had already made a reputation as a popular and successful politician. He had not been involved in provincial party politics and therefore had no connection with the internal party feuding of recent years. He was held in high esteem by his colleagues, the public, and the press. "Personally the doctor is one of the most popular figures in the public life of Canada," said the Colonist. "During the course of his public career he has not made a single enemy political or personal."79

Tolmie's accession to the leadership seemed a blessing for a party which for ten years had been torn by internal strife. Internal problems, it seemed, had been worked out, and the future looked brighter than it had looked in a long while. The selection of Tolmie had settled, at least for the time being, the problem of leadership. With the defeat of Bowser and the disintegration of the Provincial Party, the way seemed clear for a return of the traditional Conservative alliance of farmers and businessmen. The younger "reform" elements, who had deserted the Tory Party because it refused to change the old guard and the old way of doing things, felt comfortable with a leader who had remained apart from the old party elite. Perhaps most important the selection of the popular Tolmie had ended the immediate danger of a permanent party split.

But beneath the surface of unity, a superficial unity put together for the purpose of breaking the leadership logjam, lay a multitude of
unresolved problems that would shortly re-emerge. The problems that had
plagued the party since McBride had not been solved, they had just been
swept aside. Foremost was the problem of a well-known and popular political
figure leading a party which had always been based on personal loyalties,
but which lacked personal loyalty to him. Moreover, the Bowser wing of the
party had not given up its swords, it had just laid them down temporarily.
The questions relating to control of the party organization, the rivalry
between the old guard and the party reformers, and party sectionalism, all
portended a difficult future for B.C. Conservatives. Perhaps had the bottom
not fallen out of the economy in 1929, the Tolmie-led party might have over­
come its own internal problems. But with depression, vacillating leadership,
and the resurfacing of severe party factionalism, the party within six years
sunk to its lowest point ever and, as a result, was nearly erased as a po­
litical force.
FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

1 Before the 1916 election the number of seats had been raised to forty-seven.


5 Ibid.


7 Ibid., p. 344.


13 Vancouver Province, May 13, 1924.


17 This opinion was given me by R. R. Walker, who at the time knew Bowser personally. Private interview held in Vancouver July 17, 1973.


20 Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper was the son of a Conservative prime minister, served in his cabinet, and won considerable national status through service on an international commission. After retiring from public office, he continued his interest in bolstering Conservative Party fortunes in B.C. In this capacity he came into conflict with the McBride-Bowser organization. See, Black, "The Progressive Conservative Party," pp. 6-7, 21.


23 Margaret A. Ormsby, "The United Farmers of British Columbia," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, XVII (January-April, 1953), 68.

24 McRae was a Vancouver millionaire who had made his fortune in colonization projects on the prairies and in lumbering and fishing in B.C. While his loyalties had long been with the Tories, he had not previously been active in politics.


26 Ormsby, "The United Farmers," pp. 69-70. One U.F.B.C. member resigned from the executive because, "now knowing the inside workings of the executive I am convinced that the new party is a direct abuse of the confidence it sought from farmers and is a gigantic attempt to exploit not only the farmers but the whole Province as well. . . . I am compelled to believe that sinister financial interests are behind the whole movement, which has as its real objective the complete exploitation of our timber, mines, and fisheries. . . . This is no people's movement."
27 Ibid., p. 70.

28 A convention delegate sheet lists 49 farmer delegates, apparently the largest single group, and seven businessmen delegates from Vancouver and Victoria. A. D. McRae Scrapbook, n.d., Special Collections, U.B.C.


30 The parallel to Social Credit will be drawn in Chapter VI.

31 Many editions of The Searchlight are contained in the A. D. McRae Scrapbook. An overview of the issues reveals the muckraking nature of the journal.


33 The results were: Provincial Party 24.2 percent, 3 seats; Conservative Party 29.7 percent, 17 seats; Liberal Party 32.3 percent, 24 seats; Labour and Socialists 12.7 percent, 3 seats.

34 Oliver, after accepting the resignation of K. Campbell, the Liberal member-elect for Nelson, was returned in an August 23, by-election by a majority of 338. McRae withdrew from the party and in 1926 was elected Conservative member of Parliament for North Vancouver. Bowser continued to be a force in the Tory Party until his death in 1933.

35 D. A. Stoddart, Cariboo; George Walkem, Point Grey; A. C. Creery, Vancouver who just narrowly defeated A. D. McRae after the absentee ballots were counted.


38 Vancouver Province, May 23, 1924.

39 One striking indication of Conservative support for the Provincial Party is found in a telegram received by H. H. Stevens from 39 "good Conservative" signatories, among them such prominent Tories as J. N. Harvey, Reggie Tupper, A. E. Jukes, A. E. Bull, and J. A. MacDonald. It read in part, "Thousands of good Conservatives are supporting the Provincial Party in order to clean up the provincial political situation." Telegram to H. H. Stevens from 39 Conservatives, May 28, 1924, Stevens Papers, P.A.C., Vol. 2, File 15.


42. Vancouver Sun, December 4, 1924.

43. Ibid.

44. Victoria Colonist, December 4, 1924.


47. Vancouver Sun, December 4, 1924.


49. Stoddart and Creery retired after finishing out the session. George Walkem, who had abandoned the Tories in 1924, rejoined the Conservative Party.


53. Vancouver Sun, September 9, 1926; Vancouver Sun, September 26, 1926; Victoria Times, September 29, 1926.


The Proceedings of the B.C. Conservative Convention at Kamloops, 1926, the Conservative Party, 1927, Special Collections, U.B.C. Saanich Conservatives had elected two slates of delegates—a Ladner slate which carried the regular credentials of the Association, and a Bowser slate. The contending slates exemplified the severe factionalism still pervading the party. See, Victoria Colonist, November 23, 1926.

According to Ladner, this was an attempt by the Bowser people to reorganize their forces and head off any chance of a Ladner victory. Leon J. Ladner, private interview in Vancouver, August 6, 1973.


73 Ibid.


76 Ladner interview, August 6, 1973. Tolmie's own statement is revealing: "I had made certain plans which involved my family, and which I desired very much to carry out but I had to set that aside as a matter of duty." Letter, S. F. Tolmie to A. Meighen, December 31, 1926, Meighen Papers, P.A.C., Vol. 244, 164156.

77 McKelvie, "B.C.'s New Premier," p. 30. Ladner told me that the enthusiasm of the delegates over Tolmie's candidacy was unrivaled by any convention he had ever attended. Ladner interview, August 6, 1973.

78 Convention Proceedings, p. 43.

79 Victoria Colonist, November 26, 1926.
CHAPTER II
TOLMIE AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE
CONSERVATIVE PARTY, 1928-1933

The story of the Conservative Party during the Tolmie years is one of developing internal chaos culminating in party collapse in 1933. From its most impressive electoral showing since the years of McBride, in five years the political situation deteriorated to a point where not a single Conservative candidate was elected with a straight Conservative label in the election of 1933. The party's incredible collapse resulted from the interplay of three factors: 1) Tolmie's lack of political skills, 2) the re-emergence of intense factionalism, and 3) the debilitating effects of the most severe economic crisis in the country's history.

The 1928 Election

Tolmie, the politician, was unique. Necessary to understanding his years as leader of the Conservative Party, and premier of British Columbia, and his successes and failures at both endeavors, is understanding what kind of politician he was.

Without getting into cumbersome psychological questions of politicians' motives and needs, it is useful to distinguish between two types of political actors; the professional (party) politician, and the non-professional (amateur, statesman) politician.\(^1\) By professional politician is meant someone whose primary commitment is to the political process itself, rather than to some particular issue, set of policies, or sense of statesmanship. In contrast, the non-professional gets into politics
(perhaps by accident) for the purpose of achieving a particular end, an
end not necessarily involving issues or policy goals. For example, in a
society where habits of deference persist, a person of upper class back­
ground may see it as duty or obligation to enter public affairs. A person
with outstanding charismatic qualities might be persuaded by other pro­
fessionals to get involved in politics because of his electability or popu­
larity. Or the non-professional may be committed to a particular issue or
policy goal. The important point is that professionals will likely see
their roles differently and behave differently than non-professionals do.
What makes a person a political professional is not lack of principle but
a commitment to the activity of politics itself as an ongoing succession
of struggles over many issues and policies.

Tolmie could scarcely qualify as a professional politician. He was
a veterinarian who entered government not so much because he was interested
in politics as such, but because he was interested in livestock. Even
his entry into electoral politics was more the doing of others than of him­
self. "Never once did he seek office," notes McKelvie, "the office always
sought him." On his recruitment into politics, McKelvie continues:

. . . he was on his way East in 1917 when a delegation from Victoria
followed him to Vancouver to tender him nomination as a candidate
for the Capital City's supporters of the Union Government. He ac­
cepted as a matter of duty. Several years later his ability was
recognized when Hon. Arthur Meighen formed his ministry and offered
him the portfolio of Agriculture.

Tolmie's accession to the leadership at Kamloops was under circum­
stances not much different from his former political experiences. The
party sought him out, not the other way around. While a Conservative by
temperament and tradition, he did not regard himself as a professional
party politician. While he liked the externalities of politics—meeting
people, campaigning, being involved in public affairs, he did not care for, nor did he have the skills or temperament necessary for, the tough job of conciliating and consolidating the varied demands that are inevitably placed upon any party leader. Tolmie accepted the leadership out of duty, not because he wanted it, but because others wanted him to have it.

If Tolmie had a major weakness that severely hampered his leading the party, let alone the whole government in time of crisis, it was his lack of political skills. As a non-professional he thought of himself as not in "politics" but in "public service." His inclination was to appeal to others, his own allies included, in terms of high patriotism and pure reason. He was unable to forge support for himself out of the needs and interests of other men. Tolmie was not a strong leader, but neither was he weak. He firmly pressed his views, but was not willing, and probably not able, to employ a strategy of manipulative leadership in his party or the government. This was contrary to his values, and uncongenial to his personality. He was popular and agreeable but not a manager of men. "He was one of the most pleasant men you could meet," said W. A. C. Bennett later, "but he never should have been premier. He was jolly, but not tough enough, and a premier must be able to say no to friend and foe. At times when everybody else says yes, at times the premier must say no." Tolmie's "non-political disposition would cause him endless problems in the years to come.

Shortly after his election as party leader, Tolmie returned to Ottawa to continue his duties as the member for Victoria. Except for returning to aid Conservative candidates in two by-elections, he remained in Ottawa until the beginning of the election campaign almost two years later. Pooley continued to lead the Conservative opposition during the 1927 and 1928
sessions. As "absentee Leader," Tolmie remained for the most part detached from the affairs of provincial politics.\textsuperscript{7}

During the 1927 legislative session, Liberal Premier John Oliver was under pressure from his party's younger members to put the party on a more progressive track. The premier responded by seeing through the legislature the first substantial Old-Age Pensions Act in Canada.\textsuperscript{8} In addition, important revisions in the tax laws were enacted along with a reduction in the rates of annuities and succession duties.\textsuperscript{9} The problems of farmers, who had largely spurned both parties in 1924, were given careful consideration. Led by E. D. Barrow, Minister of Agriculture, and supported by Oliver, the government enacted a Produce Marketing Act which provided for government regulation of the distribution and marketing of fruit. Despite charges by some party members that the act was "communistic," the legislation put the government squarely in the favor of the majority of Interior farmers.\textsuperscript{10} The party was put further on a progressive course when a Liberal provincial convention accepted a platform which favored the establishment of a health insurance program, a system of maternity benefits, and increased aid to education.\textsuperscript{11}

But all was not well in the legislature. Opposition leader Pooley challenged the government mercilessly on questions involving the Custom's Inquiry, which had helped to defeat the King government and caused a constitutional crisis in 1926. Testimony before the Vancouver sessions of the federal inquiry indicated that provincial politicians might be deeply involved in the scandal. There were also charges of improper campaign contributions involving liquor interests.\textsuperscript{12} The liquor scandal was by far the most potent. The government was charged with having entered into a
conspiracy with the brewers before the 1924 election, and having accepted contributions to its campaign funds in return for increasing the price of beer. Throughout the session, the opposition used the scandal to flog the government. In addition, the scandal was thoroughly exploited in the Conservative press. Like the P.G.E. controversy prior to the 1924 election, a Royal Commission was finally established to investigate the alleged misdealings, and like the earlier scandal, the charges were not substantiated. But although the government was exonerated, the airing of the matter significantly clouded the accomplishments of the session and dimmed the prestige of the Liberal Party. "What are the two words written in letters of black indelibly across the record of this session," wrote the Province:

... they are "liquor" and "allegation of corruption" ... whatever the investigations disclose, or whatever the investigations fail to disclose, the people of British Columbia have made up their minds as to the existence of a certain state of affairs.

Although the Tories could look with favor on the muckraking investigations which continued throughout the 1927 session, they were not without their own difficulties. As the election approached, the general gloss of unity painted over the party at Kamloops began to show flaws. The absence of Tolmie had left the party in a vulnerable position. Many Conservatives felt that by not returning to lead the opposition, Tolmie had left the party to drift. The "Liberal press" in particular chided Tolmie's absentee leadership as "irresponsible" in view of the upcoming election. Tolmie was well known throughout the Province and probably did not need to engage in an elaborate publicity campaign, but his absence made it impossible for him to establish himself as real leader, to strengthen his position in the party, and to organize a strong coalition of support which would be needed
to neutralize the factional strains left over from Kamloops.

By August 1927, rumors began circulating in the press about Tolmie quitting the leadership. Tolmie reacted by issuing a flat denial. He stated he did not have any intention of resigning and that the rumors had been started by a small element in the party intent on destroying him. A more serious problem arose when A. D. McRae was selected provincial organizer for the party. Some members openly withdrew their confidence in Tolmie's leadership over the matter, stating that McRae had deserted the party in 1923 to lead the Provincials, and thus was not a loyal Conservative. Charges were made that this was the beginning of an organized attempt by McRae and his followers to take control of the party. Again, Tolmie reacted sharply to the criticism and defended McRae. Both situations pointed up the basic problem of absentee leadership. Removed by 3,000 miles from provincial happenings, Tolmie was constantly forced into reacting to the situation in B.C. He was unable to take the initiative. Instead he could only lead the party from a defensive posture. Inevitably the control that can be exercised under these circumstances is diminished. Moreover, Tolmie's absence left the party organizational machinery to drift. The McRae appointment and Tolmie's decision to remain in Ottawa led to a struggle for power which eroded organization cohesion. In fact, as late as six months prior to the election, organization work was all but non-existent in many of the provincial ridings.

The death of Oliver in August, 1927, caused new problems for the Liberals. Oliver's successor, John D. MacLean, had been a competent administrator and one of the more progressive ministers in the Brewster and Oliver cabinets. But MacLean was no Oliver. To the dismay of those who had
recently been invigorated by Oliver's conversion to progressive legislation, MacLean offered little in the way of new policies. "Our policy for the future will not be an entirely new one," the new premier told a Liberal Party meeting:

It will be based on the policy of the past. It will be to continue the present policies but to avoid mistakes that have been made in the past; to still further reduce taxation, to continue our program of road building as fast as funds will permit, thus opening up the country and to improve the financial relations between Ottawa and B.C.23

The 1928 session, MacLean's only term as premier, confirmed his intent. The session produced little in the way of imaginative measures, although many measures were introduced for the purpose of catching votes. For example, more funds were appropriated for public works, mostly for roads. Farmers were wooed with new marketing legislation and reduced interest rates. A host of taxation changes were enacted which largely favored the business community and a resolution was passed demanding the restriction of Oriental immigration.24

The Liberal government had managed to dole out a little something for almost everyone in the 1928 session, but problems remained which could easily lead to its undoing. The government continued to be plagued by charges of corruption and misuse of campaign funds. The efforts to dispose of the P.G.E. had not been successful. The party was beset by internal strife.25 Perhaps most important, MacLean in contrast to Oliver, was colorless, lacked the skills for generating enthusiasm in the party, and was unable to recover the progressive spirit seemingly lost by the death of Oliver.

An election was called for July 18, 1928. Tolmie immediately resigned his federal seat, hurried home from Ottawa, and prepared his election manifesto.
On the whole, the Conservative manifesto was not innovative. In fact, Pattullo referred to it as "more of a compliment to the Liberal Party than anything else." Its main points were the following: tax reductions, including the abolition of succession duties, further aid to agriculture, expanded road construction, Oriental exclusion, the completion of the P.G.E., encouragement of capital investment in B.C., increased cooperation with the federal and British governments, and a promise to streamline the finances of the province. The platform did reflect the businesslike emphasis of past Tory governments. Conservative campaign pamphlets, press advertisements, and speakers repeated a single message: "A Conservative administration promises to give good, honest, clean government, making every attempt to get a dollar value for a dollar expended." In essence the Tory program was a promise for the application of strong business principles by businessmen to the everyday problems of government. "The business of government," stated a widely distributed campaign pamphlet, "is just like any other business."

If the Tory platform lacked innovation, so did the Liberals'. Promising the same fare as earlier campaigns, the one notable exception being a proposal to move toward a provincial health insurance scheme, the Liberal platform was practically a carbon copy of the Tories'—extension of the P.G.E., tax reduction, encouragement of capital investment, public works, and aid to agriculture. As the Province noted: "The lines of general policy are not very clearly drawn between the two major parties in British Columbia. There is not very much to choose between them." "There was nothing in the campaign," the Manitoba Free Press observed, "to suggest a conflict between one set of principles identifiable as Liberal, and another set, obviously Conservative. It was a battle between ins and outs, with
issues relating almost entirely to administrative government." Indeed it was. With the exception of railway questions which sparked some controversy, the campaign was reduced to platitudes about the credentials and qualifications of candidates. "A prime glory of the Conservatives," notes Robin, "was the team of prosperous businessmen who adorned their slate in Vancouver." To quote Robin,

A Conservative ad in the *Vancouver Sun* ran, "Public Opinion throughout British Columbia demanded successful businessmen—here they are!" An ad in the *Province* reminded voters that the Conservatives were "not putting up failures as candidates, but successful men...." Vancouver's prominent businessmen were "aggressive, enterprising... men concerning whose business qualifications there is no doubt." The voter was reminded that he was "a shareholder in the Province of British Columbia... good judgement tells you that you should select successful businessmen as directors."34

As William Dick, Conservative candidate from Vancouver said, "If the people on the Conservative ticket have made a success of their own business that is all the more reason why they can make a success of your business in Victoria."35

Considering the unprecedented prosperity the province enjoyed in 1928, it is not surprising that the campaign would turn out to be lackluster. Except for the economic downturn in 1920-1921, the period 1920-1928 was characterized by a high rate of economic growth. The province's major industries, mineral and forestry products, had nearly doubled their production in the eight years beginning in 1920. Per capita income in British Columbia was higher than any other province. The industrial payroll reached an all time high and wages were at a record level.36 Given the condition of the province, the tone of the campaign was predictable. The Tories attacked patronage, the government's railway problems, inefficiency in government administration, and boasted of a solid "business slate" the Liberals ran
on their record, and both parties committed themselves to maintaining prosperity through basically identical policies.

The election resulted in a crushing defeat for the Liberal Party. The Conservatives won 25 seats and received 53.3 percent of the vote. The full Conservative slate from Vancouver was returned, and the major population centers of the Lower Mainland all went Conservative as did Victoria in its entirety. The major farm constituencies, Chilliwack, Delta, Dewdney, Esquimalt, North Okanagan, South Okanagan, Saanich, and Similkameen, all traditional Conservative strongholds, held firm. Only two lower mainland seats remained with the Liberals—New Westminster and North Vancouver. The Liberals retained control of the North, capturing Skeena, Prince Rupert, Omineca and Columbia.

The Conservative victory resulted from at least three factors. First, the collapse of the Provincial party meant the anti-Liberal vote would not be divided and many ex-Conservatives such as Okanagan farmers and Vancouver businessmen would return to the party. Second, the Liberals had been in power for twelve years. Their image was tainted by scandal, patronage, and the generally colorless leader, MacLean. In contrast the Conservatives emerged from the Kamloops convention outwardly revitalized. They had a new leader and, out of office for more than a decade, they provided a fresh contrast to an old and sagging administration. Third, Simon Fraser Tolmie was perhaps the most significant factor in drawing large numbers of voters to the Conservative side. Tolmie had a tremendous popular appeal, a charming and witty style, and a good record as M.P. Moreover, he conveyed the image of a man "above politics," a statesman who provided a refreshing contrast to the partisan and machine politicians of the past. MacLean by
comparison was a rather drab personality who did not enjoy even the support of his own party. Plagued with the patronage-corruption issue, and representing a party which had become stale in office, the Liberal leader was a poor challenge to the popular Tolmie.

**Development of Conflict**

The first year in office the Tolmie government enacted a total of 79 legislative measures, most of which passed easily with the Conservative majority generally voting together. The two most significant were a bill which provided for control over the marketing of dairy products, and a bill which in effect established the Water Board as a public utilities commission. Some social and labour legislation was passed. The most important of these was legislation establishing an eight hour day and a Minimum Wage Act which replaced previous legislation invalidated by the courts. The government also concluded an agreement with the federal government which returned to the province approximately 815 million acres of Peace River land which had been held by the Canadian National Railway.

The Liberal opposition wasted little time in taking the offensive. The government was quickly under attack for not carrying out its campaign pledge to reduce taxes. More serious were charges that Finance Minister Shelly had falsified the public accounts books in presenting the estimates for the year 1920-1930. In addition, the opposition made political points by launching an attack on the government's "political use" of public auditors, claiming that public accounts were misrepresented to cast aspersion on the preceding Liberal governments. Attorney-General Pooley was charged with extravagant patronage involving the Liquor Control Board, all of which left the impression that he, and by implication the government, was in the
pay of the liquor interests. The government denied the charges. The conservative *Victoria Colonist* editorialized that Liberals and some dissident Conservatives were out to sabotage the new government. Despite the denials, the charges served to weaken the popularity of an administration which had campaigned on a "clean and business like government" platform.

More important, however, were the difficulties Tolmie faced within his party. The election of Tolmie in 1928 did not end the struggle for control of the party organization. Prior to the annual gathering of Conservatives in November, 1929, the press reported on the struggle between the party's old guard—mostly Bowserites—and the younger members to amend the party rules to favor one group or the other in the Vancouver association meetings. It was becoming quickly evident that Tolmie's election as party leader and the Tory election landslide had not in themselves muted party factionalism.

Faced with a difficult situation, Tolmie did little to make things easier for himself. In fact, some of his first actions undoubtedly had the effect of exacerbating an already explosive situation. One provocative action was the effort to purge the Conservative association leadership of personnel known to be loyal to Bowser. The first action of the new Provincial Executive, appointed by Tolmie, was to replace J. E. Merryfield, the provincial organizer appointed by Bowser in 1924, with J. A. Blair. Merryfield's removal especially incensed the Bowserites. They viewed Tolmie's act as an attempt by the premier and his followers intentionally to excise from the party the influence of Bowser. This served to alienate Bowser supporters. Furthermore, the selection of Blair was a politically
insensitive move in that it did nothing to enhance good relations with the federal wing of the party. Blair was disliked and distrusted by many in the federal wing, among them the powerful B.C. Conservative M.P., H. H. Stevens. 49

Cabinet selections, however, caused Tolmie his major problems. 50 Considering traditional criteria such as balancing city interests with rural interests, recognition of areas of electoral support, and including persons strong in the party organization, the cabinet might be viewed a success. The selection of Howe, Maitland, and Lougheed, all important persons in the provincial Conservative association, insured a strong link with the party organization. Howe, who was appointed Provincial Secretary, would act as financial controller of party funds. 51 The selection of Pooley was probably in recognition of his services to the party as Conservative House Leader and his support of Ladner at the Convention. 52 The Vancouver members presented a special problem. The Conservative Party campaigned on a platform which promised more representation to the large population centers, in particular Vancouver. Moreover, Tolmie had received strong support in that city. Thus he appointed two members to the cabinet from Vancouver, W. C. Shelly, Minister of Finance, and R. L. Maitland, Minister Without Portfolio. He also viewed the selection of Howe (Richmond) as a concession to Vancouver. He later remarked: "Mr. Howe is a man who had identified himself with the development of the city of Vancouver for many years . . . and when he was taken into the Cabinet he was considered in every way a Vancouverite in the fullest meaning of the term." 53

Although serious conflict would develop later over the question of adequate Vancouver representation, Tolmie believed he had made a significant
concession to the Province's largest city.

The remaining positions were filled largely on the basis of traditional criteria: Burden, Atkinson and McKenzie to achieve geographical balance; Bruhn because of his popularity in the Interior; and Hinchcliffe because of the need for representation from the capital city.

Tolmie's cabinet from the standpoint of party factions was a political failure. No prominent Bowser supporters were included. Influential members such as William Dick, Bowser's campaign manager at Kamloops in 1926, and J. W. Berry, a prominent Delta dairy farmer who would have been a logical choice for the Agriculture portfolio, were passed over. Given considerations of party unity it was a serious error. A positive move to reconcile the party's divisions might have helped to avert the alienation of the Bowser people and the political infighting which ultimately split the party.

While Tolmie's cabinet appointments did little to placate the divisions in the party, another serious conflict arose over the question of patronage. The dispute centered on two issues. The first involved demands that a purge of Liberal appointees left over from the previous administration be carried out by the government. Tolmie was caught in an untenable position. Having campaigned against "rampant patronage" in the former Liberal government, he could hardly justify a full scale house cleaning, followed by appointment of Conservative replacements. But he was under intense pressure from his party to do just that. He therefore risked the wrath of his party if he took no action. He decided to reject the party's demands for the purge, angering many Conservatives, but generally gaining favor with the press.

The favor, however, was short lived. Two well publicized dismissals, obviously blatantly political, gave the impression that Tolmie's sincerity
in eliminating political favoritism was questionable.

The second patronage issue was the more explosive: Who in the party had the right to hand out patronage for the whole of the province. In short, this issue raised the question of party control since whoever controls patronage is in a position to exercise substantial power in the party organization. The usual arrangement placed central coordination of patronage in the cabinet, under the authority of the party leader or whomever he might appoint for that purpose. There existed, however, a kind of unwritten rule that M.L.A.s would have the main say in decisions involving patronage in their ridings. This ordinarily resulted in patronage matters being worked out between the M.L.A. and officials in the riding associations. In Vancouver a system of long standing had been established whereby a local "advisory committee" composed of party workers from the various divisions in the city would be consulted about patronage appointments.

Before Tolmie had completed his first year in office, a serious rift had developed between the Tolmie government and the Vancouver Conservative associations over the question of control and dispensation of patronage. The problem involved the issue of patronage being dispensed directly from the cabinet without consultation with officials of the respective riding associations. The Vancouver associations, not satisfied with Tolmie in any event, regarded patronage as the prerogative of the organization and demanded they be consulted as was traditional practice. Tolmie responded by ignoring the demands, discounting them as attempts by Bowser sympathizers to stir up trouble.

The patronage problem, however, was far more serious than Tolmie believed, or was prepared to admit. And, although the discontent in Vancouver
generated the most publicity, the party organization everywhere was alienated. In some constituencies relations between riding associations and the Tolmie government became so strained over patronage matters that association members openly questioned whether or not to continue working for the party.64

Equally serious was the situation on Vancouver Island. There the problem was not just patronage, but complaints that Tolmie was ignoring Vancouver Island while catering to the city of Vancouver. For example, a group of prominent Victoria Tories formed an insurgent Vancouver Island Conservative association. Its purpose was to function in all organizational matters on Vancouver Island in the same manner as the B.C. Conservative association did for the entire province.65 This was clearly an attempt to consolidate the party associations on the Island in order to strengthen their bargaining position. Moreover, the insurgent group was known to be directed by Conservatives loyal to Bowser.66

The problems Tolmie was experiencing in the party in 1930 were reminiscent of an earlier day. Unity in the Conservative Party had always been highly dependent on the patronage, preferments and power the winning of office provided. Tolmie's problems were more serious because he did not play the game like his more "political" predecessors. Unity was further hampered because of Tolmie's inability to generate a widespread support base in the party independent of his attractiveness as a winning candidate. Conservatives united long enough to win power in 1928, but winning did not placate the factionalism plaguing the party. With the party in power, conflicts suppressed in the interest of election victory in 1928 now broke through the surface. This was immediately evident as warfare quickly broke
out between the followers of Tolmie and the Bowserites to capture control of the party organization in Vancouver and Victoria. With the emergence of such anti-Tolmie groups as the Vancouver Island Conservative Association, the so-called chain clubs in Esquimalt, the Capital City Constitutional Club in Victoria, and a rash of other quickly put together insurgent groups, the Bowserites had clearly come to life. "They (the Bowser supported insurgent organizations) objected to the Tolmie government not so much because it had been unbusinesslike and extravagant," a Victoria Times editorial correctly explained, "as because they themselves were not among the beneficiaries of its zeal. . . . It is not the size of the patronage pot they object to but the circumstance that no place was found for them within the confines of that pot."^69

Deep seated conflicts were manifested in other ways as well. Patronage, as important as it was, was only one factor contributing to the growing problems that Tolmie faced. As in 1916 and 1924, personality jealousies, ambition, and petty vindictiveness set the stage for serious party feuding. Many Bowserites wanted Bowser in the Tolmie Ministry. Others resented the way he was "unfairly" treated by the party after his defeat in 1924 when no attempt was made by the party to find a seat for him. They contrasted that "callousness" with the actions of the Liberals who, after the defeat of Oliver in the same election, found a seat for him in Nelson. The Bowserites might have been conciliated had the new party leadership after the Kamloops convention seriously tried to reach some accommodation with the Bowser people.

There were also growing problems with the federal wing of the party. By 1930, with the approaching federal election and the need for accelerated
work in the ridings, the increased feuding in the party was an impediment to federal party work. The grievances of riding association members were viewed by some members of the federal wing as a serious threat to their election prospects in British Columbia. The problem escalated when federal Conservative leader, R. B. Bennett, while touring the province in preparation for the upcoming federal election, expressed the feeling that, "federal party concerns were not being looked after adequately by the provincial government." On one occasion, in response to complaints from Vancouver association members that Victoria ministers were ignoring them, Bennett said: "What! If that is so you should go to Dr. Tolmie and demand that man's dismissal from office." Bennett was understandably concerned about the growing discontent among provincial Conservatives. With a view toward the approaching election, the demoralization of large numbers in the party organization would do nothing to enhance organizational activity. For obvious reasons Bennett was upset that internal party difficulties were not being ironed out and made a direct appeal to the premier to take steps to placate the factions for the "good of the whole party." Upon completing his provincial tour in 1929, he wrote Tolmie:

I cannot overestimate the seriousness of the present situation. I left the province of British Columbia more depressed than I can well express. I will not trouble you by going into the details as to the conditions of our party in the various parts of the province. . . . Because I am your friend, I am pointing these things out to you, for of all the men that know you, none would regret more than I that your place in the political history of Canada should be that of a Conservative Prime Minister who destroyed his party in the most Conservative province in Canada.

Tolmie was deeply angered over Bennett's meddling in affairs he felt were not the federal leader's concern. In particular Tolmie resented Bennett's implying that the party was in danger of being destroyed in the
province. He referred Bennett to the results of the last provincial election and reminded him of the large number of Conservative M.P.s consistently returned from British Columbia. Tolmie, admitting there was indeed factional strife within the British Columbia party, charged Bennett with greatly exaggerating its extent. The premier told Bennett that many of the Conservative dissidents Bennett came into contact with were dissatisfied, not because of Tolmie's policies or his relations with the B.C. Conservative Association, but because "they were part of the Bowser faction, who have raised hell ever since Kamloops." Tolmie made clear he did not regard the Bowser elements as loyal Conservatives, asserting they would continue their efforts to undermine the party as long as he was premier.

The strains which developed between the federal wing and the Tolmie government during Tolmie's first few years illustrate a basic problem that parties must contend with in federal systems. The federal wing of the party faced with an upcoming election was primarily interested in retaining its strong Conservative representation in B.C. The Tolmie government's primary interest was in governing, organizing support and making a credible political record. Tolmie was faced with reconciling the demands of party dissidents without risking a general rift in his government. His problems with Bennett stemmed from the federal leader's view that the actions or inactions of Tolmie were dividing the party and therefore weakening its organization. The government's handling of party problems had not satisfied Bennett, but Tolmie, in addition to being party leader, had a government to run, and therefore dealt with the dissidents and used patronage in ways he deemed appropriate. Instead of smoothing over the situation, Bennett's interference further undermined the authority of Tolmie.
On balance the first two years of the Tolmie administration were beset by many difficulties. Party feuding continued and although Tolmie managed to retain the confidence and support of the majority of Conservatives, the growing dissent posed a challenge to his leadership. The opposition took advantage as Duff Pattullo, the new Liberal leader, effectively exploited the patronage issue to discredit the government. At one point he presented in the form of questions to various ministers over two hundred accusations that the administration was rewarding its political supporters with government appointments. Although the allegations remained unproved, the subsequent publicity strengthened the view that the Conservatives, despite their promises of reform, were caught up in "seamy political dealings" not unlike previous administrations.

The opposition criticized the lack of innovation in the Conservative's program and the "bungled inefficiency" of government administration. The government's lack of progress in the social field was condemned and the administration was berated for "raising false hopes" for campaign purposes and then doing nothing. More potent was the issue of inefficient administration in government departments, especially in the Department of Lands, which had, by the government's own admission, sustained a loss to the province of 2.2 million dollars in uncollectable land taxes. Pattullo attributed much of the problem to the inexperience of the Cabinet. Only three of its members—Pooley, McKenzie, and Hinchliffe, had previously been in the legislature, and none of them had administrative experience. Furthermore, it had become "obvious" that Tolmie had abandoned his election promise that he would not distinguish between "Conservatives, Liberals, and Holy Rollers" in making appointments. "The government had become," said
The most pernicious party and administration that the country has ever experienced. . . . it was too weak-willed, weak-minded, and weak-backed to resist the importunities of the hungry horde of heelers . . . and it had prostituted the public service for personal and party purposes in the most pernicious and pusillanimous fashion.

By the end of 1930, the government's problems had rapidly escalated. The onset of the depression had precipitated a severe unemployment crisis, especially in Vancouver, during the previous winter. Faced with public restlessness over the financial crises in the province and under severe attack from the opposition in the legislature, Tolmie made his first major changes in the ministry. Finance Minister Shelly was replaced by J. W. Jones, House Speaker from North Okanagan. R. W. Bruhn was moved to the important Public Works portfolio. The incumbent Minister of Public Works, W. S. Lougheed, was transferred to the Department of Lands following the resignation of F. P. Burden. The most important shift of course was the moving of Shelly, whose original appointment was believed to be largely a result of his heavy contributions, to the relatively unimportant post of President of the Council. There was no hiding the fact that Shelly's performance as Minister of Finance was less than satisfactory, and he was under constant fire both in the press and from the opposition for his actions. Tolmie was also under pressure from within his party to dispose of the Finance Minister. The shakeup left the city of Vancouver without an important portfolio. In light of the conflict Tolmie was having with that city, leaving Vancouver without a high ranking cabinet minister could only bring on larger problems later.
Crisis

In mid-1929, British Columbia was at the height of post war prosperity, experiencing a boom unequalled in its history. A year later all was changed. The financial crash of October, 1929, set in motion a depression which devastated the economy of British Columbia. It is not the purpose here to deal with the economics and the severity of the crisis in B.C. This has been more than adequately treated elsewhere. Let it suffice to say that as in most parts of North America, British Columbia experienced a drastic curtailment of production, spiralling unemployment, and extreme hardship in virtually every sector of the economy. However, one important point needs to be made. Because of the peculiar nature of the economy in the province, the effects of the depression in B.C. were especially dislocating for the business and laboring classes. The economy of B.C. was primarily dependent on extractive type industries (lumbering, mining, fishing), which produced unfinished goods mostly for export. Thus the economy was extremely vulnerable to changing world market conditions. As conditions worsened throughout the 30's in most parts of the world, the effect on British Columbia's corporate economy was automatic. For example, it was estimated that export prices for British Columbia products fell from an index value of 90 in 1929 (base year 1926) to 52 in 1933. The value of commodity out-put in the province declined by well over one-half. The construction industry lost almost 85 percent of its production, production in the forest industry declined by almost 70 percent, and by June, 1931, when the census was taken, unemployment had reached 27.5 percent. This was higher in every employment category than all other provinces.

If the concern expressed in the legislature is any indication, the
onset of depression in British Columbia evoked surprisingly little reaction from public officials. Even a marked increase in relief expenditures in Vancouver, and agitation by the unemployed in January, 1930, were for the most part ignored by the province's elected officials. Throughout the entire legislative session of 1930, the members made only a few passing references to the downturn taken by the economy, concerning themselves instead almost entirely with the necessity of increasing revenues so as to meet rising governmental expenditures and balance the budget. Thus, Tolmie, in assuring R. B. Bennett during the federal election that unemployment in British Columbia was "not critical," seemed to be reflecting the measure of official awareness.

In retrospect some reasons suggest themselves as to why the provincial government seemed unappreciative of the deepening crisis. First, the premier and his colleagues were both ideologically and politically unprepared and unwilling to take the drastic steps needed to deal with the unemployment problem that had become acute, especially in Vancouver, as early as December, 1929. In the month of January 1930, when the number of unemployed persons increased by 33 percent, the city was left to deal with the problems almost entirely by itself. The Tory Party had campaigned on a platform of business government, balanced budgets, and efficient administration. They were unwilling to make concessions which smacked of socialism or paternalistic government. According to the Conservatives, the business of government during periods of "abnormal conditions and adverse markets"—as Finance Minister Shelly called it—was to curtail expenditures and raise taxes. Moreover, politicians in 1930 had no way of knowing they were at the beginning of a long depression.
About the only positive action taken was the establishment of relief camps (in conjunction with the federal government), where destitute unemployed men could be housed while laboring on highways and other public works projects.\(^{94}\) To be sure, this had political overtones. Such a scheme, it was thought, would utilize the labor of the unemployed and, since most of the camps were in the Interior, ease the relief rolls of the metropolitan area while at the same time removing protesters.

A second reason for the lack of substantial governmental action related to the approaching federal election scheduled for mid-1930. The Conservatives had swept the province in 1926 gaining 12 of 14 seats and winning over 54 percent of the vote. The comparative strength of Conservatives made British Columbia after 1926 the most Conservative province in the country. Federal leader R. B. Bennett was determined to keep it that way and strongly indicated his desire to Tolmie during his July visit. Tolmie had been placed on the defensive. Any losses in Conservative strength would be blamed directly on him, especially in light of the severe factionalism that had manifested itself in the party in 1929 and 1930. Tolmie was determined to do all he could to help out in the campaign. He announced his strong support of the federal Conservative Party and committed the resources of the provincial organization to its cause.\(^{95}\) He stumped for federal candidates and oversaw the collection by the British Columbia organization of some $82,000 for the federal campaign.\(^{96}\) Under these circumstances it is difficult to see how the provincial government could have taken any drastic measures to ease the effects of depression without risking an uproar from the majority of relatively well off, middle class Conservative voters, largely not yet seriously affected by the depression. Already
the province was saddled with an "intolerably inflated" provincial debt. Thus to take any stiff action, which would inevitably involve belt tightening and economic sacrifice, would be a serious political risk. The Tolmie government was forced into a waiting game.97

To be sure, some minimal actions were taken. The Minister of Finance announced in the Budget Speech increases in gasoline and fuel oil taxes in the hope of increasing revenues.98 Additional tax changes were made in 1931 and 1932 which included new education taxes, increased liquor taxes, a surtax added to the income tax and succession duties, and the placing of a greater burden upon the municipalities, principally by discontinuing provincial grants for such things as mother's pensions and municipal hospitals.99 The government's approach, consistent with its business-minded outlook, was summed up by Shelly: "If the people of British Columbia demand additional services, if they insist on any large new commitments in any direction, they must be prepared to assume a larger burden of taxation."100 The approach was piecemeal and moderate; increase taxation wherever possible and at the same time limit expenditures in all ways possible.

The government's approach had minimal effect on the deepening economic crisis. Changes in taxation policy did not make up for the loss of government revenue during these years. Equally unsuccessful were the government's attempts to limit expenditures. The principal features of the economy drive, the reduction of wages and numbers of civil servants, decreases in "non-essential" public expenditures such as cutting back funding of higher education, and the elimination of new borrowing for road construction, were nearly insignificant in so far as the savings produced.101

Meanwhile, dissent within the Conservative Party was increasing.102
Many complained the government was not doing enough, that it was simply drifting and not taking strong initiatives. Others felt the premier was taking actions which smacked of "socialism," actions which were detrimental to the province's dominant business and financial interests. In particular, there was considerable party reaction to the government's new Special Revenue Tax Act which imposed a tax of 1 percent on wages earned after April 1, 1931. This "supertax," as it was called, was vehemently protested by boards of trade, city and municipal councils, labor unions, and by the Conservative associations in Burnaby, South Vancouver, and Esquimalt. 103

The surtax resulted in an outpouring of resolutions condemning the government, Parker notes, "and in one case in Vancouver a resolution was passed demanding that Tolmie resign in favor of Bowser." 104 At least one member of the caucus, George Walkem, the ex-Provincial Party member, privately informed Tolmie he no longer supported his leadership. 105

Far more serious, however, was an ultimatum presented to Tolmie in September by four Vancouver backbenchers. In effect, they threatened to resign unless the city was given more financial aid and at least one major administrative portfolio. 106 This threat caused Tolmie much concern. The thought of a complete break between Vancouver and the government would be intolerable in light of the crucial political importance of the province's largest city. One only had to recall the election of 1924 to realize the impact of alienating Vancouverites from the government and party. On the other hand, how could he give in to blackmail? After getting assurance from friends in the federal wing of the party that the federal Conservatives were not involved, 107 Tolmie decided to call their bluff. In a lengthy letter explaining his reasons for selecting the original cabinet
members, and his firm belief that, financially, Vancouver had received more from the Tolmie government than from any government in 20 years, he firmly refused their demands. 108

The Vancouver members retained their seats and an open break in the party was averted, at least temporarily. But the Vancouver situation remained unresolved as Tolmie made no significant overtures to heal the breach. In his correspondence he referred to the dissidents as the "other group" and "faction" which was bent on destroying him and the party. 109 He took the view that the troublemakers were not really loyal Conservatives at all but constituted a cabal attempting to gain control of the party. Outraged at the disloyalty displayed by certain party members, he challenged them, "to come out in the open and declare themselves." "Let them say what it is they want or else let them slip out of the party, if indeed they have ever been Conservatives at all." 110

At the annual meeting of the British Columbia Conservative Association held at Nanaimo on November 27, 1931, Tolmie acknowledged that dissatisfaction in the party was widespread and certain persons were agitating against his leadership. He urged the members to remember what internecine warfare had done to the party in previous election: "Lack of loyalty has ruined more public careers in Canada than perhaps any other cause," he said. "Whispering campaigns within the party and spread-the-poison efforts are unbecoming a Conservative and only lead to the ruin of the party." 111 But despite Tolmie's appeal, a proposal sponsored by supporters of Bowser was entered calling for a leadership convention. The resolution was soundly rejected 79-23, but it was additional evidence that the party was deeply divided. 112
As the 1932 legislative session opened, the government could only report further bad news to a province beleaguered by the worsening depression. In his Budget Address, the despondent Finance Minister, J. W. Jones, told of a provincial debt that was reaching astronomical levels, relief costs which were skyrocketing, taxation revenues which were continuing to decline, and in general an economy which had reached record lows. Still wedded to the Tory philosophy of balanced budgets through increased taxes and decreased expenditures, Jones announced further changes in the government's taxation policy. The most important was a graduated income tax of 1 percent on each $1,000 of income up to $19,000 after which the tax would be a straight 10 percent. In addition, expenditures for salaries of civil servants, education, and road building were decreased, and the bulk of the cost of social services was transferred to the municipalities. But none of this had much effect as revenues continued to shrink and government expenditures continued to be demanded. To make matters worse, government officials were charged with corruption in the administration of relief funds and deliberate distortion of government expenditures in some departments in order to satisfy party obligations.

The general dissatisfaction with the government's inability to cope with the mounting economic problems prompted the appointment by the government in April, 1932, of a committee composed of prominent businessmen to make a thorough investigation into provincial finances. The idea for such an investigation was first presented to Tolmie in November, 1931 by a delegation of Vancouver businessmen, but the premier's reluctance to "opening the government books to the outsiders" delayed the investigation until April when the party pressure and public opinion pressured him into
acquiescing. The object of the investigation was to find some method of arresting expenditure so that the government would be able to live within its income.

The Kidd Commission, as it was subsequently known, was conceived by a group of businessmen headed by H. R. MacMillan. It included representatives of the Vancouver Board of Trade, the Canadian Manufacturer's Association, the Victoria Chamber of Commerce, and the Retail Merchants' Association. As a cross section of the province's business community, the group had strong contacts with the Tory Party but also had been among the most vocal critics of the government's management of provincial affairs. The Commission was given complete access to government records and documents and government employees were lent to it for assistance. Tolmie agreed that its report would be published within a short time of its issuance, but he gave no guarantee that its recommendations would be implemented. "It must be clearly understood," Tolmie wrote to H. R. MacMillan, "that the Cabinet in considering the suggestions your commission may offer, reserves the right to decide whether or not it be advisable to adopt such suggestions."

The report was finished on June 12 and presented to the government. Its main recommendations were as follows: the assumption by the Lieutenant-Governor of supervision of government expenditure; reduction in the size of the legislative assembly from 48 to 28; the abandonment of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway (P.G.E.) unless sold within nine months; the discontinuance of the grant to the University of British Columbia and the possible closing of that institution; the reduction of teacher's salaries by one-fourth; limitation of the age for free education to the end of the 14th year; the cessation of all public works (with the exception of
essential road maintenance); and curtailment to the extent of $6,000,000 of the total annual expenditures of the province.\textsuperscript{121} The government reacted with incredulity. Most of the report's proposals were viewed as extreme and ridiculous. The government claimed a $6,000,000 reduction in expenditures was impossible and closing the university would not be considered unless such action were absolutely essential.\textsuperscript{122} The proposal to reduce the size of the cabinet and legislature was not unpopular, but almost everyone deemed the idea of the Lieutenant Governor supervising government finances absurd.\textsuperscript{123} About the only part of the report with which the government concurred were the recommendations concerning the sale of the P.G.E. and the reduction of the railway's operating costs until such a time as it could be sold.\textsuperscript{124}

On September 23, the government issued the official edition of the report to the press, expressing the view that it had no intention of implementing any of its major recommendations.\textsuperscript{125} The opposition wasted no time in making the report and the government's response to it a major political issue. Calling the report a "logical outcome of a government insensitive to the needs of the province and politically unable to maintain peace even within its own party," Pattullo called upon the government to step down: "Instead of indulging in all the present blithering kite-flying and cheap intrigue in a pitiful effort to hang on to their jobs, Dr. S. F. Tolmie and his cabinet, as men of honor should hurry off to the Lieutenant Governor and resign."\textsuperscript{126}

By its tone and recommendations, the report was an indictment of not just the Tolmie government, but the whole system of party government in the province. Like the Provincial movement in 1924, in its call for non-partisan
administration, it implied that the province's problems were largely the result of the competitive struggle between political parties, each having but one aim, the control of the spoils of government for selfish interest. The report asserted that the party struggle was meaningless and discounted the necessity of partisan opposition on the premise that a change of government had no greater significance than "the patronage list of the party in power is replaced by that of their opponents." Yet the report offered no alternative to party government other than a proposal for non-partisan business-like administration or, as the report called it, "an efficient and unhindered administrative machine." They equated the province with a business enterprise, not too surprising in light of the commission's membership and support.

The publication of the Kidd Report provided the Liberal opposition with new political ammunition. They exploited its findings as positive evidence that the government was no longer capable of managing the province's affairs. Both in and out of the legislature, Liberals asked how a government could carry on which had to resort to non-governmental businessmen to solve their problems. The report also was a point of controversy in the Conservative Party. Many Tories called it the "Vancouver Report," an obvious reference to the make-up of the committee. Others, generally dissatisfied with Tolmie anyway, saw the report as a positive sign of weakness, a clear indication that Tolmie and his followers were not capable of dealing with the province's problems and, as a government, were on the verge of collapse. Still others viewed the report's recommendations as a sensible response to the economic crisis and demanded that a new leader be selected (Bowser was the choice of many) who would implement the commission's recommendations. At least two British Columbia Conservative
M.P.s were included in the latter group.131

Within this atmosphere serious agitation began for the formation of a non-partisan "union" government to deal with the problems of the depression. The coalition idea, although not publicly embraced by Tolmie until the autumn of 1932, had been bandied around in the press as early as spring, 1931. The Vancouver Province was the principal mover behind the coalition idea. As it became increasingly obvious that the Conservative government was not able to solve the problems the depression had brought to B.C., the Province suggested a coalition government, modeled on the recently formed National Government in the U.K., be established in an attempt to deal more effectively with depression problems.132 In November, 1931, the paper sounded out the Tolmie government on the matter, but the government expressed no interest.

It was not until 1932 with the publication of the Kidd Report that Tolmie began seriously to consider the coalition idea. Apprised of the discontent within his government and the havoc in his party, Tolmie, who had had previous experience in the 1917 federal union government, began sounding out party members' opinions about coalition. The idea was met favorably by the government. All of the cabinet members supported coalition as did a majority of the back benchers.133 With the support of the Province, influential members of the business community, and the majority of the caucus, Tolmie announced:

Realizing the trend of thought throughout the world today is that government should include those men, who regardless of other considerations, appear to be able to render the best service to the state, I have, after careful consideration and discussion with many responsible citizens of the province decided to accept this principle.134

A few days later Tolmie sent letters to Bowser and Pattullo inviting
them to join a coalition under his leadership. Both immediately rejected the offer. Bowser replied that he was not interested in being part of a cabinet under Tolmie's leadership and Pattullo rejected the idea out of hand.

The reasons for both their rejections are not hard to find. Already in the autumn of 1932 there were clear signs that Bowser was planning to lead a third party in the forthcoming election. Joining with the Tolmie government would, in the view of Bowser supporters, identify their leader with a government that was sinking rapidly. By starting a new party, Bowser probably believed he could capitalize on disaffected Conservative "independents" of the type which formed the backbone of the Provincial Party in 1924, and ex-Liberals who were disenchanted with the "socialistic" Pattullo. By calling the new movement "non-partisan," Bowser hoped he could capitalize on the anti-party mood emanating from the Kidd report without destroying traditional Conservatism in the process. It was an ingenious plan but as later events would show, the Bowser people greatly misjudged the emerging Liberals' strength as well as the relative weakness of Bowser's own support base among disaffected Conservatives.

Pattullo saw no reason to entertain Tolmie's invitation either. To join a coalition when Liberal prospects never looked better would make little sense. Under the leadership of the politically able Pattullo, who was officially chosen leader of the party in 1930 following the resignation of MacLean, the party organization had been rebuilt, revitalized and streamlined. Aided by Major J. S. Moodie, the provincial organizer, Pattullo reorganized the party from the bottom up. Voters' lists were updated, membership drives were launched, numerous speaking tours were begun, and the party
electoral machinery was thoroughly revitalized. The province was organized to an extent that the Liberal office had a single person responsible for the voters' list in each riding who coordinated the work in each polling area. Pattullo, in short, built the Liberal Party into perhaps the most effective province-wide organization since party lines were established in 1903.

The Liberal Party was obviously in a politically advantageous position but Pattullo had other reasons as well for rejecting coalition. One was the simple matter of Pattullo's own philosophy. Pattullo believed that the major evil in B.C. politics was not party government, but the Conservative government. Coming from a family with a long tradition of involvement in Liberal politics, Pattullo was a staunch party man who believed deeply that the Liberal Party was the only party in Canada which represented all interests, poor and rich alike, and was capable of balancing the one against the other.

"Where the Liberal Party was the center party, the Tory Party was the party of business." In Pattullo's mind there was a basic difference between Conservatism and Liberalism. The Conservatives, representing Eastern money and business interests, spoke only for the few and the wealthy. The Liberals, however, were an omnibus party, portraying a wide spectrum of interests, and representing persons from all classes, high and low. "The Liberal Party," Pattullo often said, "was the embodiment of the non-partisan principle."

It [the Liberal Party] knows of no class distinctions, and its principles invite everyone of every walk of life to their support. It is the desire of the Liberal party . . . that all interests shall be represented in the up-building of the province, and the furtherance of its prosperity. . . . Liberalism . . . stands for the protection of the welfare of all from the misuse of power for any particular group or class and that the welfare of the community as a whole shall predominate.
Pattullo felt joining a coalition as a minor partner would have the effect of destroying opposition to "government controlled by economic elites." The Liberals who were the "embodiment of all societal interests" would be co-opted into an organization whose preponderant weight would reside in the upper classes. "A grave danger of non-party government," said Pattullo, "is that the worst forces in both political parties would concentrate to hold control with the public the common prey." The evil of the party system was not strong opposition but the existence of a party dominated by the interests of single class, and it was precisely this situation, "rule by the upper-class dominated Conservative Party," which required strong and vigilant opposition.

Pattullo had good political reasons for refusing too. He perceived the coalition idea to be a desperate attempt of a dying government to hold on to power. In a press statement he reminded people that "the government already had a three to one majority, and can do anything that it wishes to. . . ." The government, in his view, had embraced coalition because they felt it was the only policy which could save it from election defeat.

On September 13, Pattullo publicly refused Tolmie's invitation to join a coalition government. He pointed out that during Tolmie's tenure in office, the viewpoints of the two men "in respect of both policy and administration have been at almost complete variance." He queried as to what policies Tolmie had in mind for the future that "could not already have been put into effect with the large majority in the legislature supporting Tolmie." He concluded by saying:

It is not reasonable to suppose that these differences could be suddenly reconciled. While I appreciate your confidence in me asking me if I would join a union government under your leadership, I do not believe that the public interests would be best served by me agreeing to do so.
Pattullo followed his refusal with a public demand that the government resign, since "the premier had now publicly admitted his inability to carry on."\textsuperscript{147}

The Conservative Party membership meanwhile was not united on the coalition idea. Some were outraged at Tolmie's overtures to the Liberals without first gaining the party's approval through a regular convention. Resolutions protesting Tolmie's coalition actions and requesting him to resign were passed by three Vancouver Conservative associations:\textsuperscript{148}

> Whereas, Dr. S. F. Tolmie has obstructed repeated attempts to have a convention held; and whereas, Dr. Tolmie has announced through the press that the administration headed by him is not able to handle the business of the province of B.C., also that Dr. Tolmie is now said to be engaged in forming another party . . . This Association hereby requests that Dr. Tolmie forthwith resign from the leadership of this party, and hereby protests his action and disputes his right to commit the party to a policy of his own making, without any consultation with, or authority from, the Conservative party. . . . Therefore be it resolved that this Association goes on record as having lost all confidence in Dr. Tolmie's leadership.\textsuperscript{149}

Tolmie's union plans received a boost when the Executive of the British Columbia Conservative Association, meeting in October, 1932, unanimously supported Tolmie and his proposal for union government.\textsuperscript{150} But the boost was short-lived. The whole association, at its annual meeting on November 27, decided to refer the matter to the district associations for consideration before any official action was taken by the party.\textsuperscript{151} Moreover, the government-supported slate for the executive of the association was defeated and the convention decided to transfer the association from Victoria to Vancouver. This was a serious blow to Tolmie's union plans.\textsuperscript{152} Not only was control of the association slipping into anti-Tolmie hands but the party's offices would henceforth be located in Vancouver, the hotbed of anti-union, pro-Bowser sentiment.\textsuperscript{153} Tolmie's hopes of carrying the organization
with him to form the nucleus of the union party were all but lost.

The impasse over union government left Tolmie in a difficult position. He had two choices: fight it out with his opponents within the party, perhaps through a party convention, or write the dissidents off and attempt to recruit support from outside the party. That he chose the latter course is not surprising considering the kind of politician he was and the general situation he faced. Tolmie, the non-professional politician, had never been one to bargain and negotiate with party factions. Tolmie's philosophy of leader as "public servant" and his own style of personal behaviour made the manipulation of others by political skill distasteful to him. To be sure, the situation was so bad Tolmie must have believed a reconciliation with the Bowserites without first resigning the leadership was all but futile. Nonetheless, Tolmie was seriously of the opinion a coalition government was right and proper considering the crisis the province was undergoing. Sensible people would not let party ties or petty factional strife prevent them from doing what was right. By continuing to push for coalition, in spite of refusals from both Pattullo and Bowser, Tolmie probably believed it was right because the crisis-ridden province required it.

Despite the refusals of Bowser and Pattullo, Tolmie continued his efforts to build a union government. He found a few promises of financial support and managed to recruit a few candidates. But on the whole the recruitment drive was not successful. The simple fact was his leadership was already largely undermined and the chances of building a viable union government without his own party's support were nothing less than futile.

In early 1933, with the union movement in limbo, Bowser and his supporters began organizing a new party. In January, Bowser formally announced
he was returning to public life to lead a "non-partisan" movement in the forthcoming election, explaining to the press that the Conservative Party as presently constituted was no longer a factor in the public life of the province. With Vancouver business backing, and promises of support from a number of local Conservative associations, principally in Vancouver and on Vancouver Island, the Bowser movement developed momentum and generated wide publicity in the press.

Supporters of the new "non-party" party were a varied lot. Aside from Bowser loyalists such as William Dick and Nelson Spencer, the membership included: Dugald Donaghy, former Liberal Minister of Finance under MacLean and the current Vice-President of the Provincial Liberal Association; Harold Brown, former president of the Vancouver Board of Trade; Dr. G. A. B. Hall, former Liberal M.L.A. from Nelson; J. E. Merryfield, a prominent Vancouver Conservative organizer and associate of H. H. Stevens; Charles Woodward, Vancouver Liberal who had broken with the Oliver government; E. B. Andras, a former Vancouver alderman; and J. B. Thomson, Vancouver businessman and former chairman of the Liquor Control Board. Bowser's program was based on one premise—"cut and save." He proposed limiting provincial expenditures to $20 million (reduction of over $2 million from that estimated for 1933-1934), lowering taxes, balancing the budget "if at all possible," an immediate round table conference to settle the disagreements between the government and the municipalities (instead of a Royal Commission of investigation as proposed by the government), and a "dramatic" reduction in the membership of the cabinet. Following the sentiments expressed in the Kidd Report, Bowser lashed out at the evils of party government maintaining that only a non-partisan administration with experienced public servants...
could pull the province out of economic chaos. 159

In effect, the Bowser movement was an attempt to exploit the non-partisan theme, while offering virtually nothing to cure British Columbia's financial woes.

If Bowser's platform seemed reactionary, it did manage to attract some cross-party support. The flirtation of Donaghy (who was immediately ejected from the Liberal Party by Pattullo) and a few other Liberals convinced Bowser that inroads could be made into the Liberal vote. With traditional Conservatives loyal to Bowser, a handful of Liberals dissatisfied with the "radical" nature of Pattullo's "work and wages" proposals, and the in-vogue non-partisan theme, the way seemed clear, thought Bowser, to capture control of the government. However, as he had so often done in the past, Bowser misjudged the depth of his support and his appeal—the appeal of this 65 year old ex-leader who could not unite even his own party. As one Tory said: "I would rather support Pattullo. . . . In 1916 Bowser was content to scuttle Dick McBride. Now he is out to scuttle the whole Conservative Party." 160

Tolmie and his union plan meanwhile continued to drift. Even the Vancouver Province began to dismay and hinted at favoring alternative leadership. 161 Yet Tolmie, beset by the continuing provincial financial crisis, 162 seemed only to be biding his time in hope that something would happen which would rescue his tattered government. Bruce Hutchison, the legislative correspondent for the Province comments on the desolation of the frustrated premier:

Premier Tolmie delivered to the Legislature yesterday an apologia and valedictory for the government hovering on the awful brink of reorganization. . . . The premier's speech was indeed unique for the unquestioning simplicity of it, unique for its evident sincerity and rustic flavour, unique for what it contained but utterly
for what it left out. . . . Not one word on the union government, not one word of reduction of the cabinet, not one glance at the glorious spectacle of current provincial politics, not a hint of policy, not a whisper of comfort to his followers or the hint of trouble for his enemies. He stood there in the House, a massive figure seeming to be in better health than ever, bright and jolly under a heavy load of official and private misfortune—a plain old-fashioned man who is doing his best, according to the methods of a world that keeps tumbling down about his ears. . . . What would he do with his treasury empty, his government on the eve of an election, his majority milling like Chilcotin steers, the machine politicians interested only in hanging on to office to the last moment, his potential vote split by a new third party. . . . For him, there is no economic magic, no new theory of government, no new world. There is a little nostalgia for the good old days when things were so much better and simpler and the hope that they may soon return, for civilization close to the good earth as Tolmie knew it. The great-hearted man, a human being whose humanity can not be hidden under the pall of this House.163

Collapse

In the spring of 1933, after muddling through a legislative session which produced almost nothing in the way of fresh policies, 164 Tolmie extended a second invitation to Pattullo to join in the formation of a union government. He reiterated his earlier reasons for coalition, adding that union was now even more imperative "since economic conditions in the province have steadily become more acute. 165

Pattullo sent his refusal the next day, repeating his earlier response that the Conservatives, possessed of a numerical majority, could put into effect any new proposals, and the opposition would support any such measures if they were in the public interest. 166 "The House is now in session," Pattullo replied, "and if you have any such measures, the opportunity is there to present them." 167 And in repeating his earlier request that Tolmie resign, Pattullo said:
During nearly five years of office you have had in your Government men of experience in public affairs, and men who have been looked upon as leading men and you have also had a three-to-one majority in the House. . . . Instead of dealing with the immediate present, you appear to be mostly concerned as to the possible outcome of the approaching election. I do not share your alarm. In any event, it is the business of the people to express their wishes. . . . I respectfully suggest to you that the best service that you can render this province at the present time is to immediately call a general election, and have the issue settled.168

In the opinion of some, Tolmie should have followed Pattullo’s advice and immediately called an election.169 But he chose not to, apparently hoping that his Union government plan could still succeed even without the Leader of the Opposition’s support.170

The second refusal by Pattullo left Tolmie in a precarious political position. Having failed both times in his quest to convince the Liberals, what possible hope could there be for union government? Perhaps more important, his failure to move the coalition plan off the drawing board led many Tories who were still loyal to Tolmie to question their own political future if coalition was never to be. Few seriously believed that a government led by the discredited premier could be reelected.171 In addition, many in the caucus felt that union had collapsed because of the bungling of Tolmie. Already some of Tolmie’s staunchest loyalists indicated their desire to leave the government. After Pattullo’s second refusal, the Province reported a poll taken in caucus on the union issue which indicated a majority of members would take Pattullo as leader if that is what it would take to form a union government.172 R. W. Bruhn publicly stated he would not remain in any cabinet that was strictly partisan173 and back-bencher E. C. Carson repudiated Tolmie’s leadership and later joined the Bowser group.174 Even the Province, discouraged with Tolmie, suggested new leadership was needed if the party was to survive.175
Tolmie stubbornly continued to fight for union government. He told the caucus it could be organized without the Liberals and stressed that he was making every effort to get "outsiders to come in." Among the "outsiders" who had been tapped were General Victor Odlum, a prominent Liberal known to be dissatisfied with Pattullo, and W. M. Dennies, the president of the National Labor Council of Vancouver, who Tolmie thought would attract labor support.

But Tolmie's efforts were an exercise in futility. The few takers were mostly unknown, without political experience, and generally lacking in political support. Reduced to wishful thinking as regards union government, facing the end of a session which accomplished almost nothing, and plagued by the continual desertion of Conservative colleagues, the few supporters he had left began scrambling for their political lives.

To make matters worse the provincial organization all but abandoned the Tory leader. A March, 1933 meeting of the Executive of the British Columbia Conservative Association decided to refer the question of union government back to constituency associations and rejected a proposal for a convention before the next provincial election. A month later the same body announced the B.C. association would take no official part in the election and, after polling the local associations, further decided that those organizations should contest the coming election along whatever lines they wished, Union Conservative, Independent, Non-partisan, Independent Conservative, or whatever. In effect, the B.C. association had abandoned Tolmie and officially dismantled the party!

At first glance the Executive seems to have acted out of a state of resignation. But considering the political situation, the action was
probably influenced by strategic considerations. There was the problem of alienating anti-Tolmie Conservatives. Despite the degree of division in the party, it would only make matters worse for the B.C. association to take sides, especially to take the side of the Tolmie group which was all but defeated. The following observation seems to be a sensible assessment:

If they (candidates who had been Conservatives) lost, there would be no burden of defeat upon the party. If they won, the Conservative chieftain (whoever it may be) might gather them into a non-discript group which, after strife had ceased, could change its varied hues for the even color of Conservatism. Meantime the general staff at headquarters would suffer neither losses nor substitutions in personnel and unscathed by the provincial conflict could face the next Dominion contest with lines unbroken.\(^\text{181}\)

It is not clear what role B.C. federal Conservatives played in the executive's decision. Although H. H. Stevens, on behalf of the B.C. Conservative M.P.'s, condemned the B.C. association's action,\(^\text{182}\) apparently no attempt was made to intervene on behalf of any of the factions. Writing to Arthur Meighen, Stevens explained:

... The Conservative Association of B.C. has declared itself entirely out of provincial affairs. Therefore it appears to me that we would be very unwise to mix in the local situation at all.\(^\text{183}\)

Perhaps from the federal standpoint, the B.C. association's decision was a blessing, because they remained neutral and thus uncompromised for future party effort.

Whatever the reason,\(^\text{184}\) Tolmie was understandably upset by the executive's action. In a statement at the B.C. association meeting, he appealed to the delegates to put "provincial patriotism first," and stubbornly insisted that union government was the only salvation for the crisis-ridden province. As he had done so many times before, he was forced to react to a situation that possibly could have been forestalled had he taken decisive action earlier.
Shortly after the Vancouver meeting, in a last attempt to salvage support, Tolmie wrote to each M.L.A., explaining his position on cabinet reorganization and union government:

It is the intention of the government and the Conservative Unionist party to carry on a vigorous campaign with the best possible support in every riding. . . . The government is anxious that as many as possible of the old members should be re-nominated and I shall be glad to hear from you if you plan to place your name before the convention when it is called.185

Shortly thereafter, Speaker of the House, C. F. Davie submitted his resignation.186 Three other cabinet ministers, Shelly, Lougheed, and Atkinson, all of whom had announced their intentions to resign at the outset of the April 22 executive meeting, formally resigned on June 1.187 This was shortly followed by the resignations of Mackenzie and Bruhn, both of whom announced their intention to run as Independents.188 This was a shattering blow to Tolmie, as Bruhn was presumed to be a committed unionist. He also commanded a broad support base in the Interior and was in the past one of Tolmie's strongest supporters. With Bruhn's resignation the chances for union government now seemed nil. As one disconsolate organizer explained:

. . . the problem [there] is to produce a union that will appear to the public to be a real union. A Union party to go down with the public, must either consist of outstanding men of the non-political type or of well known politicians of both old parties. The second type of Union government now seems to be impossible. If we went to an election today, I am convinced we would get a tremendous licking.189

Nevertheless, a frustrated Tolmie and H. D. Twigg, the provincial Conservative Organizer, continued their attempts to obtain Unionist candidates and supporters.190 A comment by Twigg after speaking to one possible candidate is revealing:

I have just had a long talk with H. W. M. Rolston of Stewart. . . . He tells me it would be useless to run as a Tolmie or Bowser Union candidate in Atlin, but that the best chance would be to run as an
absolute Independent, with liberty to say what you please about both parties. I think he would like to run himself, and, if elected, he would be a good friend of yours.  

Subsequent developments must have convinced Tolmie his continued efforts were in vain. The first was Jones' announcement that he would contest the election as an Independent and not as a Unionist, although he would remain in the cabinet as Finance Minister until the election. Jones' defection, like Bruhn's earlier, was another major blow to Tolmie. Jones was considered by many as the most competent member of the cabinet and one of the strongest Tolmie loyalists. His action was viewed as a clear repudiation of Tolmie and his attempts to form a union government.

The second development was more critical yet. The Unionist group was not able to generate even minimal promises of financial support. The regular Conservative donors were holding back for the quite sensible reason that few people contribute large sums of money to a government on the verge of collapse and a party with no real chance.

The final blow was the desertion of the government by the federal party. Federal leader, R. B. Bennett, when approached on behalf of the Unionist group by C. H. Dickie, Conservative M.P. for Esquimalt, refused not only financial and moral support but even suggested that it might be best if B.C. Conservatives back the Liberals "to avoid a split in the free enterprise vote which could open the way for a C.C.F. victory." As Dickie reported to Tolmie:

R. B. [Bennett] is very sore and in various talks with him and his ministers, I was forced to conclude that without sound backing from him, it would be futile for me to approach the bankers or railways for assistance. . . . It is freely stated that, with our party as it is and the C.C.F. message as serious as I have set forth, it might be the part of wisdom to vote the Liberal party in.
While no other evidence could be found to support Dickie's accusation, Stevens' correspondence indicates great concern by some Conservatives that the C.C.F. had a good chance of winning the election. In view of this, it would not be surprising if some Conservatives felt less inclined than in the past elections to do battle with the Liberals.

In any case, even the suggestion that Bennett would abandon the provincial Tories infuriated Tolmie. Bitterly, he later placed much of the blame for the Unionist party's poor showing on Bennett's alleged action and claimed in effect that federal Conservatives had stabbed him in the back:

Everything looked first rate until towards the end of September when the wave was started from Ottawa, calling for the support of the Liberals to defeat the C.C.F. The British Columbia Conservatives fell right into line with the result that what Pattullo refused to do when I asked him to cooperate with the Conservative party and prevent the chaos that was bound to come and did come, was really accomplished by the voters—with the Conservative voters combining with the Liberals to defeat the C.C.F. The idea was ours in September, 1932; it was rather hard to have it used against us on November 2.

The 1933 Election

With the impending expiration of Tolmie's five year term, a dissolution of the Legislature was requested in mid-July and the election was called for November 2. With the Conservative Party torn into three discernible factions—the Bowser led Non-partisans, Tolmie Unionists, and Independents—the government was only a fragment of its former self five years earlier when Tolmie assumed office. The cabinet at dissolution consisted of only seven members (most had dual portfolios) and Tolmie was accompanied by only four of the original group appointed in 1928. While outwardly expressing optimism and continuing his efforts to recruit supporters, with most of the government having deserted Tolmie, and insufficient
campaign funds, the premier could not have had much hope. He made no tour of the province as he did in 1928, and concentrated his campaign efforts almost entirely on lower Vancouver Island.199

Furthermore, the Unionist platform offered little in the way of inspiration to a depression weary province. Compared to the Liberal's catchy platform of "work and wages" which promised to abolish "nuisance" taxes and free the small wage earner from the one percent tax, institute a vigorous public works program, and support the concept of national unemployment insurance,200 the Unionist program, which promised further reduction in government expenditures and a new Provincial-municipalities relief policy (which few understood), seemed like more of the same.201 Tolmie, who publicly appealed to "men and women of character and ability who will set aside party politics to unite to solve the problems of the day," continued to believe financial retrenchment was the best approach to the problems of depression and expressed the belief that his government, with experience and a record of clean honest administration, was the best hope for the province.202 In a typical address to a group of supporters he said:

Chasing rainbows will not get us anywhere. Those who depend on artificial prosperity by the borrowing of huge sums of money, thus increasing our obligations, will eventually come down to earth to learn that stringent economy and vigorous retrenchment are essential to a lasting recovery. . . . The government which has administered the affairs of British Columbia for the past five years, of which I have had the honour of being head, gave the people clean, honest administration. It is the only group in the field which has administrative experience during this time of financial stress. It has demonstrated its ability to economize by effecting a saving of $5,420,518 in the cost of administration in the past two years. We have demonstrated too that we have the full realization of the necessity of rigid economy on the return of normal conditions.203

In effect, the thrust of his approach was summed up in an almost humorous statement made during a campaign speech in Vancouver when he
asked: "Why change? We are the only group with depression experience."²⁰⁴

The other major Conservative group, the Bowser-led Non-partisans, offered no significantly new or different programs. Claiming they were not seeking election on a party basis and that each Non-partisan member would be free to vote in the legislature "untrammelled by allegiance to any leader, party, or caucus,"²⁰⁵ the Non-partisan manifesto asserted that if they formed a majority in the new legislature they would choose one of their group as premier but would only support him and his Non-partisan cabinet so long as they felt the administration was giving good government.²⁰⁶ Their program proposed adoption of a nation-wide system of contributory unemployment insurance, opposition to further heavy borrowings, establishment of a central bank to issue currency, regulation of price levels, the governing of credit and the reduction of interest rates, and the abolition of patronage. Bowser stated the theme of his program: "We propose the overhauling of the political and economic system to protect the great mass of people and to safeguard the ownership of private property."²⁰⁷ It was clear that all the Bowser group was offering was traditional economic conservatism coupled with platitudes about non-partisan administration, hardly believable in light of Bowser's past.

The Bowserites, while taking satisfaction in their attraction of a few members of the government who had abandoned Tolmie (Bruhn and MacKenzie), and supported by a considerable portion of the party organization,²⁰⁸ nonetheless had little cause for optimism. Despite his claim to being non-partisan, Bowser could not overcome the fact that he was still associated with old-line Conservatives. It was no secret that most of his financial support came from Vancouver businessmen, and that outside of the Province's
largest city he had almost no support. While there were obvious similarities between the Non-partisan and the older Provincial Party, there was a very significant difference. The Provincial Party brought forward many new candidates not previously allied with any party; the Non-partisan candidates were almost exclusively Conservatives who had deserted Tolmie. Thus, while in 1924 the Provincial Party, with mixed support, could legitimately present itself as a party of reform, the Non-partisans in 1933 appeared to be merely an attempt to elect (re-elect in many cases) a group of disaffected (and discredited) politicians.

It was, however, the appearance of a powerful socialist alternative in the 1933 campaign which made the election very different from those in the past. The C.C.F. (Cooperative Commonwealth Federation) originated at the Western Conference of Labor Political Parties representing the numerous labour, socialist, and farm groups then existing throughout Western Canada. In August, 1933, a provincial organization was established when a fusion meeting joined the B.C. Reconstruction Party (then affiliated with the old British Columbia Socialist Party) and the numerous C.C.F. clubs in B.C. organized by Dr. Lyle Telford of Vancouver. Despite considerable internal strife and fragmentation, the new movement managed to put together a grand convention in Victoria one month later which drew up the party's platform for the approaching election.

The platform, modeled closely on the Regina Manifesto of August, 1933, was a twelve-point provincial program drawn up with the intention of making an appeal to farmers, trade unionists (always a strong force in B.C.), old progressives, the unemployed, and socialists of every hue. In marked contrast to the Liberals and Conservatives, the C.C.F. platform spoke neither
it mentioned little or nothing about economy, efficiency and patronage. Instead, the C.C.F. demanded, in addition to specific reforms, many of which were included in the Liberal platform, a radical transformation of the society of the country—banking, currency, credit and insurance, the issuance of a purely provincial credit if necessary, the socialization of the basic resource industries, the socialization of health services, free education from public school through university, the rapid expansion of social services, and the revision of taxes to “lay the burden where it can be most easily born.”

Highly organized and filled with unending enthusiasm, C.C.F.ers spread their message from one end of the province to the other. They took as their slogan “Humanity First,” and emphasized the futility of the old parties attempting to meet the depression by capitalistic methods. The C.C.F. appealed to the public claiming that “poverty in the midst of plenty” was indefensible and “the cause of economic collapse was due, not to the graft or the lack of business ability of the Tolmie government, but to the impossibility of administering civil affairs efficiently in a contracting capitalism.” They argued that the failure of the system to distribute the fruits of industry on a more equitable basis was due to “the purpose for which it is ordered and not to faults in its administration.” They told meeting after meeting that so long as people insist on retaining capitalism, “they will have to accept the consequences of the operation of that system, and that it could not be administered any more equitably by a C.C.F. government than by a Liberal or a Conservative government.” "If economic change was to come it would have to come through basic structural change, not administrative change.” The campaign became a contest between socialism and capitalism. As MacInnis stated a few months after the election:
If in future elections, the C.C.F. adhere to this policy, the issue henceforth will be, not a high tariff versus a tariff not so high or any of the other old issues that served the purpose of the two old parties of capitalism, but Socialism versus Capitalism.216

The main planks in the C.C.F. program included: Cooperation with other provinces to obtain complete socialization of the country's financial machinery—banking, currency, credit, and insurance, the development (in case of emergency) of purely provincial credit based on provincial resources, the institution of a socialized economic plan in order to regulate the productive activities of the province, comprehensive free education, and the socialization of health services.217

As support for the new party increased so did condemnation from the traditional power groups. Both the Liberal and Conservative press violently denounced the new movement as destructive of sacred values and subversive of the principles of representative and constitutional government.218 The motives of the movement's leader were impugned; accusations that C.C.F.ers were ultra-radicals, communists, power-seekers, and disrupters not honestly concerned with the people's welfare persisted throughout the campaign. The Liberals cried "socialistic dictatorship" when one candidate talked of teaching socialism in the schools and training teachers for that purpose in night courses, with the implication of dismissal for nonconformity. When W. J. Pritchard, the C.C.F. campaign leader, made known his opposition to organized religion, and Dr. Telford expressed his views on companionate marriage, Gerry McGeer, a Liberal candidate, asked his audience, "can you imagine me sending my son to a school which propagates Socialism and atheism or bringing up my daughter under the heinous system of companionate marriage?"219

Following a C.C.F. program meeting, the Colonist, echoing the general sentiment of most of the press, editorialized that British Columbians who were
possessed of "sound common sense" would never accept the C.C.F. ideology. The C.C.F. program "might be imposed by the machine gun and bayonet in Papua or in Swat," said the Province, "but not in Canada. Servility is not the badge of the people of this land." 220

As election day approached, it became increasingly obvious the contest was really only between the Liberal Party and the C.C.F. The superb C.C.F. organization mobilized candidates and supporters from every part of the province and many speculated about how a C.C.F. victory seemed quite probable. However, the Liberals, possessed with a progressive "do something" program and supported by large numbers of Tories who felt they had nowhere else to turn, maintained the advantage. Pattullo's program for "work and wages" appealed to an electorate mired in depression but still uncomfortable with radical changes proposed by the C.C.F. 221 Attempting to bridge the reactionary "no change" program of Bowser and Tolmie and the socialism of C.C.F.ers, Pattullo used "work and wages" effectively. "Doles," he stated in his first major campaign address, "were breaking down the morale of the people . . . the government must intervene in time of peace in the economic life of the nation to get the people back to work." 222 He proposed that the federal government issue non-interest bearing credits to the province and engage in a massive public works program to get the people back to work. 223 In addition, "the federal government must assist provincial governments to maintain hospitals and schools and other necessary services through a redefinition of taxation rights and the refunding of provincial monies at a lower rate of interest." 224 Specific planks in the Liberal's platform included: the setting up of an economic council to cooperate between labour and capital, abolition of the meal tax and the one percent tax on
wages, equitable adjustment between the province and the municipalities, national unemployment insurance, state health insurance, and a far-reaching program for education. Pattullo, in a philosophical vein, summed up his party's program:

... that no person in British Columbia should be allowed to want for food, clothing and shelter through inability to obtain employment... that the people demand and are entitled to a program of cooperation between the national, provincial, and municipal authorities, and the Canadian banking system to establish the necessary credit to carry out a broad program of constructive and useful wage distributing public enterprise, and to further the health, education and well being of our people.

In essence, the Liberal strategy was to ignore the government, already a corpse in most people's minds, present the Liberal program as serious, humanitarian, progressive, and practical, condemn the C.C.F. as dangerous, radical, and alien to the values and traditions of Canadians, and emphasize that a split free enterprise vote made a C.C.F. government "with all its chaotic and radical implications a greater possibility."

Election day saw the largest field of candidates ever offered in a British Columbia election. A total of 209 candidates contested the forty-eight seats, an average of more than four candidates per seat. They were divided among no less than 10 groups: Unionist, 13; Liberal, 47; Conservative-Independent, 4; Non-partisan (Bowser), 38; C.C.F., 46; Independent C.C.F., 8; Independent, 35; United Front, 19; Socialist-Labour Candidates, 16. Apart from the factional candidates and nominal parties, a host of un-attached independents from both the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party also ran. In only two ridings was the contest between two candidates, while Victoria, a four seat constituency, began with the incredible number of 29. Although no party escaped the debilitating effects of schism, the Liberals, three of whose candidates added the "Independent"
prefix after not getting the nomination in their ridings, were least af­
fected by fragmentation. In the Conservative Party fragmentation took a
toll. Not a single candidate contested the election with a straight Con­
servative label!

The result of the election was not an overwhelming popular victory for
any party but it was clearly a disaster for the British Columbia Conserva-
tives. The distribution of the seats and popular vote was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.C.F.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Partisan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unionist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.3% (approx.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0% (approx.)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Tom Uphill (Fernie) was elected as an Independent Labour
as he would be for the next 30 years.

From the standpoint of House seats, the Liberals were the overwhelming
victors. But their popular vote increased only one percent over 1928
suggesting that what the Liberals lost to the C.C.F. was about evenly com­
pensated for by gains from Conservatives. In view of the smallness of the
vote for "Conservative" candidates, the main cleavage in the voting was be­
tween the Liberals and the C.C.F. The conclusion is inescapable that the
voting center of gravity shifted dramatically to the left.

Observers of the campaign repeatedly queried whether the Conservatives,
by running under different labels, would elect a sufficient number of candi­
dates to permit a Conservative premier to retain office. Adding the popular
vote of the Unionists, the Non-partisans, and Independents of Conservative
sympathies, the combined total was just over 19 percent of the popular vote
resulting in the election of only 12 members. But it may be an
oversimplification to say that the Conservatives were doomed even had the split not occurred.\textsuperscript{235} We have no way of knowing what effect the actual split had on the voters and it may well be that voters' actions are very much influenced by what occurs in the party. There is, for example, some evidence that in the 1953 and 1956 elections Conservative voters viewed the federal-provincial split in the Conservative Party as at least one reason to abandon it.\textsuperscript{236} It seems reasonable that the same phenomena may have been working in 1933.

If the times destroyed the government (what government in North America was able to withstand the depression?) the party destroyed itself. What the Conservative party did through internecine warfare, which fragmented the party and pushed the anti-socialist vote into the Liberals' arms,\textsuperscript{237} demolished the party as a political force in British Columbia politics for the next few years. The effect of this would be felt in years to come. The Liberals were now in a position to monopolize the anti-socialist sentiment and the Tories would find themselves, after thirty years as a major political party, a weak third party fighting for survival. Indeed, much of the strategy and tactics of the Conservative leadership in years to come were dependent on this new fact of political life.
Chapter II


3 Ibid., p. 30.

4 Ibid.


6 In the August 25 by-election in North Vancouver the Liberal candidate, A. W. Gray, Mayor of North Vancouver, defeated the Conservative candidate, C. A. Walsh, by a majority of 925, a decided increase from the Liberal majority in the 1924 election. In the October 17 by-election in Nelson-Creston, occasioned by the death of Premier Oliver, the Liberal candidate, J. A. McDonald, Mayor of Nelson, defeated the Conservative candidate Dr. L. E. Borden by a majority of only 28, a decided reduction from Premier Oliver's majority of 338 in 1924. In both contests, MacLean and Tolmie actively campaigned for the Candidates. J. C. Hopkins, Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1927-1928 (Toronto: Annual Review Publishing Co., 1928), p. 544 (hereafter cited as Canadian Annual Review).

7 Liberal strategists, starting immediately to fight the election, dubbed Tolmie "the absentee leader." He had insisted, upon acceptance of the leadership, that he would remain in Ottawa until there was a general election.

8 Ormsby, British Columbia, p. 429


10 Ormsby, British Columbia, p. 428.

11 Ibid., p. 429.

12 This is detailed in Robin, The Rush for Spoils, pp. 222-224.
See editorials in *Vancouver Province*, January 18-March 15, 1927.


*Vancouver Sun*, July 21, 1927.

*Victoria Times*, February 10, 1928

*Victoria Times*, August 5, 1927; *Victoria Colonist*, August 6, 1927.

*Victoria Colonist*, August 7, 1927.

*Victoria Times*, October 27, 1927.

Ibid.


MacLean first entered the legislature in 1916. Since then, he had held the following portfolios: Health, Provincial Secretary, Education, Railways, and Finance. He had been both Minister of Health and Minister of Finance in the Oliver government.


MacLean was faced with a revolt over the question of cabinet representation for the city of Vancouver. The issue so infuriated the influential Vancouver Liberal, Charles Woodward, he openly broke with the party and in 1928 campaigned for the defeat of the Liberal government. *Canadian Annual Review*, 1927-1928, p. 547.

*Ormsby, British Columbia*, p. 433.

*Canadian Annual Review*, 1927-1928, p. 556.


It is noteworthy that the Vancouver slate contained Conservatives from all wings of the party. Among those on the slate were G. A. Walkem, the ex-Provincial party M.L.A.; Nelson Spencer, a candidate for the leadership at Kamloops; and William Dick, an avid Bowser supporter.


C. F. M. Planta, who was active in the party at the time, states that in 1929, Shelly, Pooley, and Howe, backed by Tolmie, successfully placed men loyal to Tolmie in control of the party machinery. Parker, "Thesis," p. 97.

50 The Tolmie Cabinet:

- Premier, Minister of Railways: S. F. Tolmie
- Provincial Secretary: S. L. Howe, Richmond
- Attorney General: R. H. Pooley, Esquimalt
- Minister of Lands: F. P. Burden, Fort George
- Minister of Agriculture: W. Atkinson, Chilliwack
- Minister of Finance: W. C. Shelly, Vancouver
- Minister of Mines: W. A. McKenzie, Similkameen
- Minister of Public Works: N. S. Lougheed, Dewedney
- Minister of Education: J. Hinchcliffe, Victoria
- President of the Council: R. W. Bruhn, Salmon Arm
- Minister Without Portfolio: R. L. Maitland, Vancouver


52 Ibid.

53 Letter, S. F. Tolmie to N. Spencer, October 9, 1931, *Tolmie Papers*, Special Collections, U.B.C.


55 Ibid., p. 73.


57 Ibid.

58 The specifics of the dismissals and the negative press reaction to them is detailed in Parker, "The Last Premier," p. 26.

59 This view was given me by R. C. MacDonald. If there was no member from the riding then the top party official in the riding would be consulted. Private interview held in New Westminster, October 3, 1973.


Vancouver Sun, March 12, 1931; Victoria Times, March 14, 1931.

Letter, R. B. Bennett to S. F. Tolmie, August 29, 1929, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.

Letter, S. F. Tolmie to R. B. Bennett, October 28, 1929, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.

Ibid.

Further friction developed over the province's requests for financial assistance after Bennett was elected Prime Minister.

p. 27.  

Canadian Annual Review, 1929-1930, pp. 518-520.  

Ormsby, British Columbia, pp. 441-442.  

Ibid., p. 442.  

Canadian Annual Review, 1930-1931, p. 287.  

Robin, The Rush For Spoils, p. 234. In commenting about his cabinet appointments, Tolmie pointed out that because Shelly led the poll in his Vancouver riding in 1928, due consideration was given him in the allocation of portfolios.

Shelly was caught in the middle. Members of his own party criticized him for failing to reduce taxes as the Tory election manifesto promised. Liberals and Laborites condemned him for his callous and hard line attitude toward social legislation. On one occasion, after expressing his alarm over the rise in welfare expenditures on hospitals, mothers' pensions, and old age pensions, Shelly warned the people "to view with caution and concern any further proposals of a paternal nature." Victoria Times, March 2, 1929, as quoted in Robin, The Rush for Spoils, p. 234. The Minister's pronouncement was met by a barrage of criticism, so extensive that much of the first session (1929) was taken up by the government's attempt to explain it away. Ibid.


The prairies were the hardest hit of all. While per capita income declined by 47 percent in British Columbia between 1929 and 1933, Saskatchewan and Alberta suffered a 72 and 61 percent decrease respectively. Report of the Royal Commission, p. 150.

British Columbia in Canadian Confederation, p. 55.

Paul Phillips, No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in B.C. (Vancouver; B.C. Federation of Labour, 1967), p. 101. Robin points out that the rate of unemployment in B.C. was especially high because (1) its moderate climate tended to attract the unemployed in other provinces, and (2) the corporate nature of B.C.'s economy, with its high ratio of wage employment to self-employment.
According to Margaret Ormsby, "The month of January, 1930, was unlike any previous month in the history of the city. The number of unemployed persons increased by three hundred per cent; the police again broke up processions, made arrests, and dispersed a large demonstration in the Powell Street grounds. Civic appropriations for relief soared; a scandal developed when it was discovered that the chief City Relief Officer had accepted a "rake off" for meal tickets; and the nervous citizens, believing that Vancouver had been occupied by a Red army, hesitated to leave home for an evening's pleasure." British Columbia, p. 443.


Parker, "The Last Premier," p. 27.


Memorandum on the 1933 election, November 7, 1933, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.

It is important to remember that despite the seriousness of the situation among the unemployed in the cities, there was no real outcry on the part of the public for drastic action until much later. And the unemployed, despite their visibility, were still a relatively small number.

Canadian Annual Review, 1929-1930, p. 519.


Ibid., pp. 237-238.


103 *Vancouver Sun*, March 11, March 31, 1931.


105 Ibid., p. 30.


110 *Victoria Colonist*, June 2, 1931.


114 Ibid.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid., pp. 308-309.

117 The real spearhead of an "extra governmental board of directors" was the *Vancouver Province* which proposed the formation of a non-partisan administration composed of the best minds in the province to govern the province as a board of directors would operate a corporation. See Parker, "The Last Premier," p. 31.

118 *Canadian Annual Review*, 1932-1933, p. 293.

119 In addition to George Kidd, a chartered accountant, the committee included three businessmen: W. L. MacKen, Austin Taylor, and R. W. Mayhew, and one lawyer, A. H. Douglas.
120 Robin, *The Rush for Spoils*, p. 239.


123 The *Victoria Times* said it best: The section on the Lieutenant Governor "involves a change which would have involved the abrogation of a right obtained by the people at such heavy cost in the year 1653." September 23, 1932.


125 *Victoria Times*, September 23, 1932.


128 Robin makes the point that the commission was highly biased due to its composition. All members of the committee were wealthy businessmen. It contained no representative of organized labor, no teachers, social workers or economists. The major organizations which supported the report (as indicated by the *Province*) were the B.C. section of the Canadian Manufacturers Association, Chambers of Commerce, and Boards of Trade. *The Rush for Spoils*, p. 242; *Vancouver Province*, September 23, 1932.

129 Bowserites such as William Dick were playing on the Kidd Report as definitive evidence that Tolmie should resign and the party should choose a new leader.


131 Stevens and H. J. Barber. Stevens suggested as a replacement to Tolmie either Bowser ("because of his long experience") or W. J. Jones, Minister of Finance ("because he still retains a substantial measure of public confidence"). *Ibid.*

132 *Vancouver Province*, November 1, 1931.

133 Memo on Support for Union Government Plan, no date, *Tolmie Papers*, Special Collection, U.B.C. The lineup in the caucus was as follows: For
12 private members, 11 cabinet ministers; Against 9 private members; Undecided 2 private members. It is interesting that Tolmie's most vocal opponents in the caucus—Spencer, Kirk, Dick, and Walkem—also opposed union government.

134 Press Release on Union Government, September 8, 1932, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.

135 Letter, W. J. Bowser to S. F. Tolmie, September 9, 1932, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.

136 Vancouver Sun, August 3, 1932; Vancouver Province, September 4, 1932; letter, F. P. Paterson to H. H. Stevens, September 24, 1932, Stevens Papers, P.A.C., Vol. 13, file 6,

137 Bowser was apparently buoyed by expressions of support from such luminaries as H. H. Stevens and H. R. MacMillan.


139 Ibid., p. 24.


141 Ibid.

142 Victoria Times, July 2, 1932, quoted in Ibid., p. 250.

143 Sutherland, "Pattullo as Party Leader," p. 38.

144 Ibid.

145 Ibid., p. 39.

146 Letter, T. D. Pattullo to S. F. Tolmie, September 13, 1932, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.

147 Sutherland, "Pattullo as Party Leader," p. 42.

148 H. C. Bryant to S. F. Tolmie (letter informing Tolmie of resolutions), September 17, 1932, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.
H. C. Bryant to S. F. Tolmie (letter stating resolution of Division 3, Conservative Association, Vancouver), September 17, 1932, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.

Minutes of the proceedings of the executive of the Conservative Association of British Columbia, October 1, 1932, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.

Victoria Times, November 28, 1932.

A further blow to the union plan was struck at the October Liberal Convention when Pattullo's position was enthusiastically endorsed. Vancouver Sun, October 4, 1932.


A letter from Tolmie to Stevens indicates the premier was personally convinced of the necessity of union government, and that he was willing to let the new government select its own leader. S. F. Tolmie to H. H. Stevens, September 19, 1932, Stevens Papers, P.A.C., Vol. 13, File 6.

The list contained a varied lot, such as local dignitaries, respected academics and ex-Provincial Party candidates. In addition, it included such men as Tom Red, a federal Liberal who had violently attacked the government's work camps; George Kidd, the chairman of the committee which had condemned the government's financial policies, and G. S. Pearson, a Liberal M.L.A. who had persistently criticized the administration's lack of action. Perhaps the selection of such individuals reflects Tolmie's sincere interest in making the coalition a "real" union government. Or, more likely, it may indicate desperation on Tolmie's part.

Vancouver Sun, January 28, 1933.

Parker, "Thesis," p. 123. There were also indications that the federal organizer was backing the non-partisan group.

Canadian Annual Review, 1933, p. 295.

Victoria Times, March 11, 1933.


Parker, "The Last Premier," p. 34.
While production had increased slightly in 1932-1933, unemployment was still increasing. See Canadian Annual Review, 1933-1934, p. 304, and A. Morley, Vancouver, pp. 179-180.

Vancouver Province, March 11, 1933.

Of the 85 bills passed, almost all of them were amendments to existing legislation. According to the Canadian Annual Review, the most "important" were: an amendment to the Government Liquor Act reducing liquor permit fees and allowing consumption of beer outside of licensed premises; a meal tax to increase hospital revenues; an amendment to the Public Schools Act extending partial control of school costs to municipal councils; a renewal of the Mortgagors' and Purchasers' Relief Act of 1932; and an amendment to the Municipal Act giving city councils power to postpone sinking fund payments at their discretion (Canadian Annual Review, 1933, p. 302). The Budget Speech was a testimonial of a government completely void of new ideas. After denouncing the "burden placed on the shoulders of the province by previous governments" (the keynote of Finance Minister Jones' address), the Finance Minister spoke of the possible necessity of a further reduction of government contributions toward unemployment relief and at the same time expressed his belief that "recovery was not far distant" (Canadian Annual Review, 1933, pp. 302-303).

Letter, S. F. Tolmie to T. D. Pattullo, March 27, 1933, Tolmie Papers, Special Collection, U.B.C.


Ibid.

Ibid.

R. Walker interview, July 17, 1972.

Tolmie's own correspondence reveals other reasons why he delayed calling an election. First, the redistribution bill required a Fall meeting (1932) of the Legislature which would mean an election could be held no earlier than the "dead of Winter" of early 1933. Second, he claimed he needed time to prepare for the Union election—to tend to the details of joint campaign committees, policy planks, and the like; letter, S. F. Tolmie to H. H. Stevens, September 19, 1932, Stevens Papers, P.A.C., Vol. 13, File 6.

One indication of the government's decline in support is found in a letter to H. H. Stevens, dated September 24, 1932: "W. C. Shelly was asked last week to present the championship belt at the wrestling match in
the arena and was received with 4000 boos which continued until he left the platform. I never heard a word in their [the government] favor and do not believe they can elect a single candidate in the lower mainland." Letter, F. P. Paterson to H. H. Stevens, September 24, 1932, Stevens Papers, P.A.C., Vol. 13, File 6.

172 Vancouver Province, April 5, 1933.

173 Vancouver Province, April 2, 1933.

174 Letter, E. C. Carson to S. F. Tolmie, April 17, 1933, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.

175 Vancouver Province, April 2, 1933. Among those suggested as a possible replacement were J. W. Berry (Delta); J. W. Jones, Minister of Finance; R. W. Bruhn, Minister of Public Works and a committed unionist.

176 Vancouver Province, April 13, 1933.


178 Parker, "The Last Premier," p. 34.


180 Canadian Annual Review, 1933, p. 294.


184 Federal party interference was immediately inferred by Tolmie. Ladner insisted there was no "active" federal involvement in the decision of the executive (that he could remember) but, "it was also known that the federal wing would do what was the best for them." I was left to draw my own conclusions. Leon Ladner, private interview held in Vancouver, September 19, 1973.
185. Letter, S. F. Tolmie to Conservative M.L.A.'s, April 28, 1933, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.


187. Ibid., p. 127.

188. Ibid., pp. 127-128.

189. Ibid.

190. Ibid., p. 126.

191. Ibid.

192. Ibid., p. 129.

193. Ibid.

194. Ibid.

195. Letter, C. H. Dickie to S. F. Tolmie, September 18, 1933, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.


197. Letter, S. F. Tolmie to R. L. Maitland, November 6, 1933, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.

198. Pooley, Howe, Hinchliffe, and Maitland.


201. Canadian Annual Review, 1933, pp. 295-296. Specifically the Unionist manifesto called for creation of employment by every means possible, a national system of unemployment insurance on a contributory basis, extension of export markets, creation of a provincial marketing board, and "strict economy to keep expenditures well within income" (the thrust of the program).


204 Ormsby, British Columbia, p. 453.

205 Canadian Annual Review, 1934, p. 329.

206 Ibid.

207 Ibid.


211 Ibid., p. 260.


214 Ibid.

215 Ibid.

216 Ibid.


218 See the newspaper accounts in the Vancouver Province, Vancouver Sun, and Victoria Colonist, throughout October, 1933.


221 Undoubtedly much of the fear of the C.C.F. stemmed from the effective "scare campaign" propaganda unleashed by the press and the traditional parties. For example, MacInnis says that on the day before the election the employees of large department stores in Vancouver were circularized to the effect that if a C.C.F. government were elected it would take over the stores and all employees would lose their jobs. The lumber workers were told that the C.C.F. was opposed to foreign trade and that if it were elected the camps and mills would be closed on the day after the election. "More About the British Columbia Election," p. 169.


224 Ibid.


229 Bowser died one week before polling day and a few Non-Partisan candidates either withdrew or amalgamated with other "Conservative" groups. See Parker, "Thesis," p. 138.

230 The figures given here are those reported in the Canadian Annual Review, 1934, pp. 328-329. Virtually every source disagrees on the number of Conservative-Independents, Independents, United Front, and Socialist Labor candidates. The confusion stems from the candidates' use of different and often overlapping labels.


232 Tolmie was defeated in Saanich and his two late cabinet appointees, William Savage and W. M. Dennies were beaten ten to one in Vancouver-Burrard
and Vancouver-Point Grey respectively.

233 Election results taken from British Columbia, Chief Electoral Officer, Statement of the Votes and Results by Electoral Districts (Victoria: King's Printer, 1933). Cited hereafter as Statement of the Vote.

234 Parker, "Thesis," p. 137. The figure 12 includes both Independents. One was Herbert Anscomb (Victoria City) who later joined the Conservative Party, ultimately to become its leader. The other was H. G. E. Savage (Cowichan-Newcastle) who remained an Independent.

235 Ibid.


237 Whether the Liberal's victory stemmed more from the appeal of "work and wages" or the fragmentation of the "free-enterprise" alternative is impossible to know. While Pattullo's reforms suggested an action oriented change from the ineffective policies of Tolmie, to many Conservatives Pattullo's Liberals offered the only available barrier to a socialist victory in B.C. That Conservatives were voting in great numbers for the Liberal Party is seen in the many Liberal victories in areas of traditional Tory strength: Barrow in Chilliwack, Strachan in Dewdney, MacDonald in North Okanagan, Harris in South Okanagan, Whittaker (over Tolmie) in Saanich, Tupper in Similkameen, Johnson in Victoria, and the near defeat of Pooley in the solidest Tory stronghold of all, Esquimalt. E. J. Chambers, Canadian Parliamentary Guide, Ottawa: Mortimer Co., Ltd., 1934, pp. 375-78 (cited hereafter as Canadian Parliamentary Guide).
CHAPTER III
REBUILDING: 1934-1941

A Changed Political Landscape

The election of 1933 marked a watershed in British Columbia politics. From 1903 to 1933 party politics between the two traditional parties was for the most part devoid of great questions of ideology. It was largely a battle of the "ins" versus the "outs" for the plums of patronage and control over the determination and allocation of public expenditures. While issues of policy had always generated some difference—taxation, provincial development, governmental services—the thrust of Liberal and Conservative programs had displayed remarkable similarities. Both parties advocated in greater or lesser degree encouragement of capital investment in B.C., cheap transportation, expansion of railways, rural development and business-like government. Most election campaigns became contests about issues such as administrative efficiency, corruption in government, reduced taxes, and economic development. As the two dominant parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, alternated in office, there was usually little change both in theoretical orientation and policy output.¹

The advent of the C.C.F. in 1933 raised the prospect of a socialist party coming to power for the first time in Canada. This brought with it a series of subtle pressures that had the effect of changing the whole course and content of provincial politics. No longer would the party battle be a contest of who could best administer the affairs of the province. The dramatically increased strength of the Left as a result of depression
conditions forced a major realignment in the party system. The Liberal Party in response to the failure of Tory policies of retrenchment and the Left's advocacy of social democracy advanced a program of economic reform unprecedented in the history of the province. The Liberal's appeal to counteract the reform minded consciousness awakened by the C.C.F. upsurge, promised a new social order through progressive labour legislation, social welfare supports, public works for the unemployed, state health insurance, and an economic council which would mobilize expertise to the cause of social reform. While not abandoning capitalism, through "socialized capitalism," the Liberal Party shifted leftward, and established the battle line upon which provincial politics would be fought in future years.

If the new battle line was to be drawn between socialism and non-socialism there still remained the question of which party (Conservative, Liberal, or perhaps a new party) would monopolize the non-socialist vote. With the Tory party thoroughly disintegrated after 1933, the question seemed settled for the immediate future. The Liberals, forced to move left to counteract the C.C.F., and therefore committed to a left of center position on the ideological spectrum, were however the party of the largest number of B.C. voters. And while many probably voted for Pattullo on account of his "do something" reform program, many others presumably did so because there was little alternative. But if a non-socialist alternative to the Liberal Party would again surface (which it almost assuredly would given the leftist orientation of Pattullo Liberalism), the Liberal electoral majority, engendered by the unique conditions surrounding the 1933 election, would be in danger of crumbling. It was the building of such an alternative that Conservatives set as their task.
The Task of Recovery

The most pressing problem for the Conservative Party in the wake of the events of 1933 was how to rebuild. With not a single M.L.A. elected under the Conservative label, there was no Conservative representation in the legislature. The provincial association was shattered. As a result of the executive's freeing the riding associations for the 1933 campaign, organization work had come to a virtual standstill. Moreover the party was nearly broke. The situation was so bad that the party executive had difficulty even summoning a quorum of its members to attend the party association meetings in the year following the election.

Not the least of the party's difficulties was the great bitterness of the members over the events surrounding the 1933 election. While it was generally concluded that probably any government would have been defeated given the economic situation in the province, many blamed the magnitude of the Conservative defeat on Tolmie's indecision regarding coalition and the fact that he simply let his five year term expire before calling an election. According to R. R. Walker:

Had Tolmie taken a firmer grasp of the situation by calling an election earlier, thereby not letting the opposition take control of the situation, instead of simply letting his five year term expire, the results would have been less devastating.

Others, including Tolmie, placed the blame on the internecine warfare that had plagued the party since the 1926 Kamloops Convention. The premier never wavered from his belief that certain factions in the party had continued their efforts to undermine his leadership ever since Kamloops. Some blamed Conservatives for deserting the ship in its hour of crisis. R. L. Maitland, Minister without Portfolio in Tolmie's cabinet and who himself
would later lead the party, believed that the "fruitless efforts to entice the Pattullo-led Liberals into coalition" was in effect the same as "beating the party to death" and an admission that the Conservative Party was dead. He later wrote in his diary:

What fools men were in 1933—trying to build up a so-called Union Government in 1933 by convincing the people that the Conservative party was no good—their own party—the party that made them. And we were loyal—saw our party being killed—saw the Liberals grabbing more power and strength. We must work for a generation to restore that which was lost.°

But the bitterness was not just directed at the party leadership and the actions of members. Tolmie, for one, put a large part of the blame on what he called the "interference and subversive activities" of the federal Conservative Party. With the "imposing presence of the C.C.F." and the chaotic condition of his own Tories, Tolmie believed that federal Conservatives were actively encouraging their provincial counterparts to vote Liberal to head off "the socialist threat," a threat that "was believed very serious by many in the face of a split in the free enterprise vote":

The CCF played a very important role. While propaganda was scattered from Ottawa to the Coast among our B.C. Conservatives that, owing to the danger of the Socialists getting control of the House, the Conservatives should vote for the Liberal party and they did this by the hundreds; so that the crowds who clamored for me to come to B.C. and accept the leadership to help them out in 1928, did not hesitate in 1933 to kick my associates and myself, holus-bolus, out of office.°

While there is no conclusive evidence to warrant such a view, it appears likely that the federal wing of the party was not overly anxious to help a party that most believed was a corpse.°° Undoubtedly federal Conservatives were looking forward to the 1935 general election and must have believed that by getting involved in the provincial party's problems they would only damage their own prospects. With the party split at least three
ways, what was left of the federal organization in the province could only be placed under increased strain. As far as the federal organization was concerned, Independent Conservatives, Non-Partisans, and Tolmieites were still Conservatives in the federal arena. The risk of alienating one or more of these groups was simply not worth the price of "good relations" with the Tolmie rump which had no chance of surviving the 1933 election.\textsuperscript{11}

Despite extensive bitterness and organizational disarray, rebuilding efforts in the party were begun soon after the election. Dr. Frank Patterson, a practicing orthopaedic surgeon and lifelong Conservative, was chosen president of the B.C. Conservative Association at the annual party convention in December, 1933. Patterson's selection was viewed as the first significant step toward bringing the party back together since the new president was generally popular throughout the party, was on good terms with the federal wing,\textsuperscript{12} and had a reputation as an aggressive and completely devoted party stalwart.\textsuperscript{13} In addition the convention amended the party's constitution to allow the seating of all "un-official Conservative candidates" (Unionists, Non-Partisans, and Independents) in the last election, a move which was vital to the arduous task of party reconciliation.\textsuperscript{14}

By mid-1934 the Conservative press and many in the party began calling for a leadership convention.\textsuperscript{15} The party had been officially leaderless since Tolmie's defeat, but with the absence of a single member in the legislature, the problem seemed less than serious. However, many believed that a successful rebuilding effort could take place only under the aegis of a permanent leader. The \textit{Victoria Colonist} grumbled that:

Conservatism in the province will continue to decline until there is a stirring rallying cry for a restoration of its political fortunes. . . . This can never happen until a provincial leadership
convention is called—and the question of leadership is determined. A political party that is allowed to decay, rapidly disintegrates and disappears. That will be the fate of Conservatism in B.C. unless there is a complete change in outlook of those who are supposed at present to be guiding its destinies.16

Criticism was also mounting among the rank and file of the organization. When it was announced at the annual party gathering in 1934 that the selection of the leader would be deferred until after the upcoming federal election, many local association members, principally from Vancouver and Victoria, bitterly denounced the decision. They argued that without leadership the party was not a cohesive unit in the legislature or in the organizational setting of the province.17 Others felt the party needed a leader in preparation for the federal election.18 But the big guns in the party won the day. They argued against a convention on the grounds that there existed a general lack of enthusiasm among the rank and file of the organization, and that the absence of representation in the legislature dictated against an early selection of permanent leaders. Most had not forgotten the Tolmie situation in 1926 of a leader without a seat. Some urged delay until such a time as the party was stronger. "A premature selection of leader," one delegate argued, "in the absence of a united front would simply provide the source for renewed and bitter division."19 C. H. Dickie, federal member from Nanaimo, seemed to sum up the majority sentiment at the gathering when he said, "anyone chosen for the office now would be killed off by opposition innuendo and misrepresentation long before election."20 Patterson also favored delaying a leadership convention and the meeting adjourned with the understanding that a convention would be called after the 1935 federal election.21
Party hopes, while never very high during this time, were given a slight lift as the general election approached. Under the direction of President Patterson and provincial organizer A. W. Lundell, a flurry of party work began. Candidates were placed in all 16 ridings and both Patterson and Lundell toured most of the province on their behalf.22

But as the election campaign approached, federal Conservatives were clearly undergoing internal problems which militated against unity in the party everywhere. An open split occurred in the Tory ranks when H. H. Stevens, Minister of Trade and Commerce, bolted the Conservative Party and formed a new party—the Reconstructionists—just prior to the beginning of the campaign.23 Stevens, who before 1930 was for 19 years the Conservative member for Vancouver, and since his by-election victory in 1931 the Member from East Kootenay, was a popular M.P. and one of the most able and experienced members of the Bennett government.24 Stevens' falling out with the government was precipitated by his criticism of the pricing practices of certain commercial enterprises which, because of their close ties with the government, embarrassed Bennett and the Conservative Party, and led Stevens to the realization that Conservatism as practiced by R. B. Bennett's government could not solve the national economic crisis. Stevens' defection itself did not cause the government's defeat—the depression more than anything else was responsible for that, but by splitting the party it was a significant contributory factor in the Conservatives' worst showing ever.25

In British Columbia, the Reconstruction Party was well organized in almost every riding.26 Numerous "Stevens (Reconstructionist) Clubs," in some cases as many as five in a riding, were organized across the province.
Vancouver businessman and former Conservative J. F. Noble, was appointed provincial chairman and under his direction an elaborate network of finance committees, publicity groups, and local campaign managers, were put to work for the new party. In the end, however, there was little success. The Reconstructionists gained only one seat in British Columbia, that of Stevens, and polled only 6.7 percent of the vote. Moreover, by ideologically and organizationally dividing provincial Conservatives, a further strain was placed on the rebuilding provincial party.

The results of the federal election left both the Liberals and Conservatives ambivalent. The Tories, while expecting to do better, could take consolation in the fact that Bennett's government, like Tolmie's, was a depression administration and therefore a victory would have been indeed remarkable. And, considering the state of the provincial organization, the party's "respectable" showing in B.C. indicated at the least that the Tories were not dead. The B.C. Liberals, on the other hand, had little reason to be pleased. While the election left the Liberal Party with as many members as in the former Parliament, they could take little comfort in the result since there were two more seats this time and a Liberal sweep over the nation. Still more important, the C.C.F. got a larger total vote than the B.C. Liberal Party. On the whole, B.C. Liberals had reason to be very concerned about the federal voting result. Some, like Bruce Hutchison, interpreted the election outcome as a vote of nonconfidence in the Pattullo government's handling of provincial affairs:

It means that the Pattullo government must be up and doing if it wants to remain here two years from now. It is not a matter now of retaining its old strength of two years ago. It is a matter of building up new strength, selling itself to the people over again.
The first test of the strength of the provincial parties occurred in two by-elections which were held eight months following the federal election. The result of the Omineca by-election held on June 22, 1936 must have caused further anxiety in the Liberal ranks. The Liberal candidate, M. M. Connelly, easily defeated the Tory candidate, A. Thompson, by almost 3 to 1. However, C.C.F.er S. Goodwin was beaten by only two hundred votes (899 to 697), a respectable showing considering that the C.C.F. was internally divided and the C.C.F. candidate received only one-half the Liberal vote in 1933 (525 to 1035). The Vancouver-Burrard by-election was held two months later. All three parties campaigned hard since Vancouver elections were traditionally deemed critical political barometers. The Liberal candidate J. H. Forester won the seat but by less than 500 votes over Dr. Lyle Telford of the C.C.F. The Conservative candidate, Dr. Frank Patterson, who was chosen permanent leader of the party just a few weeks before, polled over 5600 votes, nearly one-third of the total cast. This was viewed as a respectable showing considering no candidate with a Conservative label contested the seat in 1933.

The Vancouver-Burrard contest, while certainly not a victory for the Conservative Party, did lay to rest the notion that the party was incapable of making a comeback in provincial politics. The signs were clear for the Pattullo government. They would face considerable competition from both the socialists and the rebuilding Tories when the next election was called. Bruce McKelvie, in what was probably an overstatement of the situation, later claimed, "The results of that by-election (Vancouver-Burrard) so alarmed Victoria Liberals that Pattullo called an 'early' election before the Conservatives could fully organize throughout the length and breadth of
With the federal election over and B.C. Tories boosted by their provincial showing in the face of a national Liberal sweep, the vexing problem of selecting a permanent party leader could not be delayed any longer. While Patterson had been de facto leader since his election as party president in 1934, the party had not had a leadership convention in ten years.

When the party assembled in Vancouver on June 29, 1936 Dr. Frank Patterson was the front runner in a field of candidates which included Herbert Anscomb, R. L. Maitland, and Rolf Bruhn. Patterson, a native of St. John New Brunswick, and one of the most widely known orthopaedic surgeons in all of Canada, was characterized by one B.C. Tory as "the best true blue in and out worker that we have had at the head of the organization for years." Coming from a family active in Conservative Party politics, Patterson was president of the Vancouver Conservative Association from 1914-1916 and president of the provincial association four years later. While he had never run for office, he was a dedicated Conservative who almost singlehandedly began putting the party back together after the 1933 disaster. Patterson, a friend and admirer of R. B. Bennett, was not one to re-orient the party to a more progressive stance. Economy minded and committed to business government, Patterson could not accept the paternalism of Pattullo Liberalism. In his presidential address he told the convention:

On the resolution adopted by you will be framed a policy along business lines, and in the administration of that policy we must and will employ the same methods that govern our dealings in our private affairs. In no other way can the interests of the workers and the taxpayers of this province be protected . . . we will appeal to the people on a policy sound and sane, but not reactionary; progressive but most assuredly not radical; humane but not deceitful or chimerical.
If Patterson's orientation seemed old hat it probably was representative of the general sentiment of those who gathered in Vancouver. Even the more progressive stance taken by R. B. Bennett during his last year in office was not reflected in the platform drawn up by British Columbia Conservatives. Economy, efficiency, and the restoration of free enterprise was the theme of the convention and, as if the Tory Party had remained frozen since the pre-depression days, the platform discussions reveal almost total consensus on what one reporter called "neo-Tolmieism."40

Because of his work for the party since 1913 and, under the circumstances, the rather respectable showing B.C. Conservatives made in the recent federal election, Patterson won the leadership easily on the first ballot, winning 266 votes out of 389 cast.41 In a display of party unity, Maitland, the runner-up candidate, and Anscomb, the only other contender, moved to make it unanimous. Thus while the convention itself seemed routine, it had historical significance. For the first time since the days of McBride the party avoided a serious schism in the selection of their leader.

What accounts for the newly found harmony in the Tory ranks? Perhaps, as is suggested by the relative lack of press coverage and the fact that not one person interviewed could remember even a single dispute at the convention, Conservatives were resigned to letting the party drift as it would, believing that a leadership struggle would merely make a bad situation worse. This seems highly implausible, however, considering a provincial election was coming in the next year or so, and the party, if it was to become a force again, could not afford a poor showing. A more likely explanation lies in the available candidates for the leadership in 1936. Patterson and Maitland (the front runners) were not only non-controversial, but were also close
friends. Each enjoyed broad party support. While Maitland was the more experienced of the two, Patterson had made a reputation as a tireless worker, thoroughly dedicated to rebuilding the party. While Maitland was noted for his flair with party audiences, Patterson was noted for his dogged attention to details in closed door strategy meetings. If Maitland was the advocate of the Conservative cause, Patterson was the architect of the party's revival. There is no evidence that either was prepared to take the leadership at the risk of dividing the party. In the end Patterson's enthusiasm and organizational abilities won out.

Perhaps more than anything else the tireless work of Patterson and his lieutenants in putting the party organizational machinery back together (in 1934, outside Vancouver and Victoria there existed only a few skeleton organizations, mostly inactive; by 1936 there existed over 25 active associations) kept the Tories from dying altogether in the province. Of course the fact that the party was viable federally aided its survival. And the persistence of an established Conservative press in the Province and to a lesser degree the Colonist provided an outlet for Conservative views, the absence of which would have made rebuilding considerably more difficult. No less important were such traditionally conservative and highly influential business groups as the Vancouver Board of Trade, the Retail Merchants' Association, the Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, and the British Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons which provided continued criticism of the policies of the government. As the government's policies came increasingly under attack, a vacuum on the right developed which the Conservatives could capitalize on in the next election.
The Waiting Period, 1934-1937

If the party organization was gradually being rebuilt, the party in the legislature was still a nonentity. With only three sitting Conservatives, Anscomb, Bruhn, and Pooley, the Tories were in no position to establish an effective opposition to the Liberal government. Nor was it easy to oppose legislation that was geared to a crisis which the Tories had so badly mishandled.

With a commanding majority the Pattullo government pushed into high gear. The 1934 session produced a flurry of legislation designed to relieve the tax burden on wage earners, aid hospitals, schools and municipalities, and create the machinery to administer Pattullo's New Deal program. Making good on his promise of immediate relief for the working class, Pattullo pushed through legislation exempting low wage earners from the one percent tax, originally imposed by the Special Revenue Act of 1932. In addition, tax exemptions were increased, the Meal Tax was repealed, increased revenues were voted for unemployment relief and a bill was passed giving wide authority to the courts to prevent foreclosures in cases where hard pressed homeowners were unable to meet their mortgage payments. Other innovations were made in the field of labour legislation. A new Minimum Wage Act was passed which provided a mechanism for establishing minimum wage schedules and maximum hours of work in all industries. Another act created an advisory economic council which would be authorized to investigate and make recommendations covering practically the whole field of industrial and commercial activities in British Columbia. These measures passed almost without a hitch with the Liberal majority generally voting together.
"Work and wages" could not proceed without financing and both Pat­
tullo and Hart (Minister of Finance) knew that with the provincial treasury near bankruptcy, massive assistance would have to be gotten from the fed­
eral treasury. But little was forthcoming and after the Dominion-provincial conference in January, 1934, there was little reason to believe that the situation would improve as long as the Conservatives were in office in Ottawa.\textsuperscript{48} Pattullo therefore took a "contingency action" which proved to be his most controversial during his first term in office. Declaring that he intended "to see that none of our people are allowed to suffer from want of proper sustenance," the premier rammed through the house a "Special Pow­ers Act" which conferred virtually all the powers of the legislature upon the cabinet during the interval between sessions.\textsuperscript{49} According to the Canadian Annual Review, the Act:

virtually delegated all the powers of the legislature to the govern­ment for the period specified, in the control of business of all sorts; it overrode all other legislation on the state books with regard to the matters concerned. It gave the government power to act to the full extent to which the powers of the legislature ex­tended and not-withstanding any other public or private act of the legislature. Matters outlined in the bill over which the government was given complete power included: reservation, preservation, manage­ment, development, sale and disposition of natural resources; the borrowing of money on the sole credit of the province; the lending of money to industries and municipalities; and provincial public works and property; property and civil rights in the province.\textsuperscript{50}

According to Pattullo, the Act was necessary as an "emergency" measure "be­cause of the uncertain state of relations between the federal and provin­cial government involving financial aid, unemployment relief and other matters which might require the provincial government to take decisive action." "We do not know what the ultimate policy of the Dominion may be," said Pattullo, "and we must fortify ourselves against all contingencies."\textsuperscript{51}
Pattullo's justification for what the Province called "the abrogation of constitutional guarantees in British Columbia" did not wash with the opposition, the Liberal press, or even some members of his own party. Gerry McGeer (Liberal-Vancouver-Burrard), who would become Pattullo's prime nemesis, dubbed it the "Supreme Provincial Asinity" bill and voted against it. The opposition (both Conservatives and socialists) called it an "instrument of dictatorship" and even Prime Minister MacKenzie King denounced it as the "utter negation of Liberalism." After days of spirited debate, Pattullo was pressured into accepting certain amendments, principally one which would shorten the life of the Act to the beginning of the next session and one which defined in terms of ordinances which penalties might be enforced under the Act's powers. The bill eventually passed by a vote of 34 to 13 with all the C.C.F. members, one Liberal (McGeer), one Independent (Savage), and three Conservatives (Bruhn, Pooley, and Anscomb) voting against it. While the vote on the Special Powers Act clearly showed that Pattullo was in undisputed command of the legislature, it also revealed a crack in a political unity which if exploited to maximum advantage might be the foothold the Tories would need to propel themselves back as the guarantors of "free-enterprise" and the "defenders of constitutional government."

The 1935 session was decidedly low key in comparison to the hurried and optimistic efforts to get "work and wages" off the ground the preceding year. The main enactments were the following: the tightening up of the existing Minimum Wages and Hours Act, a bill releasing funds for the construction of an old-aged home and medical facility in Coquitlam, a highway loan bill providing for increased highway construction, a bill providing for increased loans to Vancouver, and a proposed draft of a health insurance
bill which was circulated to House members in preparation for the 1936 session. The most contentious issue of the session was the premier's pet project, a proposal to build a bridge across the Fraser River at New Westminster at an estimated cost of $4,000,000. Surprisingly, five Liberal members voted against the premier's first step toward the province's own public works program. While the bill still passed easily, the Liberal defections were indications of growing discontent with the premier's strong arm and often arrogant political leadership.

To increase Pattullo's difficulties, Vancouver was "occupied" in April of that year by 1,700 men from relief camps who had gone on strike for "work and wages." The direct action by the unemployed highlighted the shortcomings of the Dominion-provincial relief program and prompted Pattullo to demand that the federal government assume the bulk of responsibility for relief aid. Moreover, the demonstration evoked considerable public sympathy and put further pressure on Pattullo to make good on his promise of "work and wages."

With the election of MacKenzie King in October, 1935, Pattullo optimistically hoped that better terms could be arranged with the Dominion government which would provide the necessary capital to bail out his work and wages program. But Pattullo's optimism would have been dampened had he known that King, like his predecessor, favored economy and retrenchment. Stunned by the size of the public debt left by Bennett, King intended to prevent "irresponsible" premiers from making further "inroads" on the federal treasury, and informed Pattullo to that effect when the two met at the Dominion-provincial Conference called by King at the year's end.
The troubles Pattullo was having, both within his party and with the federal government, were magnified by the fierce struggle over health insurance which attended the eighteenth legislature, convened February 25, 1936. The plan, originally drawn up in the 1935 session and the first such legislation to be introduced in Canada, was a scheme to provide health benefits for virtually all middle and low income groups in the province. Included in the proposed plan's coverage were all employees in the province receiving less than $200 a month and their dependents, all other persons with incomes not exceeding that amount who might apply for insurance and their dependents, all persons, irrespective of income, who were residents in a rural municipality, and all indigent persons resident in British Columbia for two consecutive years preceding registration. But such an ambitious plan would obviously require extensive financing. Because of the poor condition of provincial finances in 1935, the plan, though comprehensive, had to be self-supporting, and thus in some respects had to be cheap and exclusionary. Not surprisingly, the scheme met considerable opposition. Employers faced with severely depressed profits were less than enthusiastic about the possibility of assessments which might amount to as much as three percent of their wages. Taxpayers also shuddered at the thought of new burdens being placed on them while the medical profession opposed any governmental intrusion into an area which they believed was rightfully theirs.

Before the draft bill was submitted to the 1936 session, public hearings were held on the matter throughout the province. No fewer than 139 organizations and individuals presented briefs opposing either part or all of the proposed legislation. As a result, the proposed measure was substantially watered down. Cash benefits were entirely excluded. A
provision was placed in the bill that only "essential medical services" would be covered. As a concession to the medical profession, employees with incomes in excess of $1,800 were excluded from the Act. As a concession to employees, their contributions were limited to two percent of their wages with a provision for a minimum and maximum contribution. But the employers were given the most important concession, for their contribution was reduced to one percent of their wage costs with a provision for a minimum and maximum contribution. Finally, to assure concessions to everyone, a source of dispute between doctors and taxpayers was dealt with by eliminating indigent persons from the benefits of the Act, a concession which raised considerable public opposition to the whole bill. "The revised bill satisfied no one," said H. F. Angus:

and an apparent result of the democratic experiment in public discussion was to make every group peculiarly conscious of its own interests and of the conflict between these and the interests of other groups. There ensued . . . not a united effort to relieve human suffering but a period of intensive bargaining in which each group played for its own hand and played hard.

The measure when introduced in the legislature proved to be no less contentious there than among the public of the province. Heavily lobbied by agricultural, business, industrial, and medical interests, Liberal members were divided in their attitude, some supporting the bill, some opposing it, and others demanding modifications. The C.C.F., although disappointed that the bill had been severely compromised, supported the measure, while Conservatives Pooley, Bruhn, and Anscomb opposed it. But despite disunity in the Liberal caucus, the large government majority aided by most C.C.F.ers carried the day and the measure passed final reading by a vote of 29 to 15. Those opposing it were seven Liberals, two C.C.F.
members, the three Independents, and Anscomb, Bruhn, and Pooley.71

This, however, was not the end of the matter. The doctors, led by the powerful British Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, continued to oppose essential parts of the plan and pressed the government to postpone the operation of the Act. They were joined by various powerful employers associations72 who wanted a cheaper plan (the doctors wanted a more expensive one) as well as a large segment of the public who opposed it for every conceivable reason.73 Pattullo, obviously conscious of the upcoming election and realizing that even his own government was not united on health insurance, shrewdly decided to postpone putting the Act into effect, ostensibly until such time as the upcoming Royal Commission on Dominion-provincial relations had reported, but more likely until such a time as he could get a reading of the electorate's feelings on the matter. On the matter of public opposition to the measure, the Montreal Gazette, doing a report on "Canada's first experience with comprehensive health insurance," noted:

... the law was postponed because of differences with the medical profession and dissatisfaction on the part of a section of the public with some of its terms. Numerous municipalities protested that they were not in a position for erection of hospitals called for by the Health Insurance Act, and there were protests because indigents were not included in its scope.74

The deferring of the Health Insurance bill proved a bitter disappointment in Liberal Party circles, and almost led to the resignation of G. M. Weir, the bill's author and chief sponsor. Weir made the issue a major policy plank in the party's 1937 platform, and spent considerable sums of money establishing the machinery for its implementation. But Pattullo, with strong backing from his Attorney General, G. M. Sloan, simply let the whole matter drift, despite the fact that a plebiscite held concurrently with the 1937
provincial election demonstrated that the plan was favored by 59 percent of those who voted. 75

The health insurance controversy revealed the adeptness of Pattullo in the art of political balancing. By going ahead with the insurance scheme there was the risk of pushing the medical and business community into the arms of Conservatives who by 1937 were showing increasing signs of recovery. But health insurance was a major part of the Liberal program and the killing of the legislation would not only damage the government's credibility, but would quite possibly alienate many of the more progressive supporters of the Liberal Party. Furthermore, there existed a division in the caucus on the matter which, if not contained, could prove fatal. 76 What was Pattullo's solution? Stall the implementation of the program until public opinion could be gauged (the plebiscite) and assign to the commission established to implement the legislation the task of "study" in order to "iron out difficulties" and make compromises that would be acceptable to all. 77 Thus, an embarrassing issue which had the potential of undoing the Liberal government was, at least for the time being, neutralized.

The Party Returns: The 1937 Election

Pattullo was not required to call an election earlier than fall, 1938 when the legislature's five year term would run out. Conditions in 1937, however, both economic and political, appeared to be more favorable for the government than they had been for four years.

There was no doubt that economic conditions in the province were steadily improving. Unemployment had decreased substantially during the year 1936. Wages were up everywhere and dramatic increases in production were reported
in most of the province's basic industries—agriculture, mining, fishing, and forest products. With wages increasing at a faster rate than prices, the government could claim substantial progress toward solving the financial crisis through its own efforts. While unemployment was still at an unacceptably high level and production was still lagging, by early 1937 there was developing in British Columbia a feeling that the worst of the depression was over and that the province was gradually returning to a semblance of its former prosperity.

Politically the time for an election seemed ripe too. The C.C.F. was deeply divided after their July, 1936 convention. Patterson's third place finish in the Vancouver-Burrard by-election was viewed by Pattullo as a sign of the Tory Party's continuing weakness.

The Conservatives, however, were readying themselves for the contest. Under Patterson's leadership, organizational work increased to the point where committees were operating in all but a few of the ridings. Candidates were nominated for 44 of the 48 seats, Patterson attended nearly every nominating convention, and Bruce McKelvie, first Vice President of the province-wide association, personally campaigned in all of the ridings in which candidates were placed. Money was the most serious problem. No figures are available on how much was collected. The statements of McKelvie, however, indicate that though a few donors were returning to the fold, the total amount collected was well below the level that was reached in 1928.

The Conservative platform, announced in April, was consistent with the party program adopted at the leadership convention one year earlier. Its main planks were familiar: the reduction in the size of the legislature by one-quarter, establishment of a non-political highways commission, some
form of health insurance, a vigorous reforestation and conservation program, reduction in the size of government administration, reduced government spending and restoration of the sinking fund. It was the last plank that provided the major theme of the Tory campaign. Up and down the province Conservatives complained about the high cost of government and declared that they could administer the province more efficiently and for less money. Party leader Patterson, in a typical speech, told one nomination convention:

You have had three and one half years of costly experimenting with your affairs of high priced brain trusters and scientific theorists, and of narrow minded demagogues for which the people had nothing to show but the highest price ever paid by British Columbia for government. Where is the regime of work and wages and where is the promised era of tax reduction and where is the opening up of new fields of enterprise. . . . And yet you are paying millions more into the treasury each year.

In an effort to exploit the "spending" theme to its fullest extent, the Tories made public figures "proving" that the Pattullo government was piling up a debt unequalled by any Canadian government in history. Liberal candidates quite naturally disputed the figures, and charged the Tories with running a phony campaign. "My personal conclusions after listening and reading the speeches of their leaders is [sic] that they are not conducting the campaign on its merits," said Liberal Senator J. W. deB. Farris to a campaign rally:

They are carrying on a trumped-up campaign. . . . They haven't an honest policy of their own and they are trying to overcome it with attacks on the government which are not supported by facts. Men who make these tongue in cheek statements provide the most eloquent declaration of their own incompetency to be trusted with the government.

As a retaliatory measure, the Liberals attempted to make a campaign issue out of the "ineffective and blundered policies of the former Tolmie government, the policies that led B.C. into chaos in 1933." In a rousing speech
in Vancouver, Finance Minister Hart flayed the leaders of the former Conservative administration:

... in 1928 the net debt of the province was $87 million. The net debt in 1933, after five years of Conservative administration, was $136 million. . . . What else did they do? They took away the liquor profits from municipalities amounting to $1 million annually. They took away the municipal share of the pari-mutuel tax amounting to $200,000 a year. They reduced the grants to municipalities in respect to teacher's salaries and reduced their contributions to hospitals from ninety cents per day per patient to seventy cents. And they called these economies. But that was not all. They added social service costs to the municipalities. They increased the gasoline tax from three cents to seven cents a gallon. They instituted the one-per cent tax on small incomes, so that Mr. Jones became known as "one per cent Jones." They then added the surtax, and Mr. Jones was elevated to the position of "sir tax Jones." You would have thought that he had run out of taxes, but some one pointed out that there was no tax on food, so he promptly added the meal tax. 86

The point of the Liberal attack was clear: if the Tories could not manage the province's finances in 1930 was there any reason to believe they could do so now?

Day after day the press reported on the interchange between the parties about the state of the province's finances. Charges were met with counter-charges until the issue became submerged in a sea of facts and figures which almost no one could understand. More than anything else, the controversy probably contributed to voter confusion, and in the end it is highly doubtful that it could have aided the Conservative effort.

The Tories' offensive concentrated on the high cost of government, the Liberals ran on their record. Low keyed and sober compared to the grand promises and reform zeal which marked the work and wages campaign of 1933, Pattullo took to the campaign trail telling audiences how the credit of British Columbia had been restored, how the investment climate had been stabilized, and how welfare benefits, municipal aid and education had all
been improved by Liberal policies. Pattullo was in an advantageous position. Flanked on the left by the C.C.F., which was condemning the government for not doing enough, and on the right by the Tories, who were advocating restraint, Pattullo could once again present his party as progressive but not radical, energetic but not irresponsible, and productive but not destructive. Pattullo had demonstrated his reform credentials but he had also shown that he was not a "pie in the sky radical bent on socializing the province." Reform was the Liberal government's program but restraint was its watchword. For a depression-weary province just beginning to see the light of economic improvement, the Liberal advantage would be difficult to overcome.

On May 25, just six days before the election, a full page newspaper ad appeared in Vancouver and Victoria dailies with the headline, "I WANT TO BE DICTATOR, SAID PREMIER PATTULLO . . . Prince Rupert, May 17." Underneath, the text read:

Such is the declaration of the man who already instituted dictatorship by passing the un-British Special Powers Act. . . . Such is the declaration of the man who would force the annexation of the Yukon. Such is the declaration of the man who boasts of being a professional politician.88

The Tories, it seemed were hauling out their big guns, or perhaps the only guns they had left. In any case, the smear was on and it was not reserved exclusively for the Liberals. Another full page ad, titled "A COMPARISON OF POLICIES--What the Conservative Party Stands For, What the C.C.F. Stands For," condemned the C.C.F. program as:

A departure from the system of government under which civilization reached its highest peak; The substitution of a species of socialism under which the state will dominate every activity; Socialization of finance and the issuance of scrip; Substitution of the socialistic doctrine that the citizen is the slave of the state for the
By characterizing their own party in the same advertisement as standing for:

sound statesmanlike government according to the highest democratic tradition and ideals, maintenance of the individualistic system upon which rests the entire structure of British and Canadian parliamentary government, a minimum of interference with the liberty of the subject and the protection of personal freedom and property rights,

the Tories projected themselves as the defender of constitutional government and the Canadian way of life from the dictatorial Pattullo and the alien ideology of the C.C.F.

The electorate, however, was not persuaded and the Liberals were easily voted back into office. The final results of the election left the Liberals with 31 seats, a loss of three. Eight Conservatives were elected, enough to make them the official Opposition, as the C.C.F. returned only seven members. Rolf Bruhn was returned as usual from Salmon Arm as an Independent, and Tom Uphill, Fernie's perennial member, was the single Labour M.L.A. On the face of it the Liberal triumph looks like a sweep. However, their popular vote dropped to 37.3 percent (a drop of approximately 4 percentage points from 1933) and the Tories and the C.C.F. received 28.6 percent each.

Perhaps the most significant result of the election was the revival of the Conservative Party. The returns by constituency indicate that the Conservatives fared relatively well all across the province. Tory candidates finished second in 12 constituencies, and the party re-established its support in several traditional Tory ridings which had deserted the party cause in the 1933 election. In particular, they regained strength in the major cities by
capturing the two Point Grey seats in Vancouver and returning two candidates in Victoria. They resurrected themselves in the Fraser Valley, the Okanagan, and swept Esquimalt and the Islands constituencies solidly. From a regional standpoint they made their poorest showing in the far North and, understandably, in the labour stronghold of East Vancouver and Burnaby. On balance, the party made substantial gains in most areas of the province.

The election result, however, had a sobering effect on Conservatives who thought the province was fed up with the "autocratic" leadership of Pat-tullo and the "socialized capitalism" that he preached. While the election affirmed that there still existed a substantial Conservative constituency in the province, it also affirmed what the 1933 election suggested: the political center of gravity in the province had shifted leftward. There seemed to be no question that the Tory Party would have to adopt a more pro-

gressive stance. Patterson, for all his organizational talents, dedication, and hard work, still exemplified an unreformed, business-oriented Conservatism that, in the face of a successfully instituted Liberal reformism, would need to be considerably altered if the party was to be successful. Whether the party was capable of such a transformation would be partially decided in 1938, when, after the sudden death of Dr. Patterson in February, they would again have to find a new leader.

The Selection of Maitland and the Party in Opposition

A fall leadership convention was called, ironically in the same hall which housed the historic Kamloops Convention of 1926. The two leading candidates were Royal Lethington Maitland, former president of the party, cabinet minister in the Tolmie government, and since 1937, the first member
from Vancouver-Point Grey, and Herbert Anscomb, ex Reeve of Oak Bay, former Mayor of Victoria, and since 1933 a member from Victoria. While some dark horses were being talked about, notably the young M.P. Howard Green, it was from the beginning a contest between Maitland and Anscomb.  

Maitland, who was basing his hopes on the fact that he was well known by provincial Conservatives, was the more progressive of the two candidates. Summing up his views on the direction the party should take, he told his supporters, "I want to be elected on the basis that the party realizes present problems, conditions, and has courage to move forward with these changing conditions and the needs of humanity." Known to be a strong supporter of R. J. Manion, the recently selected reformist-minded national leader, Maitland was the candidate of the Young Conservatives and enjoyed strong support from the Interior wing of the Party. "He (Maitland) is absolutely perfect for the job," said J. Jastley, the Kootenay delegate who nominated Maitland. "He knows B.C.'s problems; he knows B.C., for time and again for 30 years Pat Maitland has been called upon to help the Interior."  

Anscomb, long regarded as one of the most conservative men in the party, was generally strong in Vancouver, where he was backed by "old-guard" Tory politicians, and in his home city Victoria. A fervent believer in government restraint, a rugged individualist, and a fervent opponent of welfare-statism, Anscomb was the exemplification of a Conservatism which stressed little government, individual enterprise, and balanced budgets. "Squarely built, he stands as a rock and in a clipped Lancashire voice (he was born at Maidstone, England) demands Conservatism as it has always been known; sane, sound, serviceable, and sensible. Sanity, service and progress are his watchwords."
Although neither candidate was in a position to ride roughshod over the other, it became clear as the platform debates began that the party was in a mood for change. Working through the 98 resolutions, the delegates reviewed and revised (in some areas extensively) the 15-point manifesto issued by Dr. Patterson when he became leader two years earlier. The final product, by no means a complete break with the traditional positions of B.C. Conservatism, contained important progressive planks, a strong indication that the party was re-orienting itself toward the "new deal" policy of the national leader, and the first indication that Maitland would likely emerge as leader. Specifically, the Conservatives endorsed health insurance on "an actuarially sound basis." They pledged support to labour, favoring the right of workers to organize in unions of their own choice for collective bargaining. A more progressive agricultural policy was adopted favoring marketing control boards composed of representatives of producers, distributors and consumers. A new forest conservation policy with larger expenditures on forests paid for out of taxes on timber land was endorsed, and the party went on record as favoring national unemployment and retirement insurance. For the first time the Young Conservatives were paid more than lip service as indicated by the inclusion into the platform of a series of Young Conservatives sponsored resolutions which pledged the party to a "more progressive stance." In addition, a number of planks were included which were an echo of past party gatherings; an independent highway commission, elimination of waste in government, elimination of Oriental immigration, and a resolution introduced by Bruce McKelvie deploring interference with the courts by provincial governments and the Pattullo government's "abrogation of the legislature's prerogatives."
In general, the platform represented an acceptable middle ground between the more progressive members, for the most part the younger ones, and the staunch right wingers, exemplified by Anscomb and most of the party's traditional elite. Maitland's ultimate selection as party leader was very much a blessing in that he stood somewhere between the extremes.

For a brief time, it seemed that the convention would be bogged down in sectionalism. The problem revolved around the question of whether Lower Mainland Conservatives would be allowed to dominate the B.C. Conservative Association. After J. H. Morgan of New Westminster was re-elected party president, North country and other Interior delegates demanded their voices be heard and that control of the association be wrested from Vancouver and Victoria. The arguments became vociferous and for a time a walk-out seemed likely. However, a compromise was finally struck and the final complexion of the directorate indicates that hinterland delegates were successful in preventing Lower Mainland domination. Major T. A. Love of Grand Forks was returned as vice president without a vote, and A. H. Bayne of Kamloops was named second vice president defeating R. D. Harvey and W. H. M. Haldane, both of Victoria. The other four executive officers selected represented a fairly even regional balance: M. D. Bowden of Esquimalt, third vice president; R. W. Alward of Prince George, fourth vice president; T. Irvine of Vancouver-East, fifth vice president; and E. A. S. Dennis of Agassiz, sixth vice president.

No less a problem arose over the selection and seating of delegates from the city of Vancouver. The controversy involved the method used for selecting delegates. Maitland supporters charged the Conservative organization in Vancouver (most of them pro-Anscomb) with maneuvering the
selection process in such a way as to favor Anscomb. The problem was the delegates had been selected at large over the whole of Vancouver. Had delegates been chosen by area—Vancouver-East, Vancouver-Burrard, Vancouver-Center, Vancouver-Point Grey, as was traditional practice, Maitland would have controlled the entire vote from the West end. As it was, Anscomb received the vast majority of Vancouver delegates, a large number of votes that possibly could gain him the nomination. With a very close vote expected, a handful of delegates could swing the election either way. Nevertheless, the credentials committee had no choice but to rule that the procedure conformed to the recently adopted party rules, and despite some bitterness in the Maitland camp, most of the delegates grudgingly accepted the ruling.

When the voting began on the second night, Maitland was touted as a slight favorite. When the result was declared final, well after midnight, Maitland had won, but by the slim majority of 16 votes, 269 to 253. Immediately following the vote, Anscomb took the platform and, in a display of party unity, said: "My first word must be to congratulate my new leader and to ask for him the unanimous support of this party." Anscomb, while undoubtedly disappointed, took his loss in the spirit of party unity, perhaps remembering the past, but probably more important, because he regarded Maitland as extremely capable, and despite Maitland's more moderate stance, had few hard disagreements with him.

The selection of Maitland as party leader was greeted with favor by most of the press. The Vancouver and Victoria dailies spoke of him as able and experienced, characterizing his selection as an infusion of a more progressive orientation for the party. In particular, the Interior was
pleased, a not insignificant accomplishment in light of the past rivalries in the party between Interior and Lower Mainland Tories. The **Prince George Citizen** said that under his leadership the Conservative Party "should be stimulated and infused with revived hope." The **Penticton Herald** likewise made it clear where they stood:

Mr. Maitland is well acquainted with rural B.C. and takes an interest in rural problems as he has demonstrated by his consistent support of marketing legislation. The Interior districts were largely for Mr. Maitland. . . . From Mr. Anscomb's addresses, the conclusion is forced that he (Anscomb) belongs to the class of businessmen who think chiefly of dollars and cents . . . his public utterances in the past seem to mark him out as belonging to that type of city businessmen who are usually failures as administrators or leaders, because of their restricted and Conservative views. Pat Maitland was doubtless the best man available for the leadership at the Convention.

The new party leader was indeed experienced and did have solid conservative credentials. Born in Ontario, and educated in Vancouver, Royal Lethington "Pat" Maitland (as he was known to almost everyone) was accepted to the bar in British Columbia in 1913. For five years he was a city prosecutor for Vancouver, and was made a King's Counsel in 1928. He became a Bencher of the law society in 1935 and later served as president of the Canadian Bar Association. As a life-long Conservative, he was active in party work before he was old enough to vote. He was first elected to the legislature in 1928, becoming Minister Without Portfolio in the Tolmie Cabinet of 1928-1933. Re-elected in 1937 after declining nomination in the chaotic days of 1933, Maitland was continually active in party organizational affairs. He was party president from 1924-1928, and was one of the few Conservatives in the Tolmie administration who did not support the coalition movement prior to the 1933 election.

In the legislature he had a reputation as a brilliant debater, "one of the finest ever to sit in Victoria," said the **Province**, "and a right hand
man to his party." Bruce Hutchison commented during his first legislative session as party leader:

In the dark depths of the depression the Tolmie government used to send for young Mr. Maitland whenever the going got hard. He always had to lead the forlorn hopes, save the lost causes, defend the indefensible—of necessity he became a master of rear guard action, an able pointer—with pride, and a whooper up who gave us our most purple passages, our gayest times in those dark days of the seventeenth legislature.

A wit of superb talents and color, Maitland was known not only for his outstanding oratory, but for his sarcasm, his phrase making and, what legislative reporters referred to as his mastery of repartee. During his years in the legislature he was constantly writing ribald comments in his small black diary, entitled Log of the House. He once recorded of a colleague in the Tolmie government, "There were long pauses between his sentences, nothing between the pauses." Of Anscomb he said during the 1937 session:

Herb Anscomb—our heavyweight from the capital is punching the government: He just goes on and on and on—never back pedals—couldn't if he wanted to—and wouldn't want to if he could. He can take on the whole crew opposite at once—and he's better than that. He's like an old dreadnaught—plows ahead at top speed and never slows down. He has just tied up at the dock for refueling.

Maitland's selection as party leader brought with it a more progressive orientation to the Conservative Party. The reasons for the shift are not hard to find. First, the election demonstrated that the Liberals' "socialized capitalism," albeit watered down from the orthodoxy of 1933, was still popular with the electorate. A drop of four percentage points for an incumbent government was not a large enough decline to infer substantial voter dissatisfaction. Coupling this with the demonstrated staying power of the C.C.F.—the C.C.F. showing made it clear that it was not a ephemeral protest movement dependent on the extreme crisis conditions of 1933—led to the
conclusion that the Left was a powerful and viable force which would have to be reckoned with in the future. Second, Maitland and his lieutenants knew that there was no going back to a politics characteristic of the pre-depression years. Even the staunchest Tories had to admit social and economic reforms once implemented are very hard to back away from. There is no turning back the clock on programs which the people come to expect. "We have gone far in this province in social legislation," the Tory leader told the House in the budget debate during the fall, 1938 session, "and with social legislation none of the parties disagrees; none has opposed it."

Despite the adoption of a more progressive orientation, however, the Maitland-led Conservative Party, buoyed by its election gains, was not prepared to stray too far from its traditional positions. The election had also shown that a substantial conservative constituency still existed. The party's strategy was to attempt to expand that constituency into a governing coalition by co-opting those portions of "socialized capitalism" which had become acceptable and workable, portray Pattullo and his Liberal government as increasingly irresponsible "spenders" and without direction, condemn the C.C.F. as dangerous extremists captivated by an alien ideology, and present a Conservation program which directed itself firmly to the main issues of the day—unemployment, escalating costs of government, and strengthening the economy.

When the 1938 session convened on October 26, opposition leader Maitland, in reply to the Throne Speech, set the course on which he hoped to take the party:

One of the greatest needs of the day is confidence in government. If we secure that faith, nothing can stop us. We will march forward. We must have a government that will satisfy capital, satisfy
industry, and satisfy the people, and show them all that they are to be fairly treated. Only in that way can confidence be restored.118

On the issue of costly government, he told the house:

We want to see the abandonment of haphazard methods of government. We want to see more planning. In this province we must get away from impractical schemes that have cost us millions of dollars without any result; from experiment after experiment that end in nothing.

In particular, Maitland was aware of a growing mood of discontent among businessmen, largely stemming from Pattullo's successful efforts to regulate utilities industries.119 In a warning to the House that Liberal policies were driving businesses out of the province and stifling new investment, he said:

The day is long past when we will pass legislation in haste, that ends in chaos. When business never knows that it is going to suffer tomorrow, when it never knows what kind of an act is going to be brought in next, business becomes afraid. Take your time. Do the job well. Don't run in with half-baked bills. Give business and the people confidence.120

On the problems facing farmers, Maitland said he had no quarrel with the government's marketing legislation, but that "this was not enough." Noting that agricultural production was still far below the 1929 level, he urged the government to "actively encourage fall fairs, which raise the standard of production, and encourage farmers' co-operatives."121 On the question of tariffs and trade, Maitland said, "B.C. should take the lead in opposing any revision of the Empire agreements, while pressing for anti-dump duties and tariffs that would help the farmers."122 Reasserting the main planks of the convention platform, he called for a greatly expanded road building program, an independent highway commission to take public works out of politics, B.C. cooperation with the federal government toward an unemployment insurance program, and an immediate returning to the municipalities of the grants taken from them in the crisis of 1932-1933.123 Aware that unemployment
was perhaps still the number one problem the government faced, he scolded the government for its lack of efforts to create jobs:

As long as unemployment exists, we must face it, and until we see it disappear we must face it as a permanent problem. I cannot help thinking that instead of issuing cheques for relief we should substitute gainful occupation if we are to maintain the morale of our people. If this money must be spent it should be spent on the roads, reforestation, surveys, planning; on business undertakings; on agricultural developments. But let it be useful work and let these people feel that they are being paid for services rendered.  

Maitland's maiden speech as party leader was significant for three reasons. First, it indicated that the Conservative Party had adopted a stance which accepted many of the reforms initiated by Pattullo, while at the same time criticized the government for its "extravagance" and excessive interference in the economy. Secondly, Maitland made verbal overtures to the business community, a traditional Tory bastion of support which was becoming increasingly uncomfortable with Pattullo. Third, Maitland made it clear to all that he was the unquestioned leader of the party and that he fully intended to equip the Opposition caucus with assertive and aggressive leadership, something Tories had lacked for many years. Province legislative reporter, Torchy Anderson, noted, "[he] made it quite clear that he is the NEW leader of the Conservative party and as such proposes to start from scratch."

Except for the enactment of the Public Utilities Act, the 1938 session provided little that was new. With the usual lambasting from both sides of the opposition, the government, with its comfortable majority, had an easy time recording its opposition to oriental immigration, raising employees benefits under the provincial Workmen's Compensation Act, amending the Industrial Arbitration Act so that union leaders could represent employees before conciliation boards, and revising the corporate tax structure.
Perhaps the most contentious issue was one involving a controversial political problem. To the charges from both sides of the opposition of gerrymandering, the government brought down a re-distribution bill which, if passed, would abolish the Islands riding. While justified on the grounds of economy and population movements the bill's political overtones were obvious since the riding was traditionally Conservative. The Conservatives viewed the bill as blatantly political and designed to counteract the growing strength of the Tory Party.

Significantly, the Liberals introduced almost no major reform legislation, a sign that the party's strong reformist tinge of four years earlier was fading. The Health Insurance Bill promised in 1937, and a central plank in the Liberal election platform, was all but abandoned. Old age pensions, mothers' allowances, prison reform, and mental health programs were conspicuously left out of the government's program. But the most dramatic sign of Patullo's movement away from "the little new deal" came when the Liberals voted down over the opposition of Conservatives and socialists a C.C.F. sponsored bill which would have provided improved working conditions and lowered working hours for hospital nurses. Said Pattullo:

We must go slow in new social reforms that cost money. . . . We know the hospitals need more money. So do the municipalities. So does the province. . . . But don't push it too far. We have been moving further in British Columbia in the field of social legislation than any other province in Canada, and don't forget that our industries have to meet unfair competition from other provinces, and the competition of foreign countries. Our industries have been bearing it and are apparently doing fairly well but don't drive this situation too hard meantime. You can kill the goose that lays the golden egg.

Thus, Pattullo had, by the end of 1938, moved to a more middle of the road position.
An explanation for the Liberal Party's changing hue is not hard to find. First, Pattullo's newly adopted program of government regulation of the economy had frightened businessmen in particular and, through a concerted propaganda campaign, many free enterprisers in general. Second, the Conservative gains in the 1937 election were fresh in the government's mind. Third, the party hierarchy had become noticeably less enthusiastic about work and wages and their lack of enthusiasm was demonstrated when the party gathered for its annual convention in August, 1938.

During the first few years of office the Pattullo government attempted to alleviate the effects of the depression by inflationary pump-priming devices. Due primarily to the difficulty of raising money for its reform projects, the government, during its second term, appeared to have adopted a second method of helping the provincial economy. The method was to reduce consumer prices, and thus increase purchasing power by breaking up monopolies and cutting utility costs. Of necessity, this involved regulation of businesses, the Coal and Petroleum Act enacted in 1937 being a prime example. For businessmen, many of whom had been an important part of the Liberal coalition since 1933, a great concern developed about the apparent direction the new government was taking. Responding to the Public Utilities Act, enacted into law during the 1938 session, the influential Financial Post condemned the legislation as the beginning of "a new era of regimentation" in which the premier and his colleagues appeared to be "definitely committed to a program of more rigid control over business and industry." As Robin noted:

The same journal maintained that the tax load on industry, which supported the government's social welfare program was pricing British Columbia primary products out of markets. Leading company
men in Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce were incensed at the new regulatory shift and nodded their heads in unison when H. R. MacMillan, during an address to the Vancouver Board of Trade, charged that "political control of the capitalistic system" was driving capital from British Columbia. MacMillan observed that "capitalists felt a little safer outside British Columbia with their capital," and that "the province was governed by men without very much consideration for economic foundation."\textsuperscript{134}

Pattullo's skirmishes with the business community were anything but a concerted attack on capitalism itself, yet they made businessmen throughout the province take heed of where the government was leading them. While protests and lobbying would have been satisfactory forms of political action a few years earlier, with the re-appearance of the Conservative Party a new form of political articulation was available.

Changes in the philosophical stance of the Liberal Party which were first noticeable during the 1937 election campaign, continued to take place after the victory that year. As is common of programmatic parties after a few years in office, a kind of atrophy sets in when members become less concerned about the "great" changes the party proposed in order to get elected and more concerned about their own political survival. Financial retrenchment, the party's desire to postpone as long as possible the quarrel with the medical profession over health insurance, and the explicit concern demonstrated about going ahead with social reforms that cost money, are all indications of the party's intentions to pursue more and more what Hutchison called "middle of the road policies."\textsuperscript{135} "By 1938," Sutherland notes, "the Liberal party, by now having lost all of its reforming zeal, was little more than an unofficial arm of the government."\textsuperscript{136} Commenting on the party's newly moderated stance, Sutherland writes:

At the convention [August, 1938], the party moved considerably to the right of where it had stood in 1933. It quietly dropped from its platform the slogan promising "work and wages" and proposals
for monetary reform. This change reflects not only the decreasing importance of the reform group in the party but also the changed view of the leaders, after almost five years of governmental responsibility.

Although the problems of the depression were far from being solved, the economic situation had apparently improved enough that the Pattullo group could feel reasonably safe in straying from the social reformism characteristic of their earlier years. To be sure, the outcry from businessmen over Pattullo's regulatory legislation, the escalating costs of government which would have to be borne by the tax paying middle strata of British Columbians, and the increasing strains between the provincial and dominion governments probably convinced Pattullo that a more moderate orientation was required to insure against large scale defections to the revitalized Tories.

For the Liberals, the forces pushing them to the right were the same forces which if tapped successfully could be the Conservative Party's ticket back to power. As the decade came to a close, the two parties were coming closer together, and the battle was on to see which could extend its hold over the anti-Socialist segment of the British Columbia electorate.

The outbreak of the war in Europe on September 1, 1939, significantly affected both the course and content of provincial politics in British Columbia. In the words of Bruce Hutchison, "the world of provincial politics died on September 1; all the old solutions, policies, slogans, rallying cries, charges and countercharges became outdated by the war." For the present," said the Vancouver Sun, "its hands [the political process] are tied by larger events outside its control. The war naturally created a kind of crisis atmosphere in which normal political activity became, to perhaps the vast majority of the electorate, inappropriate, and to some,
simply irrelevant. The people's attention was focused on the international situation, the national government, and national war policy. The war was a national problem and the most that provincial politicians could hope to do was provide support or criticism as they saw fit. Understanding provincial politics during this period requires keeping in perspective what was foremost in everyone's mind.  

For the Conservative Party, in high gear after its showing in the Vancouver Center by-election, the outbreak of war provided a sticky problem. At issue was the question of opposition in wartime. Maitland had insisted since May that, "if it ever becomes necessary, Conservatives would not hesitate to join forces with the Liberals in the event of an emergency." When the war struck, the Tories had two choices. They could continue their normal opposition role, or join in a political truce with the other parties to "suspend" opposition until the emergency subsided. Both alternatives were fraught with dangers to the Tory Party. Should the party continue in its normal opposition functions, it might be viewed as acting out of self-interest and branded as divisive in time of national crisis. If on the other hand a political cease-fire was agreed to, the Liberals would naturally gain an advantage as they were still the governing party. Moreover, the C.C.F. would be in a position to monopolize anti-government criticism since there was little chance that they would join in any such agreement. And to complicate matters further, some Conservatives were against hanging up the swords under any circumstances.

At the October, 1939 annual meeting of the B.C. Conservative Association in Vancouver, the party leaders joined with the federal members and declared "whole hearted cooperation with the federal and provincial
governments for the duration of the war." A resolution embodying party policy was adopted unanimously:

(a) That during the war it will, consistent with our national welfare, cooperate wholeheartedly with the federal and provincial governments and other constitutional authorities in respect of all matters relating to the prosecution of the war to a victorious conclusion, and the maintenance of our liberties and system of government, reserving of course the right and duty of an opposition party to discharge its functions in constructive criticism.

(b) That in respect of essentially domestic and provincial matters not connected with the war, but concerning provincial policies and the general administration of the people's business—the Conservative party and its leaders will in a constructive and aggressive manner discharge its clear duty of protecting the interests of the public.

The resolution was a kind of compromise. The party agreed to full cooperation on matters relating to the prosecution of the war but reserved the right to carry on its opposition function with regard to matters not connected with the war. This general statement of policy left unanswered the question as to how far the party would go in cooperating with the Pattullo government. When Maitland readily accepted the government's proposal that by-elections should be either postponed or go uncontested in order that a "united wartime front be established to avoid sapping strength from the government," all Conservatives were not agreeable. Herbert Anscomb with support from J. A. Paton (Cons. Vancouver-Point Grey) expressed the belief that cooperation with the government should fall short of abstention from contesting by-elections; "for such a policy," said Anscomb, "results in Conservatives taking a back seat." In particular Anscomb feared that a "united wartime front" of the two old parties would aid the C.C.F. He reminded his colleagues that in Cranbrook, where the recent by-election went uncontested by the Conservatives, the C.C.F. had taken more votes than ever before in that constituency. Anscomb was concerned that the
Conservative pledge not to obstruct the Liberal Party during the war might leave the field open for the C.C.F. to become the official Opposition. "Communistic thought, whether you call it C.C.F. or not, is prevalent in British Columbia," he warned his party colleagues. "It [the "communist" C.C.F.] is ever on the alert, ever on the offensive. Unless we are prepared to act, the Conservative Party will fade out of the picture."\(^{148}\)

But the crack in the ranks was closed when it became clear that the C.C.F. would refuse participation in any such political cease-fire along the lines advocated by Liberals and Conservatives. C.C.F. stalwarts such as Dorothy Steeves and Harold Winch denounced the truce as a political move to unify the old-line parties against the Left and as contrary to every tradition of parliamentary practice. Almost immediately, expressions of outrage were heard up and down the province charging the C.C.F. with defeatism, cynicism, and, to some, outright treason.\(^{149}\) The press followed suit, harshly attacking the C.C.F. as acting only out of partisan advantage, and praised Maitland's decision to "suspend" politics as an act of "courage" and "statesmanship."\(^{150}\) The Conservative Party, by its decision to suspend its normal opposition role had, at the very least, gained favor with the press.

With a political truce in effect, one without stated duration, organizational work significantly decreased throughout the province. This was due in part to the tacit agreement to forego partisan politics at the provincial level, but also because the federal party was having severe difficulties of its own.\(^{151}\) The national Conservative organization remained dormant through November and December of 1939, and the party offices in Ottawa all but closed.\(^{152}\) This, in contrast to the provincial situation,
was due only in part to a war-induced let up in political activities. More importantly the situation resulted from the party's inability to raise money. "As soon as the war broke out," Manion wrote:

> those who were kind enough to help us simply told us: "Well there is a war on now and we will not assist political organizations" and they have stayed by that resolution so much so that, confidentially, we have not been able to pay off the money we owe. . . .

On the opening day of the January, 1940 session, Prime Minister King announced he was dissolving parliament and calling an immediate election. The announcement took the Conservative Party by surprise. King had told Manion four months earlier, the day before the opening of the war session in September, that "there would be no general election certainly until after the next session—that is, the January session." According to Manion, by calling a sudden election the Liberal government had caught the Conservative Party without organization, without funds, and lacking important political ammunition sure to have been unearthed by a full session of parliament.

Given the depleted state of party finances, the lack of an effective issue to attack the Liberal government and the internal controversy in the party over decision to run on a "national government" platform, the Tory Party seemed to be heading for electoral disaster. The biggest problem was how to raise funds. The party coffers, already near bankruptcy before the campaign began, were getting very little help from the traditional big contributors in Montreal and Toronto. The situation became so bad that by March, less than a month before the election, the campaign was being financed on a day-to-day basis and current accounts were in arrears. "Throughout the nation as a whole," one of Manion's fund raisers later recalled, "the Conservative party spent less than the total raised in
Montreal alone during the election campaign of 1930. All of this had an obvious effect on the party fortunes in the provinces. In British Columbia, the Conservatives had trouble even getting people out to work. Finances, however, were the major problem. "The Liberals had unlimited funds—and speaking from my own experience, we had virtually none, or so little that it did not count."161

The party's conversion to "National Government" was also contentious. Maitland, while insisting on his loyalty to the national leader, made it clear that opening the doors of nominating conventions to persons of all political affiliations would weaken the considerably strengthened provincial association.162 In the end, most B.C. Conservatives retained the traditional label while pledging their support to the National Government of Manion.163

The results of the 1940 election were a disaster for the Conservative Party of Canada. Only 40 Conservatives were elected to the House of Commons as opposed to 184 Liberals, the largest parliamentary majority thus far achieved in the country's history.164 Manion lost his seat and the party gained barely 30 percent of the popular vote. Twenty-five of the party's forty members came from Ontario. With the party left even weaker than it had been after the defeat of 1935, many concluded that it was on the edge of extinction.165

Considering the Liberal landslide, British Columbia Conservatives at least stayed alive. Tory representation in B.C. dropped from 5 seats to 4 seats but its popular vote increased by over 5 percent from 1935 (1935, 24.6 percent; 1940, 30.5 percent).166 The Liberals picked up 4 seats for a total of 10 and won 37.4 percent of the vote (up nearly 6 percent from 1935). The C.C.F. won only one seat, a loss of two from 1935 and won 28.4
percent of the vote, a decline of 5 percentage points from 1935. While no amount of rationalization could sweeten the hard reality of the election result, the fact that the Conservative Party received almost one-third of the vote in British Columbia was a sign that the party was at least not declining in the province.

In assessing the reasons for the party's dismal showing in the 1940 election, the war stands out as the most important one. The party had again been victimized by overwhelming events. The Tory Party had the unfortunate luck to be in office when the most severe part of the depression struck, and also had the unfortunate luck of being in opposition when the war struck. There was little to offer people who were in no mood to change governments in the midst of the war. While the Conservative press blamed Manion for abandoning Conservative principles, and others put the blame on everything from the party's conscriptionist image to the religion of the leader, that the party could have succeeded in any case is doubtful. In politics, circumstances often play as important a role as policies, and the circumstances seemed to be again unfavorable to the Tories.

In British Columbia, the war had a significant impact on provincial politics. When the 1939 legislative session convened on October 31, people's attention, as evidenced by press reportage, was primarily focused on the events in Europe. The government had announced earlier that it would not submit an extensive legislative program. The keynote of the government's policy was contained in the Speech from the Throne, which was almost totally devoted to the theme of cooperation and unity in the war effort:

While war conditions make necessary the conservation of our resources to the fullest extent, nevertheless every effort will be made to maintain all essential services at as high efficiency as possible.
Other than some essential measures, my government will not submit any extensive legislative program for your consideration.\textsuperscript{168}

Indeed, in the shortest and what the \textit{Vancouver News Herald} called "one of the most uneventful sessions in the province's history,"\textsuperscript{169} the C.C.F. alone provided the only major clash. Hardly had the session begun, when C.C.F. stalwart Dorothy Steeves, in a rousing and emotional speech, condemned the war policies of the British Empire and questioned the war aims of the allies.\textsuperscript{170} Opening her address by declaring that Hitler was produced by the policies of the allies after the last war, she denounced the war as an outgrowth of "cutthroat competition and economic conditions":

Democracy and freedom are over-worked words. Political democracy in itself is not enough. It must be accompanied by economic democracy which would lead to social justice. . . . As long as you have poverty and exploitation out of which the privileged group makes profits, you are going to have war, Hitler or no Hitler. Democracy is not synonymous with the British Empire or British traditions. It is certainly not so in this part of the British Empire.\textsuperscript{171}

On the government's war aims, she said:

war was another excuse to do nothing about conditions [in Canada]. . . . It is not enough to destroy something. What comes after that? It is folly to go back to the old cut throat competition. It is no use to destroy Hitler in Germany and leave alive Hitlers in our own country.\textsuperscript{172}

After lashing out at the capitalist economics which give rise to conflicts between nations and exploitation and misery at home, she saved the most vitriolic statements for attacking Great Britain:

Great Britain must take its share of the blame. As the biggest Empire in the world, it can not wash its hands of the past. . . . Empire means Imperialism and the apostles of imperialism are the arms manufacturers.\textsuperscript{173}

As if she had provided the spark needed to ignite the legislature, Conservatives and Liberals alike stood up to condemn her and by implication the entire C.C.F. bench. Harry Perry, Liberal member for Ft. George,
heatedly berated the C.C.F. members for their attitude:

It is because of the very British Empire, which she [Steeves] is attacking, and because of the freedom which we enjoy under it, that such speeches can be made in this House. . . . We have waited for the official viewpoint of the CCF party and we must accept the statements made today as being those of the whole party.¹⁷⁴

Herb Anscomb thundered that Mrs. Steeves was a cyclops "with just one eye that was fixed on condemning British policy," and Pattullo went so far as to threaten some form of punitive action if members of the house persisted in such utterance:

We must win this war, and nothing must be said that will interfere with the efforts of the government to bring the war to a successful end. If such statement occur again either inside or outside the House I feel I must communicate with the proper authorities in Ottawa.¹⁷⁵

The Steeves's speech was like setting off dynamite. The members debated the war for the better part of a week in which Hutchison termed "a depth of feeling, a raw bitterness, a baring of souls that the house has not seen before."¹⁷⁶ Liberals and Conservatives demanded to know the C.C.F.'s precise position on the war. The C.C.F. demanded to know what the nation's war aims were and how it [the war] could contribute to a more "just society" when it was over. The debate, however, had little to do with provincial politics except to harden Liberal and Tory attitudes against the C.C.F.

When the passions finally cooled after a week of fiery debate, the House members settled into a relatively quiet (by the standards of the first week) and dull session. The Tories, apparently making good on their tacit agreement to suspend vigorous opposition, quietly raised the issue of government patronage in public works, argued against a bill that would divide the Dukhobor community by foreclosing on Dukhobor lands and then reselling them to the community in divided parcels, criticized the "extravagant" Hart budget, and pressed the government to open up debate on
the operations of an alleged fruit combine in the Okanagan valley. 177

One exception to the generally non-critical Tory bench was the self-appointed finance critic, Herb Anscomb. Rejecting the principle of political truce, the Victoria Conservative methodically attacked virtually every part of the Hart budget. In an attack which Province correspondent B. A. McKelvie dubbed "the most devastating that has been heard in the House for years," Anscomb declared that extravagance had littered the way of the government, that faith had been broken with bond holders in not maintaining sinking funds, that municipalities had been deceived, and that the balance sheet had been so framed as to deliberately misrepresent the true position of the province. 178 Anscomb was making it known that the voice of the Conservative Party would continue to be heard, and what is more, he was that voice. 179

On the whole, however, the Tories were restrained in their politics. And the session lived up to Pattullo's promise that no extensive legislative program would be enacted. The only major measures passed dealt with pension and tax provisions for men in the armed services. There were amendments to the Public Utilities Act and a new Elections Act updated the machinery for conducting elections. But all in all the war had made an ominous intrusion into the world of provincial politics and little of importance was accomplished during the 19th legislative session. A Sun editorial captured well the parliamentary atmosphere prior to prorogation:

Nobody has anymore heart in this session. No one feels it is worth prolonging or arguing over. This is very natural since the session wasn't suppose to be terribly important anyway. The government has postponed everything of importance on account of the war, the Conservatives have agreed to let things slide and the CCF has exhausted itself on business that does not directly concern this House--what could you expect? 180
The newly found spirit of bipartisanship between Liberals and Conservatives lasted no longer than the duration of the short legislative session. Its only reason for being was the war. The nation understandably was in a state of excited concern when the war broke out and provincial politics was all but eclipsed by the crisis atmosphere. By mid-1940 things had begun to settle down and although the war was still foremost on everyone's mind, the first shock of declaration was over, and the political process was beginning to return to "business as usual."

The political truce between the two parties was officially ended by Maitland at the Penticton annual convention of the B.C. Conservative Association in October. Anticipating an election in the coming year, and under pressure from many in his own party to end the agreement, the party leader reversed his stand of almost exactly one year earlier and declared the political truce with the Liberals finished. Charging that the Pattullo government "is one of the worst political machines in Canadian history," Maitland promised a "rough session" when the legislature convened and announced plans for a militant campaign in preparation for the upcoming election.

If the pressures of internal party politics induced Maitland to call off the political truce, the developing political situation in the province ensured that the Tory opposition would be accelerated to its old pace. In particular, Pattullo was coming under severe attack from all sections of the populace for his increasingly rigid stand against the federal government's position in the Rowell-Sirois Commission's report that greater centralization of government was the only solution to the country's economic problems. In 1937, in an attempt to find some kind of solution to the
problems of unemployment, relief, and the controversial matter of federal-provincial financial arrangements, Prime Minister King appointed a Royal Commission on Dominion-provincial Relations. The plan as recommended by the Commission (the Rowell-Sirois Commission), called for the provinces to surrender federal subsidies and provincial control of personal and corporation income taxes. In return, the federal government would assume responsibility for the whole problem of unemployment relief and all provincial debts. In addition, the federal government was to pay an annual "national adjustment grant" to the provinces and was to guarantee all future provincial and municipal borrowing. Pattullo, a firm opponent of further centralization in Ottawa, presented an elaborate brief to the commission which vehemently argued against the proposal. In short, it argued that the provinces should be given more, not less, sources of revenue and, in particular, exclusive use of the income tax. In effect, Pattullo was calling for greater decentralization of government in Canada, a view that was at odds with widely held opinion in the province, and the stated position of the Conservative Party.

This is the main issue the Conservatives seized when the legislature convened in the fall of 1940. Pattullo ignited the smoldering issue when he stated early in the session that he was going to the forthcoming federal-provincial conference at Ottawa with no set policy on the Rowell-Sirois report, ostensibly to be free to work out a compromise agreement with other provinces and the federal government. Strongly in favor of the Commission's report--Maitland called it "the greatest document since Confederation"--the Tory leader attacked the premier for his "shortsighted" attitude saying the report "should not be killed by provincial
Addressing members of the Vancouver South Conservative Association, Maitland expressed his party's position:

The report is an attempt to find a way to free the provincial government from the shackles of debt, the constant shadow of responsibility of unemployed employables, freedom from the P.G.E. debt, freedom from Sumas, Oliver and Merville debts, freedom from the millions we owe the Dominion Government. It is a serious attempt to help us plan for the day when we will have fewer natural resources, and will have to replace those that have been exploited with new industries.

Goaded by both the C.C.F. and the Tories to make his position precise as to what the government proposed to do, Pattullo finally admitted that his policy was practically the same as stated in the B.C. government brief to the Commission when it was first set up. Forthrightly, the premier declared in the House that "British Columbia will never permit itself to be 'hog-tied' or 'hamstrung' in any Dominion-provincial settlement on the basis of the Rowell-Sirois report." He also strongly objected to Prime Minister King's opinion that the adoption of the report was essential to the war effort. Later in the budget speech, Minister of Education, Health and Social Services, George Weir, supported Pattullo's stand and argued that accepting the report in toto would make it impossible for British Columbia to keep up its present level of social services.

Aided by both the Liberal and Conservative press, Maitland flayed Pattullo for his narrow "British Columbia First" attitude "while the entire Dominion was in peril." "The report is a chart which lays the groundwork for the future economic well being of Canada," declared the opposition leader:

If the premier approaches the Conference in the mood he was in here the other day I have little hope of solution for our troubles being found. If he [Pattullo] approaches it in the spirit of "I accuse", fearful of being "sold down the river" then it does not become a
conference, but a war between the dominion and the provinces. I cannot follow the premier when he says Eastern interests are trying to hamstring B.C. The recommendations apply to all provinces. Surely we are not to think the federal premier is calling a conference just for the purpose of hamstringing B.C. Future generations will judge the men who sit around that conference table. . . . They will ask: Did those men do the big thing or did they play politics.193

The Tories, at the least, felt they had an election issue and were determined to exploit it to the fullest. During the pre-war period, the questions raised in the report caught the attention of only a few as its relevance seemed less than pressing. But with the war dominating everyone's attention the report could be shown to be directly related to the war effort, and Pattullo's obstinate provincialism would reflect poorly (to some patriotically) on the premier and by implication the government that supported him. Thus the Maitland-led Tories bore down on Pattullo in an attempt to get as much mileage from the issue as possible.

Another issue which dominated the 1940 session was the government's budget. Again it was the war which generated perhaps some of the most bitter and antagonistic debate ever witnessed in the B.C. legislature. At issue was the size of the government's budget at a time when many felt the province should be tightening its belt. A Vancouver Sun editorial summarizes this view:

At a time when the federal government has drastically reduced its ordinary running expenses; when the federal government needs every taxpayer's dollar it can get for the war; at a time when every family in the country must make special contributions so that we may win the war; at a time when every British Columbian expects his government to cut down its expenditures by several millions, the government raises expenditures to an all time high. Incredible—and Intolerable.194

Proudly announcing that for the first time in 15 years the budget was balanced, Finance Minister Hart told the House an estimated surplus of
$6 million over expenditures would accrue, no taxes would be raised, and the provincial debt would be well on the way to liquidation. But no sooner had the "good" news been spoken that the government's budget was met with a barrage of criticism, calling it among other things: "shameful," "wicked," "incredible," and "fantastic." Tory finance critic, Herb Anscomb, incensed that no efforts were being made to reduce expenditures during the war, raged on for 100 minutes attacking every part of the "extravagant" budget. He saved his best words for the issue which could be exploited for the most political mileage:

Now when conditions have become more grave, we find that the minister presents a budget with estimated expenditures nearly $700,000 more than last year. In other words, in two years of war, instead of doing what every one else in the nation from millionaire to pauper is doing and cutting expenses, the finance minister goes merrily on and increases peace time extravagance to the extent of $1,200,000.

Maitland followed suit by reminding the House there was a war on. The budget was an obvious sign that the government of British Columbia had no intention of helping the federal government meet its national requirements, and should be immediately withdrawn. Bruce Hutchison, in a column entitled "Someone Should Tell the B.C. Legislature What's Happening Out in the World," wondered if "they [the Pattullo government] really know yet that we are at war?" The Sun, a strong supporter of the government in the past, commented on how "there now exists a public view, widely held in the province today, that something fundamental must be done to swing provincial authorities away from their placid adherence to the present financial set-up." And the Province characterized it "an entirely selfish budget—selfish, that is, in that it gathers everything in sight into the provincial treasury, leaving nothing it does not have to leave to the Dominion."
For days the debate continued, often at fever pitch. Maitland at one point entered a motion of want of confidence in the government which was defeated on a straight party vote 36 to 6, the C.C.F. voting unanimously with the government. A second division came a few days later and again the C.C.F. united with the Liberals and the motion was defeated by a vote of 34 to 6. The C.C.F. position was that the current level of expenditures must be supported or important social programs would be jeopardized. At the same time, they chastised the government for its wasteful patronage, inequitable taxation policy, and failure to support further centralization of government finances as reflected in the Rowell-Sirois report. As for the lone Conservative dissent, Harold Winch perhaps was not far off the mark when he charged Maitland with bringing the budget motions in "simply to play politics."

Despite the charged atmosphere and the seething debate over the size of the budget, the Tory attempt to link the budget with the government's position on the Rowell-Sirois report and thus make an issue of the "lack of support shown by the province to the nation in wartime" was not successful. Why? A number of reasons suggest themselves. First, by not committing himself on the Rowell-Sirois report Pattullo retained a flexibility which seemed not unreasonable considering the very important questions at issue in the report. When the Dominion-provincial conference met, Pattullo at least agreed to go to Ottawa and discuss the proposals in the report. By not committing the government to any specific course of action, Pattullo insisted that the province's bargaining position was retained. Both he and his cabinet ministers argued throughout the session that complete acceptance of the report would mean a drop in British Columbia living standards.
Supported by facts and figures, Health and Social Services Minister Weir showed how the report as written would mean cuts of $2 million in education expenditure, $1.7 million in health and welfare outlays, $1 million for hospitals and as much as 42 percent in old age pensions. The government's arguments were effective and by maintaining an attitude of "cooperation" and "compromise" and attending the conference with an "open mind," much of the opposition's attack was neutralized.

Second, Maitland and his colleagues in criticizing the high expenditures reflected in the budget, whatever their motivation, displayed a certain naivety of what a budget is politically. A fat budget usually means added government services and plenty of expenditures in the electoral ridings. The simple fact of life in 1940 in British Columbia was that the war did not yet require day to day sacrifices from the people of British Columbia. Belt tightening in a period of national crisis may be a noble sentiment and a statesmanlike attitude toward what the future holds, but real sacrifices more likely occur when the situation is deemed to be extreme and immediate.

Third, the performance of the Conservative opposition was not effective. If Maitland and his lieutenants had the right idea about the financial problem in general, they were ineffective in using it against the government. There was little evidence that Maitland had thoroughly informed himself about the country's economic situation. His attacks on the government seemed more like political maneuvering than informed issue-directed debate. Moreover, Pattullo kept the initiative and left the Tory leader on the defensive. In the end, when Pattullo insisted that the budget would not be cut, and demanded that Maitland show explicitly where reductions could be made, the opposition leader "fizzled out." Perhaps in not responding to the
premier, "Maitland was thinking too much of local voters who don't want their appropriations touched." 206

The 1940 session ended with both old parties back at each other's throats. The Tories were still groping to find an effective issue with which to challenge the government in the election most believed would be held the following year. Although some political ammunition had been gotten from the budget and Rowell-Sirois issues, it was clearly minimal and definitely not potent enough to defeat a government which otherwise was doing fairly well.

The Pivotal Election: 1941

On July 22, 1941, Pattullo announced the dissolution of British Columbia's Nineteenth Legislature and set October 21 as the date for the general election.

Economic conditions in the province were excellent in 1941. With the war industries thriving, production was at record levels and unemployment was at its lowest point in many years. For the first year in a decade, the economy was running at full capacity. 207

Underneath the cover of provincial prosperity, however, the Liberal Party, and particularly the premier, faced serious political problems. The January, 1941, Ottawa meeting to discuss the Rowell-Sirois report ended in failure when Pattullo, along with Premiers Aberhart and Hepburn, refused to discuss the report as stipulated in the agenda and established their own, thereby hamstringing the conference. 208 Pattullo blamed the federal representatives for their inflexibility in refusing to discuss any matters, however directly related to the concerns of the provinces, other than those in the agenda. 209 The result was a deadlock which induced the Prime Minister to end abruptly the conference.
Back home, the failure of the Ottawa talks brought a bitter reaction, especially in the business community. Businessmen saw the report as an opportunity to lighten their taxes or at least standardize the load throughout the nation and end double taxation in most provinces. Many Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce sent telegrams or letters to the premier condemning him for his obstructionist stand at the conference.  

Press reaction was especially critical. The Victoria Times which usually supported the premier condemned him for not at least discussing the report, and the Sun demanded an immediate election after the premier's return in order to test his right to continue in office. The Colonist and Province were outraged at the "British Columbia First--Canada Second" attitude of the premier, and asserted that the time had come for voters to dispense with the obstructionist Pattullo once and for all.  

More serious for the premier was the apparent attitude of members from his own party. As Sutherland notes, "only a few provincial Liberal associations passed resolutions of confidence in Pattullo's stand, a relatively common occurrence in the party when the leader is under public attack." Although there is no strong evidence that Pattullo's cabinet ministers took outright exception to his position, it was obvious by Hart's lukewarm press statements that his support for the premier's stand at Ottawa was less than solid. There was also evidence that backbenchers were getting a bit restless with the "Pattullo way of doing things." Dr. J. J. Gillis (Liberal-Yale) openly criticized the Pattullo ministry for its "secrecy" when arriving at decisions, saying that "not a single member on the Liberal side of the House was consulted regarding the budget." Harry Perry, former Liberal Speaker, attacked the Pattullo ministry for what he called its
"excessive use of boards and commissions" at the expense of not involving backbenchers in major questions of policy, "a practice," Perry said, "completely antithetical to democracy." It seems Pattullo's arrogance and "dictatorial" style had begun to take a toll.

As the election campaign got under way, the Tories tried desperately to make the premier's conduct at the Ottawa conference the central issue. To some extent they were successful but as the Ottawa Conference receded into the past, other more purely provincial issues became the focus of the Tory campaign.

By late summer the Tories shifted the emphasis of their campaign to attacking the Pattullo government for its handling of British Columbia problems. The government's highway policy was criticized as inadequate and completely entangled in political patronage. The Province apparently thought the question of highway politics so crucial that toward the end of the campaign it editorialized that the highway board and the Liberal record of highway construction were the main issues of the election. In addition, they criticized the government for failing to plan adequately for post-war employment, demanded greater economy and efficiency in government and called for more government aid for the development of the mining industry. As was becoming routine, the Tory campaign was practically dominated by the independent highway commission plank. But much of the mileage hoped for on this issue was lost when not even all Conservatives could agree that it was needed.

The Liberal strategy was to stick to its record and avoid the "pie-in-the-sky promises" characteristic of earlier campaigns. In general, it
boiled down to an avoidance of the "provincial rights" question which would only refresh memories of Pattullo's activities at the Ottawa conference, emphasis on the continuing prosperity in British Columbia, reaffirmation of the government's support of progressive social legislation, and a pledge to support increased cooperation with the federal government for the prosecution of the war. Specific issues included the building of an Alaskan Highway, annexation of the Yukon, and, in the late stages of the campaign, a firm position on provincial retention of the income tax.\textsuperscript{220}

If any generalization could be made of the campaign it was, with the exception of the controversy over Rowell-Sirois, remarkably similar to the one four years earlier (at least in terms of provincial issues). "So far as I could discover by reading about it in the newspapers," Bruce Hutchison commented, "the campaign was insufferably boring and the speeches universally mediocre. Not a striking thing was said in the campaign and not a phrase coined. . . . What has happened to our politics?"\textsuperscript{221} Whether because of the war's effect in diverting attention, or the increasing similarity between the positions of the two old parties, the \textit{Sun} concluded in late September that no real issue appeared in the election and certainly "no issue between the major parties concerning the great business of the nation and the province, which is the war."\textsuperscript{222}

Organization problems were of special concern to the Tories in 1941. In contrast to the well financed\textsuperscript{223} Liberal machine, the Tory organization was still suffering from the decline in political activity when the war broke out. According to Russell R. Walker, the newly appointed Tory organizer, several ridings were without constituency associations in 1941, and
in those that had them, most were barely functioning.\textsuperscript{224} To strengthen the organization at the riding level was a separate problem, quite different from the capacity to recruit good candidates and solicit funds. As Walker described it:

In several ridings there was serious friction. Some fathead had kept pushing until he became the nominal head of the local association, whereas better men had too much dignity and self respect to engage in any contest for the position. In such cases there was marked disunity and these presented perhaps the greatest problem encountered.

The big job, however, was the building of a full slate of candidates. The job of recruiting promising candidates was the most difficult job of all. Indeed often the best people (vote-getters) were not part of the association or visible in the constituency; good candidates were always around but they often resisted public office for business reasons or plain lack of interest.\textsuperscript{225}

Organizational problems were compounded by the war and the fact that Conservatives were in opposition. Maitland wrote to his son on May 21, "The serious war situation has hit us much harder than Pattullo. People seem to be afraid to actively come out and support opposition to any government."\textsuperscript{226} On a campaign trip through the Interior a month later, the party leader noted, "people are not very interested in politics just now. Today, for instance, the only thing that they think about is the Russian situation and you can hardly blame them."\textsuperscript{227}

The party was also facing internal dissension revolving around the age old problem of reforming the party organization. One of the most touchy problems was bringing "new blood" into constituency associations which were mostly dominated by small cliques of "old guard" Tories. This was especially troublesome as the party had attempted to open its doors to younger people in its efforts to rebuild. Not unexpectedly, new members often met with resistance in attempting to influence association resolutions or become
candidates themselves. At the annual convention of the B.C. Conservative Association in October, 1940, the problem was publicly aired when a rift between younger members and the party regulars broke out. Don McGill, a member of the Young Conservative Association, declared that the party was still dominated by a small coterie of older politicians and questioned the criteria by which candidates were nominated to stand for office. "Too often," he said, "the selection of candidates was the result of private ambition of a few individuals. The Party could only hope to win if it picked candidates of high quality and ability." When members of the Vancouver Center organization, long a bastion of old-line Tory strength, vehemently objected to the stand taken by McGill, a heated discussion ensued. The rift which almost disrupted the gathering was indicative of one of the party's central problems; how to break down the tightfisted control of the older members without tearing whatever organization existed apart. This was one of the central tasks Walker faced in 1941 and it would become even more difficult later.

With all the problems encountered, including friction between Maitland and his party organizer, organizational work was remarkably successful. Perhaps largely due to the efforts of Walker, by the end of May 1941, an active association existed in every riding except Atlin. By election time lists of Conservatives were well in excess of what had been accomplished in 1937.

The results of the 1941 election were a severe setback for the government. As the returns rolled in it seemed for a time that Canada's first socialist government might be elected. The final count showed that the C.C.F., by polling over 150,000 votes, led the popular poll.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Popular Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C.C.F.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
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</table>

For the Liberals the vote was a significant setback. The party's representation was reduced from 31 to 21 seats. The Conservatives increased their strength from 8 to 12 seats. The C.C.F. doubled its representation from 7 to 14 and regained their place as the official Opposition. The city of Vancouver did not return a single Liberal and two prominent cabinet ministers, Attorney General Gordon Wismer and Minister of Education Gordon Weir, were defeated. The premier won re-election but by the very slim margin of 118 votes.233

The C.C.F. made its largest gains in Vancouver. In three of the four ridings—Vancouver-Burrard, Vancouver-Center, Vancouver-East—the C.C.F. made a clean sweep. In 1937, the C.C.F. won only Vancouver-East. Indeed, George Weir's gloomy prediction after the 1939 by-election in Vancouver-Center "that very probably not a Liberal candidate would be elected in Vancouver in the next provincial election"234 was remarkably accurate.

Except for Vancouver and three Interior ridings—Rossland-Trail, Mackenzie, and Similkameen—the C.C.F. victories were in the same ridings that they won in 1937. However, in only ten ridings did the C.C.F. finish third, and in thirteen they finished second, three of which they were only narrowly defeated.235 Thus C.C.F. support, while obviously strongest in the working class areas of East Vancouver and Burnaby, seemed to have taken hold throughout most areas of the province.

The Conservatives made their strongest showing in traditional Tory
districts such as the West side of Vancouver, Vancouver Island, and the Fraser Valley. A few seats were picked up in the Interior. But as in 1937, they were shut out in the Northern ridings of Ft. George, Peace River, MacKenzie, Omineca, and Prince Rupert (where they did not run a candidate).

Despite the Liberal decline, to conclude that the election was a victory for any one party is difficult. If there was a loser it was probably the premier himself who barely won even his own riding of Prince Rupert. It seems likely that much of the anti-Liberal vote was a vote against Pattullo. Harry Perry (Liberal-Ft. George) who was at odds with the premier for his refusal to go into conference and deliberate upon the Rowell-Sirois report told the press that the election was "a protest against his refusal to consider the report and a rebuke to the premier for his affectionation of a dominant leader." This opinion was shared by the Province, which said: "The election was a vote against Pattullo . . . against his dictatorial methods and his standing by while the Liberal machine continues to operate."

The election, however, was more than a vote against Pattullo. There was more to it than that. The Liberals program for economic reconstruction without socialism dramatized by the slogan "work and wages" had left them on a tightrope. On one side was the Left challenging the government's policies as not measuring up to the "practical idealism" propounded by Pattullo when he first took office. Progressive Liberals were upset with the government's failure to implement health insurance and its abandonment of relief payments to unemployed single men. To many the premier was perceived to be no longer on the side of reform. The C.C.F. with its policy of social reform and a planned economy after the war undoubtedly capitalized
on the dissatisfaction of reform minded voters disenchanted with Pattullo's abandonment of socialized capitalism.

From the Right, Pattullo was challenged by stiff competition from the revitalized Tories. With the Conservative Party taking on a more progressive tint after 1938 and with its organization dramatically strengthened since the dark days of the early thirties, the majority of B.C. voters who rejected socialism now had a viable alternative. The Tory Party undoubtedly gained at the Liberals' expense, but whether the increased Conservative vote resulted more from policy considerations or the obstinacy and arrogance of the Pattullo government is not clear. Perhaps the opinion of the press is correct in suggesting Pattullo's loss of support was less the result of anything the opposition did and more the result of what Pattullo failed to do. He refused to consider the Rowell-Sirois report, he failed to implement health insurance after making it a cornerstone of Liberal policy, and his budget raised questions in many people's minds about the provincial government's commitment to the national war effort.

Without a "free enterprise" alternative, however, numerical support for the government probably would not have dropped off. The more progressive orientation adopted by the Conservative Party after 1938 coupled with the Liberal government's movement away from its earlier reformist zeal, resulted in a diminution of differences between the two parties. Reorganized, although still suffering from the war-induced political apathy, the Tories were able to present a viable alternative, one which promised more protection for the business community, the retention of most existing social legislation, and strong support for efforts to change the methods of financing dominion and provincial governments. In effect, the existence of the
Tory alternative caused the Liberal Party's support base to be nibbled way by both Conservatives and socialists. In the absence of the war, which favored the return of the incumbent government and hampered Conservative organization efforts, the Tories might have been successful.

Thus the period 1934 to 1941 witnessed the reviviscence of the Conservative Party in provincial politics. Under Maitland's leadership the party became once again a vibrant and credible force. Internally, the organization had been put back together with constituency associations operating in almost every riding. Finances were a persistent concern, although improving, and there was the problem (perhaps insurmountable in cadre parties of the Conservative type) of local associations falling into disuse between elections. Perhaps most important in 1941 was the apparent disappearance of the old factional feuds. Serious political infighting had all but ceased probably because the party was steadily improving. But the major sources of factionalism remained, however, since nothing had been done to change the party's basic organizational structure. The evidence accumulated suggests that a small clique, based in Vancouver, continued to direct the internal affairs of the party (at least in the lower mainland where it was strongest)—finances, nominations and patronage. This "Old Gang" consisted of such persons as General J. A. Clark, Leon Ladner, Bob Hamilton, and Des Brisay. Maitland was also part of this group as he was a close friend of Des Brisay—who with Clark controlled party finances—and on good terms and in close contact with the others. Most of the riding associations had very small memberships and most were dominated by one or at most a handful of traditional party elites. Also, little effort had been made to recruit
younger members. These problems perhaps appeared less than serious in 1941 because the party was in the process of building, and considering its depleted state in 1933, it had indeed made a considerable comeback. The climb back to power had gathered momentum by 1941 and few Tories would be satisfied until once again the Conservatives formed the government of British Columbia.
FOOTNOTES

Chapter III

1 This does not mean there were no differences. The Liberal Party had been the more progressive of the two since the early twenties. See p. 40 above.

2 Discussed at length in, Margaret Ormsby, "T. D. Pattullo and the Little New Deal," The Canadian Historical Review, XLIII, No. 4 (December, 1962), 284.

3 A reasonable assumption is that much of the support base for the Liberal Party came from alienated Tories who were only interested in keeping out the C.C.F. In a sense, then, the Liberals in 1933 had become an omnibus party.


8 From R. L. Maitland's diary, "Log of the House," November 30, 1937, Maitland Papers, private collection. It is ironic that Maitland would later be one of the leading proponents of coalition with the Liberals in 1941.

9 Letter, S. F. Tolmie to W. M. Dickson, November 14, 1933, Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.


11 Stevens wrote to A. Meighen, "I am very fond of Dr. Tolmie and, like all his old friends, would be pleased to help him if one could do so without injury generally to the party, but in this instance I think it would be unwise for us to take any part." Letter, H. H. Stevens to A. Meighen, July 18, 1933, Meighen Papers, P.A.C. Vol. 243, p. 163211.

13. Letter, E. A. Lucas to R. B. Bennett, February 4, 1935, Bennett Papers, P.A.C. Vol. M1252, p. 308712. Bruce A. McKelvie, the legislative reporter and writer said of Patterson: "In the whole of political history of British Columbia there is no equal to the story of these dark days and to the leadership given so unselfishly by an individual." Personal Notes, McKelvie Papers, P.A.B.C. Vol. 3, October 7, 1937. Leslie Eyres told me that Patterson was the ideal leader at the time since his popularity and qualities of conciliation were unmatched by all others in the party. Interview with Leslie Eyres, September 26, 1973.


17. Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive of the B.C. Conservative Association, Victoria, B.C., May 5, 1934. Tolmie Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.


19. Ibid.


21. Ibid.


25. In at least 45 constituencies across the country, the combined Reconstruction and Conservative vote would have won the seat. Thirty-six of these
constituencies had been Conservative in the last parliament. Granatstein argues that Stevens could have been persuaded to stay in the party had the Conservatives had a more skillful leader. See J. L. Granatstein, The Politics of Survival: The Conservative Party of Canada; 1939-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), pp. 8-9.


27. By adding the total vote of both Reconstructionists and Conservatives in B.C., in only one riding, Kamloops, would the outcome have been a victory for the Tories.

28. The Conservatives polled only thirty-two percent of the popular vote while their representation in Parliament was reduced from 137 to 39. Obviously, while an important contributing factor, the activities of the Reconstruction Party alone would scarcely have produced a defeat of such magnitude. In British Columbia, Conservative representation was reduced from seven to five seats, not a considerable drop considering the open split in the party and the magnitude of the Liberal landslide nationwide. The popular vote, however, declined from 49.3 percent in 1930 to 24.6 percent in 1935. It is important to recognize that the Liberals were not the main beneficiary of this drop in strength in British Columbia. The Liberals also declined in popular vote from 40.9 percent in 1930 to 31.8 percent in 1935. The difference was the surging C.C.F. which outpolled all other parties in British Columbia by gaining 33.6 percent, their best showing in all of Canada. All figures taken from Scarrow, Canada Votes, pp. 76, 90.

29. According to Ladner, not only was the party plagued by a serious shortage of finances, but in addition there was "no enthusiasm." Letter, L. J. Ladner to H. H. Stevens, June 13, 1935 and June 23, 1935, Stevens Papers, P.A.C., Vol. 64, File 78.

30. British Columbia returned only six Liberals out of a total of 173.


32. C.C.F. internal problems are detailed in Robin, Pillars of Profit, pp. 22-27.


34. The "Conservative" vote in 1933 was scattered among two Non-Partisans, two Unionists and one Independent. Parliamentary Guide, 1934, p. 377.

35. Bruce A. McKelvie, no title, October 7, 1937, McKelvie Papers, P.A.B.C.


40. Victoria Times, June 30, 1936.


42. Bruhn, not nominally a Conservative, was considered as such by observers in view of his past affiliation with the party and his consistency in voting with Anscomb and Pooley. Bruhn "officially" rejoined the party in 1938.


45. Ibid., pp. 337-339.

46. Ibid., p. 338.

47. Ibid.


50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.
McGeer's falling out with Pattullo was reportedly due to his non-inclusion in the cabinet and their differences over monetary policy. As McGeer saw it, the financial situation in B.C. would only be remedied if the four Western provinces set up their own monetary system. In Pattullo's opinion, what was most necessary was a redefinition of taxation rights between the dominion and provincial governments.


Ibid.


Ibid.

Ormsby says that rumors were circulating by the end of 1934 that the cabinet had split on the issue of economic change; and "the Premier," notes Hutchison, "had thrown a wall of frigid isolation about himself and was keeping his counsel like a steel trap" (Ormsby, "T. D. Pattullo," p. 290).

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 291.

Not only was the caucus divided over the New Westminster toll bridge project, but there developed in addition severe strains in the extra-parliamentary party following the strong C.C.F. showing in 1935 federal election and the losses Liberals suffered in B.C. in that same contest. The developing conflict in the Liberal Party is detailed in Sutherland, "Pattullo as Party Leader," pp. 69-85.


Ibid.

Ibid.
67 Ibid.

68 Canadian Annual Review, 1937-1938, p. 496.

69 Angus, "Health Insurance," p. 12.

70 Canadian Annual Review, 1936, p. 402.

71 Ibid.

72 Included were the powerful Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the C.P.R., the B.C. Loggers' Association, the Vancouver Broad of Trade, and the Mining Association of B.C.; Vancouver Province, February 19, 1937.

73 According to Angus, "many people took sides from curious motives. Some who had been presented with a bill they thought excessive took sides against the medical profession, and so did others who thought that doctors kept patients in hospitals for their own convenience. There were others who liked the doctors they knew but hated the profession as such. Others legalistically minded . . . pointed out that a syndicalistic dictation of policy . . . was a bad example for a learned bourgeois profession . . . there is general dissatisfaction with the present compromise measure." Angus, "Health Insurance," pp. 13-14.

74 As quoted in Canadian Annual Review, 1937, p. 496.


76 Opposition to the bill was not just centered in the backbenches. While Pattullo, Weir, and Pearson fully supported the measure, at least two cabinet ministers, Hart and MacPherson, opposed it. Sutherland, "Pattullo as Party Leader," p. 70.

77 Less than two weeks before the election, Pattullo told an election crowd: "I'm not going to tell you now what we are going to do about health insurance. I don't know. But we are not going to ram it down everyone's throat. We will iron out all difficulties." Vancouver Sun, May 21, 1937.

Until its provincial convention, the C.C.F. had been conceded a strong chance of winning the next election in British Columbia. See, Leslie Fox, "Recovery in B.C.," MacLean's Magazine, Vol. 50 (February 15, 1937), 48-49. However at the convention the party adopted a "radical" program calling for among other things, nationalization of the distribution of food, lumbering, fishing, mining, and liquor industries. The party leader, Robert Connell, denounced the platform for its extremism and also the radical members of the party executive. The final outcome, after months of debating the issue, was the expulsion of Connell and three other C.C.F. members of the legislature from the party. These four formed a new political group, the British Columbia Reconstruction Party, which left but three regular members of the C.C.F. in the legislature. See, Dorothy J. Roberts, "Doctrine and Disunity in the British Columbia Section of the C.C.F." (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1972).

Sutherland, "Pattullo as Party Leader," p. 83. While any time a leader loses an election it is at the very least an embarrassment for the party, considering that Vancouver-Burrard had never been a hotbed of Tory strength, that Patterson had been party leader for only two months, that all the Liberal top brass including Pattullo campaigned hard there, Patterson's polling 5654 to the winning candidate's 7459 is not altogether a poor showing. Not surprisingly, the Tories viewed it as a "Victory."

Patterson travelled throughout the whole of the province at his own expense between 1935 and 1937 in an effort to revivify the local associations and recruit candidates. Letter from F. P. Patterson (son of the party leader) to the author, October 2, 1973.

B. A. McKelvie, no title, October 7, 1937, McKelvie Papers.


Victoria Times, May 31, 1937.

Ibid., May 26, 1937.

Ibid., April 15, 1937.

Vancouver Province and Vancouver Times, May 25, 1937.

Press clippings, n.d., Patterson Papers, Private Collection.

Ibid.
All election totals taken from data in Province of British Columbia, Chief Electoral Officer, *Statement of Votes*, 1937.

Bruhn, a nominal Independent who had been elected in 1933 as a Non-Partisan, officially changed his affiliation to Conservative in 1938, thus increasing Conservative strength by one seat.


If the vote for the C.C.F. and the Liberal Party is added together, over 65 percent of the voters still favored the leftist-oriented Liberal and C.C.F. Parties. Further evidence that politics in B.C. shifted leftward during the mid-Thirties is found in the result of the 1935 federal election. The C.C.F. outpolled both traditional parties by winning 33.6 percent of the vote.

*Vancouver Province*, September 23, 1938. Later, after the nominations were completed, it was found that ballots containing only two names were printed—a subtle assurance to the delegates that no dark horse would be in the field.

*Kamloops Sentinel*, September 27, 1938.

*Ibid*.


*Vancouver Province*, September 24, 1938.

*Kamloops Sentinel*, September 27, 1938.

*Vancouver Province*, September 26, 1938.

*Ibid*.


There were important exceptions to this generalization. In particular, Rolf Bruhn, still officially an Independent member from Salmon Arm, was sending out signals that he might, with the right leader and right platform, officially return to the Tory fold. Bruhn, while not a participant at the convention, spent the weekend at Kamloops and as one observer noted, "at no time was he ever very far away from the places where political
policies are made and strategies planned." Kamloops Sentinel, September 27, 1938. If Bruhn decided that he liked the "trimmed to meet present conditions" platform, and could accept the convention's choice for leader, he might officially rejoin the party, and instead of Conservatives having seven seats in the House, they would control eight against the C.C.F.'s seven. (Patterson's death left the Tories with the same number of seats as the C.C.F.) It was also known that Bruhn felt the party needed a Conservative of new blood who could help create a new image for the party (he was an early backer of Howard Green). As it turned out, scarcely two weeks after the convention, Bruhn announced that he was rejoining the party, saying that he agreed with its platform and admired its new leader. Vancouver Province, November 2, 1938. One can only surmise that Bruhn's influence at the convention was considerable.

105. Kamloops Sentinel, September 27, 1938.

106. Vancouver Province, September 26, 1938.

107. Ibid.

108. Ibid.

109. MacDonald interview, October 3, 1973. This is subject to some disagreement. In particular, Russell Walker notes in his book that the two men had always been more or less at odds. Walker, Politicians, p. 69.

110. See editorial comment in the Vancouver Province, Vancouver Sun, and Victoria Colonist, September 28-29, 1938.

111. Prince George Citizen, September 29, 1938.


113. Vancouver Province, November 7, 1937.

114. Ibid.

115. Personal Papers and Notes, Maitland Papers, Private Collection.


117. Victoria Colonist, November 22, 1938.
The specific reference here is the Coal and Petroleum Board Act passed during the autumn session of 1937. The Act empowered the Coal and Petroleum Board, appointed by the cabinet, to fix maximum and minimum prices, issue and recall licenses, and regulate all aspects of the industry. Quite naturally, the industries concerned were incensed with the government's attempts to extend control over their affairs. The 1938 session produced a similar bill, the Public Utilities Act, which created a three-man utility commission with authority to rule on how much people should pay for lights, transportation, water, telegraphs, and telephones. Similarly, the business community was upset and Pattullo went out of his way to try to dispel their fears, telling them he meant no harm and was simply dealing with a long standing problem. Vancouver Sun, December 9, 1938. While the Conservative Party stood steadfastly behind the principle of a public utilities commission, they opposed both bills on the grounds that they were too sweeping in their control, that a board selected by the cabinet would permit political influence, and that neither had sufficient provision for the industries concerned to appeal to the courts. Victoria Colonist, December 8, 1973; Vancouver Province, December 8, 1938. An extended discussion about both Acts and their effects on the business community and both parties is found in Robin, Pillars of Profit, pp. 38-41.

Bruce Hutchison commented that on substantial issues Maitland's program closely resembled that of the Liberals; but instead of calling it work and wages, the Tories called it gainful employment. Victoria Times, October 28, 1938.

See editorial comment in the press, December 7-10, 1938.
A further sign of the Tories increased strength showed up in the result of the Vancouver Center by-election held on May 1, 1939. While the C.C.F. candidate, Mrs. J. Stuart Jamieson, a former juvenile court judge, was elected, it was by only 136 votes over Alderman H. L. Corey, the Liberal candidate and by only 153 votes over Alderman H. D. Wilson, the Conservative candidate. The Conservative Party, as Tory spokesmen were quick to point out, had increased its share of the vote in the traditional Liberal stronghold considerably since 1937, while both the Liberals and C.C.F. declined. Although to call any by-election a test of confidence in the government is difficult, especially when local issues play an important role in the election as they did in Vancouver Center, the Liberals clearly went all out to win. The party's big guns, Pattullo, Hart, and Wismer, all campaigned hard in the riding for Corey. The press billed the election as a test of government confidence and the Liberal candidate's campaign literature stressed: "What the Liberal Government had Done for Vancouver. While the government's ineffective handling of the unemployment crisis in the city one year earlier did hurt their candidate's chances (the crisis and Pattullo's handling of it is detailed in Sutherland, "Pattullo as Party Leader," pp. 93-96), the opinion of the Colonist is probably correct: "... the result was a reproof to the government and an unquestionable indication that it is losing strength among the electorate of British Columbia" (May 3, 1939). The by-election result was: Jamieson (C.C.F.) 3725; Corey (Lib.) 3589; Wilson (Cons.) 3572.

Victoria Times, October 30, 1940.

Vancouver Sun, October 30, 1940.
141 I detect in some of the literature on B.C. politics dealing with the war period a total ignoring of the "mood" or general "atmosphere" engendered by the severe war crisis. For example, in discussing the motives which led Tories and Liberals to make a tacit truce when the war broke out, Robin completely ignores the public mood, the crisis atmosphere, and sees the truce and the later coalition government as strictly a means of heading off the C.C.F.

142 Maitland referred to the by-election result as "a most significant renewal of confidence in the Conservative party" (North Shore Press, May 5, 1939). His elation is also evidenced in a letter written to John Robb, R. L. Maitland to J. M. Robb, May 2, 1939, Manion Papers, P.A.C. Vol. 63, File 309-M. Obviously buoyed by the result, he set out on a tour of the Interior, noting the "increased enthusiasm and strengthened organization" in the places he visited.

143 Vancouver News Herald, May 5, 1939.

144 Ibid., October 30, 1939.

145 Ibid.

146 Vancouver News Herald, November 1, 1939. Anscomb declared in a ringing speech on the floor of the House: "War or no war, . . . There is such a thing as being too loyal, when such a policy results in Conservatives taking a back seat."

147 Maitland announced on October 4, that the Conservative Party in the spirit of the war-induced political cease-fire, would not contest the Cranbrook by-election. Although there is no evidence that Maitland made the decision for any other reason, it seems reasonable that Conservatives, with only a one seat hold on the official Opposition, might not have wanted to risk a three party contest in Cranbrook which through a split in the anti-socialist vote could give the seat to the C.C.F.

148 Vancouver Province, October 30, 1939.

149 In particular, the letters to the editors in the major dailies reveal an unprecedented rage against the C.C.F.'s position.

150 See, for example, Victoria Times, November 3, 1939; Victoria Colonist, November 4, 1939; Prince George Citizen, November 9, 1939.


Ibid.


Ibid., p. 41.

Granatstein, *The Politics of Survival*, p. 46. A former publisher of the *Kingston Standard*, and a prominent member in the Conservative Party in Ontario, said of Manion's decision to change the party's name: "He had no mandate certainly, to hybridize the party or change its hue from a Conservative to a chameleonic color, or its texture from solid Conservative to a sort of crazy-quilt patchwork." W. R. Givens, "The Conservative Party: Whither Away?", *Victoria Times*, March 1, 1940.

Granatstein cites four reasons why the big contributors were holding back. First, the Canadian Pacific Railway, always a big contributor, could not have been expected to support Manion who advocated railway unification. Second, Manion was deemed a radical by many and thus industry considered him unworthy of support. Third, the war made government contracts extremely valuable, and therefore there was the fear of offending the Liberals. Fourth, Manion simply did not appear to have a chance of forming the government. J. L. Granatstein, "Conservative Party Finance, 1939-1945," in Khayam, Z. Paltiel et al., *Studies in Canadian Party Finance*, Committee on Election Expenses, Ottawa: The Queen's Printers, 1966, p. 281.

Ibid., p. 50.

The party in 1940 spent approximately $470,000 to $500,000, ending up $25,000 in debt. See Granatstein, p. 50, for details of spending and a comparison with the Liberals.


*Vancouver Province*, February 13, 1940. Howard Green told me that nobody made a distinction between Conservatives and National Government candidates; that for all intents and purposes the National Government label was ignored in British Columbia. Howard Green, private interview in Vancouver, November 1, 1973.
All figures taken from Scarrow, Canada Votes, pp. 104-105.

Conservative representation was as follows (1935 results in brackets): P.E.I. 0[0]; N.S. 1[0]; N.B. 5[1]; Que. 1[5]; Ont. 25[25]; Man. 1[1]; Sask. 2[1]; Alta. 0[1]; B.C. 4[5]; Yukon 1[1].

Excludes the Reconstruction vote in 1935. If the Reconstruction vote is added (6 percent) the difference is almost nil.


Vancouver Sun, October 31, 1939.

Vancouver News Herald, December 1, 1939.

Vancouver News Herald, November 4, 1939.

Vancouver Province, November 4, 1939.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Vancouver News Herald, November 4, 1939.

Vancouver Sun, November 7, 1939.

Vancouver Province, November 17, 1939.

Ibid., November 14, 1939, November 18, 1939.

This is Hutchison's term, Vancouver Sun, November 14, 1939.

Vancouver Sun, November 29, 1939.

Vancouver Sun, October 19, 1940.

Indeed, prior to the end of the fall 1939 session ended, rumors abounded of a developing split within the Tory ranks over the political truce. At least two Tory M.L.A.'s were known to be against it from the
beginning: Herb Anscomb and Capt. Cecil R. Bull (S. Okanagan). Opposition to the truce was publicly aired at the November 14, 1939 meeting of the Vancouver Center Conservative Association when a resolution was introduced favoring the entry of candidates in all elections during the forthcoming year. The resolution, a response to the party's decision to sit out the recent Cranbrook by-election, was billed by observers as a "thinly veiled" vote of no confidence in the Tory leadership. Although subsequently defeated 48 to 44, the message was clear. Victoria Times, November 27, 1939.

183 Vancouver Sun, October 19, 1940.

184 As indicated by Maitland's correspondence, the Tory Party leader did not intend the truce to last. On January 11, 1940, he wrote to R. J. Manion: "The time has come when I propose to abandon any good nature of acquiescence, and battle it 'out with the Government." Letter, R. L. Maitland to R. J. Manion, January 11, 1940, Manion Papers, P.A.C. Vol. 63, File 309-M. Four days later he wrote: "I had proposed tomorrow night to start a full blast against the Provincial Government. I have decided, however, to follow up my attack on the CCF--they must be definitely killed. . . ." Ibid, January 15, 1940.

185 Sutherland, "Pattullo as Party Leader," p. 96.

186 This is inferred from editorial opinion from both Liberal and Tory oriented newspapers, the general position of the C.C.F., and the writings of political observers such as Bruce Hutchison, B. A. McKelvie, and James Dyer. The business community was particularly adamant about greater centralization of finances. One proposal advocated by H. R. MacMillan reflecting the positions of such groups as the Vancouver Board of Trade, the Associated Board of Trade of Eastern British Columbia, and the Associated Boards of Trade of the Fraser Valley, specifically called for federal control of provincial borrowings, reduction and abolition of many government agencies, and the transfer of the income tax to the federal authorities. Robin, Pillars of Profits, pp. 46, 317-318.


188 Vancouver Province, November 9, 1940.

189 Ibid., November 9, 1940.

190 Vancouver Sun, November 15, 1940.

191 Vancouver Province, November 27, 1940.
In a full page editorial entitled "All Must Serve Central Plan to Win War," the Vancouver Sun exhorted Pattullo and his government "to address themselves—primarily and fundamentally—to the business of fitting our provincial plans into the general Canadian scheme for winning the war" (November 20, 1940). In a more personal attack on the premier, the Sun, in an editorial entitled "Do we Stand for Politician's Rights," wondered if a certain "politician" was opposing the Rowell-Sirois report because it "might interfere with the financial set-up he has established in British Columbia" (November 15, 1940). And Bruce Hutchison, certainly no opponent of the Liberal Party, mused that "at Victoria there are still some men who do not conceive of this as a nation but only as a collection of Little Balkan States." Ibid., November 21, 1940.

193 Victoria Times, November 23, 1940.
194 Vancouver Sun, November 18, 1940.
195 Victoria Times, November 15, 1940.
196 Vancouver News Herald, November 19, 1940.
197 Victoria Times, November 21, 1940.
198 Vancouver Sun, November 18, 1940.
199 Ibid., November 21, 1940.
200 Vancouver Province, November 16, 1940.
201 Victoria Times, November 23, 1940.
202 Vancouver Province, November 27, 1940.
203 Vancouver News Herald, November 23, 1940.
204 Victoria Colonist, November 27, 1940.
205 This is Hutchison's term, Vancouver Sun, December 7, 1940.
206 Ibid.
207 Robin, The Pillars of Profit, p. 49.
The problem as Pattullo saw it and the ultimate deadlock that resulted is detailed in Sutherland, "Pattullo as Party Leader," pp. 99-101, which is based upon Pattullo's formal statement to the conference.


Ibid., p. 102.

Victoria Times, January 24, 1941; Vancouver Sun, January 21, 1941.

Victoria Colonist, January 24, 1941; Vancouver Province, January 25, 1941.

Sutherland, "Pattullo as Party Leader," p. 103.

Ibid., p. 117; Ormsby, British Columbia, p. 473.

Vancouver Province, November 20, 1940.

Ibid.

This is how Harold Winch characterized the premier's relationship to his caucus. According to Winch, Pattullo ran the party absolutely and when he cracked the whip, the troops jumped into place. Harold Winch, private interview in Vancouver, November 9, 1973.

Vancouver Province, October 4, 1941.

J. Hinchcliffe, former cabinet minister in the Tolmie government, and the nominee for North Vancouver, spoke out against the creation of an independent highway commission. A near "mini-revolt" occurred when Maitland refused to recognize Hinchcliffe as a Conservative candidate and asked the president of the North Vancouver Conservation Association to call another convention. The Association president abided by the wishes of the leader but not without a surge of bad publicity in the press. The whole incident left some local members quite upset and brought charges of "clique rule" on the part of Maitland. See Victoria Times, September 24, 1941.

Robin, Pillars of Profit, p. 50.

Victoria Times, October 20, 1941.

September 24, 1941, as quoted in Robin, Pillars of Profit, p. 50.
223 Sutherland, "Pattullo as Party Leader," p. 121.

224 Walker interview, July 17, 1973. Unfortunately no figures have been found indicating the state of Tory Party finances. Walker only remembers that they were "not good, but slowly building."

225 Walker, Politicians, pp. 211-212.

226 Letter, R. L. Maitland to R. R. Maitland, May 29, 1941, Maitland Papers, P.A.B.C.

227 Letter, R. L. Maitland to A. C. Maitland, July 3, 1941, Maitland Papers, P.A.B.C. In Vancouver a newspaper reported that party gatherings were sparsely attended; about one-half of normal [all parties]. Vancouver News Herald, October 9, 1941.

228 Vancouver Province, October 21, 1940.

229 Ibid.

230 Letter, R. L. Maitland to A. C. Maitland, March 12, 1941, Maitland Papers, P.A.B.C.


232 Election figures taken from data in Province of British Columbia, Chief Electoral Office, Statement of Votes, 1941.


234 Sutherland, "Pattullo as Party Leader," p. 113.

235 Alberni-margin was 164 votes out of total 4,204 cast; Cranbrook-margin was 67 votes out of total 4,568 cast; Prince Rupert-margin was 118 votes out of total 3,244 cast.

236 In 1933, Pattullo won by almost 3 to 1; in 1937, his margin was approximately 2 to 1; and in 1941, his margin was only 118 votes.

237 Vancouver Sun, October 29, 1941.

238 Vancouver Province, October 23, 1941.
See press reports after the election, October 22–November 1, 1941.

CHAPTER IV
COALITION GOVERNMENT: THE MAITLAND YEARS

Forming the Coalition

When no party emerged from the 1941 election strong enough to form a majority government, a clamour arose throughout the province for some form of coalition government. "The mood was of skepticism," said one reporter, "that all parties would be politicking furiously in preparation for the early death of the new minority government."¹ The Sun declared the day after the election: "The only thing for the Pattullo government to do after yesterday's election is to seek coalition immediately with the Conservative Party. B.C. does not want, and must not have a weak minority government in wartime. The province cannot afford a new election and the defeat of the government would mean precisely this."² Bruce Hutchison summed up the election as "inconclusive," noting that two-thirds of the people are dissatisfied with the former government.³ The News Herald called for coalition immediately,⁴ and the Province stressed "the necessity for an all party combination for the welfare of B.C."⁵

In both parties political maneuvering began immediately. The complexity of the situation and the impossibility of getting completely accurate information makes reconstructing exactly what happened and why extremely difficult. Principals in the drama who are still living often give conflicting accounts and, unfortunately, there is a dearth of reliable primary materials. The following is an attempt to reconstruct from the available sources the most complete account possible of the events that occurred in
both Liberal and Conservative Parties, and the decisions reached regarding the formation of the coalition government.

To begin, Conservative leader Maitland had never ruled out the possibility of coalition with Liberals. As early as May 1939, he publicly stated: "If it ever becomes necessary, Conservatives would not hesitate to join forces with Liberals to fight radicalism." In a campaign address on the eve of the election, Maitland said: "We must have the determination to rise above politics and serve our country in this time of war." And scarcely twenty-four hours after the returns revealed the outcome of the election, Maitland sent to Pattullo a proposal for union government which would include all three parties.

It is not difficult to understand the opportunity coalition presented for a party that not only had been out of office for eight years, but had rebuilt itself from the ground up in the meantime. With twelve seats, only one-fourth of the total house, the prospect of having a share in a new government must have been quite enticing. With the party seemingly on the upswing, to share in governing could be perceived as an opportunity for enhancing the party's credibility in the eyes of the electorate. In this view, provincial Tories had little to lose and much to gain from some type of coalition arrangement.

The decision to push for coalition had notably less than total support outside the elected members. R. R. Walker, the newly appointed provincial organizer and an avid opponent of coalition, recalls:

I feared coalition so much that I took it upon myself without hesitation to circulate all presidents of associations throughout the province, begging them to bring all possible pressure to bear to halt the destruction of the Conservative party by entering coalition. I had some answers but soon ceased my efforts. Dr.
R. W. Alward, former Conservative member for Ft. George, wrote in agreement and said the move would only finish our party and throw power to the socialists.9

Walker recalls the pro-coalition decision was made by the caucus without consulting the association executives or calling a convention: "A score of Liberals and a dozen Conservatives did the most undemocratic thing they could have taken upon themselves to rule upon. This was a matter for a party convention.\(^{10}\) Walker raises the question as to why even all M.L.A.s would go along with coalition when at best only four would get cabinet posts?

I had a mighty hard time trying to pinpoint what I called the blame for the decision to accept coalition with the Liberals. The policy had to have a focal point. I naturally knew all of our dozen M.L.A.s intimately. And I got almost a dozen different answers. We were getting only three cabinet posts; so only three of the dozen could be influenced by having "Honorable" prefixed to their names. I queried the nine who would serve only on the short end, got evasive answers from some, no answers from others; so gave it up.\(^{11}\)

Walker's disillusionment suggests perhaps the most fundamental dilemma that a political party faces; that while all sectors of a political party, its officeholders, its workers, and its voters are brought together in search for power at elections, each has purposes and motivations of their own for doing so. For example, party activists may be motivated by the benefits of patronage, sensations of victory, or the defeat of an enemy party. Candidates for office may be seeking completely different benefits; the satisfaction of holding office, the fulfillment of a career commitment, or the opportunity to share in the making of public decisions. Coalition offered potential benefits for candidates which were not available to the provincial organizer. For Walker the possible debilitating effects coalition could have on the provincial Conservative Party were not worth the benefits to the party, however large, of a share of power.
The important point is that party cadres and party candidates are not necessarily committed to the capture of public office for the same purposes, nor at the same costs. Walker's concern as provincial organizer was to devise strategies for winning. To him, coalition would simply delay, perhaps forever, that prospect.\(^\text{12}\)

In any event coalition did not lack for support at the time. Despite Walker's disillusionment, there is no evidence that his opinion was widely shared by other Conservatives. Not a single Conservative statement opposing coalition could be found. All the Tory M.L.A.s apparently favored it. \(^\text{13}\)
The executives of the British Columbia Conservative Association gave their assent. And the *Province*, the party's most faithful newspaper, spoke out repeatedly for coalition from the time the election result was known.

From Maitland's standpoint, the decision to push for coalition seemed sensible under the circumstances. Maitland had formerly been a minister (without portfolio) in the Tolmie government. And now he was no longer even opposition leader.

Moreover, the war had given to provincial politics a diminished sense of importance. Public opinion seemed to favor the suspension of party politics for the duration of the crisis. Maitland said many times publicly that he believed the war came first and if coalition would provide unity, then that was what mattered most. \(^\text{14}\)

On closer examination, however, Maitland's interest in coalition is more complex. A fuller explanation of the party leader's behaviour is possible by looking at the relationship between ambition and opportunity; that is, the relationship between the politician's desire for personal success and the kinds of opportunities available which facilitate satisfaction
of such desires. If we assume that in politics a minimum condition for personal success is office-holding, then we can say the politician as office seeker engages in political acts and makes decisions appropriate to gaining office. He (the politician) is faced first with defining his office goal or goals and, secondly, with relating his current activity to them.

There is little doubt that Maitland set as his goal the premiership of British Columbia. His correspondence with his sons during the period 1938-1941 is filled with references about how the leadership of the Tory party will, with a little luck, lead to the premiership. Russell Walker recounts that:

Pat Maitland had never hesitated about declaring he had only two political ambitions. One was to be attorney-general and the other to be premier of B.C. By merely leading his small group into coalition he could realize the first. I also know he had high hopes that Jack Hart would alternate with him in the premiership.

It might be objected that as leader of the minor partner in coalition, Maitland could hope to gain little as he would be overshadowed by the premier. Whether he really believed Hart would alternate the leadership (or even felt it was a possibility) is not as important as what Maitland believed he could gain in personal stature by joining the government in time of crisis, and thereby strengthen his "premier credentials" with the electorate. Again, his personal correspondence is instructive. During the indecisive period immediately following the election, he wrote his son Bill:

We are still in irons regarding the election. I have received more publicity throughout Canada through my stand than I ever had before and maybe more than I will ever get again. I don't know what will happen.

A month later he wrote: "The (Liberal) machine is not very stuck on a coalition with us. I am not stuck on it myself, but if it is to be--it
is to be." And, on the "informal" political ceasefire during the 1939 session, he wrote his son Robert, "I am bound by my understanding to give the government a chance before criticizing. I think in the end I will score on this stand which I am taking." All this is to suggest, not that Maitland's only motive for entering coalition was self-interest or even party interest, but that the politician's ambitions are significant in understanding the kinds of political strategies employed. Coalition would not only give Maitland a share in governing, but would also place him in an ideal position from which to step into the premiership at some later date.

As for the other influential Conservatives, little information could be found on their feelings toward coalition or the roles they played in the final decision to join. Maitland's correspondence lacks any mention of the other M.L.A.s, perhaps an indication that the members were in strong agreement on the matter. MacDonald and Eyres, the only M.L.A.s interviewed, both said the issue raised little problem and everyone agreed coalition was the sensible thing to do under the circumstances.

The Liberals were of course faced with an entirely different situation. In office for eight years and having just won 21 seats in the October 21 election, it was possible for them to form a minority government. In fact there is every reason to believe this is what Pattullo wanted. Although he took no immediate stand one way or the other, there is no doubt Pattullo had always been against coalition as a matter of principle. From his first post-election comments on October 23, there is little reason to believe that his mind had changed.

Pattullo's stand, however, was not shared by many of his colleagues.
Some, assuming the Conservatives would never consent to share power with their arch-enemy of so many years, believed coalition was a means of rid­ding the party of Pattullo's leadership. Indeed it would be unusual if after holding the reigns of power for seven years, Pattullo had not stirred up some enmity and jealousy in the party's ranks. The premier's popularity within the Liberal Party had declined significantly since he, together with Mr. Hepburn and Mr. Aberhart, wrecked the recent Dominion-provincial confer­ence. To be fair, many were probably motivated to support coalition because of a desire for a stable government in a period of national cris. And, of course, there was the strengthened C.C.F., which might be the beneficiary if an early election were called.

From the strategic standpoint, the Liberals as the major partner would be in a position of dominance. Nobody doubted that the premiership and the larger number of portfolios would go to the Liberals. Therefore, even though formally a partnership, obviously it would be in reality a "Liberal govern­ment" with a Liberal premier, and with the Liberals getting credit for its accomplishments.

Pattullo's reasons for rejecting coalition are not difficult to find. As a strong party man he believed that the Conservative Party was, almost as a matter of course, the natural enemy of the Liberal Party. He did not accept the view common in journalistic circles that there was little dif­ference between the Liberal and Conservative political philosophies, that the choice for the voter lay between a "free enterprise" and a "socialist" government. To Pattullo, Liberalism was the middle way between the extremes of socialism and conservatism.
I do not think that the people of Canada want a Reactionary Government nor do I think that they want a Socialistic Government. . . . I believe that the majority of our people want a safe, sane, and progressive government. Extremes mean turmoil.  

He further believed coalition would only increase the opportunities for the C.C.F. to strengthen itself and allow the Conservatives, who were in a "dying condition," to gain a "new lease on life." If allowed sole possession of the opposition benches, the C.C.F. could capitalize on the inevitable "compromising" that would result from a partnership of two "dis-similar" parties. "That was why," he said, "the CCF favored a Liberal-Conservative coalition because they hoped that people of Liberal mind will throw their support to the CCF rather than to a combination of Liberals and Conservatives and that the CCF will receive augmented support accordingly."

Pattullo also had practical reasons for rejecting coalition. He believed that Tories would hesitate to use their "balance of power" position to bring down the government, and thereby risk an early election and possible C.C.F. victory. Because of the war and the strengthened C.C.F., Conservatives, he believed, would in all likelihood "go along." This opinion was given by Russell Walker who commented: "Duff [Pattullo] was too astute a politician to bring in anything that Conservatives would oppose—and could have carried on for the whole term—the duration of the war."

From the outset, Pattullo suspected the motives of the "coalitionists" within his party. He felt that coalition was less important to them than the removal of himself from the leadership. Writing to Prime Minister King just a month after the election, he said:

The Coalitionists, of which Hart is now the spearhead, have been doing everything possible to get me out before the House meets. This plotting has been in progress for many months, the press constantly boosting Hart and depreciating myself. If Hart had been loyal, he would have squelched this himself.
Whether in fact there was a plan to oust Pattullo before the election took place is impossible to ascertain. Concluding from the available evidence, there was not. The only hard evidence to support the "plot" theory is Pattullo's own statement. On the other hand, Sutherland found, on the basis of interviews with persons prominent in the party at the time, that such a plan never existed. No doubt many were unhappy with Pattullo. There was, however, no mention of him being replaced as leader in the four major newspapers from the time of the Ottawa conference in January until just before the election, and then only in the *Province.*

There is even less reason to suspect Hart would have spearheaded such a plan. Russell Walker, a long time personal friend of Hart, said that Hart and Pattullo were the closest of friends, even up to the day of Hart's resignation. "Hart remained loyal to Pattullo until the very last minute. He (Hart) personally told me (Walker) this." In other words, Hart remained a Pattullo loyalist until after the election when the coalition ground swell in both parties became overwhelming. Of course this was due in some measure to the Vancouver and Victoria press.

Undoubtedly, following the election some members of the party began to consider a change in the Liberal leadership. In part the dissatisfaction with the premier arose from his stubborn refusal to call together the elected Liberal members to explain his views on the party's future course. Instead, on the day following the election he announced that he and Hart would continue with their pre-election plan to go to Ottawa to negotiate a tax-rental agreement with the federal government. This trip was criticized in the press and by the opposition, but most importantly by at least one member of the cabinet, George Pearson, on the grounds that the premier "no
longer controlled a majority of the members of the House, and therefore had no right to negotiate in Ottawa on behalf of the province." While no other Liberal members spoke publicly against Pattullo's action, his failure to communicate with the caucus must have left feelings of bitterness.

There is no available record of what occurred in Liberal Party circles while Pattullo was away. That Hart made any moves toward gaining the leadership appears unlikely as he was with the premier in Ottawa. The press, however, stressed the fact that Hart and Pattullo took separate trains, a possible indication the distance between them was growing. In the meantime the members apparently agreed not to do anything until Pattullo returned home. Pattullo would then call, if not an all party convention, a meeting of the caucus to collectively decide what to do.

Upon Pattullo's return on November 8, he refused comment to reporters on the political situation and called a cabinet meeting for November 10. At that meeting a decision would be reached on who would fill the two vacancies caused by the defeat of the Attorney-General and the Provincial Secretary. The meeting resulted in no action as no decision was reached. A few days later Pattullo announced the composition of the new cabinet without consulting even all those selected. Pearson, whom he had intended to make Provincial Secretary and Minister of Education, refused his offer and resigned from the Pattullo ministry. In his letter of resignation, Pearson expressed his disagreement with Pattullo's plans to "go it alone" and the way in which the new cabinet was selected:

I regret to have to say that I cannot agree to enter the new cabinet as I do not feel that the government has the confidence of the people nor of the house, and I feel that steps should be taken to bring about an agreement with the opposition parties in the House for the
carrying on of the government for the duration of the war. . . . I also feel that the present members of the cabinet and the private government members should have been given greater opportunity to express their views upon the very critical situation that exists, before a new cabinet was formed.

The same day, Hart told reporters he personally favored coalition. This was the last straw for Pattullo and on November 17, he announced: "with very great regret I have felt it necessary to call for the resignation of Mr. Hart." With Hart's resignation came the decisive moment. Pattullo had jeopardized his control of the party. Hart provided the focal point to which the Liberal coalitionists could rally, and the Conservatives had a leading Liberal with whom to negotiate.

The Pattullo ministry literally fell apart during the next few days. On November 18, Agriculture Minister, K. C. MacDonald came out publicly for coalition and the following day was asked by the premier to resign. This was followed on November 19, with the resignation of Attorney-General Norman W. Whittaker who told Pattullo he was "taking such action in protest of the firing of Hart and the dismissal of Pearson." At about the same time W. T. Straith (Liberal-Victoria) and H. P. Hodges (Liberal-Victoria) joined Hart in favor of coalition government. By the end of the week they were joined by Harry Perry (Liberal-Ft. George) and J. J. Gillis (Liberal-Yale).

Even the local party associations began to desert Pattullo. On November 26, the Vancouver and Victoria Liberal associations passed resolutions favoring calling a convention to deal with the question of leadership in the party. Shortly thereafter, the president of the British Columbia Liberal Association, W. J. Knox, called a general convention of the association to be held on December 2, two days before the new legislature was to sit. This action infuriated Pattullo as he was not consulted by Knox.
For Pattullo it was further evidence the president and party members were
conspiring to remove him from the leadership.\textsuperscript{49}

By the time the convention met, the situation was all but hopeless for
the dispirited premier. A resolution favoring coalition was reportedly to
be put to the delegates and all early signs indicated it would pass easily.
The resolution was hotly debated but passed 477 to 312.\textsuperscript{50} The end for Pat­
tullo had come. A Pattullo supporter described the events which followed:

The resolution was carried, and as soon as the vote was announced,
Mr. Pattullo left the hall. Almost immediately afterwards, to my
great surprise, Mr. George Pearson worked his way to the front and
proceeded to nominate Hart as leader. When he concluded, Dr. Weir
marched up and seconded the motion, then immediately someone shouted, ^
"I move nominations closed," and the great convention was past history.\textsuperscript{51}

Shortly thereafter a caucus of Liberal M.L.A.s met and voted unani­
mously to support the new party leader, John Hart, in his endeavor to bring
about coalition government.\textsuperscript{52} Pattullo had no choice but to release all the
members from obligation to himself. A few days later he presented to Lieu­
tenant Governor W. C. Woodward his resignation and his recommendations that
Hart should form a new government.

Serious difficulties immediately arose as Hart tried to form his gov­
ernment. The Liberal leader had invited the C.C.F. to join in a three party
coalition. But Winch rejected the idea. Winch's stand had been known since
the day after the election. On October 23, he told the press:

The differences in basic fundamentals between the CCF and other
parties are too vast to enable them to work together. We are pre­
pared to cooperate at all times in matters of public interest but
I don't think a union government would work.\textsuperscript{53}

Later, on December 5, Winch reiterated his party's stand and expressed
the need for a vocal opposition for responsible and representative government.
He pledged full support to win the war but said he could not see how that
necessitated the C.C.F. in coalition. Winch further said that in refusing to become part of a coalition, the party was following a policy laid down at the C.C.F. national convention at Winnipeg in 1940.

In the meantime, friction was developing between Maitland and Hart as to conditions stipulated by the Conservative leader to be met before his party would agree to the partnership. On December 4, the Conservatives caucused in Victoria to consider the coalition issue. At that time they agreed in principle that coalition with the Liberals would be acceptable only if certain conditions were met. These conditions were:

1. Cabinet posts must be split 50/50 between the two parties. In addition the Liberals will name the premier, so they will have one more portfolio than the Tories.

2. Steps must be taken at once to set up a highway commission (a central plank of the Conservative's election platform).

3. The new government must commit itself to seek reconsideration of the Rowell-Sirois report.

4. There must be a thorough investigation and reorganization of the public services with a view to economy, and the elimination of waste and patronage.

To complicate matters, an anti-coalition movement began to surface in the Vancouver Conservative associations. Reliable information is lacking regarding the source and extent of the dispute. However, Vancouver Conservatives, always a mainspring in the party organization, were threatened with losing their power over the party as a whole if a merger took place. Maitland, in an attempt to head off an internal party split suddenly left Victoria on the night of December 4, to meet with the Vancouver dissidents. There is no information as to what agreement was reached but news accounts reported Rolf Bruhn (Conservative Salmon Arm) threatened to leave the party and sit as an independent if the party rejected coalition. In any event, Maitland came to some kind of arrangement with the Vancouver group and the
danger of open revolt in the ranks was avoided.

Maitland's problems, however, had just begun. On December 6, Hart rejected the Tory condition that a coalition cabinet would be equally divided between Liberals and Conservatives. In a letter to Maitland, Hart proposed a compromise ministry of five Liberals with portfolios (excluding the premiership), and four Conservatives, three with portfolios and one without. In addition, Hart implied he was going to form a government in a few days with or without Maitland's participation. 58

Moreover, Hart had become "not a little annoyed" by what he called the very "uppity attitude" of the Tories, "demanding more cabinet posts than they deserved" plus a "couple of posts of higher priority than they were actually entitled to." 59 Hart became so irritated by the Conservative conditions, that he called Harold Winch to his office and asked if he would be interested in forming a coalition with the Liberal Party and leaving the Tories out. Winch replied that the C.C.F. position was unchanged. What transpired at the meeting is best described by Harold Winch:

Just when everyone thought their agreement was settled relative to the division of portfolios, Hart called me into his office and disclosed otherwise. He said that Maitland was throwing a monkey wrench into the works by demanding another top ranking cabinet post or he would lead the Tories out of the coalition. Hart said he was being blackmailed and again asked me to come into a partnership, and would throw the Conservatives out if that was the only basis upon which the CCF would enter. He offered me any cabinet job I wanted except premier and Minister of Finance. I again declined to enter a coalition. When Hart then said he just didn't know what to do I told him "why don't you tell Maitland to go to hell." Tell him you talked to me and that "I said I would recommend to my caucus supporting the Liberals as a minority government on the understanding they would only be thrown out on a declared 'Want of Confidence Motion' or on warning that the vote on a specific government bill would be considered a confidence vote."

The CCF leader said Hart accepted his advice:
Hart took my strategy suggestion and called in Maitland. He later called me to let me know Maitland had taken the bait, as I knew he would, and had withdrawn his demands. 60

Whether these threats helped to pressure Maitland toward a compromise is not known. In any case, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, probably helped to settle things and on the day after a compromise was struck between the two leaders. The Hart pro-rata formula was adopted and the Liberals with 20 seats received five cabinet positions and the Tories with 12 received four, one of whom would have no portfolio. From the press reports, there is no evidence Hart accepted the policy conditions set out by Maitland in his letter to Hart of December 6. 61

With the major deadlock broken, only one problem remained—the assignment of portfolios. It was a foregone conclusion that Maitland would get the Attorney-Generalship and Hart would remain as Finance Minister. But the remaining portfolios provided some difficulties. It was agreed that Hart would decide which portfolios would go to which party and that Maitland and Hart would decide who would get portfolios from their respective parties. Maitland, undoubtedly haunted by the Tolmie ministry, was careful to include Anscomb, his challenger for the leadership in 1938 and a heavy weight with the "old-guard" in the party. Rolf Bruhn, long a coalitionist in principle, was a natural choice for the Public Works portfolio as he had extensive experience in the Department of Public Works in his pre-political career and had served as Minister of Public Works in the Tolmie cabinet. Because Public Works was the richest source of patronage, many of the rank and file in the Liberal Party were unhappy about Hart's concession to the Tories. But Liberal antipathy was somewhat overcome when it became clear that with Maitland the Attorney General, Anscomb the Minister of Mines and Industry,
and Bruhn the Minister of Public Works, from a policy standpoint, the Tories were in a position to do as little harm as possible to the "social reform" policies that Hart promised to continue.

The Liberal selections were not readily accepted. In particular there was concern expressed by some Tories about the "socialist" leanings of men like Pearson and Perry. These two plus George Weir were the most progressive members in the former Pattullo government. Harold Winch recounts that when changes were sought in unemployment insurance, labor relations, hospital services and other social measures "we first attempted to win these men over as they had considerable clout with Pattullo and were much more inclined to these kinds of policies than were most of the others." Apparently at the instigation of Maitland, who was interested in keeping "left winger" Perry out of the cabinet, Hart agreed to name Perry Speaker of the House. Viewed by some Liberals and the C.C.F. as an attempt to neutralize the progressive tint of the new government, considerable pressure was placed on the Liberal leader to find a place in the cabinet for Perry. According to Winch:

Harry came to me, upset, as he thought he deserved a cabinet post. Some of us thought so too, so we let the premier know there would be a real donny-brook in the House if Perry wasn't in the cabinet. I think Hart had given way to Maitland because the latter had no use for Perry, thinking he was a "socialist in Liberal clothing." Anyway, Hart put his foot down and Perry went into the cabinet.

The rest of the cabinet was more or less a balance of experience and regional considerations. Arthur W. Gray (Liberal-New Westminster), serving in his fifth successive government, returned to his old post as Minister of Lands. Kenneth C. MacDonald (Liberal-North Okanagan), a Vernon dentist, was returned to the Agriculture portfolio, George Pearson (Liberal-Nanaimo
and the Islands) became Provincial Secretary and Minister of Labour. And George "Harry" Perry (Liberal-Ft. George) was in the end given the Education portfolio. On the whole it was a fairly well balanced group, Liberal and Conservative, regional balance (North, Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island), experience, and a fair cross section of each party. The coalition ministry probably was, as the Victoria Times editorialized, a cabinet of experience and one which the circumstances demanded.  

The Changing Federal Party

Coalition, while meeting the needs of Conservative and Liberal politicians in British Columbia, would become a serious problem for the federal wings of the respective parties. Few federal politicians were talking about any kind of "union government," certainly not surprising in light of the huge Liberal majority gained in 1940.

For federal Conservatives, the immediate problem was finding a new leader. Since the debacle of 1940, a contest had developed in the party between those who wished to make conscription and free enterprise the keystones of Conservative policy and those who feared that with such a restricted platform the party might again become a casualty of the war. The dividing line between the protagonists was not well drawn. Many who favored conscription also believed a new Conservatism must be based on a policy of "social welfarism" if the party was to make significant inroads into the huge King majority. However, with the selection of Arthur Meighen, a militant conscriptionist, as leader in November 1941, the more progressive elements in the party lost out. The loss, however, turned out to be the party's as Meighen was defeated by a C.C.F. candidate in his bid to re-enter
the House of Commons in February, 1942. Now the party's chances for revival looked more hopeless than ever. "Meighen's defeat," notes Granatstein, "brought the Conservative Party as close as it had yet been to extinction."

This was the condition of the party when many "forward looking" Conservatives seized the initiative and made plans to take over and rebuild the party in 1942. At Winnipeg John Bracken, the long time Liberal-Progressive Premier of Manitoba, won the leadership atop a reformist-progressive platform. Most of the British Columbia delegates supported Bracken. Two of them, Howard Green, the young M.P. from South Vancouver, and H. H. Stevens, entered the race but with only minor support withdrew before the balloting. Bracken won by two to one over his nearest opponent.

The selection of Bracken ushered in a new era in Conservative Party national organization. Realizing the party was hopelessly disorganized, Bracken and his lieutenants began searching for new methods to turn the party's fortunes around. Of utmost importance was the need for an efficient national organization. "Our curse in the past," wrote national organizer Richard A. Bell, "has been that we have chosen a leader and then expected him by his own unaided efforts to accomplish miracles." One striking indication of the desperate state of Conservative organization was a study done in 1941 that showed party organization to be either non-existent or woefully lacking in 204 of 243 federal ridings.

Bell immediately made plans for a full scale reorganization of the party. Included was the establishment of a central research bureau, a full time national chairman, a publicity director, a national monthly newspaper, and the formation of "non-partisan" study groups (Bracken clubs) all across the country. But the most significant development was a plan to coordinate
the federal and provincial organizations on a regular basis. In effect the party was undergoing intensive centralization of its country wide organizational network.

Prior to 1942 what could be called a national Conservative Party was little more than an extremely loose confederation of relatively autonomous provincial associations. "The national headquarters had but little control over the autonomous organizations in the provinces," notes one student of Canadian party organizations. 71 J. R. Williams 72 says that in 1942 the Progressive Conservative Association of Canada for the first time began functioning between elections. By Bracken's insistence and through the timeless work of his organizer, Bell, efforts were begun to make the party into a more organic national structure capable of asserting some degree of control over the provincial associations. The goal was to prepare the party to do national battle as a highly coordinated nationwide entity.

This development, however, was not without repercussions. As Lederle points out:

Naturally there are strong reasons for mutual cooperation but we must not forget that the provincial party organizations are primarily interested in provincial parliamentary elections and only secondarily in the national cause. At times they may actually be diverted by provincial leaders to downright opposition to the national party organization. 73

The situation Lederle refers to stems from the inherent difficulty of reconciling the needs of the federal party with the needs of the provincial organizations. 74 The potential of strain between the two wings was high enough in ordinary times, but with coalition, tension between the two wings was an almost certainty.

In British Columbia federal organization had been since 1934 in the
hands of a committee named by the members of parliament. Bracken, in line with his new thoughts on national organization, decided a representative designated by him should take sole charge of coordinating all federal organizational matters in the province. In particular the federal leader was concerned about the Liberal-Conservative coalition which he felt necessitated an outsider take charge of federal concerns. Although the provincial association was active, its leaders were in league with the political enemy, thereby making it awkward, if not impossible, to do battle with the Liberals. Conservative leaders in B.C., under steady criticism in the legislature from the C.C.F., were frequently called upon to defend policies supported by the Liberals in Ottawa, adding to the confusion. Moreover, it was only a question of time before Liberals and Tories would be forced to stay out of partisan federal politics on the grounds that the parties "cannot be non-partisan in provincial affairs and stump separately for the two old parties in the federal field." The Times stated the problem exactly:

How in the name of common sense can Coalitionist members of the Crown in B.C. declare open party warfare when the next dominion elections come around--appearing on Liberal and Conservative platforms to plead for votes for or against the present King administration in Ottawa--and expect the public to continue to have any faith in a non-partisan government in this province. This problem led to the belief that a strong federal hand was necessary to take charge of federal matters in the province.

Bracken chose as his representative Howard Green. Opinion is divided on the attitude taken by Maitland on Green's appointment. In the "Blue Book" put out by the provincial association in 1955, a statement by Conservative M.L.A. Allan J. McDonell claims that Maitland told him that "he objected to the whole procedure and was unwilling to accept that arrangement
as final." This statement has been contradicted by Green who said Maitland did not object to the arrangement and he and Maitland were good friends who worked closely together. Maitland unfortunately left no written record as to what his attitude was, and other persons interviewed have given contradictory opinions.

In any case Green's duties were to take charge of the nominations of federal candidates and the conduct of the campaign in British Columbia. This was accomplished through the establishment of a formal advisory group consisting of six members, three of whom were selected by Maitland and three selected by Green. As Green was firmly in charge, the group's function was more to symbolize cooperation between federal and provincial members than anything else. In addition to being in charge of federal election preparations, Green was to be a kind of "liaison" through whom both the federal and provincial leaders would be kept informed about matters involving the party.

The appointment of Green appears to have been of little consequence at the time. The federal and provincial wings had been working fairly well together and so the arrangement did not seem extraordinary. With no election in sight federally or provincially for at least two years, organizational work was confined primarily to keeping up party fences. The War was then at a crucial stage and that many British Columbians were even active on the political scene is doubtful. However, when Herbert Anscomb succeeded to the party leadership upon the death of Maitland in 1946, this so-called "intrusion" by the federal wing became a source of a bitter controversy. Anscomb, for reasons discussed later, resented bitterly the "intruder" Green, and would not accept any arrangement in which he was not in charge of all party matters in the province.
"The Best Government B.C. Ever Had"

The first few years of coalition government were exceptionally harmonious. Perhaps the most striking thing about the legislative sessions from 1942-1945, was the almost complete lack of conflict exhibited between members of the once rival parties. In surveying press clippings covering the sessions of this period, not a single instance was found where the coalition parties divided on a major issue along anything resembling partisan lines. Even in caucus the members got along so harmoniously that one Tory could not remember a single serious dispute, and Bruce Hutchison was forced to conclude in 1943:

The government has been able, after some preliminary hesitation, to emerge into a unit, without party friction, with much clearer cooperation between the ministers than is usually found in a one party cabinet.

Things seemed to be going along so smoothly that even the tone of the legislature had changed: "Below the surface it [the legislature] has undergone a fundamental change," said Hutchison upon returning to Victoria in 1945 after a year's absence. "The steam has gone out of it; the province seemed to be getting a new brand of quiet, unheroic and extremely competent government."

Changes were evident in the tone of the C.C.F. opposition as well. Despite its growth in the early years of the war, due mostly to an expanding unionism and an increasing disposition not to fear the consequences of national planning, the C.C.F. seemed to have mellowed from its former firebrand self. "The fire seems to have burned out of the CCF," said Hutchison during the 1945 session; the CCF "born and reared in grievance," seemed "strangely deflated and subdued" in the "quiet and competent" coalition
The C.C.F. may have moderated its tone but not its sense of direction, its purpose and its orientation toward fundamental political change. Its growing membership and particularly its winning of two by-elections in 1942 and 1943 inspired a new confidence and elan by the mid-war years. Radical C.C.F.er W. W. Lefeaux, leading off the 1943 budget debate, urged the government to introduce legislation to expropriate the British Columbia Power Corporation and its fourteen subsidiary companies, take over the brewing and distilling industries, and create a government sugar and insurance monopoly. The party's convention of 1943 and 1944 favored public ownership of utilities and power production, government sponsorship of collective farms on an experimental basis, a government monopoly in the purchase, processing and wholesaling of farm products, a comprehensive social security insurance system, a steeply graded income tax and the establishment of public corporations empowered to issue securities guaranteed by the province as part of a larger program leading to a "Dominion-wide socialist economy." Any question that the C.C.F. was becoming more moderate in ideology was quickly dispelled when Harold Winch stated, during the Alberta election in November 1943: "When we become the government, we will institute socialism immediately," and further, that it would be "enforced by the police and military if necessary." 

Although the C.C.F.'s ideology remained firm, its political behaviour mellowed considerably from pre-coalition years. The reason probably had to do with the direction of substance of politics during the mid-war years. After the heated controversy of Canada's role in the war died down, the legislature returned to more strictly provincial issues. Labour relations,
public control and ownership of industry, social welfare measures, agriculture policy, and post-war benefits for men in the armed services were the main fare of the four legislative sessions prior to the 1945 election. Aided by unprecedented prosperity (largely brought about by the war) the coalition government successfully co-opted a good deal of the C.C.F. reforms in such areas as labour-management relations, social reform such as mothers' allowances and old age pensions, control (but not take over) of private power systems, increased allocations for education and the raising of teachers' salaries, and expansion of public works programs. As Robin puts it:

The transformation of howling socialist wolves into wooly pink sheep was merely one miracle imputed to Hart's bland wizardy; another was the remarkable increase in governmental revenue which financed the new expenditure. Under the forced draft of the war, industries in British Columbia made spectacular progress. The value of gross production increased from $311 million in 1940 to $629 million in 1945, while per capita net value of production rose from $345 to $553. Without any basic changes in tax policy the government announced continued surpluses on current account. 90

Indeed, it is not surprising that the tone of the opposition would change when a party, which has as its raison d'être fundamental political and economic change, is faced with a government riding the crest of a boom. Governments are usually popular when spending money just as they are unpopular when collecting taxes. "The government seems to be doing pretty well," wrote Hutchison, "but these are the salad days, the boom days, the wildest days of finance the world has ever known." 91

A number of reasons suggest themselves as to why the coalition partners were able to transcend their old party feuding and work cohesively together. Of prime importance was the fact that the government was able to accomplish much in the way of public policy during its first three years of existence. Another related to the political "environment" existing at
the time the coalition was created and the four years thereafter. Still another had to do with the coalition leadership and the inner workings of the coalition itself.

The coalition government accomplished much during the mid-war years. In the opinion of most observers, British Columbia was experiencing its best and most progressive government ever.

Prompted by the demands of an expanded unionism and fuelled by unprecedented prosperity induced by the war, by 1943 the Hart-Maitland government had made significant advances in the area of labour and social reforms. A Workmen's Compensation Act boosted workers' benefits and broadened the qualifications for compensation. An Industrial Conciliation Act, hailed by Paul Phillips as the most advanced in Canada, clarified the status of unions as bargaining agents and provided for compulsory recognition by employers. Mothers' Allowance benefits were expanded, teacher salaries in rural areas were increased, and a $15 million Loan Bill was passed for the purpose of carrying out post-war public works. In addition, the government "confirmed" its progressive credentials by petitioning the federal government to urge the enactment of social security legislation, a national system of health insurance, and "other legislation for the welfare of the public."

The 1944 and 1945 legislative sessions followed suit with further reform bills. Chief among these were: a Social Assistance Act which for the first time established the right of any destitute or ill person to get public help; a "Bill of Rights" for provincial civil servants which guaranteed collective bargaining rights, grades pay and promotion schedules, tax relief for farmers; and increased money for education in the form of
student loans for returning veterans, higher teacher salaries, and expanded school construction. The sessions also devoted considerable attention to the problems of returning veterans. A post-war rehabilitation bureau was created, monetary allotments were provided for settlement of returning veterans, and provincial land taxes were eliminated for men in active service. One of the more controversial bills of the 1945 session was the Power Act which established an electric power commission funded to develop electric power in the rural areas of the province. The C.C.F. favored the Power Act in principle, but argued vehemently against it for not going far enough. The government supporters hailed the Act as a major developmental program which would put a light bulb in every farmer's barn.

By the end of the 1945 session, even some C.C.F.ers were publicly remarking (albeit reservedly) that the coalition was the "best government British Columbia has ever had." The press followed suit as both liberal and conservative newspapers lauded the Hart-Maitland government for its "solid achievements," its "progressive initiatives," and its success in "submerging petty partisanship for the good of the province." This opinion was echoed from outside the province. The Ottawa Journal commented:

The coalition now has held office for more than three years, and it seems to be doing an excellent job. The groups within it have found that they have more things in common than separate them, and in unity they have been able to give the province sound, progressive government.

Government success (achieving high marks for its conduct of public affairs) is a necessary condition for harmony within the governing party or parties, but not a sufficient one. A fuller explanation for the surprising cohesion in the Liberal-Conservative coalition during its first term lies in other political factors. The following are important:
first, the political conditions which existed when it was formed; second, the high cost of dissolution as perceived by the members; third, the "convergence effect" of the opposition C.C.F.; and fourth, the coalition leadership.

The Hart-Maitland government began under extremely favorable political conditions. Absent was the existence of hard differences on fundamental issues which, had they existed, would have produced a built-in strain at the outset of the partnership. "In my opinion," Hart wrote Maitland in December, 1941, "there are no fundamental differences between us." The closeness of the two parties on policy question during the 1941 campaign has already been noted. There was also little disagreement between them as to what general direction the government should move. Both parties had more or less accepted progressive social reforms as part and parcel of public policy in the mid-forties. Maitland, in extolling the coalition's initiatives in the field of social reforms, bragged that British Columbia's record in social legislation was superior to that of socialist Saskatchewan. "The steady progress of social legislation belongs to no party," declared the Tory leader, "it is in the hearts of our people and as certain of moving forward as the rising sun." In addition, on the important questions of post-war reconstruction and Dominion-provincial relations, the two leaders held almost identical views.

Second, beliefs about the goal(s) of union government were generally the same and strongly felt in each party. Both were outwardly (and I believe genuinely) concerned with coalition government as a necessary and sensible approach to the war crisis (what other reason would there be for attempting to make it an all-party government?). But perhaps more important, both
believed strongly that stable majority government was essential for the future fortunes of their own parties. With the ominous presence of the strengthened C.C.F. opposition and the war foremost on people's minds, both parties were determined to prevent an early election. Maitland had already sensed what was in store when he wrote: "This coalition is a strange thing, I think it will be good government because we will watch each other, if the CCF grows we will have to stay together quite a while." As one student of coalition behavior observes, the high cost of dissolution as perceived by the partners plays an important part in preserving inter-party peace in coalition situations. The costs were there and both parties' leaders perceived them.

A third factor contributing to coalition cohesion might be called the "convergence effect." Contributing to this was the existence of a distinct opposition in the C.C.F. along with the condition discussed above under which the two parties began the partnership. As the parties were able to make the coalition work from the beginning, the presence of the C.C.F. opposition tended to blur further whatever differences may have existed between them. The more successful the coalition, the more "natural" it seemed for them to be working together. The analyses of two political observers are revealing:

... the elected members of the two parties act with a single mind and speak with a single voice in the legislature. There is no fundamental point of policy upon which they disagree. They work as a unit and think as a unit and for all practical purposes are a single and united party. There is not a legitimate political issue left upon which a Liberal and a Progressive Conservative may oppose each other in the provincial field.

... there is not a shadow of a doubt that the vast majority of the intelligent people of British Columbia--sick and tired of the fiction that a political or ideological fence separates the purely Liberal from the purely Provincial Conservative--will condemn a procedure calculated to disturb an arrangement eminently suited to the transaction of public business across James Bay.
In effect, coalition tended to undermine the identities of the two parties. This convergence was facilitated by the existence of the opposition C.C.F. since policy debates continued to be polarized and the Liberals and Tories could not help but find themselves on the same side.

A fourth factor contributing to coalition cohesion was leadership. Hart assumed a kind of "broker" role which had the effect of staving off potential conflict between the parties. In a suggestive study, Peter Merkl demonstrates the central importance of Adenauer's "broker" role to the continued (generally harmonious) functioning of the C.D.U./C.S.U. coalition in Germany:

As in our equilibrium model, this system has called for a leader who is basically uncommitted to any one group. While Adenauer could not help being pronounced a Catholic, a man of business associations, and a former local government official of considerable reputation, he has remained far from becoming the herald of any of these groups. He has bent over backwards to win the confidence of Protestants and to get along with organized labor and states righters. . . . His role as leader has been mainly that of a moderator or mediator among all the groups.109

Newspaper reports and party members suggest that as premier and leader of the coalition government, John Hart actively played such a "broker role."

Mr. Hart is a good man to manage such a process. He has a remarkable elasticity of mind and an extraordinary capacity for reconciling discordant elements. A hard and fast mind, a mind set in a fixed groove, would never be able to do this job. Mr. Hart's mind has not set and is still developing.110

Hart was indeed the ideal skipper to direct the coalition ship. An experienced politician and an unabrasive personality, John Hart had managed to steer clear of both left wing and right wing factions during his long tenure at Victoria. A prudent man of considerable financial talent, devoid of his predecessor's arrogance and provincialism, he enjoyed the confidence of both middle-strata Liberals and business-government minded Tories. He
was progressive, but not too far to the left; business minded, but not a tool of the business class; diplomatic, but firm and assertive. "John Hart plays it safe; he offends no man," said Maitland. \textsuperscript{111} "If ever there was a Tory Grit," comments Robin, "it was Hart":

It is difficult to imagine anyone better qualified to lead a faceless, bipartisan caretaker government which included as active partners and active backers, hardened Conservatives and corpulent businessmen.\textsuperscript{112}

Party members who were interviewed agreed Hart was firmly in charge, but "he never acted in an arbitrary or dictatorial fashion." Few policies were presented to the cabinet as "faits accompli," and "there was always thorough and vigorous discussion with all points of view given a hearing."\textsuperscript{113} In addition, from all available accounts, Hart and Maitland got on quite well, certainly a primary requisite for the success of any partnership, and both were well respected within the ranks of both parties.

Stresses and Strains

Coalition, however, involved more than just governing in Victoria. The larger party structures of which elected officials are only one part were also intricately related to and affected by the coalition arrangement. If the party's elected officials were able to get along relatively harmoniously and produce a credible governing record, it was not without consequences for the organizational cadre, the federal wing of the party and the people who vote for the party's candidates and/or have an emotional identification with the fortunes of the party. The coalition arrangement did generate certain stresses and strains because it was contrary to the organizational structure of both political parties, especially the federal-provincial relationship. The two most important problems involved first,
federal-provincial relations in the party, and second, the coalition's effect on the functioning of the provincial associations.

Both the Liberal and Conservative Parties are federally organized. Thus a provincial alliance led naturally to an awkward relationship between the federal and provincial counterparts. The problem was simple: How could politicians who were allied provincially relate to their counterparts who were bitter foes federally, and vice versa? The provincial politicians and their supporting cadre were forced to adopt a kind of schizophrenic personality which would ultimately lead to severe stresses and strains within the parties and between them.

Significantly, the first signs of Conservative discontent with coalition came from a group in Vancouver concerned with what the coalition arrangement was doing to the party federally. Led by W. C. Thomson, President of the Vancouver Center Conservative Association, a resolution was passed at the Association meeting on January 27, 1943, urging the party to elect a new leader "unfettered by provincial entanglements and commitments to the Liberal party." The group was concerned that Maitland, as leader of the party in coalition, was not in a position to also lead the party federally. Thomson said: "If we are going to campaign for a Progressive Conservative organization and get behind John Bracken, we cannot just blow hot and cold provincially . . . Mr. Maitland cannot lead the party federally!" In effect, the resolution amounted to a no-confidence motion in the provincial leader. However, at the quarterly meeting of the executive of the provincial association the following week, the resolution was overwhelmingly voted down. Party members mainly ignored the affair and the always loyal Province called it "mischievous nonsense," and continued to
voice confidence in Maitland and the coalition government.\textsuperscript{117}

The revolt did, however, typify the dilemma both parties found themselves in by 1945. Could Maitland, or for that matter any party official, as a spokesman of the provincial wing of the party, but also in partnership with the Liberals, presume to speak on behalf of Conservatism in British Columbia?\textsuperscript{118} Moreover, it became obvious to the party's rank and file how difficult, if not impossible, it was to be at one and the same time fighting Liberals federally in the same ridings in which they were allied provincially.\textsuperscript{119} The problem was summed up at the annual meeting in October 1943, when a disgruntled Victoria party official said:

\begin{quote}
A general federal election will come soon and what an anomaly will then appear—whether our British Columbia ministers will not appear on the platform in support of the federal candidates, or will do so and attack, while provincially holding hands in our parliament.\textsuperscript{120}
\end{quote}

Because of the overlapping nature of British Columbia federal and provincial party organization (see diagram 1), the same cadre as a matter of course provided the same riding-level organization for the two wings of the party. If, as in the diagram, the loyalties of party workers from community 101 could be divided between the federal member from federal riding X and the provincial member from provincial riding R, then the problem would not exist. But the parties are not separate organizational entities provincially and federally. The Conservative Party of Canada (and the Liberal Party) are each one unit, composed of many more or less autonomous sub-units in the various provinces. But in each province, the sub-units are an integral part of the country-wide organizational network. During a federal election, the candidate from riding X is dependent upon the resources (legwork, money, expertise) from each of the communities 101-106
A typical case of federal-provincial overlapping political organization in the Progressive Conservative Party of British Columbia.

Diagram 1 refers to a normal set of circumstances in the party in British Columbia based on a case of two Federal Ridings and four Provincial Ridings. The small circles with crosses inside are cities or towns each with concentrated voting populations.
inclusive. It is obvious that once loyalties are divided between the party's provincial and federal wings, or worse, that in the interests of provincial non-partisanship, communities 101-106 simply fail to work for the party, then the party is beset by a serious problem. The problem was not of great importance between elections since the "caucus" type Conservative organization was generally in a state of reduced activity in most ridings. In 1945, with both a federal and provincial election in the offing, the problem unavoidably emerged to challenge the Conservative Party organization.

The provincial riding associations, the mainstay of the party organization, were also being strained as a result of the coalition arrangement. Almost forgotten in the glee over government unity was this simple fact: the two parties throughout the province remained separate entities with separate organizations and with surviving animosities and jealousies. In other words, coalition had been consummated at the government level but not at the party (extra-parliamentary) level. The complaint of a Kamloops' Tory official points this up:

Let me review coalition as it appears to me here. I feel that coalition is in effect only in Victoria and, while collaboration there is seemingly effective and smooth in operation, there is no vestige of it between Conservative and Liberal associations here. We are regarded as interlopers trying to "muscle in" on private Liberal preserves. This, carried to its ultimate conclusion at the time of an election, would be disastrous to the cause of each and profitable to our common foe. We have seen what happened at Salmon Arm, and despite warning signs we appear no nearer coalition than we ever were.121

On the one hand, the local party cadre were suffering a loss of function: "Should we get out and work, we could be accused, and probably would be, of working to the detriment of coalition and for the propagation of the Conservative principle."122 On the other hand, there was developing a loss
of party identity: "Do we wish to collaborate (with Liberals)? If we (are) in complete coalition what do we become? Can we then retain our identity as Conservatives?" One consequence was reduced enthusiasm at the local level. In some ridings party members became so frustrated they simply opted out of party work altogether.

The problem intensified for local officials in those ridings where the other party held the seat. As might be expected, few party workers were enthusiastic about collaborating with the traditional foe.

At present we are, I feel, outside the pale. The Liberals have their effective organization in full operation: they hold the channels to the powers that be and keep them a closely guarded preserve and we learn of moves and recommendations only after the matter in hand has been brought to a, for them, successful conclusion.

Patronage made the problem more acute. A Peace River association, responding to "Liberals getting preferred treatment," passed a resolution demanding that any future appointments affecting said riding shall be on the recommendation of a joint committee of Liberals and Conservatives in that riding. The riding association in Revelstoke, upset at not receiving enough patronage, went so far as to sponsor a resolution that Conservatives withdraw altogether from the coalition. Others demanded the coalition leadership step in to ensure that the party association which held the seat did not receive favored treatment in the respective riding. With the Tories holding the fewer seats there was the natural feeling that in both general policy matters affecting the districts and the selection of candidates, the Liberals were at an unfair advantage. Russell Walker, the provincial organizer, despondently noted that by 1943, "we had been practically absorbed by the Liberals."
Altogether these problems pointed up the difficulty of establishing a "true" coalition anywhere except in the legislature so long as the old party organizations were retained.

With the coalition government performing well, and the C.C.F. continuing to build nation-wide, it was only a question of time before the parties came under pressure to merge into a permanent coalition party, one which would be in the words of the Penticton Herald, a "real union in fact as well as name." The first strong impetus for permanent merger came after the Revelstoke by-election, held on June 14, 1943. Billed as a provincial political barometer, the Revelstoke contest generated more than passing interest as both coalition parties and the C.C.F. sent in practically their whole legislative membership to campaign for their respective candidates.

The outcome was a stunning blow to the government. C.C.F'er Vincent Segur, a locomotive engineer, defeated Joseph McKinnon, Liberal-coalition candidate, 1,036 to 968. Coming only six months after the C.C.F. victory in the traditional Tory riding of Salmon Arm, and in view of the fact Revelstoke had been held by the Liberals since 1916, coalitionists and their supporters were deeply concerned about what the election foretold for the future. The Province warned: "the trend toward the C.C.F. which was in evidence at the time of the general election and still more in existence in Salmon Arm is still running. The C.C.F. can no longer be ignored as a little party of extremists." The Sun went further and called the Revelstoke by-election a portent:

The lesson of Revelstoke is clear. If the two old parties of B.C. cannot sink all their differences and emerge as one party they are going to hand the province over to the CCF and its new program of militant revolutionary socialism. While the importance of the poll representing a thousand or so voters out of the entire electorate
Hutchison went so far as to assert in a column entitled "Socialism Marches On," that the C.C.F. could "now win a provincial general election if it was held today," and a Sun political columnist called the result of Revelstoke "the most significant political omen of recent years in Canada."

No doubt the press over-reacted as they usually do when an unexpected political development occurs. By-elections are not necessarily accurate indications of the direction of political winds. This is especially true in small, rural ridings like Revelstoke where local issues and personalities usually play a strong role. However, the Revelstoke by-election took on added importance because local issues and personalities did not seem to be the major factor in the election result. By all accounts, the campaign was fought without excessive attention to personalities, and outstanding issues of a local nature did not arise. Coalitionists based their campaign on the government's record of achievements, particularly in the area of social and labour legislation, while the C.C.F. emphasized its program of socialism and "the new order for British Columbia" when the party took power. It was, in the words of the Colonist, "a clear test of British Columbia's coalition regime at the polls" and "the first un-clouded contest between orthodoxy and socialism in this province in recent times."

The C.C.F. victory, for the first time, crystallized strong sentiment for permanent coalition. Within a week's time editorials advocating a permanent coalition between the two old parties appeared in the Sun, the Times, the Prince George Citizen, the Comox Argus, the Penticton Herald and the Vernon News. Each editorial advocated essentially the same thing;
the Liberal and Conservative organizations which have operated in the past should be disbanded and in their place should be created a new organization committed to concerns of purely a provincial nature. The idea seemed so logical that it was irresistible to pundits such as Bruce Hutchison. Noting that both party's "machines" were an albatross on the back of the coalition, Hutchison advocated permanent coalition as the only sure-fire way for the government to save itself and the province from the C.C.F.:

We have had in Victoria a very great improvement in government since the coalition was formed. But this will not save the government or stop the CCF. For the people know that the government is composed of two parties which still have the same organizations they always had, the same camp followers, the same professionals who have operated here for the last quarter of a century. What can the government do then? It can scrap the existing organizations and form a brand new party of the grass roots, a movement coming from the people themselves. The method of such a movement has already been suggested. . . . It is simple and obvious—the calling of local conventions representing all people to subscribe to the principle of private initiative and then the calling of a provincial election to lay down a general policy.¹⁴⁰

By fall, rumors abounded that coalitionist M.L.A.s were being "sounded out" with regard to the formation of a "united progressive party" to replace the old line Liberal and Conservative associations.¹⁴¹ Cabinet ministers quickly denied having any knowledge of such a plan but at least one Tory backbencher, with the support of one or two others, had already begun organizing just such a "coalition party" in his own constituency.

Firmly convinced that Conservatives could not be allied with Liberals provincially while continuing to do battle with them federally, South Okanagan freshman M.L.A., W.A.C. Bennett began advocating the creation of a new "coalition party," a party which would be entirely divorced from federal politics.

Bennett, who would later lead a group of dissidents out of the
Conservative Party, was never considered a strong party man. He was known as an "outspoken young member" who would not hesitate to oppose the government if he felt principle required it. \(^{142}\) "He calls the plays as he sees them," said the *Province* when during a debate on the Throne Speech he attacked the government for its lack of policy in regard to irrigation problems in the Interior. "When he felt that government policy justified it, Mr. Bennett was glowingly complimentary on the administration's efforts; where he believed criticism was due, he minced no words in making his objections clear." \(^{143}\) Bennett was an ardent coalitionist, mainly because it was headed by Hart, a man he believed of superb financial ability, for whom he had great respect. Bennett felt coalition had given the province its best and most progressive government ever. But he perceptively realized that the life and power of the coalition would depend upon the consolidation of coalition support. Thus, he publicly announced on October 22, 1943, that he was in favor of organizing an entirely new coalition party in B.C. to "throw out the old line Conservative associations as they affected provincial politics." \(^{144}\) Bennett was less interested in a new party for partisan reasons than using it as a vehicle through which provincial political talent could be mobilized to pursue public policies for British Columbia. Bennett was a planner and a doer and in his view partisanship, except in the case of opposing socialism, was a needless bother which only got in the way of concrete political action. "Any good government to be effective," he later said in the legislature, "must plan not for two or three years, but for ten to twenty years. Under temporary coalition, such planning is impossible." \(^{145}\)

While Bennett had managed to organize a coalition organization in his own constituency by 1946, his plan received little attention from other
members of the party. Paddy Sherman says Bennett was certain he had top level support for his idea in the beginning from Premier Hart. However, no evidence could be found to support this view and Hart's own statements seem to contradict it. "I saw many years service as a Liberal and I am the same Liberal today," Hart told columnist Roy W. Brown when asked about his feelings concerning the formation of the 'coalition' party. "I will continue a good Liberal at the head of a coalition government." No information could be found regarding the attitude taken by Maitland. Although Maitland and Bennett remained good friends, that the Conservative leader could have favored such a plan seems highly improbable. As things stood he had little to lose in the present arrangement, and moreover, he had publicly committed himself to continuation of the Tory party in B.C. While Bennett's efforts to build a coalition party were not successful outside his own riding, he was already developing views on provincial administration that would affect his standing in, and ideas about, the Conservative Party later. Largely because of his membership on the Postwar Rehabilitation Council, which allowed him to study first hand the problems of postwar provincial development, he adopted the view that a provincial government was needed equipped to concentrate primarily on provincial development. In discussing this idea with Hart, he stressed that while the provincial government should cooperate with Ottawa, it should take little interest in federal affairs. And, "it would never let the federal parties tell it what to do." Bennett firmly believed that such a government could only be possible in the absence of party lines.
Continuing the Alliance

If the Revelstoke by-election set off the debate about permanent coalition, the impending federal election, which was held on June 11, 1945, kept it going. Although there is no evidence that the majority of the elected officials at Victoria were ever persuaded by the persistent editorials in the Sun and the Times or Bennett's example in South Okanagan, the increasing attention given to the idea of a permanent alliance undoubtedly made it easier for Liberals and Conservatives to justify the continuation of the existing "temporary" arrangement through the next provincial election. With the war nearly over, the original rationale for coalition no longer existed. But as was indicated after the federal election in June, a coalition which was begun as a quest for majority government would be continued to ensure the C.C.F. remained in opposition.

The problems that federal Conservative leader John Bracken faced in his attempt to return the Tory party to power are detailed elsewhere and shall not concern us here. One need only note that Bracken, the Manitoban selected to give the Conservative Party a more progressive tinge and "Western" outlook, was, in the end, unsuccessful in returning the party to power. The Tories went down to their third consecutive defeat. Although the result was a substantial improvement over 1940—mostly due to a doubling of their strength in Ontario—the party failed to make any significant gains in the West, certainly the key to their hopes of forming a government. In British Columbia, five Conservatives were elected, one more than in 1940. In addition, for the first time since 1930 the party led in total popular vote. Yet the Liberals also won five seats (a reduction of five from 1940), and more significantly, the C.C.F. won four while finishing second in the
popular poll. While the Tories had some reasons to take comfort in the election result (especially if they took into account the Drew sweep in Ontario scarcely a week before), the overall effect of the election was to focus attention on what the C.C.F. showing in B.C. might portend for the future course of politics in the province.

Federal elections are of course different from provincial elections so the results cannot always be read as a clear indication of how the provincial parties would fare. Nevertheless, federal elections do show trends and in the absence of other measures of political opinion, are taken seriously as approximate political barometers by politicians and observers alike. Clearly the June election, if nothing else, dismissed the view held by some after the New Westminster by-election that C.C.F. strength had peaked and its support base was beginning to ebb.

In British Columbia the C.C.F. polled 125,945 votes, less than 3,000 fewer than the Tories who led the popular count. The total leftist vote, the C.C.F. plus the Labor Progressives, was 151,073, or over 20,000 greater than the Conservative vote. Especially impressive was the C.C.F. showing in Vancouver and Victoria. In Vancouver-Burrard, the combined socialist vote trailed the Conservative total by only 172 votes and was 5,977 greater than the Liberal vote. In Vancouver-Center, Vancouver-North and Vancouver-East, the combined socialist vote was greater than either the Liberal or Conservative totals (in Vancouver-East, not surprisingly, it was larger than the combined Liberal and Conservative vote). Only in Vancouver-South did the winning Conservative candidate, Howard Green, secure a majority over all opponents. And in traditionally conservative Victoria the C.C.F. hiked its total vote to 29.1 percent, nearly two and one-half times that of 1940. One reporter pessimistically concluded: "If there were an
election called on party lines the only safe seat left to the anti-socialists would be Vancouver-South. This fact should not be lost on the old-line party politicians." The Times was even more blunt:

Last Monday's general election in Canada emphasized an impressive truth which the people of British Columbia should take to heart; that stability of government in this province can be preserved only by the present system of coalition administration.

Shortly after the election the premier announced that a joint caucus of coalition M.L.A.s would be held to discuss the upcoming Dominion-provincial conference and the general political situation facing the coalition government. Rumor had it that high on the caucus agenda was the question of whether the coalition would be continued through the next provincial election, which it was believed would be held in the fall.

Unfortunately no primary materials could be found as to what exactly took place at this very significant meeting. The press reported that the coalition M.L.A.s (27 of the 30 attended) unanimously agreed to continue coalition and that the decision be recommended to a full convention of each party for final approval. The joint resolution read as follows:

That in view of war conditions and the necessity of united efforts in adequately meeting our postwar problems, it is considered in the best interests of the people and of good government in British Columbia that the Coalition of the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties should continue.

Therefore this joint meeting of members of the Legislature of both parties hereby recommend to their respective party organizations and supporters their consideration of the above resolution.

In light of the result of the federal election and the obvious staying power demonstrated by the C.C.F. throughout Western Canada, the decision of M.L.A.s to continue coalition was predictable. Not so predictable, however, were the attitudes of the rank and file in the party organizations. Some local associations were beginning to make it known that they were fed
up with the arrangement whereby the "welfare of the party was being sacrificed so that those in office could insure their staying there." The problem of nomination was particularly sticky and when R. W. Alford, President of the Provincial Progressive Conservative Association, said he would "insist on an equal chance for nominations" if coalition conventions were held in each constituency, the specter of an open division in the Tory Party presented itself. 165

Both parties scheduled executive meetings for the last week in July to discuss the coalition question. The Liberals met first and despite resistance from some federal members of parliament, the Liberal executive at Hart's urging overwhelmingly endorsed continuation of coalition government by a vote of 102 to 29. 166 Also endorsed was an "election formula" which stipulated that present coalition members of the legislature would not be opposed for re-election by the other party.

The Conservatives met the next day. Anticipating opposition in the ranks, Maitland had publicly announced on July 15, that coalition should continue. He cited as reasons: the coalition's record; the coalition program; and "it is the only way to beat the socialists in a way that will be final and conclusive." 167 Addressing the party executive on July 28, he was more specific:

The war is not yet over and we agreed to a coalition government for the duration. The time has now come when we must decide our future again. Are we going to carry on with the arrangement we agreed to? Are we going to remain united to defeat socialism and to carry out our vast post-war program? My advice is that we do. I don't stand alone in that advice. You can ask the metropolitan press, or the country press or the man on the street. You know that this has been good government. I have travelled a great deal in this province. I think I have visited the various parts of it as much as any cabinet minister, and I think I know what our party wants and what the public wants. They want the coalition to continue for another term.... 168
Maitland's speech was politically attuned to the situation he faced. On the question of the need for coalition after the war, he noted the war was not over and further, postwar rehabilitation would require a bi-partisan approach as much as the war crisis itself did. On the convention issue, a point of considerable contention among the 40 delegates, Maitland was "sorry a convention couldn't be held," but noted a fair and representative convention is out of the question because of the federal war order which restricted travel to gatherings of more than 50 persons. On the issue of nominations in ridings which were held by the Liberal Party, Maitland appealed to the delegates' sense of fairness: "You can't say to the Liberal party, we are agreeable to carry on, but only if we get a better deal. We can't say that we will only carry on with the coalition if we get more advantageous terms." Finally, he stated that in his opinion the coalition government had enhanced the future fortunes of the Conservative Party. At the same time he reaffirmed his partisan commitment:

Every step that I have taken, every move that I have advised, has been for the benefit of this province and has made the respect for the Conservative party greater in the minds of the people.... We must answer what I think is the demand of the people of British Columbia. We must once again put our country first, and I can only say this in conclusion, that if we today make a move that would break up this coalition at this time, we will put our party back for 20 years.

I want to point out that (when the coalition was first formed) I was careful indeed to preserve the identity of the Conservative party. I did not want to see the formation of a new party and to kill all that belongs to our own party. You cannot discount the strength of the Conservative party in this province. You cannot forget that the Conservative party has gathered around it adherents in accomplishment and it must not be allowed to die.

Whatever opposition was brewing was apparently dissuaded as the delegates approved unanimously a resolution calling for continued cooperation with Liberals through the next election. Also passed were resolutions
approving a procedure for nominating candidates similar to those passed by
the Liberals earlier. The procedure adopted, known as the "Hart formula"
provided for the following:

1. Present coalition MLA, or adherents of the same party, to run in the
seats now held by Liberals and Conservatives.

2. In other constituencies a convention to be held, with equal repre­
sentation from each party, and the "best candidate without regard to party
affiliation" to be sought.

3. In two member constituencies, each party to nominate one candidate.

The issue was settled. Liberals and Conservatives would contest the
next election as a coalition team and if returned to power would continue
collection government for at least another term. Coalition which had come
about as a "temporary" arrangement in 1941 had proven it could govern well.
Now with the socialists apparently strengthened, it was only "natural" that
it should be continued. A combination of good government, "the best the
province had ever had," and an arrangement to insure the continuation of
anti-socialist majority government was irresistible to the politicians and
press alike in 1945. "One hears on every hand that the Government at present
is the best Government in the history of the province," glowed the Western
Canada Mining News:

and to upset it and no doubt afford an avenue through which the
Socialist CCF might secure control of the affairs of British Columbia
would be something the people of B.C. would regret for years to
come.... British Columbia is entering the post-war period and it is
quite evident from the program of Premier Hart that efficiency will
be the watch word and results worth while secured. Not the least
tinge of scandal has been reported during the several years of
Coalition administration of B.C.'s affairs and all members of Coali­
tion have worked together harmoniously to secure the excellent
results which we must admit through the business-like way in which
all departments of government have been handled have resulted.
The bulwark of conservatism, the *Province*, had to admit that "the Hart government had given British Columbia the best type of government it had ever had." But nobody was happier than the *Times*, which had persistently advocated coalition be made permanent and party lines be done away with altogether. Referring to the decision of the caucuses to recommend continuation of coalition, a *Times* editorial noted this was simply a reaffirmation of what everyone already knew: "that no basic difference separates provincial Liberal from provincial Conservative." Continuing, the editorial was steeped in praise for the provincial administration:

This vast majority (of B.C.) also recognizes the all-important fact that never in the history of British Columbia has the demand for stable government been so insistent as in these times. Nor is there anything startling or surprising in this healthy manifestation in public thinking. All save the pureblind [sic] partisan obviously realize that the administration over which Mr. Hart has presided for more than three and a half years has given this province its most efficient government for many a long day. To go back to the old party rivalry and the old party wrangling and the old party patronage system is unthinkable. The coalition's resolution, therefore, represents good advice to the party organizations and a decision which all progressive minded British Columbians will welcome most heartedly.

The "Campaign to Preserve Free Enterprise"

With the war rapidly winding down and the huge problems associated with postwar rehabilitation looming around the corner, the time was ripe for an early election. Hart wasted little time. On August 30, 1945 the legislature was dissolved and an election was announced for October 25.

By and large coalition nominating conventions ran relatively smoothly. All sitting coalition M.L.A.s were, if they chose to be, re-nominated in conventions composed of delegates from both parties. In ridings which were
held by the C.C.F., conventions were held with approximately equal representation from each party to choose the coalition nominee. While the procedure called for the "best candidate without regard to party affiliation to be chosen," in most cases the selection was worked out beforehand by party notables and the main criteria seemed to be to select a candidate who could win. None of the persons interviewed were able to recall any serious problems arising from this procedure.

To be sure, not every riding association was prepared to go along. "Revolts" against the coalition occurred in at least five ridings (there were varying degrees of dissatisfaction in many others). In Victoria and Saanich the regular Conservative association nominated Mrs. Helen Hart and Major L. H. MacQueen respectively to challenge the coalition candidates, John Hart, W. T. Straith (Liberal), Nancy Hodges (Liberal), and Norman Whittaker (Liberal). In Lillooet, George M. Murray, a former Liberal M.L.A., was nominated as an "Independent Progressive Liberal" to challenge coalitionist (Conservative) E. C. Carson. In Vancouver Centre, W. R. Mackay was nominated as an "Independent Liberal" to challenge coalitionist (Liberal) Gordon Wismer and coalitionist (Conservative) Allan J. McDonell. And in Revelstoke disgruntled Liberals announced they were withdrawing from the coalition after a joint Liberal-Conservative nominating convention selected Conservative W. J. Johnson by two votes over the Liberal candidate. An attempt was made to run an "Independent" Liberal candidate but the nomination was stalled when the papers were not filed in time. All the non-coalition candidates were publicly repudiated by party leaders Hart and Maitland and the press followed suit by referring to the rebels as "selfish partisans," "mischievous vote splitters," and "minor elements in both
parties. The revolts did, however, point up the problem of attempting to impose a coalition umbrella on party organizations which for years had been foes. While the perceived threat from the C.C.F. and the public mood for coalition served to induce most in both parties to "go along" in 1945, in the future as conditions changed, so would rank and file support for the governing arrangement, an arrangement which became harder to justify as the war receded into the past.

A joint platform (Coalition Manifesto) was drawn up by Liberal and Conservative leaders. A cumbersome document embodying a 43 point program promised vast expenditures for postwar development, sweeping education cost reforms, a revised province-municipalities financial arrangement, increased cooperation with the Dominion government, and new progressive social and labour reforms. Specific planks in the manifesto included: redistribution of education costs to relieve the burden on property owners, appointment of a committee of experts to study the general financial relationship between the province and its municipalities, an additional supplement to the $10 million already available to the B.C. Power Commission in order to extend electrification throughout the whole of the province, increased aid to the university for building expansion and education loans for returning servicemen, a low rental housing and slum-clearance program whereby the provincial government would undertake 50 percent of municipal costs involved in land purchase and clearance, a massive highway building program including plans to push ahead with the Alaska and Peace River highways, an immediate $30 million postwar building program, a plan to assist municipalities to acquire the B.C. Electric Railway Company's power distribution and transit system, and an extensive research and development program to encourage maximum
growth in the provinces major industries: fishing, mining, lumbering, shipbuilding, and agriculture.\textsuperscript{186} To round out the ambitious platform, the manifesto promised continued progressive action in the areas of social reform, labour legislation, education, and park development.\textsuperscript{187}

The manifesto left almost nothing untouched. The \textit{Times}, always enamored by the actions of the Hart-Maitland team, called it "an excellent manifesto; a striking contrast to the nebulous economic planning to which the opposition forces are giving much lip service."\textsuperscript{188} The \textit{Province} spoke as glowingly, referring to it as "an ambitious program which recognizes the needs of all sections of society and the overall need at this time to create useful public works that will give maximum employment to post-war labour."\textsuperscript{189} Maitland defied the C.C.F. to find a legitimate flaw in it\textsuperscript{190} and W. T. Straith, coalition candidate in Victoria, happily concluded that the coalition program was so comprehensive that the C.C.F. could find nothing different to offer except a difference of method.\textsuperscript{191}

Despite the praise the coalition manifesto had garnered in the press, it is hard to disagree with the \textit{Colonist}'s characterization of the elaborate document as "forty three pledges wrapped in silver paper and tied with gay election ribbons."\textsuperscript{192} There was no denying it included significant additions to the many progressive policies previously enacted by the Hart-Maitland government. Yet there is probably much truth in the criticism of one C.C.F. candidate who said, "if the coalition really means what it says, it could have implemented this program before dissolving the legislature, as it could have had more than twelve months more in office."\textsuperscript{193} Perhaps more important, the manifesto did not mention some of the most difficult and controversial issues that any post-war government would have to confront.
For example, there was talk of the expenditure of large sums of money, but no clear mention of what was to become of British Columbia's income tax, its chief source of revenue. Bruce Hutchison noted that on one of the most important issues of all, the form of a new revenue exchange system between the Dominion and provincial governments, the coalition apparently had not agreed upon a plan, "at least one that would be announced before the election."\textsuperscript{194}

But the voters appeared unbothered by such "technical" questions. The economic condition of the province was excellent and the war was ending. With the economy booming, government revenues had increased to almost double their pre-war level, and spending on welfare and development increased almost proportionately.\textsuperscript{195} In every major industry, the war stimulated production. Farm production increased as the overseas demand for agricultural products rose. Lumber, precious metals and petrochemicals were all desperately needed for the production of war supplies and British Columbia industries could hardly keep up with the demand.\textsuperscript{196} It was like a glorious cycle for what the C.C.F. News described as the "luckiest government in the world."\textsuperscript{197} As production rose, so did profits and wages and employment and government revenues. With such boom conditions, most of the electorate could not have been more content.

The opposition C.C.F., however, seemed not discouraged. On October 6, party leader Harold Winch announced the C.C.F.'s "people program to develop B.C. in the interests of all the people."\textsuperscript{198} Reflecting the deliberations of the April provincial convention and reacting to what one C.C.F.er called "the coalition's pre-election promises," the C.C.F. program called for the socialization of the production and distribution of electrical energy,
transportation and utilities, brewing and distilling industries, and the
development, processing and distribution of petroleum and petroleum prod-
ucts. In addition, the manifesto called for a substantial expansion of
provincial social services, the amending of the Workmen's Compensation Act
"to take the cost off the workman and put it on industry where it belongs,"
a provincial housing plan, and the granting to civil servants the right to
organize and bargain collectively. To pay the bill for all this, the
C.C.F. proposed four measures: higher provincial taxes for persons in the
upper income bracket, larger federal grants for specific objectives, a fixed
proportion of the federal income tax collected within the province, and the
use of the profits of the socialized industries.

With the C.C.F. program made public, the central issue (and later on
the only issue) of the campaign emerged: the people would have to decide
whether they wanted a government operating within the traditional bounds of
free enterprise, or whether they wanted to embark upon an "experiment" in
socialism.

For the Liberal and Tory coalitionists, the campaign was, in most
respects, a joint enterprise. Candidates ran on a joint platform. Campaign
literature lacked any semblance of partisan labeling. An ad in the Times
was typical of the way coalition candidates were advertised. All six candi-
dates were pictured around a caption which read, "John Hart, and these
candidates who are the best equipped to properly represent the Greater
Victoria constituencies—be sure and return them to office." This was fol-
lowed with, "VOTE COALITION" in large bold print. To pay for such ads
and for the central "machinery" which conducted the coalition campaign, a
central war chest of funds was established into which both party
organizations contributed. For individual campaigns, members relied mainly on their own campaign sources.  

Partisanship, however, was not completely submerged, nor could it be. In some ridings as soon as the decision to contest the election as a coalition was accepted, local party officials began jockeying for influence in the upcoming nominating conventions. Maitland was dismayed that the Liberals "were not cooperating in Revelstoke" in the efforts there to put together a joint nominating convention. In Victoria two Conservative officials refused to support the coalition nominees because "the party constitution forbids Conservatives to support Liberal candidates." Some of the local party faithful showed little or no enthusiasm for campaigning to elect coalition candidates especially those of the other party. In at least one case, Rossland-Trail, the president of the Liberal riding association resigned rather than work for the coalition candidate. If any generalization is possible, Conservatives worked harder in constituencies with Conservative candidates and similarly for the Liberals. 

One additional consequence of coalition was the relative decline of federal Conservative campaign support for provincial Tory candidates. The degree of support varied in every constituency, and provincial leaders were concerned that federal support might weaken "coalition" candidates by associating them in the minds of the voters with their partisan counterparts. Also, both Hart and Maitland agreed that concerted federal party support would violate the spirit of coalition, and thereby lead to internal animosities. As one federal member remarked, "it (coalition) forced candidates to run a very personalized campaign." 

As the campaign heated up most expected the coalition to be not only
successful, but to win handily a majority government. Two newspaper polls on October 12 and October 18, pointed to a probable increase of from one to five seats for the coalition. Another factor adding to coalition optimism was the entry of the communist Labor Progressive Party which fielded candidates in 16 ridings, most of which were potential wins for the C.C.F. The C.C.F. and communists appealed to the same class constituency. Thus the entry of the L.P.P. threatened a split in the leftist vote which could only enhance the fortunes of the coalition. L.P.P. leaders attempted to form an electoral alliance with the C.C.F. but Winch and his colleagues were not interested since a "united front" with the communists presaged a loss of support from sections of the middle and working classes "fearful of the red, as opposed to the pink, menace."^208

To be sure, the coalition was also facing two and three way contests for the "free-enterprise" vote in some ridings as at least five "Independent" Liberals and Conservatives were entered in the contest, and the upstart Social Credit Association of British Columbia fielded 16 candidates. Some Social Credit candidates like Margaret Murray of Peace River were refugees from the coalition. But most of the candidates represented an assorted melange of "Alberta Aberharters," doctrinaire Douglasite monetary reformers, rural populists, church reformers, anti-semites, and a hodgepodge of persons who joined for any of a hundred reasons. Lacking organization, campaign know-how and funds, the Social Crediters were not a serious threat to the coalition.

The coalition campaign consisted of two main elements. The first was to emphasize the government's record and echo, to the point of boredom, the anti-socialist press's adulation of the preceding four years of government as the best in the province's history. Maitland set the tone in a typical
campaign address:

If British Columbia is to be properly developed, her rich future planned, and if this province is to be built to her just state the task must be given to a government in which British Columbians have complete faith. . . . The coalition, which stands confidently on its grand record of service to the people of British Columbia during the past four years, is fully prepared for this undertaking and asks that the voters express their agreement in the coming election. The past term of office has greatly enhanced this proud tradition, and the record was a shining example of three outstanding factors, soundness of administration, practical experience and the cooperation of capital and labor.210

Coalition candidates echoed this theme from one end of the province to the other. "Government by experience," "sound prosperity," and "social progress" were the campaign's watchwords and with the aid of business support and the orthodox press, the government's message inundated virtually every city, town, and village in the province.

The second element consisted of a vicious anti-socialist propaganda attack, perhaps unrivalled anywhere except in the Ontario provincial election earlier that year.211 Aided by such business associations as the Industrial Association of British Columbia, and the British Columbia Federation of Trade and Industry, the politicians and the press alike castigated the C.C.F. as "totalitarian," "dictatorial," "subversive," and contrary to the very essence of the Canadian way of life. Calling the C.C.F. "Canada's Totalitarian Party," the Times urged British Columbia voters to defeat "a party pledged to permanent controls of the people's lives and liberties."212 Herbert Anscomb, perhaps the government's number one crusader against the evils of socialism, and who on one occasion referred to the C.C.F. pamphlet, Make This Your Canada, as "Mein Kampf Number Two,"213 warned repeatedly on radio and in the press that you cannot have socialism without dictatorship: "The two parties joined to save the province from socialism," he told a
Conservative rally. "Socialism leads to dictatorship." And, continuing in a vein of acute hysteria, he warned those who deplored fascism and nazism in Europe that "he saw no difference between the C.C.F. and its policies than those of the dictators of Europe." The theme was an effective one and the coalitionists continued to use it often. Maitland, in a radio address, told the people that: "The very constitution which they (the C.C.F.) worked under leads to dictatorship and is a threat to our way of government." Liberal Norman Whittaker of Victoria urged the voters to become aware of what the C.C.F. would really do if elected in B.C. The people had not known regimentation during wartime, he told his audiences, compared to what was in store for them if the C.C.F. won: "Regimentation which British Columbians have tasted during wartime would be completed from the top down." Not to be outdone, Vancouver lawyer, John Farris told a Point Grey Coalition meeting, "They (the C.C.F.) would make Goebbels look like an amateur."

The scare campaign continued unabated. On the very sensitive issue of Japanese resettlement and rights of citizenship, which the C.C.F. had not opposed, coalition politicians spewed forth racist diatribes. J. Alex Paton, coalitionist candidate for Vancouver Point Grey, and the one person who rivaled Anscomb for king of the right wing, bluntly announced:

If Canadians did not send packing every last Jap in Canada they would be betraying their own democracy. The divinity of their Emperor is ingrained in their marrow. Ultimate world domination has been their ambition and a part of their religious belief. . . . It is apparent that these complacent citizens (those who would not deport them) are not aware that the Japanese who came to B.C. 50 years ago were an advance war party.

In Revelstoke Liberal Senator J. W. deB. Farris told an election audience, "he could not understand an intelligent working man supporting a party
whose return would mean a vote for the Japanese and the end of a white
B.C." Gordon Wismer, who insisted that all C.C.F.ers were "a gang of
wreckers who would break down your institutions," assured an audience that
"if the CCF comes back, you will have the Japanese on your hands . . . these
same men who used our soldiers for bayonet practice."221

The effect this campaign had on the voters is difficult to ascertain. Obviously many dismissed the rantings as typical right-wing paranoia since
"scare" propaganda was nothing new to British Columbians, especially with
regard to Orientals. Some voters were probably affected since the country
had just fought a war to defeat "extremists" and political "experimenters"
in Europe. With the war's end, people could be expected to desire a return
to a period of "normalcy."

In any case, the C.C.F. fought back stressing the main issue of the
election as between two economic systems, one based on class ownership with
the motive of private profit, the other on social ownership and the well
being of all the people.222 Ads appeared in the press saying, "The Issue
is JOBS NOT JAPS," and the C.C.F. leaders, assisted by their socialist
counterparts in Saskatchewan, travelled up and down the province charging
that the coalition program for postwar construction was inadequate, that
province-wide power production should be completely socialized, that labor
legislation providing for reduced hours of work and union security was
desperately needed, that the acute housing shortage could not be alleviated
without massive governmental assistance and, what was by far the most over
used promise, that if a C.C.F. government was returned to power they would
guarantee 100,000 jobs. If the C.C.F. made one major strategic mistake,
it was in not latching on to two or three specific issues and basing the
campaign on them. The C.C.F. was constantly finding itself on the defensive, having to defend "what we really said, or meant, or intended," and rarely found itself taking the initiative and defining the terms of the debate. As Barry Mather pointed out after the election, "Mr. Hart's brief factual statement—'We are going to take over eight more power concerns' was much more politically valuable than all of Mr. Winch's oratory about the correctness of what Mr. Winch had said at Calgary."  

When the result was in, the coalition had, not unexpectedly, won an overwhelming majority of the seats. Winning over 55 percent of the vote, the coalition increased its overall majority from 30 at dissolution to 37. The C.C.F. lost five seats, reducing their representation from 15 to 10, but won 37.6 percent of the vote, their best popular showing ever. Labourite Tom Uphill was returned from Fernie as usual but no Labour Progressives or Social Credit candidates were successful. In effect, the existence of the coalition produced the first "two-party" contest since 1928. 

Regionally, the coalition sweep was almost complete. In Vancouver, which had sent seven C.C.F.ers to Victoria in 1941, only two survived, Harold Winch and Arthur Turner in Vancouver-East. On Vancouver Island, the C.C.F. elected only one. It was blanked in the farm districts of the Fraser and Okanagan Valleys. Only in the far North did the coalition fail to make new inroads. The C.C.F. won Ft. George, Peace River, Omineca, Prince Rupert (defeating Pattullo), barely missed in Atlin (by six votes), and Skeena. And in such traditional labour strongholds as Kaslo-Slocan, Cowichan-Newcastle, and Mackenzie, C.C.F.ers were successful with firm majorities. 

Had Liberals and Conservatives contested the election separately,
British Columbia might have elected its first socialist government. This assertion is premised on three-way contests leading to splits in the free enterprise vote. Of the 32 ridings in which coalition candidates defeated C.C.F. candidates, in only 12 did the C.C.F. candidates get less than 40 percent of the vote. In seven, C.C.F. candidates received over 45 percent of the vote, and in four, Atlin, Comox, Skeena, and Revelstoke, they narrowly missed being victorious. Recognizing that the coalition may have led some normally Liberal and Conservative voters to support C.C.F. candidates out of protest, it seems likely that the total number of such voters would have been quite small. The conclusion is inescapable that if coalition was seen as a mechanism to keep out the C.C.F. it was successful.

To the orthodox politicians and political commentators, the overall significance of the election was the voters firm rejection of socialism. "The electorate at the polls has given decisive answer on a clear cut issue," concluded John Hart, "sound business administration with progressive measures based on the traditional foundation of free enterprise—instead of a gamble in socialism." The C.C.F. had been contained; "The verdict is clear cut, the electors plainly rejected C.C.F. socialism."

This was obviously true. But it was no less true, as some pointed out, that in the C.C.F. defeat there was a curious kind of victory in as much as the C.C.F. threat had forced the two old parties to combine to defeat the socialist organization. By gaining nearly 40 percent of the vote, the C.C.F. had again demonstrated its viability and thereby "defeated," perhaps forever, a party system which contained a distinct Liberal Party and a distinct Tory Party. As one columnist accurately noted, "Whether
the C.C.F. will score a victory next time, say in 1949, will not be settled by the Liberal Party or the Conservatives; it will be settled by a new party now called the Coalition. For those in the coalition ranks, and there were many, who looked hopefully to a renewal, at some future time, of the old rivalry between Liberals and Conservatives, the "political facts of life" of the 1945 election were indeed significant. For it is obvious, despite the glittering promises of the coalition's manifesto and the humane "people oriented" program of the C.C.F., there was only one major issue in the election—the ideological issue—and what is more, only two parties mattered to the electorate, the coalition "party" and the C.C.F.

Thus, as the year 1946 began, the Tory Party in British Columbia found itself being swept along by the tide of events. What started in 1941 as a temporary arrangement designed to improve the fortunes of a rebuilding party, by 1946 had become a mechanism for political survival, a mechanism which was beginning to develop a life of its own separate from the two parties which had created it. As the second term of coalition government got under way the two parties found themselves in a schizophrenic state. On the one hand they were still separate and distinct political parties struggling to retain their identities in the provincial arena and their legitimacy in the federal arena, while on the other hand they had become a governing union increasingly forced to adopt similar positions for the sake of harmony and the maintenance of government itself. The convenience of it all overshadowed the warnings of the more perceptive that this "unnatural" political relationship would in all probability culminate in political disaster.
FOOTNOTES

Chapter IV

1 Paddy Sherman, 


Vancouver Sun, October 22, 1941.

Victoria Times, October 27, 1941.

Vancouver News Herald, October 24, 1941.

Vancouver Province, October 24, 1941.

Vancouver Province, October 24, 1941.

Victoria Times, October 20, 1941.

Victoria Times, October 24, 1941.

Walker, Politicians, p. 216.

%Ibid.

%Ibid. Eyres and MacDonald both gave reasons relating to political union in time of war.

12 Walker gave up his job as organizer in 1944 to work for federal candidates. His major complaint was that the coalition leaders were too devoted to perpetuating their own "good thing" and did not take any interest in what was happening to the party--as a separate and still functioning entity apart from coalition. Walker interview, July 17, 1973.


14 This was the basic theme of numerous speeches made by Maitland before and during the coalition discussion. Speech Collection, 1941, Maitland Papers, Private Collection.

15 This is generally referred to as "ambition theory." See, Joseph A. Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States.

16 Ibid.

17 Walker, Politicians, p. 216.

18 Letter, R. L. Maitland to W. J. Maitland, November 8, 1941, Maitland Papers, P.A.B.C.

19 Ibid., December 1, 1941.

20 Letter, R. L. Maitland to R. R. Maitland, October 2, 1939, Maitland Papers, P.A.B.C.

21 The Vancouver Sun reported that Bruhn threatened to leave the party if it refused to enter a coalition with the Liberals. December 5, 1941.


23 In a press statement, he did not respond to Maitland's offer, but instead indicated that with 21 seats his government had a legitimate right to carry on. Victoria Times, October 23, 1941. He later told reporters, "If coalition came, the great Liberal party would start downhill and it wouldn't come up for a generation. Never again would it be a force in B.C." Victoria Times, December 3, 1941.

24 See, for example, Bruce Hutchison, "New Deal," Victoria Times, December 11, 1941, p. 4.


26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 Walker, Politicians, p. 45.


31 Ibid.
32 Vancouver Province, August 8, 1941, cited in Ibid.


34 See editorials in Vancouver News Herald, Vancouver Province, Vancouver Sun, and Victoria Colonist, October 23-25, 1941.

35 Vancouver Province, October 22, 1941.


37 Sutherland, "Pattullo as Party Leader," p. 129.

38 Letter, G. S. Pearson to T. D. Pattullo, November 15, 1941, cited in Ibid.

39 Victoria Times, November 14, 1941. Pearson was then Minister of Labour.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Vancouver Province, November 17, 1941.

43 Two Conservative M.L.A.s, R. C. MacDonald and L. H. Eyres, told me that Hart was widely liked and highly respected by members of both parties. In particular, Conservative leader Maitland and Hart were good friends. MacDonald interview, October 3, 1973; Eyres interview September 26, 1973.

44 Vancouver Sun, November 18, 1941.

45 Vancouver Sun, November 19, 1941.

46 Victoria Times, November 15, 1941.

47 Victoria Times, November 26, 1941.

48 Sutherland, "Pattullo as Party Leader," p. 132.

49 Ibid.
50. Victoria Times, December 3, 1941.


52. Vancouver Province, December 3, 1941.

53. Victoria Times, October 23, 1941.

54. Letter, H. E. Winch to John Hart, December 5, 1941, Johnson Papers, University of Victoria.

55. Vancouver Sun, December 6, 1941.

56. Letter, R. L. Maitland to John Hart, December 6, 1941, Johnson Papers, University of Victoria.

57. Vancouver Sun, December 5, 1941.


59. Sherman, Bennett, pp. 40-41. In particular, Herbert Anscomb who, as an old line Conservative, was never terribly excited about coalition with Liberals. He supported it however, hoping that he would become Finance Minister. He had always been at loggerheads with Hart on questions involving provincial finance. Anscomb believed that with Hart moving to the premiership the way was clear for him to assume the Finance portfolio. Winch interview, November 9, 1973.


61. Vancouver Province, December 8, 1941. In his December 7, letter to Maitland, Hart refused to commit his party to Maitland's policy conditions but said, "there were no difficulties affecting the formation of a coalition government which cannot be composed in conference." J. Hart to R. L. Maitland, December 7, 1941, Johnson Papers, University of Victoria.


63. Ibid.


65. Victoria Times, December 11, 1941.

Ibid., p. 112.

Ibid., p. 148.

Ibid., p. 156.

John R. Williams, The Conservative Party of Canada 1920-1949 (Durham, N. C.: North Carolina University Press, 1956), p. 117. A memo dated December 30, 1942, further attests to this. According to R. A. Bell, the National Organizer, "In very many cases meetings have not been held for years, and the officers elected years ago have become completely inactive." R. A. Bell to H. R. Milnor, December 30, 1942, Bell Papers, P.A.C., Vol. 1.


Victoria Times, July 7, 1943. This cease-fire would become a reality in the 1945 and 1949 elections.

Victoria Times, July 30, 1943.


Green interview, October 16, 1973. In his correspondence R. A. Bell contradicts this view. In a report entitled "Problems of Organization," Bell wrote, "the relationship between Green and Maitland is not

80 Walker, Politicians, p. 22.

81 MacDonald interview, October 3, 1973. The parties also retained separate caucuses.

82 Vancouver Sun, June 17, 1943.

83 Ibid., February 28, 1945.

84 The percent of workers who were organized to all workers increased from 28.8% in 1941 to 40.4% in 1943. Sanford, "The Politics of Protest," p. 140.

85 Vancouver Sun, February 28, 1945.

86 The significance of these by-elections was tremendous. C.C.F. candidate George Sterling more than doubled his party's vote in winning the Salmon Arm by-election of November 26, 1942, necessitated by the death of Rolf Bruhn (the seat had been a Tory and Unionist seat for 18 years). In June, 1943, the C.C.F. was victorious in the Revelstoke by-election, necessitated by the death of Liberal Harry Johnston. Revelstoke had been characterized as a "solid" Liberal stronghold since Liberals had held the seat since 1916.

87 Robin, Pillars of Profit, p. 73.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid. Winch's infamous Calgary statement was used by Liberal and Tory politicians across the country as evidence that the C.C.F. was "totalitarian." See Gerald Caplan, The Dilemma of Canadian Socialism: The CCF in Ontario (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), p. 129. Later in the 1945 B.C. provincial election campaign, when coalitionists resurrected Winch's comment, the C.C.F. leader said: "I stand 100 per cent behind what I said in Calgary. If big business dares to defy the laws of the people, then they will be jailed by the people's government." Victoria Times, October 5, 1945.

90 Robin, Pillars of Profit, p. 79.

91 Vancouver Sun, February 28, 1945.
92 Victoria Times, March 10, 1943.

93 Robin, Pillars of Profit, p. 77. Even the conservative Vancouver News Herald lauded the act as the most significant of the sessions and one "which will set the pace for all the Canadian provinces, and thus have a cumulative effect on Dominion legislation." March 20, 1943.

94 Victoria Colonist, March 19, 1943.

95 Ibid.

96 Victoria Times, March 29, 1945.

97 Robin, Pillars of Profit, p. 78.

98 Vancouver Sun, March 17, 1945.

99 Ibid., February 20, 1945.

100 See editorial comment in the Province, Sun, Colonist and Times, March 19-21, 1944 and March 29-31, 1945.


102 Letter, John Hart to R. L. Maitland, December 7, 1941, Johnson Papers, University of Victoria.

103 Victoria Times, February 23, 1945.

104 Vancouver Province, February 19, 1943. Even the more "rightwing" Tories such as Paton and Anscomb accepted for the most part the government's incursions into social reformism.


Bruce Hutchison, "New Deal," *Victoria Times*, December 11, 1941.


Robin, *Pillars of Profit*, p. 68.


*Vancouver Sun*, January 27, 1943.

Ibid.

*Victoria Colonist*, February 7, 1943.

*Vancouver Province*, February 4, 1943.

The problem was a particularly sticky one for the Tories since the emergence of Bracken as national leader in 1942 was to be the beginning of closer links between the federal and provincial wings in an all out effort to revive the party's fortunes at the federal level. Maitland, in particular, was caught in a bind. As provincial leader he was determined to do all he could to help out the new leader but was at the same time under severe pressure to remain apart from partisan politics because of his high position in the coalition government.

A survey of press reports indicate increased concern about this by mid-1943 when Tories began thinking about a federal election.

*Victoria Times*, October 14, 1943.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.
Letter, W. S. Simpson to R. L. Maitland, August 2, 1945, Maitland Papers, Private Collection.

126. Vancouver Sun, October 12, 1943.


The Hart-Maitland formula, agreed upon for the 1945 election, required that the nominees for each seat be from the party which currently held the seat. Discussed in detail in Chapter V.

Walker, Politicians, p. 220.

Since 1942, the C.C.F. had won by-elections at York-South, Ontario (defeating federal Tory leader Arthur Meighen), Winnipeg, Edmonton and Salmon Arm. A nationwide Gallup Poll showed the C.C.F. had increased its popularity from 10% in January, 1942 to 23% in February, 1943. In the West and Ontario, its strength fluctuated at around 30%. Cited in Victoria Times, June 5, 1943. Most important, however, was the C.C.F.'s showing in the August 4 provincial election in Ontario. Polling 31% of the vote, they elected 34 members, second to the Tories' 38 and well over double the Liberals' 14. Considering they won no seats in Ontario in 1937 it was a remarkable showing. See Caplan, The Dilemma of Canadian Socialism, pp. 104-107.

June 19, 1943 (as quoted in the Vancouver Sun of that date).

Victoria Colonist, June 15, 1943.

Vancouver Province, June 15, 1943.

Vancouver Sun, June 15, 1943.

Ibid., June 17, 1943.

Ibid., June 19, 1943.

See, B. A. McKelvie, "Revelstoke Election may show trend of Provincial Politics," Vancouver Province, June 12, 1943; A. Williamson, "Revelstoke Political Donnybrook," Vancouver News Herald, June 14, 1943; and editorial comment in the major dailies immediately following the election.
138 Victoria Colonist, June 11, 1943.

139 Vancouver Sun, June 22, 1943; Victoria Times, June 18, 1943; all others as quoted in Clippings Scrapbook, March 16, 1943 to November 4, 1943, p. 74-b, Maitland Papers, Private Collection.

140 Vancouver Sun, June 29, 1943.

141 Victoria Colonist, October 15, 1943; Vancouver Province, October 13, 1943; Vancouver Sun, October 13, 1943.


143 Vancouver Province, March 5, 1946.

144 Victoria Times, October 22, 1943.

145 Sherman, Bennett, p. 53.

146 The only other government member who publicly supported Bennett's coalition plan was Conservative Don Brown (Vancouver-Burrard), Vancouver News Herald, March 5, 1946. Brown, like Bennett, later defected to Social Credit.

147 Sherman, Bennett, p. 50.

148 Vancouver Sun, March 8, 1946.

149 In a speech to the party faithful in Victoria. After the Revelstoke by-election, Maitland steadfastly asserted that while in coalition he was a Conservative, "always has been and always will be." Victoria Times, July 7, 1943.

150 Sherman, Bennett, p. 51.

151 Following the 1945 provincial election, "permanent" coalition organizations were established in Delta, Omineca and Kamloops.


153 Election results, 1945, (percentage of popular vote in parentheses): P.C., 67 (27.4); Liberals, 125 (41.4); C.C.F. 28 (15.6). All
figures taken from Scarrow, *Canada Votes*, p. 118.

154 The popular vote won in B.C. in the federal election was: P.C., 128,529 (30.0%); Liberals, 117,737 (27.5%); C.C.F., 125,945 (29.4%); Labour Progressive, 25,128; Independent, 7,348; Independent C.C.F., 6,123; Trade Union, 4,679; Other, 3,062. Scarrow, *Canada Votes*, pp. 118-119.

155 This is because provincial problems, and therefore provincial politics, are not the same as federal ones. Provincial problems are "contained" within the party systems of the provinces.

156 The New Westminster by-election, held on May 10, was easily won by the coalition candidate, Byron I. Johnson, former Liberal M.L.A. for Victoria. Johnson defeated C.C.F. candidate Robert Cormack, 3,538 to 1,669. Government spokesmen were quick to interpret the result as an endorsement of coalition policies and a clear and definite rubuke to the socialists. Hutchison, in a hopeful vein, said that the result was an "indication that the C.C.F. throughout Canada has passed its peak of popularity." *Vancouver Sun*, May 14, 1945.


158 Ibid.

159 Scarrow, *Canada Votes*, pp. 115-129.

160 *Vancouver News Herald*, June 18, 1945.

161 *Victoria Times*, June 16, 1945.

162 *Victoria Times*, July 12, 1945. Whatever compromises were made, if any, is not known. Hart told the press that it was a harmonious meeting (what else could he say?), and the faint recollections of R. C. MacDonald suggest there was little or no dissent. MacDonald Interview, October 3, 1973.

163 Ibid.

164 On June 15, 1944, C.C.F. hopes in Canada were given their greatest boost in the history of the young movement when the party scored a sweeping victory in Saskatchewan. They captured 47 of the 55 seats and won a clear majority of the popular vote. Perhaps of more interest to B.C. Liberal and Tory politicians was the fact that in the four Western provinces, the C.C.F. captured by far the largest number of soldier votes. In British Columbia, the C.C.F. received 15,039 to the Liberals' 9,120 and the Conservatives' 8,435. G. Dexter, "Service Vote Analyzed," *Victoria Times*, June 29, 1945.
The pressure to continue coalition was so strong that even so staunch a Tory as Herb Anscomb publicly stated that, "any party that breaks away from coalition now is headed for oblivion." *Victoria Times*, July 30, 1945.

About the only political issues that the government was stumbling on in 1945 was the very sensitive question of the fate of "re-located" Japanese after the war and the housing shortage which was becoming extreme as thousands of troops began returning home from war service. Other than that, the economy was booming and the popularity of the government seemed quite high. See Robin, *Pillars of Profit*, pp. 79-80; Ormsby, *British Columbia*, Epilogue.
It should be noted that the important Dominion-provincial conference to discuss a further revenue sharing system between the provinces and the federal government had been held only a few months before. The federal government had proposed that the Dominion take the income tax and then make per capita grants to the provinces out of its revenues. Hart had announced that British Columbia would make alternative proposals, a suggestion that the government had rejected the Dominion proposal. But no one was telling what the alternative proposals were. The C.C.F.'s announced position proposed that the provinces receive a fixed percentage of all Dominion revenues collected within their boundaries.
197 Robin, *Pillars of Profit*, p. 82.

198 *Vancouver Province*, October 6, 1945.

199 Robin, *Pillars of Profit*, p. 86.

200 *Vancouver Province*, October 6, 1945.

201 *Victoria Times*, October 21, 1945.


204 *Vancouver News Herald*, September 13, 1945.

205 *Ibid*.


207 Fulton interview, November 1, 1973.

208 Robin, *Pillars of Profit*, p. 86.


210 *Vancouver News Herald*, October 6, 1945.


212 *Victoria Times*, October 9, 1945, October 24, 1945.

213 *Vancouver Sun*, February 8, 1945.


While both Liberals and Conservatives increased their membership in the House, and all the candidates ran formally as coalitionists, seven newly elected "coalitionists" were Tories, and four were Liberals. The Tories increased their strength in the government from 11 to 18 and the Liberals from 20 to 21 since three incumbent Liberals were defeated. "Tory" coalitionists elected were: A. C. Hope (Delta); A. B. Ritchie (Salmon Arm); Dr. R. Laird (Similkameen); E. D. C. Brown (Vancouver-Burrard); A. J. McDonell (Vancouver-Center); Dr. F. W. Green (Cranbrook); W. J. Johnson (Revelstoke); "Liberal" coalitionists elected were: J. L. Webster (Rossland-Trail); George Weir (Vancouver-Burrard); Capt. J. H. Cates (No. Vancouver); Gordon Wismer (Vancouver-Center; straight Coalitionists elected were: H. J. Welch (Comox), and W. D. Smith (Atlin). The increased Tory representation made the parties almost equal in strength, thus improving the Conservatives' bargaining position for more portfolios.

The multiple member ridings, Vancouver-Burrard, Vancouver-Center, Vancouver-Point Grey, Vancouver-East, and Victoria are counted as one member by totalling the vote of all C.C.F. candidates and comparing with the total vote of all coalition candidates.
C.C.F. politicians and sympathetic commentators such as Elmore Philpott (Vancouver Sun, October 29, 1945) attributed the C.C.F. defeat to the split in the Leftist ranks. While undoubtedly a factor in some ridings, it is highly doubtful that a "united Left" could have defeated the coalition in 1945. While an explanation for the C.C.F. showing is beyond the scope of this study, it can be said in general that a majority of British Columbians were unprepared to accept socialism in prosperous B.C. in 1945. For a deeper explanation which attributes the C.C.F.'s inability to generate large majorities to particular "cultural" and "status" factors, see Caplan, The Dilemma of Canadian Socialism, pp. 197-200. In more ways than not I think Caplan's explanation is applicable to B.C.

Victoria Times, October 26, 1945.

Vancouver News Herald, October 26, 1945.

CHAPTER V

PRELUDE TO DEFEAT: THE ANSCOMB PARTY IN COALITION

The turning point for the coalition, indeed for the future of the Progressive Conservative Party, came on March 28, 1946, when Conservative anchorman in the coalition since 1941, R. L. Maitland, died of heart disease. From the struggle to succeed the Tory leader came many of the stresses that would lead to the disintegration of coalition and ultimately play havoc with the Conservative Party.

The Faltering Partnership, 1946-1949

Maitland's untimely death led to a severe crisis for the heretofore cohesive and generally popular government. The immediate problem was how the Attorney-General portfolio would be filled, while at the same time retaining the status quo between Liberals and Conservatives in the cabinet. None of the Tory members was a lawyer, thus if the Attorney-General was to be drawn from the House he would almost certainly have to be a Liberal. But the appointment of a Liberal would bring the ratio of cabinet ministers to six Liberals and two Tories. The Conservatives would not accept such an arrangement, especially since they increased their representation at the last election. In fact, they had been clamoring for more representation.

The second problem was the question of the leadership of the party. Not only were the Tories without a leader, but there was no obvious heir-apparent to Maitland. The most likely successor was Public Works Minister Herbert Anscomb, who was just narrowly defeated by Maitland for the
leadership in 1938. However, Anscomb was not overwhelmingly popular even among all the members of his own party. His extreme conservatism was viewed with distaste by the younger members, and his long standing associations with old-line Vancouver and Victoria politicians made him suspect to Interior partymen. Worse yet, few Liberals were anxious to see the "pillar of Tory-ism" become Hart's partner in the coalition government. One solution was to recruit a new party leader who was not an M.L.A. and who would be qualified to take over the Attorney-Generalship. One name that was increasingly rumored as a possibility was Conservative M.P., Howard Green. Green, however, showed little enthusiasm for the job. His primary interest was in the federal field. Moreover, he did not get along with Anscomb who resented his intrusion in provincial party matters on behalf of national leader John Bracken in 1942 and, with a substantial number of Conservatives committed to Anscomb for the leadership, Green's entry into the race would pose the risk of a disastrous party split.

On April 2, Anscomb, who that day was chosen temporary House leader, sent a letter to Hart on behalf of the Conservative caucus urging Hart to delay the appointment of Maitland's successor until a leadership convention could be called. Hart refused the request. He replied that the upcoming federal-provincial conference necessitated he have an Attorney General competent to deal with constitutional and legal problems. He pointed out that, since the only lawyers in the cabinet were Liberals, a Liberal Attorney General was logical in view of the circumstances. At the same time he proposed to increase the size of the cabinet (the appointment of more Conservatives) so the ratio of Liberals and Conservatives would remain in rough proportion to their existing strength in the coalition
government. That same day, Anscomb sent to Hart another letter re-affirming his concern (and the concern of the caucus) that the appointment be delayed. Hart again refused the request. Then, the next day, in a decision made apparently without consulting even all members of the Conservative caucus, Hart told reporters that Public Works Minister Anscomb was to be sworn in as Minister of Finance and Liberal Gordon Wismer, a former Attorney General in the Pattullo ministry and the renowned boss of the Vancouver-based Liberal machine, was to be sworn in as Attorney General. The expediency of the trade-off was obvious, and many in the party were upset. Not the least of these was backbencher W. A. C. Bennett who later declared: "Nobody had been told about this. We were hostile, and from then on it was open war. We felt Anscomb hadn't played fair with us when he became Finance Minister against the direct wishes of the caucus."\(^5\)

Bennett, who was not a close friend of Anscomb, and on a number of occasions had been at odds with him, probably exaggerated the extent of discontent. There is no evidence the caucus would have opposed Anscomb's selection for the Finance portfolio. But the way in which the "deal" was made was unsettling. The fact that Hart and Anscomb had worked out the arrangement in secrecy\(^6\) did not increase good will with the rank and file members of both parties.

Anscomb's maneuverings, while politically dangerous, seemed designed to improve his own chances for gaining the leadership. Accession to the Finance portfolio gave him the position he always wanted plus elevating him to the highest cabinet rank. As temporary Conservative House leader, and now Finance Minister, becoming permanent party leader when the leadership convention convened in June would be a "natural progression."
The press had mixed reactions to the new cabinet which included few new additions. The Sun criticized the efforts of Conservatives to keep the Attorney-Generalship as a partisan prize while observing that "Mr. Wismer, happily, is fully equipped to undertake the tasks of Attorney General." The Conservative press reaction was less enthusiastic. The Vancouver Province, obviously taking advantage of the opportunity to take a shot at the Liberals, echoed the sentiments of Bennett and the younger party members when it charged:

In the days of the past Liberal government, when every bit of government business was on a patronage basis, when political heelers were crowding the traffic, "the man to see" was Mr. Wismer. Now that the province has had several years of government free from that sort of thing, and the people have learned they could take pride in an honest, non-partisan government, the reappearance of Mr. Wismer in that key portfolio is alarming.

The Victoria Colonist viewed the whole affair as a blunder and foresaw the beginning of a rift in the coalition over the matter:

The Hart-Wismer cabinet will not stand in the people's eyes in the same light as did the Hart-Maitland one. The latter was a coalition team. Its successor seems to wear a Liberal ticket, slightly shop worn at that. We feel a blunder has been made.

Political expediency, it seems, had won the day. In any case, almost unnoticed in the controversy surrounding the problem of appointing an Attorney General, was the selection of the two new Ministers: L. H. Eyres (Conservative-Chilliwack), Minister of Railways, Trade, Industries and Fisheries, and R. C. MacDonald (Conservative-Dewdney), Minister of Mines and Municipal Affairs. In the shuffle, former Mines Minister Ernie Carson was moved to Public Works. As was standard practice, Anscomb as acting leader decided which Tories would be elevated to cabinet rank. Both Eyres and MacDonald were strong supporters of Anscomb and were rewarded accordingly. Of significance was the fact that Bennett was passed over. Whether Bennett
would have taken a cabinet post had one been offered cannot be ascertained. At least one person who knew Anscomb well felt the deliberate slighting of Bennett increased his dislike of Anscomb and thereby whetted his appetite for bigger things later.11

Bennett's first attempt at "bigger things" came quicker than most people expected. A convention to select Maitland's successor was scheduled to be held in June, and Bennett quickly began his first attempt to secure the party leadership.

In the absence of Bennett's own papers and his unwillingness to be interviewed, it is impossible to know when he first made the decision to challenge Anscomb for the leadership. He had been a close friend and admirer of Maitland whom he felt represented the progressive wing of the party. Moreover, he and other Interior Tories believed that Anscomb with his "big city connections" was insensitive to the problems of Interior B.C. Bennett probably felt that Anscomb, then the only declared candidate, had to be opposed. As an advocate of a permanent "Coalition" party—he had already supervised the establishment of a coalition riding association in Kelowna—it is unlikely he really believed he had a chance of winning. His campaign was low keyed. He did little politicking outside his own riding and even there limited most of his efforts to his home town of Kelowna. Bennett gained the support of the Young Progressive Conservatives and the only M.L.A.s who expressed any support for his candidacy were Tilly Rolston, who nominated Bennett, and Ernie Carson, who later could not bring himself to vote against the party favorite.12

The federal members, despite later allegations that they were actively backing Bennett, remained for the most part out of the party battle. Davie
Fulton, the 30-year-old member from Kamloops, said he would have preferred someone other than Anscomb but did not actively involve himself in Bennett's campaign. "I was aware in 1945 of what the coalition was doing to the Conservative Party, both provincially and federally," remarked Fulton, "and felt that Anscomb, because of his active role in it would not lead the Conservatives out." Neither Howard Green nor C. C. I. Merritt could remember taking any active part at the convention, both saying they believed the coalition had given B.C. very good government and, therefore, at that time "there would have been little reason to oppose the leading candidate." George Pearkes, a good friend of Anscomb, who also was rumored as a possible candidate, could find no reason to oppose Anscomb in 1946. Pearkes recalls that he had been "instinctively suspicious of Bennett's motives as he was young, perhaps too aggressive, and certainly not a tried and true Conservative."

The convention opened in Vancouver on June 14, amid press reports that increased concern over the coalition would promise a lively bout among the delegates. Perhaps recognizing he was a longshot in the leadership race against the front runner Anscomb, Bennett, upon his arrival, gave just about everyone in attendance a case of fresh Okanagan apples.

On the first day the question of the future of the party was debated. A resolution from the Kamloops association, expressing fear the party was in danger of being absorbed by the Liberals, demanded the new leader restate the aims of the party and pledge himself to complete independence of action in any matter not in conformity with these aims. In the following debate many delegates condemned the party for taking a "back-seat" in the coalition and complained that the Liberals were taking credit for the province's "good
legislation." The debate produced some loud shouting but the majority of delegates were not prepared to take action that would in effect drive a wedge in the partnership. Thus, the motion died for lack of support. The convention then turned to policy questions and passed resolutions calling for early completion of the P.G.E. Railway, increased economic assistance for veterans, and an independent highway commission.18

Despite a late Interior swell for Bennett's candidacy and heavy support from the party's youth and women, Anscomb won the nomination easily on the first ballot, 319 votes to 188.19 A main issue of the contest apart from Bennett's lack of experience was his association with the fledgling efforts to build a permanent Coalition Party. Anscomb made clear where he stood on the matter: "There has been formed in this province a Coalition Party and I want every Conservative to know that I will have nothing to do with it."20 The statement, which was directed straight at Bennett, was probably not necessary as Anscomb had already declared himself against permanent coalition.21 Anscomb, who was not known for his political finesse, apparently allowed his new sense of party dominance to take precedence over better political judgment. Instead of attempting to make amends with the ambitious Bennett in the interests of party unity, Anscomb alienated him further and thereby provided the needed crack for a serious party split. To add insult to injury, at a party for B.C. newsmen shortly after the convention, Anscomb received a portrait of Bennett framed in a toilet seat and, as one observer described the incident, "then he (Anscomb) showed his gentility by prancing around, holding this up, and beaming all over."22

The accession of Anscomb to the leadership was probably inevitable considering his position in the coalition Cabinet, the domination of the
party organization by Lower Mainland Tories, and the almost impossible task for anti-Anscomb Tories to groom a strong candidate for the leadership in the short time between Maitland's unexpected death in late March and the convention in June. Anscomb had built up a strong coterie of supporters during his long years in politics and many of them were among the most influential members in the party. In effect, he was the only Tory with the necessary support base to succeed to the leadership. And, there were few provincial Tories available who were prepared to challenge the "heavyweight" from Oak Bay. His accession to the leadership, however, was not without adverse consequences. For one thing, he alienated the younger members. For another, he adamantly resented any intrusion by the federal wing in Conservative affairs in British Columbia, thereby setting the stage for strained relations between the party's two wings. Finally, he was deeply suspect by Liberals who opposed his strong conservative views and were afraid he would attempt to dominate the coalition government.23

The accession of Anscomb to the Tory leadership weakened the coalition's foundation, but this was only one of a number of factors which led to increased friction between the coalition parties during their second term in office. Other important factors were: developing divisions in the ranks of both parties between coalitionists and anti-coalitionists, rank and file Liberal and Conservative disenchantment with government "footdragging" and "cabinet dictatorship," concern in both parties that government policy was increasingly tinged by the ideological coloration of the other party, and, perhaps most severe, Hart's stepping down from the premiership.

Since the fall election campaign, permanent coalition associations had been formed, or were in the process of being formed, in no less than
six ridings: Comox, Delta, Kamloops (North Okanagan), McKenzie, Omineca and Kelowna (South Okanagan). In most of these ridings agreements were made to retain party identities only in the federal field. In Comox, however, militant coalitionists went so far as to exclude Liberal and Conservative organizations of any kind, even in federal affairs. Such activities raised the question in many people's minds as to whether the parties were really in danger of being swallowed up by the gradual but persistent coalition tide. The apparent trend was increasingly condemned by associations of both parties. The Vancouver Center Liberal Association endorsed a Young Liberal resolution which strongly "opposed the formation of coalition organizations," and the executive of the Vancouver East Conservative Association followed suit by harshly attacking existing coalition organizations and unanimously approved a resolution calling for the immediate suspension of any member known to have joined the "newly formed Coalition Party." R. W. Alward, the retiring president of the Tory provincial association, told the party's annual January meeting that the existing "condition of bewilderment" in which the party found itself was undermining party organization throughout the province. He told the 55 delegates:

In my opinion, until the party policy in regard to coalition has been clearly defined a condition of bewilderment, lack of cohesion and general ineffectiveness among the rank and file of the party is bound to continue.

Alward's warning, although directed at the problem of Conservatives contributing to the creation of permanent coalition riding associations, was also applicable to the division in the party between supporters of coalition as currently operating in Victoria and anti-coalitionists, which included most of the federal members. In effect, the issue of coalition divided Conservatives into three groups: permanent coalitionists (like Bennett),
temporary coalitionists (like Anscomb and the majority of the caucus), and anti-coalitionists (like the Young P.C.s and many of the federal members). Although the temporary coalitionists seemed to be in the majority, the uncertainty of it all began to weaken party morale and posed a threat to the future viability of the party organization.

A second problem involving coalition politics at Victoria was yet more serious. The end of 1946 revealed the remarkable unity characteristic of the coalition government's first term was slowly breaking apart. Backbenchers complained of cabinet "dictatorship." Liberals complained that government policy was increasingly colored by "Toryism," and Conservatives attacked Liberals for being "spendthrift," "extravagant," and "wasteful." As the 1946 session wound down, the press reported that behind the closed doors of the secret caucus meetings, Liberals and Conservatives were increasingly in combat. 28

Backbenchers in particular became uneasy as the government, perhaps feeling overly secure with their swollen majority, failed to produce on the problems closest to the people. One such problem was the issue of reforming the antiquated liquor laws, a central plank in the coalition platform of 1945 and, if attention devoted to it in the press was any indication, one of the most bothersome problems on the minds of British Columbians. The nub of the problem was the government refused to change a system which generated tremendous sums of revenue in the form of taxes and license fees, in addition to providing valuable patronage. As one party official told me, "Liquor licenses could only be obtained by going to the right person and that person was in all probability a ward of the Liberal or Conservative machine." 29

To complicate matters further, legislators were heavily lobbied by "drys"
who adamantly opposed any further liberalization of the liquor laws. Because of the political impossibility of gaining consensus on any single course of action, nothing was done to reform the liquor laws and the issue was left to fester like an open wound.

No less a problem involved the question of expanded road building and repair. Of those things which brought political favor back home, new roads were very high on the list. Roads were, however, costly and inflationary. During his tenure as Minister of Public Works, frugal Herbert Anscomb ruled the department with a heavy business hand. Always cautious in the expenditure of funds, Anscomb was constantly criticized for not taking sufficient action to meet the province's desperate transportation problems. To be sure, he had succeeded in completing the badly needed Hope-Princeton highway, which gained him favor in such Interior districts as Nelson and Trail. But the provincial outcry for improved roads and highways required expenditures far heavier than the economy-minded Public Works Minister was prepared to recommend.

On the question of releasing highway funds, Anscomb was accused by Liberal backbencher Nancy Hodges (Liberal-Victoria) of "bad faith" in not extending the necessary aid to complete the West Coast Road on Vancouver Island. In a particularly biting remark, Mrs. Hodges stood up on the floor of the House and asked the Minister, "If the West Coast Road was called the 'Anscomb Road' would he complete it?"  

Not the least of the critics of coalition inaction sat on the government benches. During the 1947 session, Bennett's disenchantment with the government reached a new high. He demanded a highways board, which had been ignored since the 1946 convention, more government aid for irrigation, the single transferable ballot and elimination of multiple ridings in Vancouver
and Victoria, and the establishment of a Royal Commission to study the
liquor problem. On one occasion, Bennett's broadside against the govern-
ment's lack of action was so furious that the next day's press reported:

The legislature was shocked Friday afternoon. It is not unusual
to hear criticism in the chamber when forty-eight members in the
course of their sessional duties examine the policies of their
friends on the other side of the House. But Friday afternoon,
W.A.C. Bennett uncorked a flood that swept across the cabinet's
benches, leaving desolation in its wake . . . no cabinet minister
escaped his wrath.32

Bennett assured Hart he still supported coalition but complained to the
premier that, in his view, coalition government as it operated in Victoria
would neither produce good government nor strengthen the parties. What was
bothering Bennett was precisely what was beginning to cripple the partnership
government: Cabinet ministers on both sides, in their attempt to reach com-
promises acceptable to both parties, were as a result severely compromising
their own party positions. Coalition was taking bits and pieces of the in-
dividual policies of each party, compromising them so that the end product
resulted in at best poorly constructed programs and at worst non-programs.33

The only solution, according to Bennett, was either a return to straight
party politics or the formation of a real Coalition Party unencumbered by
present partisan considerations.

A further source of friction arose when Anscomb handed down his first
budget as Minister of Finance. As the more progressive members feared, the
budget reflected Anscomb's conservative outlook. While the provincial budget
had increased sixfold since 1941, Anscomb's budget exhibited concern over
the growing bite social welfare measures were taking from provincial income.
Bennett saw the budget with its $8 million surplus as overly frugal and not
appropriate for dealing with the province's development needs.34 Liberals
who had always been suspicious of Anscomb anyway saw his budget actions as a first step toward the undoing of the trend toward greater social reforms. Young Liberals in particular denounced the Conservative Finance Minister and demanded an end to coalition before the party's accomplishments were dissolved into "Tory reactionism."

There were other policies, too, which strained the government partnership. During the 1947 Session, the government enacted Bill 39, a new Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act which required strike votes to be taken only under government supervision, legitimized company unions by giving full status to extra-trade union employees associations, and provided stiff penalties for unions and union officials in the event of illegal strikes. The legislation naturally shocked organized labor and through the C.C.F. and the British Columbia Federation of Labor they vehemently attacked it. The bill also stunned reform-minded Liberals, so much so that the party's executive, outraged that the legislation was the product of "Toryism," demanded that the bill be altered. It subsequently was during the 1948 Session.

Worse yet was the Anscomb-inspired three percent sales tax handed down in the 1948 session and the infamous health insurance legislation given first consideration the same year. Fearful that the escalating costs of social services would soon outrun the ability of the government to pay for them, the government imposed a three percent retail sales tax called the "Social Security and Municipal Aid" tax on retail goods, capital equipment, and construction material. Hardly had the legislation been announced when protests began coming in from all over the province. Small business claimed the tax would compromise their ability to carry on; labor delegations protested the tax was regressive and would therefore be an unfair burden on the
working man; municipalities complained it would take away their revenue producing potential; government members like Bennett, Hart, and James Mowat (Liberal-Alberni) argued the tax was not needed. Paddy Sherman says a major battle was waged behind closed doors of the government caucus and Liberal members finally came into line only on Premier Johnson's threat to resign. When the final vote came, four government members (including Bennett) voted against the measure.

If the sales tax issue had the effect of heating up the already simmering coalition, the health insurance legislation brought it to a boil. Although the legislation itself, first introduced in the 1948 Session, seemed sensible enough—hospital care would cost a family a maximum of $33 a year—the bungled way it was administered and the endless costly amendments which were attached to it in subsequent sessions put the legislature into a tizzy. Moreover, the hospital insurance issue had become a source of friction even before it was put before the House as legislation. The original legislative commission put together to study and recommend an insurance program was chaired by Sydney Smith, a Liberal, with Harold Winch deputy chairman. Conservatives like Anscomb, who were little disposed to favor such a "socialistic" and costly plan in the first place, resented the commission's make-up and particularly were annoyed by Harold Winch's influential role. In the end, Liberals and C.C.F.ers formed a kind of "de facto" alliance on hospital insurance and ignored for the most part the complaints of "economy minded" Tories. As it turned out, there was truth in the later accusation that the Hospital Insurance Bill was a "Liberal bill" which was jammed down the throats of the helpless coalition partner.

But the single most serious blow was dealt the governing union when
Hart announced to a Liberal executive meeting in Vancouver in October, 1947, that it was his intention to give up his office by the end of the year. The 68-year-old premier's decision to retire apparently had nothing to do with the current political situation. Instead, Hart's health had deteriorated markedly during the past year and he made known that he was thinking of retiring. His announcement to the Liberal gathering significantly lacked any mention of the coalition partnership and included an assurance that he would stay in office until a successor was named at the upcoming Liberal convention to be held in December.

The resignation of Hart threatened to break the coalition apart. Hart had been the kingpin of the theretofore generally cohesive partnership. Now, not only would the coalition lack his steadying hand, but perhaps worse, the sticky problem of deciding who the new premier would be might bring the parties to the breaking point. The problem was rife with complications. Who would become the new premier, the new Liberal leader (as yet unchosen) or the "deputy premier," Herb Anscomb? Would the coalition have to be re-negotiated? The Conservatives took the position that the two parties were literally co-partners in a governing coalition and, therefore, matters of great importance would have to be agreed upon jointly. In other words, the Tories concluded that no agreement existed that the Liberals should always retain the premiership. In their views, the departure of Hart required negotiating a new agreement. In the interim period, according to the Tories, it was only natural that the deputy premier take over until such time as a new agreement could be reached. Anscomb put his party's position as follows:
With the retirement of Mr. Hart who had held the Premiership since the original inception of the coalition, it became a natural sequence that the Deputy Premier should succeed him for the balance of the life expectancy of the Government. This suggestion was made by me to Mr. Hart with the understanding that if the coalition, as at present constituted, should again appeal to the electors and be sustained, immediately afterwards the question of the premiership would be left with the then members to decide among themselves for the period of the new partnership.47

The Liberal position was quite different. To them the coalition was not an equal partnership but a governing coalition which was based upon the strength of both parties in the House. As was agreed when the coalition was first formed in 1941, the party with the largest representation would have legitimate title to the premiership. The Liberals still had the largest representation so Hart's resignation, the Liberals argued, did not change the basis of the original agreement. After Johnson became party leader, he made the Liberal position clear in a letter to Anscomb:

The Coalition Government was formed with representation in the Cabinet in proportion to the representation of each party in the House which gave the Liberals--5; Progressive Conservatives--3. After the death of Mr. Maitland, the Cabinet representation was increased, giving each party one additional, which left the standing Liberals--6; Progressive Conservatives--4, as it is at the present time, the Premiership being with the larger group, i.e., the Liberal Party. In as much as it was always understood that the larger group would have the Premiership, it was on that basis that the Liberals proceeded to elect a leader with the understanding that he would become Premier.48

The Liberal case for retaining the premiership was a strong one. They had the largest representation. Hart had not lost the confidence of the House but had instead voluntarily stepped down. As was traditional parliamentary practice, a change in the leadership in the governing party did not necessitate a reshuffling of positions and portfolios in the government. Besides, the Tory leader's status as deputy premier only meant that he would preside when the premier was not available. Despite Maitland's hopes
when coalition was first consummated, there was no express agreement that the premiership would alternate between the Liberal and Tory leaders.

The Liberals also had good political reasons for refusing to turn the premiership over to Anscomb. Hart and just about everyone else in the Liberal Party knew that if arch-Conservative Anscomb took over, a major conflict would likely occur in the party. As one Liberal official said, "I don't believe Liberals would agree to remain in coalition with Mr. Anscomb as premier. Mr. Anscomb's beliefs are not in harmony with the tenets of the Liberal Party." 49

The situation marked the greatest crisis the coalition faced since its formation. Indeed, the events of that autumn seemed to be leading to a complete break between the two parties. On October 24, the Conservatives at their annual association convention unanimously backed a resolution which stated in effect that the Tory leader must be the next premier. 50 The delegates also demonstrated their support for Anscomb by delegating him power, in a strongly worded resolution, to renegotiate the entire coalition arrangement. Hart, as expected, rejected the demand.

In the meantime, the Liberal leadership race, which began as soon as Hart announced his resignation, was generating heat of its own. The logical successor to Hart from the standpoint of experience and party position was Attorney General Gordon Wismer. But Wismer's candidacy threatened to split the party. Wismer, a Vancouver lawyer, was most notable as the undisputed boss of the Vancouver Center Liberal Machine which, according to one writer, "competes with that of Montreal-Cartier for the gamiest reputation in Canada." 51 Young Liberals resented the Wismer image and wanted a younger, more progressive leader. Interior Liberals, always leary of "big city"
politicians, were naturally suspicious of Wismer's Lower Mainland, urban base. Especially important was the opposition of influential federal members like James Sinclair of North Vancouver and Robert Mayhew of Victoria, who felt the party's federal organization would be ignored by another coalitionist from the Hart clique.

Opposing Wismer was the relatively unknown backbencher Byron I. Johnson of New Westminster. Johnson, who had no cabinet experience, was first elected in 1933 as the Liberal member from Victoria. After losing in 1937, he was elected in 1945 in New Westminster. As a compromise candidate his political credentials were good. Having kept a low profile, Johnson had made few political enemies. While not an opponent of continuation of coalition, it was believed by some that Johnson was lukewarm toward it and could be persuaded to lead the Liberals out. The Young Liberals and Sinclair in particular (who was one of the leading promoters of the Johnson candidacy) believed the ending of the war made coalition unnecessary and, as it turned out, mistakenly thought Johnson would break up the partnership after becoming premier. A heated fight was waged at the convention with Johnson narrowly defeating Wismer by eight votes, 475-476.

A showdown now seemed imminent. On December 23, the new Liberal leader wrote Anscomb and confirmed his commitment to the continuation of coalition government. He then reiterated the Liberal Party's position that the agreement made between Hart and Maitland gave the premiership to the largest party in the legislature and that:

I may say it is my intention to call a caucus of representatives of both parties as well as the Independent members of the coalition and ask for their endorsement prior to the meeting of the legislature.
In other words, the Liberals were going to proceed to form a government with or without Tory participation. The Liberals had called the bluff. Would the Conservatives make good on their implied threat to withdraw from coalition and thereby possibly precipitate an early election? There is little evidence as to what exactly happened. A flurry of Conservative caucus meetings were held between December 17-27, and during the same period Anscomb met privately with Johnson on a number of occasions. On December 27, the press reported that Conservatives had agreed to withdraw their demand that Anscomb be the next premier and voted to give the party leader full authority to reach an agreement with Johnson. Two days later, Johnson told the press the coalition would remain the same, the only exception being the appointment of Victoria Liberal, W. T. Straith, to the Education portfolio to replace the ailing George Weir.

The most plausible explanation for the Tories' reluctant acceptance of the Liberals' terms appears to stem from a lack of commitment to the original Conservative conditions. Since the Liberals had the greater strength both in seats and popular vote, that Anscomb and his colleagues really expected to get the premiership is doubtful. The Tory "ultimatum" was probably more of a bluff than a condition which Anscomb and his colleagues were strongly committed to. One cabinet minister said the redistribution of cabinet portfolios was completely in the hands of Johnson and Anscomb and the Tory leader never seriously believed he could get the premiership. A conversation between Anscomb and R. C. MacDonald was related this way: "After Hart's resignation he (Anscomb) called me in and indicated he really would like to be premier. But the Liberals had the majority," Anscomb said, "and if the tables were turned, what would you do?"
It is likely that the terms set by Anscomb and agreed to by the caucus were primarily for party consumption. Many were becoming restless with the coalition, especially insofar as the Tories appeared to be taking more and more a back seat in the general conduct of government. By driving a hard bargain, Anscomb could demonstrate his sincerity in keeping Conservative Party interests first and, if lucky, perhaps get a concession or two. And, not to be overlooked is the fact that Anscomb retained the coveted Finance portfolio.

The coalition had weathered its most severe crisis and as the year 1948 began the controversy surrounding Hart's succession quickly receded from the minds of voters, reporters and pundits alike. Certain basic political facts of life remained, however, facts that would be critically important in affecting future developments in the coalition government. Firstly was that the controversy had left politicians bitter, not the least of whom were the two party leaders. Second and most important, neither Anscomb nor Johnson had created the coalition and they lacked the kind of camaraderie their predecessors had. In fact, neither really trusted the other and both expended a good deal of time and energy in political intrigue to gain the political advantage. According to one observer, there was a continual struggle with each attempting to gain political influence over the other and thereby be in a position to dominate the government. In addition, provincial politics had changed considerably since 1941. The sense of urgency existing at the outset of the war no longer existed (although the C.C.F. was still perceived as a threat). Both parties extra-parliamentary organizations were divided as to the desirability of continuing coalition, whereas in 1941 there was almost complete unanimity in favor of it. Both leaders
knew coalition had to end sooner or later and naturally were under intense pressure to get their parties into an advantageous position to be ready for the inevitable. Finally, neither Johnson nor Anscomb possessed the kind of "statesmanlike" qualities of Hart. Johnson was a dark horse leader who had his hands full just keeping his own party together. Anscomb was tough and aggressive, but lacked diplomatic skills and the confidence of perhaps everyone in the Liberal Party.

Continuing the Coalition: The Politics of Expediency

The decision to continue the governing partnership for a third term (1949-19--) was of momentous significance. This decision set the forces in motion which led to the disintegration of the Conservative Party, the breakdown of the coalition government and ultimately the complete collapse of the Conservative Party in the 1952 and 1953 elections. Had the partnership been disbanded in 1949 and had the parties contested the election separately, probably no matter what the outcome, Social Credit would not likely have materialized as a viable political party in British Columbia. The strains produced by the continuation of coalition government more than anything else shattered the Conservative Party in less than three years and provided the political vacuum which Tory backbencher W. A. C. Bennett, joined by other dispirited Tories and a mélange of Social Crediters, quickly filled.

In the absence of basic evidence (memos, personal correspondence, etc.), it is difficult to explain the precise reasons why the party elite chose to continue the partnership for yet another term. Principals involved in the government who are still alive often gave reasons of such a general kind they rarely transcend the obvious and/or sublime.61 About all that can be said for certain is that the decision was made by top party officials
in both parties, perhaps by the party leaders themselves, with little or no consultation with the Liberal and Conservative rank and file. Yet certain sectors of both parties, in particular the youth organizations and the federal members, were generally known to be against continuation of coalition.

Granted the assigning of motives is always difficult, the available evidence suggests at least two considerations which very likely had an important bearing on the decisions to continue coalition. First, the perceived "socialist threat" emanating from a three-way contest continued to influence the thinking of party officials and the interests which supported them. Second, the governing elite undoubtedly had a strong inclination to continue with an arrangement which was highly satisfying in terms of power, ambition, and political control.

The strong C.C.F. showing in the 1945 provincial election had a sobering effect on both Liberal and Conservative politicians who thought a "free enterprise majority party government was the likely outcome of a three-way election contest. The governing parties together were able to garner overwhelming majority support in 1945, but that majority depended on normally Liberal voters and Conservative voters voting for the same "coalition" candidates in the various ridings. This fact, obvious to party officials, was no less obvious to the dominant interests which supported them. Certain business interests, the lumber and mining industries, brewers and distillers, utility companies and B.C. telephone, were known to be strongly against the dissolution of coalition for obvious reasons. The amount of influence these interests exerted cannot be determined, but it was probably considerable. One person interviewed agreed that the traditional "big contributors" of both parties had a "considerable interest (and made it known) in a governing
arrangement which insured the continuation of anti-socialist government in B.C.

A most revealing statement was made by a Conservative Party official in 1953. Lamenting the shift of business support to Social Credit, he said: "First they ("the thick-headed tycoons" of B.C.) pushed us into a coalition and ruined us as a party in B.C. because they said that was the only way to stop the CCF." A sensible inference is that business groups, aware the coalition had done its job against the C.C.F. in 1945, were in no mood to take risks four years later.

If businessmen were enthusiastic about coalition, the politicians in Victoria, most of whom were businessmen of one kind or another, also promoted its strategic importance. Herb Anscomb warned in a letter to each riding association president of the consequences of breaking up the coalition in 1949:

Only a few weeks ago the young Liberals of British Columbia advocated the end of the Coalition. Personally I do not believe that they fully realized what a calamity that would be. All the progress we have enjoyed in the past eight years in British Columbia has been due, in no small measure, to the teamwork and action of your Coalition government. The CONSERVATIVE PARTY entered that Coalition because we felt that it was in the best interests of all the people of this province, both as a progressive governmental move and as a powerful weapon against the encroachment of socialism and communism. . . . That weapon must be kept strong and intact for the danger is perhaps greater now than it has ever been. It is imperative therefore that the strength of Coalition in this province, which has set an example of good government to the rest of Canada, must remain unimpaired.

Later, in a campaign address, the Tory leader stated bluntly:

Premier Johnson and I have agreed to carry on the coalition for the duration of the emergency--the emergency caused by spread of the evil cancer of communism and its brother socialism.

The threat of socialism was undoubtedly one factor which served to keep the parties together, but probably not the only one or, perhaps, even the most powerful one. The C.C.F. surge throughout Ontario and Western
Canada that began in 1943 had leveled off by 1946 and by 1949 there was no evidence the party's prospects were anything like they were in 1945. The postwar period, with its unprecedented and to a great extent unexpected prosperity, substantially muted the intensive wartime demand for social reform. Moreover, the years of 1948 to 1949 were bad times for strengthening the image and organization of the socialist party as the Cold War was rapidly heating up and anti-communist frenzy was at a high point. It may indeed be that the "socialist threat" was more of a justification to continue coalition than the reason it was continued. After all, both parties had committed themselves to a return to straight party government at some time in the future and it is unlikely that their position vis à vis the C.C.F. would improve very much from what it was in 1949.

This raises a second consideration for continuing the coalition. Simply stated, the "comfortableness" of the status quo governing arrangement for the party elites cannot be discounted. Observers of the provincial political scene noted that by 1950 the cabinet was thoroughly dominated by the "triumvirate" of Premier Johnson, Finance Minister Anscomb and Attorney General Wismer. Each had much to gain and little to lose by continuing with a governing arrangement in which they held positions of considerable influence and power. Johnson would continue as premier, certainly no little accomplishment for one who just two years earlier was not even a cabinet minister. Wismer had not achieved the party leadership, but he was Attorney General, perhaps (excluding the Finance portfolio) the second best thing to it. At the age of 61, and considering his lack of appeal to the party's younger members, it is unlikely that he would again have the opportunity to advance any further. Anscomb, ever anxious to become premier, had nonetheless
achieved one of his foremost desires, the Finance portfolio. The chances of the Tory Party winning a majority on its own in a three-way election contest were indeed slim and therefore by breaking coalition Anscomb and his colleagues would in all probability forfeit the cabinet positions they then held. Moreover, the imposition of the controversial sales tax was evidence that Anscomb and the Conservative members, despite their "junior" status, were able to exert some measure of influence, however small, in the Liberal-dominated coalition government.

If the coalition government was dominated by a "triumvirate," no less so were the organizations of both parties. After Johnson's elevation to the premiership, Attorney General Wismer continued to retain an iron hand on Liberal organizational matters primarily through his control of the Vancouver Center Association. Anscomb was in such firm control of the Conservative organization that almost every riding association was composed of "usually no more than a handful of old guard party workers fiercely loyal to Herb Anscomb." One person interviewed said:

Local associations were often composed of fewer than 12 persons all firmly loyal to the machine. They (the association people) made it a point to keep the membership as small as possible to insure that outside troublemakers could not gain a foothold and be in a position to upset the machine.

When asked if there were any substantial efforts to expand the base of the party organization through concerted recruiting drives, Bewley replied, "those in control seemed more concerned with running a tight ship to insure the perpetuation of the status quo state of affairs than anything else." In general, the description by a Vancouver Sun political commentator of the "closed" nature of the Conservative and Liberal Party organizations in 1943 continued to be the case:
The Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties have become little closed corporations, entirely concerned with the distribution of little government jobs, petty governmental favors, pee wee intrigue and the exertion of local political influence. The average citizen is not expected to join them and, in practice, only budding politicians and heelers do.76

Thus, at least three kinds of interests dictated the continuation of coalition government through yet another term. First was the ideological one. Avid "free enterprisers" like Anscomb and Wismer felt coalition government, however undesirable, was worth continuing to protect the province from dreaded socialism. Second there was the office-maximizing interest of Victoria politicians. Since most of the leading politicians in both parties were serving in the government, they must have realized that their positions of influence would be jeopardized by a return to straight party politics. Finally, there was the economic interest of the province's businessmen and company lords. Given the C.C.F.'s economic program, most businessmen were probably only too happy to support an arrangement which assured the socialists would remain in opposition. In addition, it should be remembered that, though grievances were increasing within the party ranks, public opinion apparently still favored coalition and thus politicians were faced with the difficult problem of how it could be dissolved.

Political Implications of the 1949 Elections

On April 16, 1949, Premier Johnson announced the dissolution of the Twenty-first Legislature and called an election for June 15. As in 1945, the so-called Hart Formula for electoral cooperation was used for nominating coalition candidates. In the 17 seats held by the Liberals,77 the sitting member would not be opposed. The same agreement applied to the 15 seats held by the Conservatives. In the three seats held by straight
coalitionists, Esquimalt, North Vancouver and Comox, an open convention composed of equal numbers of Liberals and Conservatives would either renominate the incumbent or choose anew. In C.C.F. held seats, joint nominating conventions would be held with the understanding that the candidate(s) selected would not be opposed by either of the parties. The 1945 election seems to have been good experience as, by comparison, relatively few problems arose in 1949 in the process of nominating candidates.

The joint platform, drawn up on April 29, contained 34 points "based on the assumption," according to Johnson, "that the people of British Columbia desire a continuance of good administration and an aggressive policy of development of the province's natural resources." Indeed development was the overwhelming theme. The platform promised, in addition to continuation of "progressive social policies" such as old age pensions, hospital insurance and social security, construction of a $300 million aluminum plant in central B.C., completion of the P.G.E. from Quesnel to Prince George, development of a deep water port for the Port of Squamish, construction of a modern highway from West Vancouver to Squamish, financial assistance to the B.C. Power Commission for further development of power facilities in the North, assistance for the development of pulp and lumber plants adjacent to the P.G.E., extensive highway development throughout all parts of the Interior, further flood control projects on the Fraser River, and increased government assistance in the form of land clearing and mining roads to stimulate the province's agricultural and mining industries.

The announcement of the coalition manifesto unleashed a surge of propaganda on why the government's record was the best B.C. had ever had, and how prosperity, development, and job security depended upon a return of
free enterprise "to assure investors of our economic stability." The "development with free enterprise—stagnation with socialism" theme was, as in past elections, thoroughly exploited by politicians, businessmen, even some labour organizations, and the anti-socialist press alike. A typical ad in the Province said it all. Highlighted by five squares which individually read "ALUMINUM - PULP - LUMBER - P.G.E. - MINING," all underneath an imposing diagram of British Columbia, the ad read in bold letters, "BUILD B.C. ON SOMETHING SOLID," followed by:

British Columbia's development is coming from the industries that are here or are coming here, the mines, the pulp and paper mills, the cellulose plants, the aluminum plants and all the other great enterprises that mean money and jobs.

From the same pioneering spirit that built up this province in the past.

Not from foreign, old world theories that discourage initiative and enterprise.

Make sure that British Columbia will continue as a land of freedom and opportunity, a land of progress and development by returning the Coalition government, the government that stands on something solid.

This was followed by the caption, "RETURN THE COALITION -- The Best Government B.C. Ever Had." Almost daily, similar ads appeared in the province's leading newspapers. Company leaders and businessmen warned of "fear in the East that, municipally and provincially, British Columbia might turn socialist," an event which could drastically affect the integrity of the province's finances. A widely circulated pamphlet entitled the Saskatchewan Story, financed by mortgage and insurance companies, warned of how Saskatchewan under socialism had become an economic wasteland. Even Duff Pattullo, in his first address in several years, took to the platform to warn that the most pressing problem of the day was to maintain individual
liberties against the prophets of oppression: "There is no cause for complacency. We must prevent militant minorities from getting control of government. It has been a long, long fight for the freedoms we now enjoy." As in 1945, the chiefs of coalition showed little restraint in their diatribes against the "totalitarians of the left." Socialism would place a political boss over every man in industry in B.C.," Premier Johnson told a Kamloops audience. "I'm dead against socialism and I hope the time will never come when any political party can place men in industry, and when every man will have to apply to a political boss for a job." But once more Herbert Anscomb could take credit for the least amount of restraint in attacking the C.C.F. Making sure that nothing was left out, he compared the C.C.F. with Nazi Germany: "There is no difference between National Socialism in Germany and ordinary socialism in B.C. There can be no socialism without dictatorship." Commenting on the C.C.F.'s attitude toward the Atlantic Alliance, he claimed, "Most CCFers in the province are siding with the Kremlin against the free people of the world. They (the CCF) are in agreement with Russia, nothing more, nothing less." Summing up the "paramount issue of the campaign," he told a packed Vancouver meeting that the coalition was formed to save the province from socialism, that "there is no difference between socialism and communism in the final analysis," and therefore, "the election could only determine whether free enterprise would win out over totalitarianism." Considering the anti-socialism atmosphere of the Cold War, the generally good economic conditions in the province, and the divided Left, the election outcome was probably a foregone conclusion. When the result was in, the coalition had won an impressive victory, taking 39 of the 48
House seats and gaining 61.4 percent of the popular vote.\(^\text{93}\) C.C.F. representation was reduced by three, from 10 seats to 7, and its popular vote declined by slightly more than two percentage points, from 37.6 percent to 35.1 percent. Tom Uphill was again returned from Fernie and one Independent, James Mowat, who left the coalition, was elected in Alberni.

It was a sweet victory for the coalition. As in 1945 a straight party contest probably would have resulted in a stalemate, or perhaps a C.C.F. minority government. If 40 percent is used as an approximate winning percentage in typical three-party contests, the C.C.F. probably would have won between 17 and 20 seats. Instead, C.C.F. representation was further reduced, and its decline was most marked in the North where the coalition won back MacKenzie, Omineca, Peace River, Prince Rupert and increased its majority in Skeena from 58.7 percent to a hefty 73.2 percent. To the coalition's delight, the promises of Northern development and the boom conditions throughout the Interior apparently played their magic.

If the election was sweet for the coalition as a whole, it was only bittersweet for the Conservative Party as the junior partner. Hidden in the overall coalition victory was the fact that Conservative representation had declined to where the Liberals, the senior partner, standing alone could now muster a majority in the legislature with the support of just two non-committed coalitionists.\(^\text{94}\) The Liberals had increased their number to 22 seats (23 if Mowat, a former Liberal, was included) but the Tories had actually declined from 15 to 14. The Conservative decline, their first since the party began rebuilding in 1934, resulted from the loss to the C.C.F. of two coalition seats formerly held by Tories, Grand Forks-Greenwood and Cranbrook, and the loss of two nominating conventions to Liberal
candidates who were subsequently victorious in Similkameen and Revelstoke. Both seats were formerly held by Conservative coalitionists. The disparity in the government between Liberals and Conservatives, the worst it had ever been, presaged a new source of stress. Some Liberals began questioning whether they needed the Conservatives any longer. And many Conservatives could see a future of Liberal hegemony in what was supposed to be a partnership government. Coalition can hardly work if one party is seen to be gaining strength at the expense of the other.

To make things worse for the Conservative Party, the federal election, which came just 12 days after the provincial contest, resulted in a Liberal landslide victory. The Conservative Party under its new leader George Drew won only 41 seats and polled less than 30 percent of the popular vote. In British Columbia, the party won only 27.9 percent of the popular vote and returned only three M.P.s, their worst performance ever.

Whatever the reasons for the magnitude of the Liberal sweep, the conservatism of Drew, the unexpected appeal of St. Laurent, the high level of prosperity after the war, the federal Tory Party had hit a low point nationally and in British Columbia. The dismal federal showing coming within two weeks of the provincial election focused attention on what the coalition was doing to the Conservative Party in British Columbia, both provincially and federally. As the inevitable "what's wrong with the party" meetings began throughout the summer of 1949 one fact stood out as obvious. A coalition that was protecting British Colombians from socialism was at the same time strengthening the Liberal Party in the province both provincially and federally. The new party alignment emanating from the June 15 provincial election insured that Conservatives would play less of a role.
in the new government than they had in the past. And, with only three Tory M.P.s successful in the June 27, federal election, organizational work in British Columbia, which had already been severely hampered by coalition, would suffer even more. Three representatives is not much of a base from which to rebuild a party's fortunes.

This fact was not lost on many Conservatives, who during the summer began to take a hard look at what was happening. Prominent among the soul searchers were such federal members as Davie Fulton and Howard Green, and young Conservatives like Les Bewley, David Tupper, and Stewart Chambers.

From the vantage of federal members, certain political realities had become obvious. One was that coalition had practically dried up provincial organizational work in federal ridings. As in 1945, provincial Conservatives were told not to take an active part in the federal campaign for fear of introducing partisanship into "non-partisan" provincial politics. Since the same party cadre had traditionally been the operatives for both federal and provincial party work, the coalition decree understandably made it difficult for the federal party to run an effective campaign. In many federal ridings the only campaign possible was a personalized one which would not publicize the party label at all. In geographically large ridings (except for the lower mainland and lower Vancouver Island, all were large), which depended upon coordinated organizational work from the various provincial associations within, it was almost impossible to run an effective campaign without the assistance of these organizations. Fulton, the federal member from Kamloops, described the problem in his home riding:

In a federal riding such as Kamloops with a vast territory, continuous effective organization was impossible because it was too far for people to come together more than once a year. However
an effective organization was possible if the provincial riding associations included within the federal Kamloops riding (Williams Lake, Merritt, Kamloops, Salmon Arm, etc.) were organized, prepared to work for federal candidates, and sent delegates two or three times a year to form the Kamloops federal association. This also meant that representation would be forthcoming from each association within the federal riding. But when these associations were told that they shouldn't work for federal candidates, the situation became impossible.

In ridings in which there was no federal member, no one around to whom people could rally, it was virtually impossible to build up an organization to get a federal member elected.101 Understandably federal members were bitter about this as they could see the party's strength sapped from simple lack of organization and effort, effort that was expressly prohibited by the provincial coalition leaders.

If the coalition impeded organizational work it also raised questions about the logic of federal Liberals and Conservatives belaboring each other as scoundrels at the very time that their British Columbian counterparts were collaborating. The problem was more pronounced in 1949 than in the past since the two elections came so close together. How could, for example, the Liberal premier, sharing the platform with the Conservative Finance Minister, tell his audience that the two of them "saw eye to eye" when four days later a federal Conservative candidate told an audience in the same city that the Liberals in Ottawa were just as dangerous as socialists.102

This occurred throughout the campaign and, although attempts were made to separate the parties federally and provincially, it is difficult to see how such appeals could have done anything other than insult the voters' intelligence. Conservatives were especially vulnerable to charges of hypocrisy since Drew campaigned hard against federal "give-aways," increased bureaucracy, and creeping socialism under the Liberals in Ottawa while at the same time such policies were the mainstay of the coalition's rather good record, and an important part of their campaign manifesto in British Columbia.
All of this had the effect of not only arousing the ire of the federal members, but of crystallizing dissident Tories in the Province into a movement to do something about the sagging fortunes of the Conservative Party in British Columbia. The problem was simple. The coalition was not only working to the disadvantage of the party in British Columbia, it was also clearly working against the federal party. The party was down to three M.P.s in B.C. and so long as coalition continued, rebuilding would be impossible in the "once most Conservative province."

If the problem was clear, so was the solution. Coalition would have to be broken and a new leader who was more concerned about the fortunes of the federal party would have to be installed. In other words, Herbert Anscomb, the symbol of "old-guard" boss politics, insensitive to the interests of the federal party, and the one who seemed to have a strong personal interest in continuation of the stifling coalition, would have to go.

This was the situation when in early 1950, a group of Vancouver Young Conservative lawyers, backed by W. A. C. Bennett, and quietly supported by two of the three federal members, succeeded in gaining control (by one vote) of the executive of the B.C. Progressive Conservative Association. The executive called a party convention for October 6, ostensibly for the purpose of airing party grievances, but with all the undertones of an Anscomb inquisition. 103

The insurgents, however, had a fight on their hands. Anscomb, who closely resembled Bowser in his political ways, and who had a tough and aggressive personality, had managed to build up a considerable loyalty among provincial party members. Perhaps he was most highly respected for his administrative abilities; some thought he was the most competent person
available for the premiership. He was a powerful and shrewd politician who according to one intimate, "had the kind of powerful personality that could knock a person senseless and they would feel good about it later." 104 Whether through his personality, or his control over channels of advancement in the party, he had an almost uncanny ability to generate loyalty of the firmest kind. "There was no middle position with Anscomb," his good friend Tom Norris said, "you were either with him or against him. Herb had no patience with anyone who was not loyal." 105

On the matter of Conservative affairs in British Columbia he never made any bones about the fact he considered himself totally in charge of party matters in the province. He regarded Howard Green an intruder when he was designated personal representative of federal leader John Bracken for federal party matters in B.C. in 1942. As long as Maitland was party leader, Anscomb had little to do with Green. With Anscomb's accession to the leadership in 1946 he made clear he did not recognize Green's authority, arguing that the provincial leader was leader of all Conservative matters in the province and the idea of a personal emissary from the federal wing was an unwarranted intrusion by the federal leader on the rights of the provincial leader.

Green resented his attitude. He claimed that Anscomb wanted to be in charge of everything and rejected completely the idea of a cooperative arrangement which "had never been questioned before." "He wanted to be the boss," Green said, "and no federal leader would ever agree to that and I wouldn't either." 106

Anscomb's view of the provincial leader's responsibilities and his blunt and usually abrasive attitude led to increasing antagonism between himself and the federal wing of the party. 107 To be sure, the federal
people did little to help the situation. When George Drew assumed the leadership in 1948 he, like Bracken, continued to work through M.P.s (Green, Pearkes, Fulton and Merritt) and for the most part ignored Anscomb altogether. Pearkes recalls that:

while Anscomb's attitude was a bit arrogant, the national leaders (Bracken and Drew) did little to help settle the problem. By ignoring Anscomb, they simply helped to alienate him and increased his belief that the federal party was actively trying to undercut his leadership.  

Relations became so strained that by 1950 it was impossible for Fulton, who was elected vice president of the B.C. association, to work together with Anscomb on any matters. One striking manifestation of the depth of the conflict was the decision by provincial leaders to cut off financial aid to federal candidates in the 1949 election.

One writer states that the provincial Conservative Party's difficulties with the federal party stemmed primarily from Anscomb's insistence that there be only one Conservation organization in the province and that he should lead it. No doubt this was a great source of strain. But it was not the whole story. In addition to this, and the personality conflict between Anscomb and federal members like Green, the nub of the problem was coalition--what it was perceived to be doing to the organization and, indirectly, to the federal party's chances in B.C. Only one M.P. could remember being actively opposed to coalition prior to 1949. This was probably because its effects were not readily apparent until after the 1949 election. Intensive opposition to Anscomb by federal members surfaced as they became aware that coalition was depleting the party in the province. The feeling was that if coalition could be broken, the continuation of Anscomb as leader could be tolerated. But Anscomb had no intention of taking the Conservatives out. Thus, federal members felt their interests could best be served if
Anscomb was deposed by someone who could "get along" and also break the hated coalition.

The Suicide Convention

As the October 6 convention approached, it became increasingly apparent that Bewley's group and "quite a few others" were organizing a purge of the party leadership. A paraphrase of Bewley's own remarks affords an insight into why such a "desperate" action was thought to be necessary.

The party convention presented the opportunity for a challenge to Anscomb's leadership. Our group, which included the heart of the Young Progressive Conservative organization, was fed up with the shenanigans that we observed in coalition, and thus had been planning for months the removal of Anscomb. The group was outraged by the machine which had grown out of coalition devoted solely to self-preservation at the expense of Conservative principle, an even minimum sense of decency and the fate of the federal party. The group was incensed by the fact that virtually every worthwhile public appointment went through a party apparatus, strictly controlled by the coalition elite. Preferments were traded for contributions. Top party officials were engaged in what was considered open and blatant conflict of interest. For example, Anscomb had interests in breweries and wine companies which sold products in government liquor stores. As Finance Minister he sat on the treasury board—which was responsible for setting prices for the Liquor Control Board. The Government denied entrance into the province of California wines, which in effect preserved a monopoly for Growers' Wines—of which Anscomb and other government officials were shareholders. The group knew this type of thing was seriously damaging to the party, but Anscomb was inflexible and saw nothing wrong with what he was doing. In order to save the party, there had to be a clean up.113

The party's dirty linen was hung out for everyone to see. In a series of editorials, the Vancouver Sun questioned not only Anscomb's liquor interests, but the entire system of dispensing liquor licenses to private clubs which Anscomb (and Wismer) oversaw.114 Bewley, in a continuing debate with Vancouver Sun columnist Roy W. Brown, blasted the political morality of the Tory leader under the heading, "Tory Good Name Issue in Anscomb Fight."115 Brown questioned Bewley's motives ("Liquor Business Not Real
and defended Anscomb's business interests and the continuation of coalition.

Throughout the summer and early fall of 1950 the issue continued to generate controversy in the press and among Conservatives of all persuasions. The main problem for the Bewley group (they had already generated considerable publicity) was to find a candidate who would oppose Anscomb. This was no easy task. After all, Anscomb was the leader and revealed absolutely no intention of stepping down. The unprecedented act of challenging a sitting leader was akin to political suicide and almost certainly would lead to a devastating split in the party.

Fulton was touted in some circles but he never expressed any serious interest. Besides, federal members were not anxious to get actively involved in the dispute. Although whose side they were on was no secret, there is no evidence they played an active organizational or financial role in the efforts to oust Anscomb.

There was, however, one person who, if agreeable, seemed the logical choice. This was the maverick Conservative W. A. C. Bennett who had already challenged Anscomb once before and was known to be perhaps the only staunch anti-Ansicombite in the caucus. Bennett's credentials were good. Not only had he furiously attacked the arrogance of the coalition leadership during the past few years, but in a widely circulated pamphlet, "Bennett for Unity," published under the auspices of a Bennett for Leader Committee, he stated the view that his prime concern was the rejuvenation of the Conservative Party so that there would "BE AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PRESENT SOCIALIST OPPOSITION." The pamphlet was a political gem. "The people were dissatisfied with a government too autocratic and incompetent (witness the bungled
hospitalization insurance scheme) for their liking," the pamphlet said. The C.C.F. was gaining ground only by default--"because there was no alternative honest and competent free enterprise party." The coalition had led to the degeneration of both the present Liberal and Conservative Parties; but there was hope if dissident Tories could gain control and revitalize the party. Bennett's views did not compromise his earlier advocacy of a real Coalition Party in B.C. but, instead, simply made clear that old guard politicians would never let such a party come about. Therefore, the only alternative was a revitalized "free-enterprise" Conservative Party. In other words, Bennett had not actually left the Conservative Party, but had simply put provincial interests above party and, when a true coalition failed to materialize, he set about revitalizing his own party into what a true coalition could have been.

Perhaps most important from Bewley's point of view was that Bennett had a clean record and was an effective politician. He had won the South Okanagan seat by a large majority (returning to his home grounds after an unsuccessful attempt at the federal by-election nomination in Yale in 1949). Being from the Interior he would add the regional balance the party desperately needed. And not only was he on good terms with the federal wing of the party--he was a good friend of Bracken--but he had opposed Anscomb from the beginning. At a meeting in Vancouver, the Conservative Action Club which had become the spearhead of the "dump Anscomb" drive met with Bennett and quietly agreed to support him for the leadership.

The convention convened on October 6, amidst reports in the press that a major battle would be waged. While most of the pre-convention publicity focused on the activities of the rebels, Anscomb and his
lieutenants were quietly working all summer to make sure that the leader had control of the situation. When the parley opened Anscomb and his supporters demonstrated they did have control of the important credentials committee which ruled on voter eligibility. When the resolution naming the credentials committee was submitted, Anscomb supporters forced a major floor battle to pass an amendment which would add seven more names, all Anscomb supporters. Supporters of Bennett put up a heated battle against the motion. The battle was in vain, however, as they lacked the necessary strength on the floor. The credentials committee issue indicated Anscomb would control the majority of delegates. Bewley recounts the thoroughness with which the Anscomb people took control:

William Haldane, a Victoria lawyer who was an Anscomb supporter, was nominated as chairman of the credentials committee. When our group of delegates arrived at the hotel, the credentials committee had locked itself in the porter's room, and they were handing credentials out the back door to Anscomb supporters. There was a great deal of drunken hilarity going on inside. We pounded on the door but it wasn't until an hour or so later that they let us in. By the time we got credentialed, Anscomb people had firmly taken control.

Not only was the credentials controversy, which lasted most of the first day, a sign of the strength of the Anscomb forces, but it was the first indication of the depth of ill feeling existing in the party. When party president Gordon Cameron tried to speed up the work of the credentials committee, he became involved in a shouting altercation with Anscomb in the hotel lobby. After the credentials question was finally settled, and the delegates convened at the evening session to begin considering agenda items, a Victoria delegate demanded that the agenda be modified so that the "real business at hand be discussed, the question of leadership." Combative Waldo Skillings, a Victoria Alderman, and avid opponent of Anscomb, jumped
to his feet and said:

It is no use meeting here if we are going to stick our heads in the sand without facing our problems. It would have been far better to save the $30,000 this convention cost if we came only to speak platitudes of the past ten years.

In a slap at Anscomb, he went on to say:

Some of the tactics used here have been far from British traditions. What have we to be afraid of? Certain businessmen here are wearing badges because they are afraid to do anything else.125

The delegates then exploded with hoots and cheers. After the vocal wave ebbed, one delegate demanded that Skillings be ruled out of order for implying that some delegates were cowards. Skillings, becoming red-faced, yelled: "This is a democracy. I will not sit down until somebody knocks me down." Nobody came forward, but Skillings finally sat down.

Perhaps the most devastating comments came from Cameron,127 who was retiring as president of the association. In his keynote address that evening he lambasted the Anscomb-dominated party: "I now feel that my term of office has been a total loss of time and money," he began. After expressing the hope that the next executive "will be able to accomplish and bring some results," he leveled a cutting criticism at the party leader: "It is obvious that the leader of our party in B.C. must give more attention to the responsibilities of the association, organization and welfare of the members of the party."128 He next appealed for unity and common purpose and then remarked about the problem between the federal and provincial wings:

Organization in the federal and provincial fields has been chaotic or nothing more than a dogfight. Neither group has cooperated with the other. Many will say that nothing has been done to build up the party—but more to destroy it. This disunity can never make us strong. The (provincial) association has had no responsibility of organization—or any responsibility whatever. . . . In the past few years this Association has been physically unable to advance the cause of the Progressive Conservative Party in B.C.129
Cameron then described how he asked federal leader George Drew to come to Vancouver to meet with Mr. Anscomb to try to settle some of the problems between them. The meeting was held in Ottawa instead, and upon its completion, Drew informed Cameron that "it was highly desirable to have a single organization to deal with both federal and provincial matters." Such an organization presumably would be, as in the past, composed of representatives from both the federal and provincial wings. Then, Cameron said, after Anscomb returned from the East, he (Cameron) was advised that the name of any person appointed by the federal wing must be satisfactory to Anscomb. After that, party negotiations ceased altogether. Cameron concluded his address with a warning to the party:

"Unless a united organization is brought about immediately it is possible we shall see the formation of a separate federal Progressive Conservative Association of B.C. carrying with it the Young Progressive Conservatives—the future leaders of our party, the Women's Association, both founded under federal organization."130

What is significant is the extent to which a wedge had been driven between the two wings of the party. Cameron had drawn a grim picture, but, as events were to show, an accurate one.

The question of leadership was taken up that evening when Whitworth Stanbury, a Victoria delegate, moved an amendment requesting that an election for party leader be included in the agenda. This was immediately followed by a sub-amendment from Oak Bay lawyer, R. A. Wooton, calling for a vote of confidence in Anscomb. The fat was now in the fire. The fight had begun. For the first time in the party's B.C. history a ruling leader was forced to fight for re-election. Shirley Dougen, a young Trail delegate, led off the attack against Anscomb. She told the delegates that supporters of the party leader had packed the delegate selection meeting in her home.
constituency. She then blasted Anscomb personally:

The young members of the party would be loyal to the leader but he won't recognize us. You can't talk loyalty to the present leader. He disregards the federal organization, he disregards the young people, and apparently disregards the provincial organization. We want a man who will cooperate with the organization. We want to man who will carry out his duties as a leader and not as a dictator.131

Next came a spirited defense of Anscomb from Vancouver Center M.L.A. Allan J. McDonnell. He praised the party leader as "the greatest political leader and the greatest administrator in B.C." Then, in a reference to the obviously youth dominated anti-Anscomb faction, he said, "The Progressive Conservative Party is suffering from the exuberance of youth. It doesn't naturally follow that youth possesses wisdom."132 McDonnell's remarks were followed by Wooton who blasted Bennett for his lack of loyalty. "Loyalty to the leadership is the cornerstone of any successful political party," shouted Wooton. "At a convention four years ago, a man named Bennett, after being defeated for the leadership, had pledged his loyalty to Mr. Anscomb and since that time has repeatedly attacked the leader." Wooton's remarks were echoed by T. G. Norris, the seconder of the sub-amendment, who declared, "The Progressive Conservative party does not need a purge, but a good dose of old fashioned loyalty to our leader." Waldo Skillings, later a cabinet minister in the Bennett government, challenged the remarks that Anscomb was a capable leader: "Leadership requires more than ability to speak and to finance a department of government":

The leader for the past four years had come before the executive, had come before us, and said the organization has been making great strides and that is an absolute falsehood.133

The heated exchanges continued. Finally after about ninety minutes of watching himself praised and vilified by the speakers, Anscomb rose to his feet,
and in front of the 617 delegates stated a vote of confidence would be insufficient because his honesty had been attacked. He then resigned the leadership, saying he would enter the leadership contest the next day and through victory vindicate his honor. Anscomb's strategy was undoubtedly calculated. The credentials vote assured that he had command of the convention and thus would easily be returned as leader. By forcing a contest with Bennett he could demonstrate conclusively the South Okanagan backbencher and his rebel supporters were but a minority, and perhaps dispose of the troublesome Bennett for good.

As the convention convened for its second day, a new controversy broke out over a resolution seeking to establish the concept of a single organization for the party in B.C. Ranged against the resolution were the Young P.C.s and the federal members, the one exception being George R. Pearkes, M.P. for Nanaimo, who argued for it on the grounds that organizational efficiency would be impossible in the absence of a united Conservative Party. Supporting the resolution were most of the Anscomb backers and of course the party leader himself. During the course of the heated debate, correspondence which had passed between Anscomb and Green, and between the provincial leader and John Bracken and George Drew, was read to the delegates. The revelations simply fueled the fire. The letters revealed that Green had accused Anscomb of "wanting to be a dictator" because of his view that the provincial leader should control the entire Conservative organization in the province. Contending that the coalition had driven a wedge between the two wings of the party, thus necessitating separate organizations, Green declared, "the aims and interests of the party in provincial and federal fields in B.C. are widely different because of the provincial
coalition with the Liberals." Green therefore believed separate organiza­
tions were necessary because "the problems confronted in fighting the 
Liberals in national politics have no relation to those of the provincial 
field." His position was fully supported by Davie Fulton, but the party's 
third federal member, Pearkes, noted that in his federal riding of Nanaimo, 
"the party has been successfully organized as a single unit." Pearkes went 
on to claim much of the problem was due to misunderstanding and ineffective 
communication between the provincial leader and the federal leader. Fulton 
interjected that Anscomb had misinterpreted Drew's position. He said Drew 
was reacting to Anscomb's idea that a provincial leader should be in sole 
charge of provincial and federal matters in the province. "It was the 
difference between everything going forward in partnership, said Fulton, 
or a view that holds to one man directing everything himself." When 
voted on the resolution passed easily. A decree denying a separate federal 
organization in the province was thereby given effect. The Anscomb 
forces had demonstrated their majority once again.

The battle to control the party association followed similar lines. 
For the election of officers, Anscomb supporters carried printed lists of 
a prepared slate. For the presidency, Pearkes, who was the candidate of 
Anscomb supporters, defeated Fulton in a two-way contest. There followed 
the election of the full Anscomb slate except the vice presidency which 
Fulton won in an upset victory over William Haldane of Victoria. 
There was little doubt now that Anscomb had firm control of the convention and 
would be re-elected leader easily.

Anscomb was nominated for the leadership by Public Works Minister 
E. C. Carson. This was a substantial boost for the Finance Minister as
Carson had the reputation of being one of the most respected men in the party. In addition, as the member from Lillooet, Carson symbolized up-country support, the absence of which had been one of Anscomb's greatest sources of difficulty in the past. Anscomb began his election speech by denouncing the efforts of the "rebel Tories" to blacken him in the public eye. Greeted by rousing shouts, he declared: "The vicious attacks against me must be answered and I am going to answer them. There is no tougher Tory anywhere in Canada than the one who now stands before you." Referring bitterly to "the attack on my personal character and my private business," he denied having ever done anything that even "smacks of conflict of interest" and reminded the delegates that his business interests had been known throughout his cabinet career and "had never been questioned by former Premier Hart, Premier Johnson, or the late R. L. Maitland when he was party leader." He denied there was anything in British Columbia law or British tradition that should bar him from a cabinet position because of his business. On coalition, he warned the party must not break coalition "until the present contract with the Liberals and people expires." Then, in an apparent attempt to shift the issue of coalition to safer ground, he said:

Coalition, with everything bubbling up, is the greatest test of endurance you can get for a leader. Sooner or later coalition must end, but the end should be told to the people in a public statement from the Prime Minister and the Conservative leader—an honest declaration . . .

In closing his speech, he bitterly criticized the party rebels. "Paid people have been used to vilify me . . .," he said. "I have one request to make, make your vote so decisive that there can be no doubt."

Bennett followed with an aggressive speech directed straight at
Anscomb. Echoing the complaints of the younger members, Bennett charged the Progressive Conservative Party for the past four years had been run by an inner council—"a brain trust"—instead of by the "duly elected executive." He blamed the party's failure at the last election on Anscomb, arguing "it was a direct result of the present state of the organization as a one-man party." Apart from four or five constituencies, he said, "the Progressive Conservatives do not have an organization in British Columbia that is worthy of the name." Bennett brought up the issue of directorates in wine and brewing industries and criticized Anscomb for not giving them up on becoming Finance Minister. "The failure to give up directorates was irretrievably harming the party's image," Bennett said. Then, in a shift of emphasis, the South Okanagan M.L.A. attacked Anscomb for making deals with the Liberals "without the slightest consultation with the Conservative caucus." Calling it the "biggest mistake the party had made in the province," Bennett charged that Anscomb had traded the Attorney General portfolio for Anscomb's own portfolio of Minister of Finance in a deal with former Premier Hart without consulting or even advising his colleagues.

When the vote was finally held, Anscomb was easily re-elected leader by a vote of 450-167. The vote was more one-sided than expected and confirmed the soundness of Anscomb's strategy. In his acceptance address he immediately declared his intention to remain in coalition, "at least until the end of the present legislature." "To do otherwise," he said, "would be a breach of confidence of the large numbers of people in the province who voted for coalition at the last election." Then, in an obvious slap at his opponent, Bennett, he advised the convention in an emotional voice: "Now we should be looking ahead for a very stable young man who can assume
the responsibilities (to succeed to the leadership) I am now taking for the second time."^147

The announcement of the outcome of the leadership election ended a day and a half of bitter feuding. There followed a listless discussion of the policy resolutions. The sitting delegates approved the resolutions on the agenda, in most cases with little or no discussion. With hardly a whisper of debate, resolutions were passed favoring increased old age pensions without the "means" test, dispersion of hospital facilities in the lower mainland, increased highway building, and a new Dominion-provincial tax agreement to provide the province with a greater share of the income and corporation tax revenue. In addition, the meeting overwhelmingly reaffirmed the stand taken at the 1946 convention that some form of alternative voting system was desirable. Glaringly absent from the roster of policy issues was any mention of the contentious three percent sales tax, which had been a sore point in the caucus since its introduction in 1948. Perhaps the sales tax, along with the controversial compulsory hospitalization plan issue were intentionally not discussed in an attempt to salvage some semblance of unity from the convention.

The convention ended as it began, amid a tension-ridden atmosphere. Anscomb had been given a new lease on the leadership, the rebels had been soundly defeated, and even the offices of the association had fallen into hands almost completely loyal to the new leader. However, the divisions which had given rise to the convention still existed and in many respects were deeper than before. The issue of separate federal and provincial organizations had been technically settled but there was no evidence that Green or Fulton or Drew would anymore accept Anscomb's status now than in
the past. With coalition to continue, the problems existing between the federal and provincial party wings would remain and, eventually, get worse. In addition, many of the rebels were apparently not going to say die. Away from the convention hall there was quiet talk of expelling some from the party. Certainly if the party had any hope of going forward, a serious effort to patch up the divisions was necessary. The convention ended without any indication of how this would be accomplished. As one observer noted:

Apparently they (the delegates) had forgotten that the prime object in calling the meeting, next to settling the leadership question, was to bring unification within the ranks and plan for the future. No route was discussed for the marches the party hopes to make on the provincial and national capitals come voting time. In fact the meeting amounted to little more than knock-down-drag-out fights between the two factions on the leadership puzzle.

Two events occurred shortly after the convention which further increased friction within the already badly strained party. The first was an order from Arthur Harper, secretary of the provincial association, demanding federal Conservatives move out of provincial offices at 815 West Hastings Street. Confusion surrounds the circumstances of the eviction. However, some approximation of what happened can be gleaned from the press reports and available Conservative Party correspondence. Newspapers reported on October 26 that federal Conservative organizer Frank Barker received the eviction order from Harper on October 14. Barker reportedly notified George Drew for advice on how to proceed. Drew apparently took no action. On October 28, George Pearkes, president of the B.C. association, wired the national leader to brief him on the situation. In reminding Drew of the convention resolution which decreed there would be no separate federal organization in the province, Pearkes stated:
Convention passed resolution that provincial and federal organizations in B.C. must be merged into one. Deplore press statement (indicating) intention of (Barker and his associates) to open separate federal offices elsewhere. . . . Imperative that separate offices not be opened as indicated in press.  

Pearkes continued: "In order to insure harmony and cooperation, essential (Barker) cease to be employed by party."  

Pearkes, as later events would show, had put his finger on perhaps the central problem. On that same day the officers of the association expressed full confidence in Drew. The press then reported that questions of conflict between the two wings of the party had been exaggerated, and the real issue was Barker himself. Provincial association people were at odds with Barker because he supported (some claimed he led) the anti-Anscomb forces at the convention. In any case, to Pearkes' dismay a separate office was opened for Barker and federal activities. Pearkes was caught in the middle. In a letter to the association office secretary shortly after Barker moved out, the party president said:

I have just received your letter informing me about the "rebel office" having been opened in the Vancouver Block. This I very much regret and if they are forming in the nature of a separate Association with a secretary of their own it will do George Drew and the party federally much harm.

The two organizations had in effect been working separately anyway, and the opening of separate offices was visible evidence the federal-provincial split was now a reality. Drew may have been able to reconcile the situation had he decided to get involved. For example, he could have fired Barker. But he remained indifferent. As he said in a letter to Pearkes, as far as he was concerned, "national activities had long been handled by a local committee" and the work "is being carried on in exactly the same way as before."
Two months later a convention of Young Conservatives met in Vancouver to assess recent developments in the party. The traditional invitation to the provincial leader was not extended. During the proceedings, criticism of Anscomb occurred so frequently and vehemently only Fulton's threat to leave the meeting stopped the attacks. That same day an executive meeting of the association was held and the Young Conservatives' official representatives, Bewley and Tupper, were denied admittance. Open war between the Young Conservatives and the Anscomb party was now official. From that time on, the rebels in effect disassociated themselves from the provincial party and remained Conservatives only to aid the party in the federal field.

The End of Coalition

While Anscomb was having severe problems with the federal wing, and certain elements in the provincial party, the wretched hospital insurance controversy was threatening to blow the coalition apart. The issue dominated the 1951 Session. Under attack since its inception in 1948, the plan in its first fifteen months of operation had run up a huge deficit. By 1950, premiums had been increased, the Commissioner of the Service had resigned, and the Public Accounts Committee made public the fact that tens of thousands of citizens had not paid their premiums. A further report issued at the outset of the 1951 session showed that to continue, the plan would require several million dollars more than the premiums provided. Almost everyone supported hospitalization insurance in one form or another. The controversy, however, centered on where the money was to come from to make up the shortage. The Finance Minister, trying to hold the line against additional taxation, favored a system by which in-patients would be charged
additional "co-insurance" to help foot the bill. Many believed this would make a mockery of the whole insurance scheme because an obvious intent of hospitalization insurance in the first place was to reduce the financial burden of hospitalization costs on those least able to pay. Some, such as Bennett, thought the scheme should be financed through a portion of the sales tax while others favored gradual increases in premiums.

In March, the government brought in a bill which proposed increases in premiums by $9, thereby raising the total premium from $21 to $30. This was to take effect on July 1. In addition, hospital patients would be charged $3.50 per day co-insurance towards the cost of the hospital bill. The 30 percent raise in premiums was bad enough. But the amendment providing for co-insurance brought thunderous protests from opposition and government members alike. Backbenchers W. A. C. Bennett and Maurice Finnerty (Similkameen) demanded the bill not be considered until the new budget was brought down and alternative means of financing the plan were considered. When the amendment came up for second reading, Finnerty and Bennett joined the opposition and voted against it. Outraged that the plan was being rammed through the House, Bennett said:

The people of the province are entitled to get in touch with the members before the bill passes. I want to disassociate myself from the government benches on the amendment of this bill. . . . It is breaking faith with the people of this province.164

Finnerty added: "(This) so-called solution is ill-conceived as all generally admit the whole scheme was in the beginning."165

While Bennett and Finnerty were the only members on the government benches to vote against the measure, there were signs this "mini-revolt" was only the tip of an iceberg. The hospitalization scheme had become such a wrangle—escalating premiums, overcrowded hospitals, people refusing
to pay premiums, and now co-insurance—that the public was becoming completely fed up. Private members who had to face the people in their ridings were beginning to speak their minds. During the throne speech debate government members complained that the cabinet was not giving enough consideration to what they had to say. One coalitionist, when told by a disgruntled C.C.F.er that his party was unable to influence the course of the insurance plan, replied, "you're just about as influential as we are when it comes to changing policy!" 166

The cabinet was also known to be far from united on the hospitalization issue. Anscomb, who in the role of Finance Minister was most responsible for the plan to institute co-insurance, was evidently not happy about any system of compulsory insurance. Anscomb told an election meeting during the Esquimalt by-election campaign he had been against the hospitalization insurance scheme from the beginning: "I believe it should be done in a different manner, but the majority ruled." 167 In his budget speech he sharply criticized his colleague Douglas Turnbull, 168 the Minister of Health:

I want to make it quite clear that unless there is a realistic approach by the Minister of Health, I have grave doubts that the proposals submitted will do what they are supposed to do—put the scheme in balance. . . . I say quite frankly that I am not prepared to impose further taxation on our people to cover operating expenses on ordinary account, or to finance ventures in socialism. 169

Later in a revealing statement, Bennett said not more than three coalition members favored the hospitalization insurance amendments when they were secretly first proposed. "But they were all threatened," Bennett said, "and brought into line." 170

In any case the amended insurance scheme was rammed through the legislature on March 16, but not without severe fallout. Bennett, now totally disgusted, after an hour long review of coalition policies walked
out of the government to sit as an Independent, saying he no longer had any confidence in the Liberals, the Conservatives, or the coalition. Summing up his displeasure, he told the legislature:

When the government forced through second reading of the amendments to the Hospitalization Insurance Act, I disassociated myself from government action in that regard. I now disassociate myself 100 per cent from the present cabinet and the Coalition government in this House and throughout this province.

Bennett's desertion from the government, followed a short time later by Tilly Rolston, seemed to crystallize the widespread discontent smoldering since the session began with the way the hospitalization insurance scheme had been handled. Headlines were emblazoned: "Hospitalization Plan Protests Flare Across Province," "Hospitalization Payment in Advance Rouses Indignation of Citizens." The Colonist in an editorial entitled "This Should Be the Government's Last Chance," said, "By use of steam roller tactics the government has rammed its amendments to the Hospital Insurance Act through the legislature despite a flood of protests from all over the province and from some of its own supporters." In a later editorial entitled, "The Johnson-Anscomb Coalition is Dismissing Itself," the Colonist warned, "no political party, participant in the Coalition or not, can ride roughshod over the public's will." On March 28, the Province wrote:

The people are angry. The growing feeling of anger has come to a head over higher premiums for hospital insurance, setting up additional cash contributions for the first ten days of hospitalization, collection of retroactive increases. Most of this anger is not against hospital insurance itself, but against the government for not finding out more about costs before it plunged into this thing. . . . This thing seemed to be turning to chaos.

Liberals blamed Conservatives, in particular the Finance Minister. Conservatives blamed the insurance scheme itself, a "socialist creation" which was inevitably doomed from the start. One Conservative M.L.A. said, "If
it was operated under free enterprise, the way a Conservative party would operate it, the basic problems would not exist." Backbenchers blamed the cabinet and the system of "over-compromised," "hodge-podged policy making" which the coalition fostered. The member from Similkameen, Finnelly, charged that policies of coalition came from compromise between the two parties, "the results of which were often unacceptable to almost everyone." Sun reporter Leslie Fox wrote of the bitter complaints of private members about the way government measures are rammed through on a take-it-or-leave-it basis:

They (private members) ascribe this to the fact that the Liberal and Conservative wings in the cabinet have to reach a compromise first before they can put their proposals to caucus and, once having made a cabinet decision, do not like to back down.

Tilly Rolston told a meeting of Conservatives in Vancouver, "that the government had gone power-crazy." At the present time, she continued, "private members are just so much window dressing."

The protests continued. On April 15, a petition containing over 200,000 signatures was brought to the legislature protesting the higher premiums and the system of co-insurance. The cabinet had no choice but to take a hard look at the "monster" which they had created. An official government commission was established to launch an inquiry into the entire issue of hospitalization insurance. But the commission was more a "lightning rod" than a serious reappraisal by the government. The government had become so entangled in the mess that anything short of abolishing it altogether seemed impossible.

One effect the controversy had on the Conservative Party was to again raise the cry to end the coalition. Anscomb's position as stated at the party's quarterly executive meeting in April, was: "The party would not
quit coalition until at least the next election." In response to a resolution from the Vancouver-Burrard Conservative Association requesting the coalition be disbanded as soon as possible, Anscomb said, "The public endorsed coalition in the last election and we must keep our contract with the people." Anscomb, fond of referring to coalition as a kind of "bonding contract," undoubtedly had other reasons for not leading his party out of the partnership. As Minister of Finance he had the dominant influence in financial matters. The policy taken in connection with the increase in premiums and the adoption of co-insurance was, if not adopted on his demand, certainly not adopted without his approval. If he did not approve it, then the public would have every reason to expect he would resign. In other words, the Conservatives as an integral part of the government had driven themselves into a corner. They could not expect to escape the blame for the sorry state of hospitalization insurance. At least so long as the coalition continued, Anscomb could expect the blame to be shared by both parties, thereby not giving the Liberals an undue advantage in an inevitable election which would shortly follow the partnership's termination.

The issue of hospitalization insurance dominated the session, but there were other problems too. A system of forest management licensing was introduced, with the idea of enforcing conservation. The C.C.F. opposition attacked the measure as a shield to the big logging interests and a "death sentence" to the smaller logger. The government was split on what to do with the labor law and the Workmen's Compensation Act, both festering problems that were sapping whatever appeal the government had left.

The tumultuous session ended on April 18 with the Anscomb-led party
having come to the brink. Internally it was in shambles. The party organization was cut in half. The federal organization and the federal members had all but disassociated themselves from the provincial party. Many of the party's rank and file had openly deserted to work solely in federal matters. Much of the caucus was, if not publicly, at least privately fed up with the way policy decisions were reached. The muddled hospitalization insurance scheme had served to crystallize the smoldering frustration. Two members had defected to sit as Independents, thereby reducing Conservative strength in the government from 14 to 12. Public dissatisfaction was higher than at any point since 1941. Indeed there were ominous signs in the air that the party's total collapse in the near future was a very real possibility.

Further evidence the coalition was in trouble came in October when the coalition candidate was sharply rebuffed in the Esquimalt (a traditionally Tory riding) by-election. Coalitionist Percy George, Mayor of Esquimalt, finished a poor third behind C.C.F.er Frank Mitchell, the winner, and Independent, A. C. Wurtele. The defeat was particularly bitter for the premier as Johnson had campaigned for weeks to secure the election of George. Moreover, Esquimalt had never before elected a socialist M.L.A.

Editorial comment in Conservative dailies called it a "repudiation of coalition," while the Liberal Vancouver Sun declared it a stunning defeat for Premier Johnson. However interpreted, Esquimalt was a sharp setback for the government and perhaps the first solid indication the public had lost its patience with the internal bickering, the bungling over hospital insurance, and the general insensitivity of the Johnson-Anscomb government. One legislative reporter probably was not far from the truth when he
offered this view:

It wasn't the government policies (overall) that people in Esquimalt voted against--but against the bickering and fighting, the sparring for position--the general hanky-panky that is going on inside the Coalition, with Liberals and Conservatives trying to pretend they are friends, whereas in reality they are bitter political enemies. 187

When the new year opened events were rapidly moving toward a complete break in the coalition government. The Esquimalt by-election had served notice the government was losing the people's confidence. Conservative disenchantment was at a new high after the December "reconciliation meeting" failed to improve internal party relations. In January, one hundred and eighty members of the B.C. Liberal executive met in Vancouver in what was billed as a "state of the party session." At the meeting Liberal leader Premier Byron Johnson had an open fight with the party's veteran president, Harry Perry. Perry, one of the most progressive of B.C. Liberals, had become increasingly dissatisfied with coalition since Anscomb took over the Finance portfolio in 1947. He demanded a convention be called before the end of February and coalition be ended immediately thereafter. 188 Johnson won, but only by giving in to Perry's main demand: a convention to end coalition. 189 Ten days later Johnson himself ended the ten year old Liberal-Conservative coalition. He fired Anscomb.

On January 18, 1952, Premier Johnson walked into the cabinet meeting and demanded Anscomb's resignation. The drama is best described by the then Minister of Municipal Affairs, R. C. MacDonald:

We were all sitting in the cabinet meeting waiting for the premier to enter. He walked in looking a bit edgy and then announced there would be no meeting this morning. He then looked at Anscomb and said, "Mr. Anscomb, I want your resignation!" Anscomb, hardly changing expression, simply packed up his folders, got up, and left the room. Myself and the other three Conservative ministers got up and followed him out. 190
As his reason for firing Anscomb, Johnson cited the Finance Minister's "leaking" to reporters before he told the cabinet the details of his recently negotiated tax agreement with the federal government. However, in his press statement the premier indicated other grounds for his action:

For nearly three years the Minister of Finance has deliberately baited my colleagues and me. He has carried on an open fight with a minister of the crown in direct contradiction to government policy. . . . In radio speeches he has given notice of dissolution and then at the same time carried on with an arrangement which he admits he does not like. . . . He delivered at the last legislature a speech which constituted a public criticism of a fellow minister. These and many other instances my colleagues and I forebore in the best interests of the people, but there comes a time when repeated violations of constitutional procedure cannot be longer countenanced. "

He then got to the point of the immediate firing:

The failure to consult the members of the Lieutenant-Governor-in Council before issuing a press statement on his negotiations at Ottawa has strained my patience to the breaking point."

Anscomb claimed later that Johnson's stated reason for breaking coalition, the leaking to reporters of the tax agreement, was a red herring since he had told the premier of his negotiations on January 9. Furthermore, circumstances beyond his control (a fogged-in Victoria airport) prevented him from meeting Johnson on the designated day and hence the leak to the reporters was nothing more than a "flimsy pretext" to break up the coalition. He later told the legislature his own view on why Johnson broke coalition:

He (Johnson) had severe problems in his party. He was faced with a convention ahead of him, and he knew if there was any hope at all of remaining supreme at the convention that he must break coalition, because sections of his party were dominant on that point. Second, I wonder if it was not the un-pardonable sin of a Conservative being successful (at Ottawa) where a Liberal had failed."

Why did the break come at this particular time? Some have suggested that Johnson's growing impatience with the Finance Minister's economic
policies had finally worn through, that the controversy over the tax agree-
ment had provided the needed justification to do what had been Johnson's
intention for some time. Others have said that Johnson was afraid of
Anscomb, that Anscomb's dominating presence in the government made it dif-
ficult for the premier to subdue him. Still others blamed a recent
automobile accident in which Johnson was involved and from which he was
severely injured.

After the accident something happened to the Premier. He was
never the same. He was more irritable, capable of flying off the
handle at the slightest possible occasion. He seemed to lose his
grip on the situation and let things drift.

Whatever the reason, the split everyone had been waiting for had
finally come. Liberals reacted to the news by blaming Anscomb. Conserva-
tives naturally responded by blaming Johnson. Few people seemed upset by
the news and many believed it to be a good thing. "It (coalition) is a
splendid thing in war time," said one person polled by the Colonist, "but
it is time we returned to straight politics." Another said, "The coalition
government was in too long. It was time for a change." Public reaction
was probably adequately summarized by a Colonist editorial:

Whatever the given pretext for the break-up, and it was a slim one,
mutual antipathies both personal and political had made the result
inevitable. Not only had the coalition politically outlived its
usefulness, but it had fallen progressively into growing disfavor
with the public for its latter day blunders, extravagance and dicta-
torial rule.

The continuation of coalition would have been difficult even under
the best of circumstances. By 1952, however, pressures had become so great
that collapse was probably inevitable. Federal Liberals and Conservatives,
ever very happy with the coalition, made their opposition openly known
after the 1949 election and rarely ceased in their agitation against it.
They understandably had difficulty establishing separate and credible party images in an electorate bombarded with provincial election propaganda which emphasized similarities, not differences, between the two parties. Federal Conservatives were especially upset when their local party organization had obviously lapsed due to provincial politicians' inability to activate their associations on behalf of "partisan" federal candidates. The two wings of the party were working, if not actively against each other, at least separately and not in union. This imposed a tremendous strain on the coalition.

Federalism was, however, not the only factor working against coalition. Leadership had become a major source of strain following the death of Maitland and the resignation of Hart. The trouble began when Johnson and Anscomb took over. Johnson's selection as leader was an expediency to satisfy the factional groupings in the Liberal Party. He was an obscure backbencher, without reputation, and with none of the "mediator" qualities of Hart. Anscomb, the successor to the Conservative leadership, resented Johnson's assumption of the premiership. He lacked confidence in Johnson's ability and believed he should have been Hart's successor. Anscomb was also convinced that Johnson was not a firm coalitionist. He accused the Liberal leader of refusing to put the damper on anti-coalition activity among members of his party. A bad situation was made worse by the poor relations between Johnson and Anscomb. The premier was agitated by Anscomb's extreme conservatism. He was suspicious of Anscomb's motives and firmly believed the Conservative leader would exploit every opportunity in attempts to control the government.

A coalition's ability to endure depends upon the development of means
by which the natural divisive pressures can be contained. According to one
student of coalition behavior, enduring coalitions are characterized by their
capacity to develop or evolve means by which conflict can be minimized, or
the coalition's capacity to handle conflict can be increased. In British
Columbia such means were evident during the coalition's early years: (1)
the existence of a "broker," (2) an electoral arrangement to ensure partisan
strength in the coalition remained stable, and (3) a joint "non-partisan"
caucus. By 1950, each of these had more or less broken down.

As one author notes in discussing Adenauer's role as "broker" in
the CDU/CSU in Germany, "the system has called for a leader who is basically
uncommitted to any one group. . . His (Adenauer) role as leader has been
mainly that of moderator or mediator among all the groups." John Hart
actively played this role in the coalition. As indicated above, when Hart
stepped down, the partnership lost perhaps its main stabilizing pillar.

Another means to reduce the potential for conflict was the agreement
that neither partner would oppose the other's candidates in provincial
elections, nor participate in federal campaigns. The potential for conflict
resided most certainly in the attitude, however grounded in reality, that
during the years of partnership one party was gaining a preferred position
relative to the other. For the coalition to survive, it was essential that
the party's strength relative to each other remain stable. Elections there­
fore must not favor one party at the expense of the other. In fact, since
both parties were looking to the future to form a government on their own,
any wide disparity in the number of elected M.L.A.s would necessarily
threaten the continuation of the coalition. The relative equality of numbers
of the parties significantly changed after the 1949 election. The coalition
as a whole gained seats from 1945, but the Liberals were the benefactors
as Tories actually declined from their 1945 standing.

Another development which had the effect of facilitating the coalition's capacity to minimize conflict during its early years was the operation of the coalition "non-partisan" caucus. The coalition caucus functioned in addition to separate party caucuses which both parties retained. Although hard evidence is lacking, all indications point to the fact that during the Hart-Maitland years coalition caucuses were relatively free from partisan wrangling. Whether it had to do with the absence of controversial issues, the overwhelming crisis of war or the political abilities of the respective leaders cannot be stated definitely. What is known is that policy decisions made within the joint caucus and cabinet, and originating with and reflecting the partisan differences in priority, did appear to involve a fair amount of consultation and, perhaps most important, were conducted in an atmosphere of good will. Even the committees, such as the Post War Rehabilitation Committee, were conducive to harmony since they included members from all three parties and were not "top heavy" with cabinet influentials. By the late forties, however, the coalition caucus increasingly turned into a partisan battlefield. Committees became less important, the previous atmosphere of good will became poisoned by partisan squabbling, and separate party caucuses became commonplace. By 1950 the parties were reportedly dividing along straight partisan lines on most issues. Half-baked policies were enacted into law because of the difficulties in securing meaningful compromise. The parties would caucus separately, adopt their own position, then come together with their minds made up. Understandably, the joint caucus became less and less effective. A side effect of partisan divisions within the coalition caucus was in increasing concentration of power in the hands of the "coalition elite." With the parties divided, time and time again, a
small inner council became the makers and breakers of most legislation. This resulted in increased alienation of backbenchers and, by the time the coalition broke, the caucus had almost ceased to exist as a functioning body. Most of the government's business was determined in the cabinet and, further, within the cabinet by a small inner council.

Perhaps a certain amount of backbencher alienation is inevitable in any coalition government in which cabinet posts are shared by two or more parties. A coalition cabinet is not the same flexible institution the cabinet is in one party government. Changes of cabinet membership tend to raise the issue of relations between the coalition partners, and are best avoided. The elevation of ambitious men, like Bennett, could not be accomplished unilaterally and therefore was not attempted. In the end, the rigidities of cabinet membership in coalition probably helped to divorce the leadership of the party in the cabinet from the caucus. This led to an unusual degree of autonomy for cabinet members and, at the same time, a feeling in the caucus that the cabinet was isolated and beyond reach.

In the final analysis, the coalition endured as long as it did because it helped the two parties stay in office which, in the face of a strong opposition, was a position neither party could have been certain of achieving on its own. Liberals, always the dominant partner, had little to lose since the general course of government policy was painted with a Liberal brush and, to the extent that the government was popular (and it was very popular until 1949), the Liberal party could reap the benefits. The Conservatives, who never had more than 16 members, four of whom were in the cabinet, found their position much too comfortable to jeopardize. Only after the 1949 elections, when the costs of partnership in policy, in party organization,
in relations with the federal party, came to outweigh its benefits did the partnership finally collapse under its own weight.

Collapse: The 1952 Election

Following the disbanding of the coalition in January, the Liberals muddled through the remainder of the short five-week session. Despite the damming report of the commission formed to review the hospitalization insurance issue, Johnson, who with the support of three straight coalitionists was able to retain a slight working majority, did not have the will or the necessary support to do anything positive about the festering problem. The only significant measures enacted during the session were the ratification of the Federal-Provincial Tax Agreements, the approval of colored margarine, and the release of highway funds to complete the Squamish-Vancouver Highway and the Trans-Provincial Highway from Prince Rupert to Prince George. Johnson, believing the political situation was too murky for him to carry on for another year, announced an election for June 12.

In more normal times a government would have reason for optimism because of the general condition of the province in 1952: The economy was booming and the province was enjoying increased prosperity. The new budget showed spending up 15 percent in one year, manufacturing output up from $400 million to over $1 billion in ten years, investment up 300 percent in five years. Wages were the highest in Canada. Population was up 42 percent in 10 years, yet there was near full employment.

But neither party was cheered by these facts and figures. The coalition, for the most part (1941-1948) an efficient and relatively progressive government, had nevertheless become highly unpopular. This was largely the
result of the internal dissension which plagued it in recent years. But this was not the only reason. The government in making a credible overall showing had nevertheless bungled several issues of intense interest to the people. In particular, the coalition made a mess of compulsory hospitalization insurance. In addition, the Workmen's Compensation Act was in need of reform, and nothing had been done to reform the antiquated liquor laws. As one observer said: "The causes of the public's complaint may have been unimportant, but they hit the pocketbook and stomach, and sometimes the heart."

If a political vacuum had developed, then a new movement was rapidly building that would fill it. Social Crediters, who as a group had never received more than 1.5 percent of the vote in a B.C. election or even come close to electing an M.L.A., were busily forming Social Credit clubs and lining up members all over the province. This was especially worrisome for Tories as most of ex-Conservative W. A. C. Bennett's time was now devoted to projecting the image of Social Credit as the alternative to the coalition and the C.C.F. Bennett, who believed the best government in Canada was Manning’s government in Alberta, officially joined Social Credit in December, 1951. As a well known politician in British Columbia, something that had been lacking in the Social Credit movement, Bennett was the element which might crystallize the diverse and generally non-cohesive Social Credit clubs, mostly directed from Alberta, into a viable political party. For Conservatives, the essential problem was: How many disaffected Tories would Bennett take with him out of the Conservative Party and into Social Credit?

Many Young Conservatives with at least tacit support from some federal members decided after the 1950 leadership convention they could not support
the provincial party as long as the "Anscomb crowd" remained in control. A group of Young Conservatives including Les Bewley, Robert Bonner, and David Tupper met with Bennett shortly after the convention and "talked for some weeks about forming a new party." They discussed the possibility of a "British Columbia Party" and a variety of other names. Bennett astutely realized that building a new party from the ground up would take too long and felt that something had to be done immediately. Whether Bennett took the initiative and contacted the Social Credit group with his plans or they contacted him is subject to debate. In any case, Bennett came to the conclusion that Social Credit was the right vehicle and then asked the rebel Conservatives to join him. Bewley says that his group of Young Progressive Conservatives and some party regulars agreed to work with Bennett. As for the federal members, "many of the important people such as Leon Ladner were sympathetic but in no way provided funds, lent their names, or took public stands. He (Ladner) gave us private comfort but little else." Although the dissident Young Conservatives supported, and in some cases worked for Social Credit candidates in 1952, they did not officially join the party because they did not want to leave the Conservative Party federally. Understandably, these activities infuriated the Conservative Party's provincial leaders. They charged that not only were Conservatives working for Social Credit candidates, but that federal Tories actively encouraged some provincial riding association presidents not to run Conservative candidates in their constituencies against Social Credit candidates. This charge was vehemently denied by Howard Green.

The presence of Social Credit in the provincial campaign posed another unexpected problem. The transferable ballot, supported by virtually all
the coalition members, was introduced in the 1952 campaign. This device, adopted by the coalition government in 1951 in anticipation of its own breakdown and of a three-party contest in the next election, was to insure a split in the "free enterprise" vote would not result in the election of a C.C.F. government. With Social Credit actively in the race, however, there was a chance the scheme might work in favor of the new party or, at least, make it considerably more difficult for Liberals and Conservatives to win a majority of the seats. Indeed, events seemed to be working against the Tories and the prospects for the long hoped for return to power seemed dimmer than ever.

In April, all four parties held their pre-election conventions. The Social Credit Convention surprised everyone by attracting over 700 delegates and some 300 visitors. In 1949 fewer than 50 delegates attended their convention and the following year they attracted barely enough to pick a slate of candidates. Unlike the other parties, the Social Crediters not only had to put together a platform but had to select a leader. The convention was divided as to whether someone outside of the province, one of the Alberta people, should be selected. There was a further problem as to whether a permanent leader should be chosen or a temporary "campaign manager." Bennett and B.C. Social Credit League President, Eric Martin, opposed outside control of the party. Bennett's opposition was probably because of his own interest in the leadership. Bennett, after realizing he did not have sufficient strength to be elected leader, supported the idea of a temporary leader whose prime responsibility would be to lead and direct the party's campaign. This way he would not be cut off from assuming the party leadership later in the event Social Credit formed the next government. It
was a shrewd move and as events turned out it worked. One other problem had to be disposed of, how to insure that Albertans did not gain control? Martin came up with an ingenious plan. As delegates were preparing to leave the convention, he asked for a resolution empowering the Social Credit M.L.A.s elected in the forthcoming election to choose their own permanent leader. Since everyone was anxious to get home, the resolution passed with no debate. Bennett, with the aid of Martin and others, had shrewdly worked the situation to be sure he would be in the running for the leadership.

The Social Credit platform was less specific than the other parties. The platform, resembling more a moralistic-philosophical statement on government than a program, was divided into four parts. The first had to do with "integrity of government administration." It referred to the need for "honest administration and the abolition of patronage, favoritism, self-interest and the bargaining or selling out of principles for money or blocks of votes or any other favors." The second part had to do with the "elimination of compulsion"—an attempt to play on the hospital insurance mess and the "evils of socialism." In Hansell's words:

The principle of compulsion is against all human dignity. Men and women were never made to be driven around by any force or power or dictator in the driver's seat, nor to have bits put in their mouths to be compelled to go this way or that at the will of a master driver, whether it be state or individual. Men and women are above the animals of the field.

A third part dealt with free enterprise. The party proclaimed itself against "socialism, nationalization, and all forms of regimentation." It put itself "firmly on the side of the people's interests, firmly opposed to exploitation and monopoly." A final part of the Social Credit program dealt with
so-called "benefits to the people which should accrue because of the wealth of the land." Giving lip service to the traditional doctrine of Social Credit, the program stated: "The wealth of the province belongs to the people. Thus, the province should be administered so that the people get their fair share of the wealth produced." This would be accomplished through a system of royalties, leases, and other forms of revenue, "such revenue then being turned back to the people in the form of public works and social benefits."220 The Social Credit program, like the Provincial Party's of the twenties, was based more on appeal to reform politics than a program for economic or social reconstruction. As such, it was extremely vague. Most of it was devoted to moralizing and criticism of the other parties. The platform offered few new ideas. Aside from some discussion of traditional Social Credit doctrine, which few people understood (including most of the candidates), the program was designed to capitalize on people's disillusionment with the old line parties. In general, most of the candidates stressed three themes: honest administration, debt reduction, and Christian principles.221

The Conservatives, meeting on April 29, drafted a 12-point platform. The platform's main points included: a voluntary hospitalization insurance plan and the elimination of co-insurance, extension of the P.G.E. into Vancouver and eventually north to the Peace River, increased hydro services for rural areas, expanded highway construction, increased grants to municipalities in areas where the provincial government holds property, reconsideration of the Workmen's Compensation Act, a new program of forest management, local option on the liquor question and the preservation of the existing system of non-sectarian schools.222 The big issue in the platform,
the question of hospitalization, consumed most of the delegates' time. When
the vote came, all but one of the 250 delegates voted to abolish the present
system and replace it with a non-compulsory voluntary plan. Reg MacDougall,
the Tory M.L.A. from Vancouver-Point Grey, appeared to sum up the sentiment
of the convention when he said: "A (Conservative) government is not going
out of hospital insurance—but it was introducing a new plan which would
be non-compulsory in accord with Conservative principles." Anscomb vo-
ciferously defended the voluntary hospitalization insurance scheme, saying:

The B.C. Progressive Conservative Party believes that the welfare
of the people is best assured by a minimum of compulsion by govern-
ments, that the increasing intrusion of government authority into
the private affairs of the individual must be curbed; that the
growth of bureaucratic controls brings burdensome and destructive
taxation and endangers the freedom of all our people.

Despite the one-sided vote approving the plank on hospitalization in-
surance, the delegates did not come quickly to their decision. Little time
was wasted in reaching agreement on abolishing the compulsory plan but an
alternative was hard to devise. The proposed alternative, a voluntary plan
underwritten by the government in addition to private health insurance
schemes, was "all too vague to meet the questions the voters would ask."

Perhaps the Province editorial assessed the dilemma correctly:

... it is not at all clear how this non-compulsory, non-
monopolistic plan will operate and the whole political value
of the proposal lies in a convincing demonstration of how it
would work. ... A detailed explanation by party leaders of
what they have in mind ... must be forthcoming if the Con-
servatives expect the voters to take their hospitalization
insurance proposals seriously.

The C.C.F. took all three parties to task on this issue. Harold Winch
said:

The C.C.F. is 100 per cent behind the principle of hospital insurance.
Conservative and Socred policy would wipe it out. Liberal policy
is unknown because of contradictory statements by the premier and his first lieutenant, Gordon Wismer.227

The Liberals campaigned on their record. In outlining the essence of the program, Premier Johnson emphasized the social policies given effect by the Liberal governments over the past eighteen years. The platform made some fifty pledges which can be summarized as follows: Expanded development in B.C. and continuation of progressive (not radical) social reforms begun by the Liberal government in 1934 and continued to the present day. The platform contained no suggestion of economy or tax remission. The party, against the wishes of its leader, also pledged to abolish co-insurance. 228

But not clear in the Liberal program was how hospitalization insurance would be administered and financed. By voting to retain the compulsory scheme, but without co-insurance, the Liberal program sidestepped the most crucial issue.

As the campaign heated up few people at first gave Social Credit much of a chance. Bennett's name rarely appeared in the news reports. Hansell was laughed off as an "Alberta Infiltrator." Attention was focused on the old-line parties. Anscomb told Conservative rallies compulsion must go, that people were not paying their hospital premiums, and to enforce the law in B.C. was physically impossible. Liberals harped on the theme that only a Liberal government could form a majority on its own, thus providing the necessary stability to carry on the province's business. They warned the election of a Tory government would undo the years of social progress the province enjoyed under Liberal administrations. Winch attacked all three of the capitalist parties, arguing none of them had the people's interest first. He showed least restraint when attacking Social Credit, calling their convention "fascist in nature," and on more than one occasion referred to the group as "totalitarians."229 But he saved the best remarks for the
Liberals and Conservatives and the recently disbanded coalition: "When you put two rotten eggs together," Winch told his audiences, "you can't make a good scramble. And once they've been scrambled you can't unscramble them."

As the election approached more and more people began to take the Social Crediters seriously. This was obvious as the old parties began to spend more time attacking Social Credit than each other. A noticeable element of caution began to show up in the campaigning. Anscomb told his supporters: "The Social Credit Party is so bold as to presume that British Columbians are prepared to entrust their future to a leaderless group whose philosophies are beyond all comprehension." A full page Liberal advertisement appeared saying in part: "Voting for leaderless individuals could result in hopeless chaos such as this province has never before experienced." The Vancouver Province said in an editorial:

British Columbia needs good, sensible, experienced government to meet the needs of the times. We are on the crest of a wave carrying us forward to new accomplishments. This is hardly the time to dabble in questionable experiments.

As the assault on Social Credit became more intense, it also shifted ground. Less and less were they referred to as fanatics or extremists. Increasingly they became the "spoilers of stable majority government." At least now they had become respectable and very likely the campaigns of the old free-enterprise parties helped to legitimize Social Credit in the eyes of the voters.

Curiously, the new alternative voting system played little part in the four parties' campaigning. There is little evidence that party leaders attempted to take full advantage of the system by urging their supporters to give their second and third choice to designated parties. No doubt
Liberals and Conservatives expected to attract second choice votes from each other and presumably from Socred voters as well. Anscomb, however, went so far as to urge his supporters to ignore second and third choices altogether. "Mark no choice beyond the first," he said, since no other parties, including Liberals, "deserved support from genuine Tories." With Liberal and Conservative rivalry resuming its traditional intensity, the politicians perhaps felt that to openly invite supporters to give their alternative votes to the enemy might be interpreted as a sign of weakness.

The election resulted in a stunning defeat for the Liberal and Conservative Parties. Both Anscomb and Johnson were defeated. The Tories won only four seats and received a paltry 16.8 percent of the vote on the first count, their worst showing since 1933. Tory candidates led on the first ballot in only three ridings, and either led or ran second on the first ballot in only six ridings! The Liberals won only six seats and received 23.5 percent of the vote on the first count. The eventual victor was Social Credit which, because of the transferable ballot, managed to sneak ahead of the runner-up C.C.F. on the third count.

The most striking thing about the election was the large number of Social Credit second choices going to the C.C.F. and vice versa. Neither Liberals nor Conservatives received substantial second choice support from these two parties. In other words, there appeared to be two distinct voting cleavages: a cleavage formed by the voters supporting the old line parties, and a cleavage formed by voters supporting C.C.F. and Social Credit, in effect, those voting against the old parties. According to this view, voters who were disillusioned with the patronage, party infighting, bungled policies, and generally stale image of Liberals and Conservatives, but
leery of the C.C.F., found an acceptable alternative in the new party of free enterprise and political innocence. As one student has concluded:

Social Credit's "funny money" doctrines were of little importance in the 1952 election. On the other hand, the religious and business themes utilized in Social Credit propaganda were of great importance; the movement portrayed itself and gave promise of Christian integrity and business-like efficiency. This image attracted numerous voters who were repelled by the actual or perceived corruption and inefficiency of the traditional parties.239

Although assigning motives to voters is always difficult this seems a reasonable conclusion in light of editorial comment, informal polls and reactions of party supporters at the time.

The year 1952 marked the end of an era. Not only had a government been defeated but, for the first time since the introduction of party lines in 1903, neither the Liberals nor Conservatives separately or together would form the government in British Columbia. The coalition which had saved the old line parties from the C.C.F. had, in the end, set in motion the forces which led to both of their defeats. Political infighting, bungled policies and an image of self-serving politics severely weakened the coalition parties and produced a vacuum which the new B.C. Social Credit Party filled.

One explanation for the election result might be that both the Liberal and Conservative Parties were victimized by the alternative voting system which ultimately worked to the considerable advantage of Social Credit. However, the magnitude of Conservative and Liberal declines on the first ballot in traditional areas of strength indicates that, despite the voting system, the parties suffered an enormous exodus of supporters.240

For example, in Alberni, James Mowat, a three-term Liberal-Independent, was only able to muster 27.8 percent of the vote on the first ballot. In Cariboo, which had elected Liberals for more than twenty years, incumbent Angus
MacLean received only 19 percent of the vote on the first ballot while Social Crediter, W. R. T. Chetwynd polled an impressive first ballot total of 51.8 percent. In Columbia, which also had consistently elected Liberals since 1933, the Liberal candidate polled 29.3 percent on the first ballot while the Social Credit candidate polled 31.9 percent. In Delta, which had traditionally been a tight three-way contest between the Liberal, Conservative, and C.C.F. parties (the coalition kept it anti-socialist from 1945-1949), the Liberal and Conservative combined showing on the first count reached only 28.4 percent, while the C.C.F. and Social Credit won 34.5 and 37.2 percent respectively. In Dewdney, which elected Tory Frank Patterson in 1938 and followed with R. C. MacDonald in 1941, 1945, and 1949 (he was Minister of Mines and Municipal Affairs in the Johnson-Anscomb cabinet), the Conservative first ballot total was a miniscule 11.4 percent. Perhaps Dewdney was the most telling loss of all considering the caliber of MacDonald and the magnitude of the loss. And so it went for the coalition parties.

Throughout the heartland of B.C. neither Liberal nor Conservative candidates led on the first ballot in North Okanagan, South Okanagan, Omineca, Peace River, Prince Rupert, Revelstoke, Rossland Trail, Salmon Arm, Similkameen, Kamloops, Kaslo-Slocan, Mackenzie, Atlin, Chilliwack or Cranbrook. The Tories fared much worse than the Liberals. In the Interior and North districts, they rose above 17 percent on the first ballot in only three ridings, Grand Forks-Greenwood (which they lost on the final count to the C.C.F.), Revelstoke, where despite winning 20.5 percent, the Tory candidate was still outpolled by all three other parties on the first ballot, and in popular Ernie Carson's home district, Lillooet, which they subsequently
In the Lower Mainland, the situation was but slightly improved. While faring somewhat better than their Interior counterparts, Tory candidates in Vancouver-Burrard, Vancouver Center and New Westminster still failed to win more than 20 percent of the vote on the first ballot. Only in Vancouver-Point Grey did two Conservative candidates outpoll all three other parties on the first count and subsequently win the seats on the final tally. Similarly, on Vancouver Island, the Tories were able to poll above 20 percent of the vote in only one riding, Nanaimo and The Islands, which they subsequently won on the final count. The Liberals' showing markedly improved on Vancouver Island as they led throughout the counts in Oak Bay and Victoria and eventually won all four of the seats.241

The election results indicate that the alternative voting system contributed to the magnitude of the defeat of the two old parties. But assuming that first choices would have remained the same had the old voting system been used, it was clearly not the voting system but the voters that caused the defeat of the Liberal and Conservative Parties.

The collapse of the government and the decline of the parties in 1952, especially the Conservatives, was the result not so much of any great attraction of Social Credit or any overwhelming organizational insurgence on its part, but more the effect of the political malaise that had settled on the coalition and the partisan infighting that had discredited the parties. The muddled hospitalization insurance scheme served above all to highlight the political chaos which had permeated the government during its last few years. Everything considered, this issue was probably the most important factor contributing to the coalition's defeat.242 It was not
the only issue, however. The coalition government had failed to extend the P.G.E., thus alienating the Northern ridings. The sales tax issue had become a political football which was effectively exploited by the opposition. The coalition refused to provide public support to Catholic schools, and this became a mounting issue in the months before the 1952 election. Although the province was experiencing prosperity, it was also experiencing inflation, a particularly important issue for the "little man"—the small businessmen, merchants, pensioners, school teachers—who had insufficient reason to believe the government of Johnson, Anscomb and Wismer was sensitive to their problems. And the fact the coalition parties fared so poorly in hinterland ridings was probably due to a widespread discontent about the government's seeming dominance by urban, Lower Mainland politicians.

In the final analysis, perhaps Social Credit's success and the failure of the old parties can in part be explained in terms of what we know about collective behavior and social movements in general. Social Credit was more of a protest movement than an ideological one. It provided an alternative outlet by which resentment and disillusionment with the conduct of politics could find political expression. Social Credit was successful not because it put together a huge mass following of committed voters, but because the traditional parties failed to maintain their support and Social Credit was the natural alternative to which migrant voters could turn. In other words, the key to understanding Social Credit's success is not so much its appeal as the inability of the old parties to hold on to their constituencies. The variable most related to this failure is apparently psychological—the weakened ties of normally Liberal and Conservative voters to their parties. Ten years of Liberals and Conservatives working
in partnership followed by increasing intra-coalition conflict followed by
the reappearance of partisanship generated a cross-pressure effect on
voters on the eve of the 1952 contest. The cross-pressure hypothesis
maintains that multiple attachments to politically divergent groups create
cross-pressures or conflicts for the voter in decisions about voting. 247
Coalition created a situation in which voter's loyalties were given to
Liberals and Conservatives collectively but, when the coalition disbanded,
the voter was then cross-pressured between two rival parties. We know from
studies of cross-pressured voters that not only do these individuals tend
to vote less frequently but, more important, the direction of their vote
is less consistent when they do vote. 248 In effect, cross-pressures may
lead to unstable political behavior. 249 Sociologists and psychologists who
have investigated the cross-pressure effect predict that responses to
cross-pressure often take the form of avoidance reactions—efforts to avoid
or to minimize the anxiety produced by the conflict. 250 Non-voting or voting
for a new party may be just such an avoidance reaction. 251
FOOTNOTES

1 *Vancouver Province*, March 29, 1946; *Victoria Colonist*, April 4, 1946.


3 *Victoria Colonist*, June 11, 1946.

4 *Victoria Colonist*, April 5, 1946. A copy of the letter and Hart's reply is reprinted in the *Colonist*.

5 Sherman, *Bennett*.

6 Those interviewed could not recall any other Conservative members being privy to the negotiations.

7 The average age in the cabinet was just under 60 years and all but one had served in the legislature for at least two terms, five for three terms, and three for four terms or more.

8 *Vancouver Sun*, April 5, 1946.

9 As quoted in Sherman, *Bennett*, p. 54.

10 *Victoria Colonist*, April 5, 1946.

11 Henry Drummond, private interview held in Burnaby, B.C., July 24, 1974. Drummond says Bennett was "waiting for a cabinet offer." One close confidant of Anscomb said "there was no way Anscomb would have ever put Bennett in his ministry." The Honorable Mr. Justice T. G. Norris, private interview held in Pitt Meadows, B.C., August 9, 1974.

12 Carson later nominated Anscomb in 1950.


17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., June 16, 1946.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. At the quarterly executive meeting of the Conservative Party in April, Anscomb strongly affirmed his commitment to partisan lines, saying, "as for me, I am a strong Conservative but will back the coalition as long as the menace of communism (CCF) exists." *Victoria Colonist*, April 14, 1946. His position was restated firmly at the time of the convention.

22. Confidential interview.


27. Ibid., January 26, 1964.


29. Confidential interview.

30. On one occasion a delegation of 50 representatives of the United Baptist and Presbyterian churches, the Salvation Army, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the British Columbia Temperance League went to the legislature and urged that no government action be taken on the liquor question until a Royal Commission was established to investigate all matters which had a bearing on liquor's effect on the "health, efficiency, public life, and welfare of the people." *Victoria Colonist*, March 9, 1946.


32. Sherman, Bennett, p. 56.
As the two parties began more often to caucus separately, decide upon an action, then meet jointly to try to reach a compromise, this became more evident.

Sherman, Bennett, p. 57.

Robin, Pillars of Profit, pp. 97-98.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 99.

Sherman, Bennett, pp. 59-60; Vancouver Sun, March 18, 1946.

Byron I. Johnson became premier following Hart's resignation in December, 1947, see pp. 286-287.

Ibid., p. 59. This was disputed by R. C. MacDonald who could not remember any exceptional difficulty arising from the sales tax legislation. It should be noted, however, that MacDonald was one of the firmest Anscomb supporters in the Tory Party. MacDonald interview, October 3, 1973.

Opposing it were Bennett, Tillie Rolston, James Mowat, and J. J. Gillis. Vancouver Sun, April 14, 1948. Hart also opposed the tax but "did not wish to oppose the government's policy." Ibid.

This is discussed in detail on pp. 320-325.


The fateful insurance scheme was an outgrowth of the Liberal promise of some form of government health insurance, and the postwar escalation in the costs of hospital care. Later referred to as the "Johnson bill," because of his support and persistent efforts to make it work, it was really the brainchild of "welfare Liberals" Weir and Pearson. Winch says that although the Tories were not happy with the legislation, there was nothing they could do because "Liberals and CCFers had the votes." Winch interview, November 9, 1973.

Ibid.


Vancouver Province, October 27, 1947.

Ibid., October 24, 1947.


Victoria Colonist, December 11, 1947.


Vancouver Sun, December 27, 1947. According to Winch, the Liberal caucus demanded that Johnson not accept any ultimatum. Winch interview, November 9, 1973.

Vancouver Province, December 29, 1947.


Ibid.

Winch interview, November 9, 1973; see Vancouver Sun, December 16, 1947.

Norris interview, August 9, 1974.

For example, one person simply said that "it was a good government and therefore there was little reason to change." MacDonald interview, October 3, 1973.

Governing elite refers to the coalition ministry, both Liberal and Tory cabinet ministers. Since elite refers to a group or stratum that exerts exceptional influence and power, the coalition cabinet as it operated in 1949 falls within this definition.
Drummond interview, July 24, 1974.


Occupationally, in 1949 27 of the 35 coalitionists were in business of some kind and no less than 10 were either current or past presidents of local chambers of commerce or boards of trade, Parliamentary Guide, 1949.


Vancouver Province, June 1, 1949.


It may have been as Anscomb publicly said (Vancouver Province, June 1, 1949), that the coalition parties were hoping that a big victory in 1949 would so thoroughly demoralize the CCF, the party would decline and perhaps eventually become only a fringe force in B.C. politics. This would then pave the way for a return to the old Liberal-Conservative party alignment.


A. L. Bewley described the provincial Conservative organization as a "little fiefdom" centrally controlled by Anscomb and three or four others. The association rarely had meetings and most riding associations were little more than skeleton structures with skeleton staffs. Private interview held in Vancouver, September 28, 1973. Even Deane D. Finlayson, an avid supporter of Anscomb, did not deny this was true. Private interview held in Nanaimo, B.C., December 13, 1973.


Drummond interview, July 24, 1974.


Ibid.

Alan Morley, Vancouver Sun, August 10, 1943.
Excludes W. D. Smith (Atlin) who, while once a Liberal, was elected a straight Coalitionist and showed few signs of partisanship in the Legislature.

Letter, B. I. Johnson to H. Anscomb, March 24, 1949, Johnson Papers, University of Victoria.

Victoria Times, April 30, 1949.

Ibid.

As quoted from Premier Johnson in, Ibid.

For example, Jack Ross, international representative of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, campaigned against the C.C.F. Said Ross to a coalition rally in Vancouver, "A vote for coalition is insurance for continued prosperity and security." Vancouver Province, June 13, 1949.

Vancouver Province, June 10, 1949.

Robin, Pillars of Profit, p. 102.

Ibid.

Victoria Times, April 23, 1949.

Vancouver Province, June 1, 1949.

Ibid.

Vancouver Province, June 1, 1949.

Ibid., June 13, 1949.

1948 was a record year for production output and high employment in British Columbia. By mid-1949 wages were not only higher but increasing faster than anywhere else in Canada. L. G. J. Wong, "British Columbia, The Outlook for Business in 1950," Pacific Northwest Industry, Vol. 9 (December, 1949), 40-44.

The C.C.F. was still contending with the L.P.P., see Robin, Pillars of Profit, p. 104.

One, Captain J. H. Cates (North Vancouver), while formally a coalitionist, had previous to 1945 been affiliated with the Liberal Party.

In all, the Tories lost eight of eleven joint nominating conventions in C.C.F. ridings.


Scarrow, *Canada Votes*, p. 132.


The comparative strength of federal Conservatives in B.C. since 1921:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>7 (53%)</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>10 (71%)</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>12 (85%)</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>7 (50%)</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935*</td>
<td>5 (31%)</td>
<td>24.6%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>4 (25%)</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>5 (31%)</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>3 (16%)</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Reconstruction Party in 1935 (Conservative splinter group) took 6.7% of the vote and 1 seat. If added to the 1935 Conservative total it puts Conservative federal strength above 30%.

This opinion was given by Howard Green and E. David Fulton, respective interviews, October 16, 1973 and November 1, 1973. Worse was Liberal organizers attempting to capitalize on the coalition to get votes for federal Liberal candidates in Liberal-dominated federal ridings. "To have Liberal organizers asking for Conservative votes, as in the Cariboo riding experienced in the last Dominion election, is indeed a sorry reflection on this once great party and its present day leaders." Letter from L. Scott, the *Vancouver Province*, October 28, 1950.

Fulton interview, November 1, 1973.

*Vancouver Province*, June 17, 1949.
Prior to the convention, instigators of the revolt—namely a group of Young P.C.s led by Bewley, Robert Bonner, and Stewart Chambers—publicly made it known that Anscomb's leadership was on trial because of his business interests in a wine-making firm, interests which they believed were improper since the wines were bought by the government. Anscomb supporters said the wine issue was simply an excuse used by the rebels to enhance their chances to take over the party.

Drummond interview, July 24, 1974.

Norris interview, August 9, 1974.


Everyone interviewed who knew Anscomb spoke of his bluntness in dealing with political matters. Much of the conflict between Green (and Fulton) and Anscomb was organizational, but it also had to do with the backgrounds and personalities of the two men. Anscomb, who "came up the hard way" from the docks of Maidstone, Kent, England to become a successful chartered accountant and blustery politician contrasted sharply with the more "refined" Green and Fulton, who seemed products of an aristocratic lineage. One person who knew them all said that they were different "breeds of cats" altogether, the one representative of the "Jersey City" brand of politics, the tough, no nonsense politician who spared little in rewarding friends and saw to it that enemies were "justly" dealt with; the other representative of "gentleman" politics, deeply steeped in tradition and "correct" forms of conduct in which philosophical Conservatism was known, discussed and savored. To be fair, friends of Anscomb, while admitting that his style was gruff and blunt, and offensive to some, were quick to remark that he had strong principles (mostly related to free enterprise and anti-socialism), and that while he may have been a "dinosaur" (Norris's term) he was a "principled one" (also Norris's term). Even Winch admitted he greatly admired Anscomb for his unwavering principles and beliefs, "the only Tory in the government who had any." Winch interview, November 4, 1973.


Fulton interview, November 1, 1973. This was a particularly serious problem in that as Vice President Fulton was responsible for insuring that there was federal organization in every part of the province. Without Anscomb's help, the feeling arose that he was not concerned with federal campaign problems.


Fulton. Only 29 when elected in 1945, Fulton had been President of the Young Progressive Conservatives, who had always opposed merger with the Liberals.

Bewley interview, September 28, 1973. Norris countered by calling the liquor issue a red herring, but admitted that he tried to persuade Anscomb "to give up his interests in Growers' Wines." Anscomb refused on the grounds of principle saying that "if he were in Britain, his business interests would not be questioned; in fact, they would be considered quite normal and quite respectable." Norris interview, August 9, 1974.

Especially, March 4, 1950.

Vancouver Sun, September 1, 1950.

Ibid., August 29, 1950.

Fulton personally told me this. Fulton interview, November 1, 1973.

This charge was made in the "Blue Book" and by Deane Finlayson who said he has written evidence that it was so. However, I have not seen any such evidence. All the federal members interviewed and Bewley denied that they (the federal members) were actively involved.

Vancouver Province, September 12, 1950.


Victoria Colonist, October 1, 1950.

Vancouver Province, October 6, 1950.


Victoria Colonist, October 7, 1950.

Ibid.

Victoria Colonist, October 7, 1950.

One party official said that Cameron was an avid opponent of Anscomb who "was making trouble because he was ignored by the party leader."
The resolution read as follows:

Whereas duplication of work and a certain amount of confusion exists through the fact that there is now a federal organization and a provincial organization working within the framework of the British Columbia Progressive Conservation Association, and whereas, in the interests of efficiency and economy these two organizational branches should be merged into one.

Therefore, this convention goes on record as favouring this change and that the Executive of the British Conservative Association be empowered to take any necessary steps to have it effected. From B.C. Progressive Conservative Association, A Factual Documented Statement of the Conservative Party's Position in B.C. and Some of the Reasons for the Motion of No Confidence in the National Leader, Party Files, March, 1955, p. 10. Referred to hereafter as Blue Book.

* At the time, the federal people and provincial people were located in separate rooms but in the same office building. They had separate telephones and even the signs on the doors distinguished between federal and provincial organizations.
Bennett and Tillie Rolston (Conservative Vancouver-Pt. Grey) made their displeasure with the sales tax known by bolting ranks and joining the C.C.F. in voting against it. While rumors abounded that the Tory caucus was in an uproar over the tax, which was instigated by the Finance Minister, no information could be found on other caucus members.

In addition to each wing having its own organizers, they also had separate finance committees. The person apparently in charge of raising money for the provincial party was A. C. Des Brisay. For the federal party it was Fred Field and Leon Ladner. According to Ladner, the coalition prevented the two committees from working together. Letter, L. J. Ladner to G. Drew, January 28, 1954, Bell Papers, P.A.C., vol. I.


Barker was first employed as provincial organizer for the Conservative Party by Howard Green in 1942 when Green was assigned responsibility for federal organization in the province.


157. According to Bewley's correspondence, the demand for Barker's discharge was on the grounds "of interference in provincial affairs and marked disloyalty to the provincial leader." Letter, A. L. Bewley to R. A. Bell, February 12, 1954. *Bell Papers, P.A.C., Vol. 1.*


159. Letter, G. Drew to G. R. Pearkes, November 18, 1950, *Blue Book*, p. 12. The argument smoldered until December, 1951, when Drew came to Vancouver to meet personally with Anscomb in an attempt to patch up the quarrel. The question remained: how much voice would the federal Conservatives have in provincial affairs? Drew's visit, coming at the time of the association's annual convention in December, was marked by several private meetings with prominent B.C. Conservatives, including a long closed door session with the provincial leader. Nothing concrete was settled, but the federal people did win at least a partial victory in the fight to keep a foothold in the B.C. association. A draft constitution considered at the convention, which would have increased provincial representation within the association fourfold while halving the federal representation, was delayed through endless amendments and finally layed over until the new year. The only other action of significance to come out of the meeting was the appointment of C. C. I. Merritt, former M.P. for Vancouver-Burrard, as Drew's personal representative in B.C. For details of the 1951 Convention, see, Ron Haggart, "Struggle for Tory Control Unsettled," *Vancouver Sun*, December 3, 1951.


162. $4.5 million. A further deficit of $2.5 million was forecast by Anscomb in his budget address at the outset of the 1950 session. Worley, *W. A. C. Bennett*, p. 46.


Turnbull was a Liberal.

Sherman, Bennett, p. 73.

Ibid, p. 74.

Victoria Colonist, March 16, 1951.

One interpretation is that Rolston had made a "firm" request to Anscomb in 1950 that she get a cabinet post. His refusal and not the hospitalization insurance mess was the key factor leading to her bolting the party. Norris interview, August 9, 1974.

Victoria Colonist, March 17, 1951.

Ibid., March 29, 1951.

Vancouver Province, March 28, 1951.

Leigh Stevenson (Vancouver-Pt. Grey). Vancouver Province, April 7, 1951.

Victoria Colonist, March 29, 1951.

Vancouver Sun, March 30, 1951.

Vancouver Province, April 7, 1951.

Vancouver Sun, April 15, 1951.

Vancouver Province, April 9, 1951.


The poor relationship between the two wings was reflected not only in the divided organization, but also in the behavior of provincial M.L.A.s. In 1951, the B.C. Conservatives in the legislature voted against imposition of federal price controls—a complete break with their national leaders in parliament. Victoria Times, April 21, 1951.
Results of Esquimalt by-election (October 1, 1951):

Frank Mitchell (C.C.F.) 2711
A. C. Wurtele (Independent) 2510
Percy George (Coalition) 1693
Other 435

Vancouver News Herald, October 3, 1951; Victoria Colonist, October 2, 1951.

Vancouver Sun, October 3, 1951.

James Nesbitt, Vancouver News Herald, October 3, 1951.

The executive voted to call a full scale convention before June 30. Vancouver News Herald, January 9, 1952.

Fraser, "B.C. Coalition Commits Suicide," p. 5.


Victoria Colonist, January 19, 1952.

Ibid.

Ibid., January 19, 1952.

Sherman, Bennett, p. 97.


Victoria Colonist, January 19, 1952.

Ibid.

This point was stressed by Henry Drummond who was Conservative campaign chairman for Anscomb in 1952 and Finlayson in 1953. Drummond interview, July 24, 1974.


204 Winch interview, November 9, 1973.

205 Primarily Wismer and Anscomb.

206 Robin, Pillars of Profit, p. 140.

207 B.C. liquor laws prohibited the sale of spirits by the glass. Despite public outcries for change of the outmoded liquor laws, the coalition, mainly because they could never agree among themselves what to do, refused to act. This was the case despite their running on election platforms in 1945 and 1949 which promised liquor reform.


211 Ibid.

212 Ibid.

212a It was alleged, for example, that Frank Barker, who was thought to have strong leanings toward Social Credit, was attempting to completely separate federal and provincial party operations because of his links with Bewley, Bonner and Bennett. Letter, L. Bewley to R. A. Bell, February 16, 1954, Bell Papers, P.A.C., Vol. 1.
At least one example of this is cited in the *Blue Book*, p. 14. Howard Green told me that he doubted the veracity of the report as he had never heard of the person alleged to be the federal organizer. Letter from Howard Green to author, November 20, 1973.

Green denied that federal members as far as he knew ever involved themselves in the Social Credit campaign.


Ibid., p. 105.

The Reverend Ernest Hansell, evangelist, Alberta M.P., and National President of the Social Credit Movement of Canada, was selected campaign leader.


*Victoria Colonist*, June 10, 1952.

Ibid.

The Social Credit doctrine and campaign is detailed in Sanford, *The Politics of Protest*, Ch. 6.

*Vancouver Province*, April 30, 1952.

Ibid., May 1, 1952.

*Victoria Colonist*, June 10, 1952.


Ibid.

*Victoria Colonist*, June 10, 1952.

At a party meeting, Johnson protested vigorously against the decision, Wismer supported it.

*Vancouver Province*, April 29, 1952.

Sherman, Bennett, p. 109.

Cited in ibid., p. 108.

ibid.

Vancouver Sun, June 11, 1952.


One possible reason for this is that many voters confused the label "Social" Credit with "socialism" or some variant thereof. In the 1953 election, the mistake was not repeated.


ibid., p. 181.

 Seats and Votes on the First Count, 1952 Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.C.F.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Credit</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27.20</td>
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</table>

All election data taken from Province of British Columbia, Chief Electoral Officer, Statement of the Vote, 1952.

Victoria is a three-member riding.


Except for Carson (Lillooet), the entire coalition cabinet in 1952 was made up of Lower Mainland-Victoria politicians.


André Blais suggests more attention be paid to the symbolic means by which traditional parties are effective or ineffective in remaining attached to the voters and therefore making it possible for third parties to emerge in the first place. "Third Parties in Canadian Politics," Canadian Journal of Political Science, VI, No. 3 (September, 1973), 437-438.


As cited in Flanigan, Political Behavior, p. 88.

Voter turnout declined in 1952 by 5 percent from 1949.
CHAPTER VI
THE THROES OF DEFEAT: 1952-1954

The High Price of Failure

In the months following the 1952 election, the Conservative Party paid a high price for its dismal showing and the internecine warfare which had plagued it since 1949. First, a large number of Conservatives—supporters, party officials, and even some candidates—abandoned the Tory Party to join Bennett and the recently successful Social Credit movement. Second, dissension between the party's provincial and federal wings increased and intensified, culminating in the unprecedented act of a provincial leader supporting a motion of no-confidence in the federal leader two years later. Third, provincial organization practically dried up in most of the constituencies in the next few years.

The immediate effect of the Conservative Party's electoral failure in 1952 was a massive drop off of the party's support base and organizational cadre. While figures are not available, party officials confirmed this to be the case. Deane D. Finlayson remarked that "they (Conservatives) went over in large numbers. Bennett was where the action was now."¹ Henry Drummond, Campaign Chairman for Anscomb in 1952 and Finlayson in 1953, agreed that between 1952 and 1954, except for the old guard in the riding association and die-hard Anscomb loyalists, most Conservatives moved over to Social Credit.² Barker, the controversial federal organizer, writing in a confidential "State of the Ridings" report at the end of 1953, stated: a major Interior riding "was in a HELL of a mess" since "our people have

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either gone Social Credit openly, or give us lip service and work for Social Credit secretly." In another riding, Victoria, Barker concluded, "the best people are openly Social Credit provincially and I suspicious [sic] were secretly Social Credit in the last federal election (1953)." This exodus was not confined to party officials and supporters. Candidates, some who had been affiliated with the party all their lives, also made the switch. Don Brown, who as a Conservative was elected in Vancouver-Burrard in 1945 and 1949 and his wife Buda Brown, Vancouver Parks Commissioner and a prominent woman in the party, joined Social Credit after the 1953 election. Tilly Rolston and Robert Bonner, both former Tories, won seats for Social Credit in 1953. The following year, Arvid W. Lundell, former Tory M.L.A. for Revelstoke and a party organizer, announced that he was making the switch. The candidates who ran for office under the new Social Credit banner were invariably members of Conservative associations," noted Russell Walker:

Unlike Bennett, they were Tories who were not dominant in their local groups. That didn't make them second raters. In some instances they were better men than those found blocking their advancement. But they were Tories. . . . To me the only definition that stands up is that a Social Crediter is a member of the wing of the Conservative Party now in power.6

The dismal Conservative showing and the success of Social Credit also led to a deeper division between the federal and provincial wings of the party. Finlayson charged that Fulton, Green and federal organizers were directly responsible for undermining the provincial party because "they helped raise money for, and actively supported Bennett's attempt to win the leadership." Supporting Bennett was perceived as "an act of sabotage" and, understandably, increased the provincial leaders' hostility toward the federal wing:
They (federal people) were using these guys who shouldn't have been used this way. Federal organizers should have been used for organizing voters for the federal election. They shouldn't have been used to go around poisoning Conservative minds against the provincial leader.8

Moreover, the opening of the separate federal office, and the refusal of Drew to order it closed, infuriated the Anscomb people. "Drew could have made the difference by telling Pearkes to break with Green and close up that office," said Finlayson, "but Drew didn't!"9 The bitterness which the reality of dual organizations fostered cannot be overstated. Drummond remembers that the conflict intensified to a point where even the executive secretaries of the respective offices would not speak to each other.10

Leadership Again

With Anscomb defeated, the party once again was forced to choose a new leader.11 Few prominent candidates stepped forward, not surprising considering the party was almost a corpse. More by circumstance than by intent, Ernie Carson, who was selected temporary house leader of the four man caucus, seemed the natural choice to succeed Anscomb.

Carson, who did not actively seek the leadership, in fact had excellent credentials. He had by far the most experience of any sitting member. First elected to the legislature in the Tolmie sweep of 1928, he was reelected in 1941 and had been a cabinet minister since 1942. From 1942-1946 Carson held the twin portfolio of Mines and Trade and Industry. Since 1946 he had been Minister of Public Works, one of the most valued portfolios because of the extensive patronage involved. A popular M.L.A., Carson had remained for the most part removed from the schism in the party which gave rise to the anti-Anscomb movement in 1950. He enjoyed fairly
good relations with Anscomb while at the same time he was highly regarded by the federal people. Fulton recalled how he first tried to get Carson to oppose Anscomb in 1950, but Carson refused on the grounds that "the leader deserved the loyalty of his fellow Conservatives." Fulton explained Carson's position this way:

Ernie was in 100 per cent agreement that the coalition should have been ended in 1949. He also felt that it was nonsense for any provincial leader to take the position that Anscomb took in respect to his status as provincial leader. But out of loyalty and friendship, he wouldn't agree to oppose Herb Anscomb.

It was Fulton who first approached Carson after the 1952 election. According to him, Carson consented to run for the leadership. He died, however, one month before the convention, and with him died perhaps the best opportunity to put together a united Conservative Party.

Yet prior to Carson's passing there were rumors other candidates might be in the leadership race. The person most frequently speculated about was George Pearkes, who was the only federal member to support Anscomb over Bennett in 1950. Pearkes would have been a good conciliation candidate. His relations with the federal wing were excellent and, despite his involvement in the separate offices affair, his support of Anscomb in 1950 kept him in fairly good standing with the provincial wing. He considered himself a "personal friend" of both Drew and Anscomb, and had been involved in numerous "fence mending" meetings between the provincial and federal wings of the party in the past. But on September 26, Pearkes publicly announced he would not be a candidate. He said his first interest was in federal politics and that the provincial leadership did not interest him. To understand why is not difficult. Pearkes was a popular M.P. and highly regarded in the party. What possible reason could there have been for him
to sacrifice a successful career in parliament to lead a party verging on bankruptcy?

As the annual meeting of the British Columbia Conservative Association approached, the leadership question was up in the air. With no active candidates for the position some began speculating that it might fall to Anscomb by default. Such a possibility greatly disturbed the anti-Anscomb forces. Correspondence between Bell and Fulton and Green and Merritt reveals the considerable importance they placed on "making sure" Anscomb was ousted at the October association meeting. Fulton stressed the importance of "packing the B.C. association" sufficiently to do the job, "so that there would be no recriminations that the federal party did it." Fulton wrote to Bell: "get federal meetings in each constituency, get our own people in there, and then insure that at the meeting on October 18, we and our friends are in control." 16

When the meeting convened, the anti-Anscomb forces pressed their view that the party leader should resign at once. This effort was designed to foreclose on the possibility that Anscomb's leadership would be tested at a formal leadership convention. Anscomb at the outset of the meeting announced his intention to resign, but only at a formally constituted leadership convention. The rebels did not want to wait. They wanted him to resign immediately.

Only after the anti-Anscomb forces demonstrated they had the votes to control the meeting 17 did Anscomb, sensing their determination and strength, bow to their demand. Three hours after he announced his intention to resign, he rose from his chair and said:
Mr. President, I am in the unhappy position, I think, that perhaps my English isn't good enough to express what was in my mind. For clarity a third time . . . I'll hand my resignation to you but you must tender it to the convention.  

It was now official. Anscomb had quit. But not before he rapped his opponents. As for the party's younger members, he denounced them for "thinking that they can run the world all by themselves." As for his federal antagonists, he said, "We had absolutely no support from the national party (in the last election) and under the circumstances I didn't want it."  

The meeting produced more visible evidence of the deep split between the two wings of the party. During the controversy over the proposed changes in the party constitution, two Vancouver Island delegates argued vehemently that "the federal people had no right to interfere in B.C.'s business"; in other words they should be excluded from participating in provincial party affairs. When another delegate called the whole thing crazy because "it presupposes that the provincial and federal groups are at each other's throats," several anti-Anscomb delegates shouted "we are, we are."  

When the meeting concluded, the proceedings gave evidence that a minor revolution had occurred in the party. Anscomb was no longer leader, but as events would show he was still very much in the picture. With the defeat of the contentious clause in the new constitution which would have effectively stilled the voice of federal Conservatives in the affairs of the B.C. association, and the election of Davie Fulton to succeed George Pearkes as party president, the party's old guard had been defeated. The locus of power in the provincial party had shifted. How these changes would affect the outcome of the upcoming leadership contest and future prospects for a united party, however, remained in doubt.
A leadership convention was called for November 29. With Carson and Pearkes out of the picture, attention focused on Albert MacDougall, the second member for Vancouver-Point Grey, first elected in the by-election caused by Maitland's death in 1946. But MacDougall, who was loyal to Anscomb, died prior to convention day, leaving the leadership question wide open once again.

In the meantime, on Vancouver Island a newcomer was quietly organizing a campaign of his own. On November 13, thirty-three year old Deane D. Finlayson, a Nanaimo insurance agent, who had been active in the party for only six years, formally announced his candidacy. Finlayson, whose only past party achievements were managing the successful Larry Giovando provincial campaign in Nanaimo in 1952, and being elected president of the Nanaimo Federal Conservation Association, was part of the still strong "Anscomb Island machine." Whether or not he was personally tapped by Anscomb to run is not ascertainable. In any case he was a strong Anscomb supporter at the 1950 convention and had the overwhelming support of Vancouver Island Conservatives. His youthfulness was definitely an asset in a party long dominated by an "aged clique," but his ties with Anscomb were something of a handicap if he was to be the leader to unite the party.

In an attempt to head off Finlayson, Bewley and other Vancouver Young Conservatives began putting together a "draft Fulton" movement. Fulton, the new association president, tapped once before for the leadership, continued to express reluctance. Like Pearkes, his reasons were obvious. Why sacrifice a successful career in parliament to lead a hopelessly defeated and divided party? On November 26, three days before the convention opened, Fulton announced that under no circumstances would he be a candidate.
With no apparent opposition to Finlayson, Bewley entered the race at the last minute "only because he felt the Anscomb crowd had to be opposed." Finlayson's election was an almost certainty, and he won easily over his only opponent. Bewley's candidacy was hopeless from the beginning because of his vigorous anti-Anscomb and pro-Bennett activities in the past. By not presenting a viable candidate in advance, opponents of Finlayson blundered badly. One month earlier they had demonstrated significant strength in the provincial association. Had they been grooming someone from the beginning, they probably could have controlled the party. As it was, the touting of such federal influentials as George Pearkes and Davie Fulton was only wishful thinking.

All in all, the convention resembled more, in the words of the Times, "a public assignment in bankruptcy than the beginning of recovery." So dispirited was the party only 200 of the more than 600 eligible delegates attended, the smallest gathering for a leadership convention in the party's history. If the party could be reunited, a formidable task, there yet remained the problem of making a comeback. With the death of Carson and MacDougall, the party's strength in the legislature was reduced to two seats, not much of a nucleus from which to begin rebuilding efforts. Finlayson was correct when he stated in his nominating address:

We have one handicap; generally speaking, the confidence of the public in our party is so shattered that people of this province who want no part of socialism will rally to the aid of Social Credit in order that the C.C.F. is not elected.

The Struggle to Survive: 1953 Election

One of Finlayson's first major tasks as leader was to restore good relations with the party's federal wing. This was possible, Finlayson believed, only if all Conservative operations in B.C. were channelled
through the regular provincial association and the separate federal office closed. He relayed this belief to Drew shortly after taking over the leadership. In addition, Finlayson attempted to actively involve provincial people in the upcoming federal election campaign, thereby hoping to use the election as a catalyst to cement good relations.

But Finlayson's activities were abruptly altered in March when the Liberals, joined by the C.C.F., Tom Uphill, and one Social Crediter, defeated the government's proposed education bill, thereby prompting the government's resignation. The vote against the bill hardly surprised Bennett. The premier pushed the Public School Act amendments (thereafter known as the Rolston Formula) knowing full well the government would lose. Bennett could now go to the people on the pretext the opposition was obstructive and make a strong case for the return of a solid Social Credit majority. When the dissolution was granted, much to the disappointment of Winch, Bennett quickly announced the "main issue" of the election to be whether or not British Columbia was to have a government with a working majority, in other words, "Social Credit or chaos."

The campaign was lackluster and produced remarkably few issues upon which the parties divided. All four parties spoke generally of the need for increased economic development in B.C., further labor legislation to protect the rights and security of the workingman, increased spending in the areas of health and education, removal of the three percent sales tax on meals under one dollar, and further development of the North through completion of the P.G.E., and increased highway building. If any generalization is possible, it is that specific issues became hopelessly obscured in a sea of clichés and unending verbiage. The Liberals spoke of intelligent
leadership "as the alternative to hopeless chaos." The C.C.F. emphasized the "Christian origins" of social democracy and spoke of "the need for a stable balanced economy, progressive social reforms and a contented labor force." Deane Finlayson proudly spoke of the Conservatives as the party of "tradition" with centuries of public service to democratic peoples throughout the Commonwealth, and the party of "private enterprise" supporting the "cardinal principle that incentive must be kept alive and not smothered." The premier spoke repeatedly of the Social Credit Party as a "responsible peoples movement, the soundest group that ever operated a government in the Dominion of Canada."

Although the 1953 campaign was similar to the one a year earlier, there was a significant difference. Bennett's party had demonstrated its viability and from the beginning the opposing parties campaigned against Social Credit rather than against each other. Social Credit was mercilessly flayed by all three opposition parties, perhaps to an extent paralleled only by the coalition attack on the C.C.F. in 1945. Arthur Laing, the new Liberal leader, denounced the Social Credit Party as a gang of "radical McCarthyites" masquerading under a free enterprise label, "the most dangerous movement ever to strike Canada . . . a government based on prejudice." On one occasion, Laing quoted Solon Low, Reverend Hansell, J. A. Reid and other fundamentalists to prove the fascist nature of the new men of power. Social Credit opposed the United Nations, Jews, Liberals, labor, education, social security, free enterprise and parliament, Laing charged. Contending that the "real issue" was between socialism and fascism on the one side and democratic liberalism on the other, he promised, when elected, to rid the government of "those who called each other dirty names across
the aisles and to restore a greater measure of dignity to public life in
the province.  

Laing's diatribes, however, were no better than Finlayson's. Bitter
that Social Credit was perceived by many voters as having stolen the Tory
Party and worse, preempted the Conservatives' claim to represent "free enter-
prise," Finlayson and his lieutenants attempted to negate the appeal of
Social Credit by branding the party "socialistic," "dictatorial," and fun-
damentally alien to the traditional economic institutions of Canada and
the Canadian way of life. For Conservatives it was a risky strategy,
but perhaps the only strategy they had. On one occasion Finlayson claimed
Bennett led a "fundamentally Socialist Party" which could not function
without a dictator. Comparing Bennett with Hitler, the Tory leader said,
"the same characteristics are there--a desire to control and a desire for
self-glorification." In an attempt to dismiss Social Credit as an al-
ternative for the "great majority of voters who want to vote against social-
ism," a half page newspaper summary of the Conservative program stated:

British Columbians have indicated in a general way they prefer a
system of private enterprise administration. Were it not for the
fact that Social Credit is a factor in this election people follow-
ing this category would, of course, vote Conservative or Liberal.
It is the advent of Social Credit which complicates and confuses
in this election.

Some people--too many--have been deluded into thinking Social Credit
is a private enterprise party. This is caused by the fact that it
operates on a provincial level restrained by federal laws on a more
or less private enterprise basis. Thinking people, however, must
not overlook the real purpose of Social Credit which is anything
but private enterprise . . . it is to work to achieve a new finan-
cial structure in Canada which would control prices, wages and
profits. Social Credit, like the CCF, would stifle individual
freedom and initiative.

Bennett, despite the mudslinging, was in the driver's seat. After
all, it was to Social Credit that people by the thousands had flocked as
an alternative to the insensitivity of the traditional party politicians, the alleged improprieties, and the petty partisan intrigue of the former Liberal-Conservative government. It was Social Credit which had, during the past session, demonstrated a "populist" or "people's" hue, while at the same time standing firm for the preservation of free enterprise and individual initiative. And it was Social Credit that could claim to be unencumbered by partisan and special interests since its supporters came from the ranks of Liberals, Conservatives and the C.C.F. alike. Most important, "Social Credit had one clear advantage over the other parties," Bennett said; "the average voters' desire for a stable government." He warned the voters that "many large and small industries are awaiting the outcome of this election; if the Social Credit government has a good working majority, then industries will be commenced with increased payrolls to all."

The Conservative Party found itself in the worst position of all. Bitterly divided, its organization and finances severely depleted, and running against a party which had stolen a good chunk of its support base and organizational cadre, the party could hardly advertise itself as any more of a credible alternative in 1953 than it was in 1952. Perhaps the Conservative Party might have had a chance if there existed definable policy issue areas which distinguished it clearly from the others. Instead, despite attempts to woo voters with promises of free milk to school children, and a strong endorsement of the "democratic system of non sectarian schools," the Conservative Party did not carve out any clear and distinct policy area of its own. The education plank, which provided a new formula for financing education costs relieving the property owner of some of the burden of school taxation (the provincial government would pay 80 percent
of operational costs and the cities and districts 20 percent) was referred to in the Speaker's Manual as the "most significant proposal in our platform." Yet the Manual also admitted the Liberals had adopted most of this plank in their own platform. The plan appeared sensible enough, yet facts and figures presenting "operating costs" and "percentage formulas" made it very difficult to understand. Except for the plank against "confiscatory taxation" on the mining and timber industries, and the famous "free milk" plank (which many Tories thought was something of a joke in light of their general philosophical bent), the platform did not present a clear Conservative alternative. As the campaign progressed, it became obvious that the Tory Party had resigned itself to a strategy which contained two major components; a personal and ideological attack on Bennett and the Social Credit Party, and a firm, if not highly salient, defense of free enterprise economics.

The Tories were plagued with severe financial problems. Most of the big contributors of the past were either holding back or directly supporting Social Credit. B.C. Telephone and the liquor industries, both traditional contributors for Conservative campaigns, gave one-twentieth of what they contributed in 1952. The federal wing of the party cut off funds altogether. The only campaigns receiving minimal financial support were in the two or three "safe" seats such as Nanaimo and Vancouver-Point Grey. In addition, Finlayson, insisting a candidate be fielded in every constituency, could not find candidates to run in many. The magnitude of the problem is demonstrated in this revealing statement by Drummond:

Four days before the nominations closed, Finlayson called to tell me he could not find a candidate to run in Prince Rupert. "Nobody will run," he said. He then insisted that I (the campaign chairman) enter my name there.
The federal wing also gave little or no assistance to their provincial counterparts in order, in Bewley's words, "to retain their (the federal people) prospects of re-election." 49

By the time of the election, the party's prospects and general situation had deteriorated from poor to hopeless. Only thirty-nine candidates were fielded, eight short of a full slate. 50 The campaign was grossly underfinanced. The strategy of attacking Social Credit as "radical" had not been successful and, if anything, made the Tories look quite desperate. Speakers for rallies were almost impossible to obtain forcing cancellation of some ridings meetings. Candidate meetings which typically drew from 75 to 100 people in 1952 were getting an average of 15 to 20 this time and in some places only the organization personnel and the candidate's friends showed. 51

Party morale was further drained as it became commonly believed federal organizers were holding meetings in various constituencies and telling the riding associations not to run candidates because of an "understanding" with Socreds (allegedly made by federal people). In return for not running Conservatives against Social Credit provincially, Social Credit would reciprocate by supporting Conservatives federally. Finlayson stated:

In Chilliwack, the meeting there told me that the understanding was that we weren't going to put up candidates. They said that they were told this by federal organizers. 52

This charge is also found in the "Blue Book" 53 but vehemently disputed by Howard Green. According to Green, "certainly the federal members were not backing Social Credit." 54

Regardless of whether or not "deals" or "arrangements" were made in individual ridings between Social Credit and Conservatives, the significant
point is that Finlayson and many others believed deals were made, and therefore became even more embittered with federal people.

The election resulted in the Conservative Party being all but destroyed as a force in provincial politics. They won only one seat, Dr. Larry Giovando's in Nanaimo and the Islands, and that only on the final ballot. The party ended up winning a minute 1.1 percent of the vote on the final count (the alternative voting system was again used in 1953) and 5.6 percent on the first count. The magnitude of the defeat was immense. Apart from Nanaimo, in only two ridings, Oak Bay (Finlayson) and Salmon Arm (Ritchie), did a Tory candidate finish higher than fourth on the first count. And in both of these ridings, the Conservative candidate finished third. Across the province, Conservative candidates were massively defeated; in Atlin, the Tory candidate received 90 votes out of 603 cast; in Cariboo, 465 out of 4607; in Chilliwack, 566 out of 13,915; in Columbia, 66 out of 1984; in Delta 557 out of 29,585; in Dewdney, 539 out of 18,112; in "Conservative" Esquimalt, 476 out of 8561; in Kamloops, 405 out of 7629; in Ernie Carson's Lillooet, 424 out of 3630; in Similkameen, 310 out of 9888; in Vancouver-Center, 941 out of 18,785 (Ballot A) and 1006 out of 18,518 (Ballot B); in the traditional Tory stronghold, Vancouver-Point Grey, 4418 out of 48,248 (Ballot A) and 7156 (Miller, an incumbent) out of 48,293 (Ballot B). And so it went. The party that had been a major force in British Columbia politics since party lines were first established, emerged from the 1953 election almost completely defeated.

The success of Social Credit in 1953 (28 seats and 37.7 percent of the popular vote on the first count) is examined in detail elsewhere. Of significance here is the extent to which Social Credit "stole" votes
away from the Conservative Party. A comparison of the 1952 and 1953 elections reveals an important change. In 1952, C.C.F. secondary support and Liberal-Conservative tertiary support gave Social Credit the election victory. In 1953, C.C.F. secondary support changed markedly and went, in all but two ridings, to the Liberals rather than to Social Credit. However, the most significant difference in the 1953 election was the shift of traditional party voters to the new party. In other words, Liberals and Conservatives generally gave their second or third choices to Social Credit. Sanford found that in the ten new seats Social Credit won in 1953 (these were all in the Vancouver-Victoria area), there was a distinct shift from the Conservatives to Social Credit at the first choice level. Not only did this help to build Social Credit's majority, but it indicates that many Conservatives who refused to abandon the party in 1952 had, one year later, changed their minds and voted for the new party. This apparent switch in party support is the single most important factor accounting for the loss of voter support suffered by the Tory Party.

The new system of interchanged votes manifested in 1953—1) Social Credit, Conservatives and Liberals; 2) C.C.F. and Liberals—was, curiously, just what the Tory (and presumably the Liberal) campaign bosses wanted. The Conservative Campaign Speaker's Manual goes on to elaborate lengths to explain why candidates must warn against plumping and urge their supporters to vote alternatively for the free enterprise candidates as the sure way to defeat socialism and increase their party's chances to win. (Interestingly enough, after referring to Socreds as alien radicals throughout the campaign, Conservatives were urged to give their second or third choice votes to them.) This, as in 1952, worked to the benefit of Social Credit in terms
of the number of seats won. The strategy, however, did not affect the outcome for the Conservatives because the first count totals indicate the party was soundly defeated despite the balloting system.

The fact the Liberal Party did considerably better than the Tories in 1953 raises an interesting question. If the Tories were so discredited by the political sparring and intrigue associated with coalition, why were not the Liberals equally discredited? A number of general reasons are suggested. First, voters who gave the C.C.F. a respectable 30.8 percent of the vote on the first count in 1953 tended to transfer votes differently than they did in 1952. In 1952 the typical C.C.F. voter tended to give his second choice to Social Credit. As discussed above, the typical C.C.F.er's alternative choices were used as a protest against the traditional parties. In 1953, as a result of Social Credit being in power, C.C.F. voters (presumably now with more understanding of the new party) tended to revert to more traditional patterns of C.C.F. voting; alternative choices were in most cases given to the Liberal Party, rarely given to Social Credit and almost never given to the Tories. This is not surprising since a substantial part of both the Liberal and C.C.F. voting constituency, since 1933, had shifted back and forth. Moreover, once Social Credit demonstrated its free enterprise credentials, the C.C.F. voter was probably disposed to favor the Liberal Party over the other two. The main significance of this for the Liberal Party is that it kept its final vote count from being substantially reduced.

This voting behavior, however, does not account for the Liberals' respectable showing on the first count in both 1952 and 1953, suggesting a possible second reason. The Liberals, the dominant party in British
Columbia since 1933, and the dominant party federally since 1935, still appeared viable, while the Conservative Party, an opposition party both provincially and federally, did not. Admittedly, this cannot be "proven" since there is no way of administering a survey to the voters in 1952 and 1953. At best this explanation can only be inferred from what we know of party development and voting behavior. The Liberal Party enjoyed a history of great success in British Columbia, and it would be surprising if in the short period of two years its massive support base completely crumbled. Something of a parallel existed in Alberta where the Liberals dominated Alberta politics through four elections (1905-1921). After a decisive defeat in 1921, it took three election defeats before the party's support base dropped below 25 percent. Of course, there are certain circumstances under which a major party might completely crumble, despite its longevity or dominance in a party system. One such circumstance is party fractionalization in which a major sector or faction of the party leaves to join another, or begins a new party. Party fractionalization suggests a third reason why Liberals fared better than Conservatives in 1952 and after.

Admittedly, coalition led to severe infighting in both parties. Both had problems with their federal wings and both had leadership problems. Both experienced the divisive strains of temporary coalitionists, anti-coalitionists and permanent coalitionists fighting with each other. The simple fact of the matter is that the Conservative factionalism was worse, probably because of the frustrations of being out of power so long, the problems arising out of its "junior" status in the coalition, and the unique personality and organizational conflict that existed between the federal and provincial leadership.
Although the coalition produced severe strains in the Liberal Party, it did not deeply divide it. Liberals avoided situations as damaging as the infamous 1950 Tory leadership convention which split the Conservative Party in half. Most important, Bennett was a Conservative who took with him to Social Credit not only Conservative voters but a large part of the organizational cadre, traditional financial support, and the sympathies, if not the open support, of the party's federal wing. 64

Rock Bottom

Since 1950 the Conservative Party in B.C. had been undergoing a gradual process of self-destruction, culminating finally in the 1953 election. The Conservatives plunged from a major force in provincial politics to a pitiful remnant party in less than three years. With the party internally divided, financially depleted, and electorally defeated, many Conservatives felt it was pointless to carry on. More important, general opinion as reflected in the press seemed to feel the party was dead, or at best, experiencing its last gasps. 65

If provincial Tories were rapidly being written off as a future force in B.C. politics, what did this spell for the federal party? Federal Tories had also been experiencing hard times in British Columbia, but with three M.P.s and still some semblance of an organization, they were at least viable. There was a strong feeling, however, that their fortunes could not improve unless federal people were in full control of organizing whatever Conservative clientele still existed in the federal arena. This implied if not a complete divorce from the provincial Tory remnant, at least sole authority over all party matters in the province relating to electing federal Conservatives. This became the federal party's position which, not surprisingly,
was completely unacceptable to Finlayson and his provincial rump. A major conflict ensued (perhaps more correctly, the continuing federal provincial dispute escalated) culminating in a dramatic blow-up at Vernon in the summer of 1954, an event which sank the provincial party to its lowest point ever.

Because the Vernon meeting was a symbolic climax to the provincial Tories' ongoing process of self-destruction (at least since 1950) it is useful to conclude this account with an examination of the events leading up to, and the consequences of, the Vernon confrontation.

Less than two months after the 1953 provincial election a federal election was held. The results of the August contest found the federal Tory Party once again far removed from electoral victory. The party managed to gain only 10 seats more than the paltry 41 won in 1949 (all but two of the gains were in Ontario). In B.C. the party failed to increase its representation over the three seats already held, and the total Conservative vote in the province dropped from 128,620 in 1949 to 66,426 in 1953. To some observers the federal party in B.C., like its provincial counterpart, appeared on the verge of extinction.

The dismal showing of federal Conservatives in B.C. can only in part be attributed to their poor showing nationwide. The Conservative vote in B.C. was reduced to nearly half of the 1949 vote. But the only other provinces in which the Tory popular vote declined were Alberta and Saskatchewan (drops of 13 and 23 percent respectively). The poor Conservative showing resulted from the entry of Social Credit in the federal contest (it polled 26.1 percent of the provincial vote) and the general disarray within the party, especially its inability to raise money and the fact that candidates were placed in only 16 of the 22 ridings.
The immediate effect of the election was to increase the animosity between Finlayson and his supporters and Drew, Green, and the national party president, George Hees. The federal people complained that Finlayson's "wanting to make trouble" made building an adequate organization impossible, which directly contributed to the party's poor federal showing. Finlayson blamed the federal people for dividing the party and added: "What could they expect? They didn't help us, so few of us were overly enthusiastic about helping George Drew. They had their own federal organizers so what role was there for us?" Finlayson saw something else in the result too:

Had the federal party been successful, their courting of Social Credit and writing me off as a liability may have justified itself. As it was, they went nowhere. If anyone was a liability, it was George Drew, who had taken the party to depths lower than even it was with Bracken.

Despite the grumbling, some concrete attempts were made shortly thereafter to reunify the party. Recognizing that disunity would only further jeopardize the future of the party provincially and federally, the executive of the B.C. association after meeting on September 21, sent to the national leader a set of proposals which, they felt, if put into force would enhance the reunification and rebuilding of the party. In line with the association's long standing position that there should be one Conservative organization in the province through which all party operations would be channelled, the following proposals were made:

1. The elected officers of the B.C. Progressive Conservative Association, hereafter referred to as the "Board" shall function as board of management ... to conduct the affairs of the party in B.C. and shall be responsible to the membership of the association and leaders, provincial and federal.

2. The Board shall hire and fire the staff employed by the association including the field men (organizers) but no field man shall be employed or discharged without first being approved by provincial
and federal leaders. In the event of objection, either leader will have the power of veto. Field men shall be known as Progressive Conservative party field men and not designed [sic] as provincial or federal.

3. All party activities shall be conducted from one office known as the party headquarters in British Columbia.

4. Operational expenses shall be shared equally by national headquarters and party headquarters in B.C.

5. It is not the intention to limit the authority or privilege of the leaders of this party, but rather to complement them in development of strong and active constituency and riding associations for the purpose of assisting in the selection and election of candidates to the legislature and to parliament. 71

Controversy surrounded Drew's reception of these proposals. In his response to Finlayson on October 6, Drew agreed with the proposal that the national and provincial organizations should share equally the cost of maintaining the B.C. Progressive Conservative headquarters. 72 Further, he implied his acceptance of the idea of one joint office:

As I explained to you in our conversation over the telephone a few days ago, I am convinced that there is no difficulty whatever about making arrangements for the joint maintenance of an office of the B.C. Progressive Conservative Association for the general purposes of national and provincial organization throughout the province of British Columbia.... I am convinced that we are in entire agreement in principle and that there will be no difficulty working out any of the details. 73

Howard Green, however, denies that Drew agreed to the association's proposal that there be a sole provincial organization from which federal people would take their orders. 74 The issue boiled down to a question of interpretation and whatever Drew's position was, he made no attempt to clarify it at the time. As far as the provincial people were concerned, his "agreement in principle" was enough to put him in agreement with the general thrust of the proposals, and therefore when the separate federal office was not closed, the provincial people accused Drew and his federal counterparts of bad faith. 75
On January 21, R. A. Bell the National Organizer, sent a wire to Les Bewley, Drew's personal representative, which read as follows:

Imperative all outstanding matters relating joint maintenance office for general purposes national and provincial organizations be finally settled forthwith. Such settlement must be in full conformity with position stated Drew letter October sixth read to annual meeting from which position no departure can be tolerated. All here greatly disturbed by misunderstandings which appears to be occurring and by suggestion that indirect means being adopted to circumvent clear purpose October sixth letter. Possibility further misunderstandings allegations impeaching integrity good faith Ottawa must be removed immediately. Please send me detailed report as soon as possible.76

The intent of the wire seemed clear. Immediate efforts should be made to merge the two organizations into one and a cost-sharing plan should be implemented. However, no action was taken. Rent continued to be paid on the federal office and the provincial group became incensed that the federal people were not following Bell's instructions.77

In reviewing the correspondence on both sides, one is left with the impression that nearly everyone was prepared to accept the concept of a joint office. Bewley and Bell did not really care as they felt a joint office in itself would not prevent the federal people from exercising control over their own affairs. The two persons against the proposal, however, were Ladner and Field, the two most instrumental in mustering finances for the federal party in the province. According to Ladner:

Fred and I consider it futile to attempt to co-operate in the establishment of joint offices which mean the cost for rent, secretary, telephones and travelling expenses and in the end an organizer. The people who have been contributing would not be willing to give us money. Some of them have already indicated that.... The reaction amongst the business people and others in the community was most unfavorable (to Finlayson). They considered the provincial party as a political force to be of no consequence and its leader a man of poor judgement and little capacity.78

As it turned out, Field and to some extent Ladner, were operating independently of the regular federal party officials (Bewley and Bell). The
separate office remained open because it served Field's purpose for raising money. Bewley, after realizing the office had not been closed, conceded:

"There is no damned reason why he (Field) cannot close it down and then give that $80 (rent) over to the B.C. association and then give the appearance of going along." In a revealing statement, he continued:

Why harass the B.C. association? I am not yet persuaded that you can simply ignore the sole elected body in this province without doing some damage to the Chief's position, or to the federal party out here.... Damn it all--your strictly federal group is small enough; and I hate, unless absolutely forced to the wall, to give the impression of a small group of appointed and non-elective persons carrying on affairs with little or no regard for the official association, however stupid at times that association may be.

All of this suggests that the federal people fumbled the ball in what might have been an easy opportunity to begin patching things up, or at least keep things from getting worse. As it turned out the separate office issue paved the way for the explosion at Vernon in July.

In February the office was still open and Finlayson learned the rent had been paid to the end of the month. The issue was heatedly raised at the annual meeting of the Conservative Party of Canada held later that month. The principals on both sides agreed to hold a "reconciliation summit" on April 22 to attempt a settlement once and for all. But again no progress was made. In fact, the situation markedly deteriorated when the meeting was informed that a decision had already been made. The province would be divided organizationally into three areas in which each federal member, Green, Pearkes, and Fulton, would be responsible for all matters relating to the federal party. The decision outraged Finlayson as a further attempt by the federal members to take control of the party in the province. Drew defended the decision on the grounds that the three M.P.s are:
extremely capable members, who have demonstrated their knowledge of successful campaigning by getting elected regularly, and are ready to use their experience for the general advantage of the party at this time.82

Two days later, on April 24, at an executive meeting of the B.C. association, Finlayson suggested to the meeting:

it advise the national leader and the national president that the B.C. association will tolerate no interference, deviation or obstruction and that the suggestions advanced as to the division of the party and the province are totally unacceptable to the people of B.C. and the national leader will then to make his own choice.83

A rather lengthy and sometimes heated discussion followed. One delegate, Stewart Chambers, argued that Finlayson's proposed resolution was in effect an ultimatum and that a complete breakdown would result if it was sent to Drew. George Pearkes also spoke against it. He defended the controversial decision to divide the province into three areas on the grounds that organizational work was not being done. The party must have people in the constituencies, Pearkes agreed, who could report back directly to the national headquarters on matters such as: what constituencies should be concentrated on, how organization is progressing, and the special needs existing in particular areas. "Everyone was concerned with obtaining more seats," Pearkes said, and the intent was not to divide or take control, but to "decentralize the national organization" to make it more efficient and productive.84

Finlayson, however, was not persuaded. He felt the "federal interference" was compromising his own position. "He had been elected leader," he said, "but could not carry on under handicaps":

How can you expect the provincial leader or the president and officers to accomplish anything if you may say that they are incapable, yet that is the meaning of the decision which has been made at Ottawa... Is there anything wrong in stating our position to the national leader and the national president that we are determined to restore the party to a position of respect—that the
association will tolerate no interference or meddling by anyone—
If someone is to move around the perimeter and interfere with and
disrupt our activities and continually criticize one or the other
of us, how can the party be restored? 85

The arguments continued, but the Finlayson resolution finally passed
with only four dissenters. Among the dissenters were Pearkes and Chambers. 86

The resolution, which in effect condemned the federal party for not
closing the federal office, attempting to separate federal and provincial
organizational activities; and place federal members in charge, also took
a swipe at Howard Green:

This executive is of the opinion that this move (operating the
organizations) is merely a primary step toward dividing of the
Conservative Association of B.C. and the setting up of a separate
federal organization, dominated as in the past by Howard Green,
without any obligation or responsibility to the Conservative
association of British Columbia ... and further, Mr. Howard Green
has indicated to the provincial leader that he refuses to be bound
by commitments of the federal leader to the Conservative Associa-
tion of British Columbia and the provincial leader, in particular
in reference to the national leader's letter of October 6th, 1956,
addressed to the provincial leader. 87

Perhaps had the resolution been tempered so as not to be a blatant con-
demnation of federal actions, and had it excluded any reference to Green,
who was a formidable national figure, some sort of compromise may have
been possible. 88 Drew, left with little choice, rejected the resolution
out of hand in a personal letter to Finlayson on June 9. 89 Moreover, in
the letter he took the position that federal organizational activities
would not only continue in B.C. but would henceforth be channelled exclusive-
ly through the separate organization:

The course I now find it necessary to take indicates no lack of
interest in your success, nor does it change in any way the re-
lationship between the national and provincial associations. It
simply recognizes the fact that nothing will be gained by further
efforts to use one office for national and provincial activities in
view of the position you have taken. We must proceed with our own
organization. 90
The dispute came to a climax at the executive meeting of the B.C. association at Vernon on July 17, 1954, when Finlayson and his supporters moved a no-confidence motion in the federal leader, George Drew. In what the *Vancouver Sun* called the "Battle of Vernon" and the *Vancouver Province* fittingly described as "Suicide at Vernon," the delegates ranged themselves on one or the other side of what amounted to an open civil war in the party. One the one side was Finlayson, most of the executive members of the B.C. association and most of the ridings associations' executives. On the other side were the members of Parliament, Green, Fulton, and Pearkes, most of the Young Conservatives, and the remaining riding associations' executives and officials. Giovando, the lone Conservative M.L.A., remained aloof from the battle, but later changed his party affiliation to Independent.

As soon as the resolution was introduced, the delegates began a heated battle which lasted for several hours. Little restraint was displayed in what was an exhibition of bitter accusation and recrimination unprecedented in the party's history. Green and Drew were the object of much of the attack from those ranged on the pro side of the resolution. At one point after Green was vilified, Fulton got up and shouted "we are all a bunch of lunatics." When the roll vote was finally called the vote of no confidence passed 40 to 24. The three federal members immediately got up and stalked out of the hall taking their supporters with them. The B.C. Conservative association had taken the extreme action of repudiating its federal leader, certainly a decisive step in what the *Province* called "a fantastic progressive suicide by the Conservative Party in British Columbia."93

The party's fortunes after the historic Vernon meeting sank to their lowest point ever. With Giovando's move to Independent, the B.C. Tories
did not have a single member in the legislature. The federal members, under the aegis of Drew and the national party president, and with the support of influential British Columbia Tories such as Leon Ladner, Reg Tupper and Cecil Merritt, set up a separate organization known as the Federal Council in the fall of 1954. In the meantime, the B.C. party had a severe problem to keep from going out of business altogether. Increasing numbers of disaffected Conservatives went over to Social Credit. Organization in the ridings dwindled drastically and recruitment drives were rarely attempted. What Tory money there was went mainly to the federal party and by 1956, provincial Conservatives were operating on something less than a shoestring. Some measure of the problem is seen in the following excerpts from a "Report on Organization" written on March 4, 1955 (the author is a federal organizer who just completed a tour of the Interior):

General impressions expressed which were common to all areas:

1. Our supporters feel that the public at large is completely fed up with the party because of the internecine warfare.

2. Many of the people who should have attended the meetings and should be active workers have already reached the stage of disgust themselves and are ready to throw in the towel.

3. My organization talk resulted in one or two people taking out membership cards on the spot but they almost laughed bitterly at the thought of recruiting new members in general.

4. People said to me privately, "Why should we go on working for the party when we are patronisingly laughed at by our friends and neighbors for supporting the party?"

Typical comments:

1. From a Salmon Arm car dealer: "I am fed up and cannot see any point in attending (Conservative Party) meetings."

2. From an editor of an Interior Paper: "You're flogging a dead horse; I shall never vote Conservative again."
3. From a Vernon businessman: "Sorry, I've gone Social Credit (provincially) and am all signed up."94

The year 1954 marked the complete disintegration of the provincial Tories. Defeated, disunited, demoralized and largely displaced by Social Credit, the party did not again (as of 1975) become a major force in the province's politics. In the 1956 provincial election only 22 candidates were fielded to contest the 52 seats. Not a single candidate was elected and the party gained only 3.1 percent of the popular vote. Not even the Diefenbaker victories in 1957 and 1958 were able to revive the provincial party. In 1960 with the federal and provincial wings reunified, a nucleus of 18 Conservative M.P.s from B.C., considerable financial improvement, and a full slate of candidates,95 the party still did not win a single seat. In that election the party won only 6.7 percent of the vote. Throughout the sixties the party remained unrepresented in the B.C. legislature and, except in 1963 when it won 11.2 percent of the vote, the Conservatives were unable to put together anything like a full slate of candidates or get more than one percent of the vote. Today (1975) with only one member in the B.C. legislature, the Conservatives remain an insignificant political force in B.C. politics.
FOOTNOTES


2Drummond interview, July 24, 1974.

3Letter, C. V. F. Barker to F. Field, January 19, 1954. Ladner Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.

4Ibid., p. 3.

5Letter (no name) to R. A. Bell, July 9, 1954, Bell Papers, P.A.C., Vol. 1, File No. 7.

6Walker, Politicians, p. 229.


8Ibid.

9Ibid.

10Drummond interview, July 24, 1974.

11Anscomb at a meeting of the provincial executive in August announced his intention to resign at the upcoming annual convention. Vancouver Province, August 4, 1952.

12Fulton interview, November 1, 1973.

13Ibid.

14This was Fulton's view, Ibid. C. C. I. Merritt also believed Carson was the party's best candidate for leader. In his opinion, "if the situation ended up with George Drew the federal leader, Ernie Carson the provincial leader, and Davie Fulton the provincial president, that would all be a net gain, as Carson is friendly toward us all and would certainly set about trying to mend breaches...." Letter, C. C. I. Merritt to R. A. Bell, October 20, 1952, Bell Papers, P.A.C., Vol. 1, File No. 7.

15Vancouver Province, October 18, 1952.

17. This was evident in a vote on the proposed new constitution which if carried would have substantially reduced federal representation on the provincial executive, thereby giving the provincial people overwhelming control of the executive. A series of amendments were proposed by Vancouver Young Conservatives, supported by the federal people, all of which carried. It was a clear demonstration that the Anscomb forces would not be able to control the meeting. Vancouver Province, October 20, 1952.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.


22. Finlayson denies that he was. Others affirm that he was.


26. The party, much to the chagrin of Anscomb, did not even contest the two by-elections caused by the deaths.


28. Winch went to the Lieutenant Governor and argued that since he was in a position to command more than 19 votes, he should be given a chance to form a government. He also told me that both sitting Conservative M.L.A.s had privately assured him they would support him "because it was the right thing to do." When pressed on this, Winch replied, "the Tories were so bitter toward Bennett and the Socreds that they were very eager to block Bennett and his self serving maneuvers." Winch interview, November 9, 1973.

29. Vancouver Sun, April 1, 1953.

30. Vancouver Province, June 5, 1953.
During the 1952 session, the government lowered auto license fees, raised the sales tax exemption on restaurant meals from fifty cents to one dollar, increased taxes on logging company and mining profits, and authorized increased spending on education and mental health services.

Except for the Conservatives' opposition to increased taxation of the province's resource industry, the platform, in the words of the Province, "is in general no different from that of the other parties." April 22, 1953.

The free milk for school children plank was the brainchild of Finlayson. Perceptively, the Vancouver Province concluded, "he (Finlayson) needn't be hurt if someone points out that while professing to follow staid Conservative principles, he is setting his cap to catch votes...." April 22, 1953.


Drummond interview, July 24, 1974.
This despite Finlayson's concerted efforts to run candidates in every riding.

"Statement of the Vote," as reported in the Vancouver Province, June 10, 1953. The results in these ridings are typical of how Conservative candidates fared. Data on final vote totals (Province-wide) and percentages of vote received by each party are taken from, Province of British Columbia, Chief Electoral Officer, Statement of the Vote, 1953.

The Liberals received 23.6 percent on the first count and 23.4 percent on the final count. Four Liberals were elected.


One only needs to peruse the editorial opinion and the numerous "Letters" in the Vancouver Province, Vancouver Sun, and Victoria Times during the weeks after June 9, 1953.

Scarrow, Canada Votes, pp. 132, 146.

For example, Fred Waterhouse, a federal organizer, found the situation so bad that even in Davie Fulton's riding he had to conclude, "People in general are Davie Fulton's supporters and many would not support a Conservative if Davie resigned." Letter, F. Waterhouse to L. Ladner, March 14, 1955. Ladner Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C. The severity of the federal party's condition in B.C. is easily shown by examining the vote by riding. Six seats went uncontested. In only eight ridings did the party get more than 15 percent, and in only three did it get more than 20 percent (Kamloops-Fulton, Esquimalt-Pearkes, Vancouver-Quadra-Green, all of whom had strong personal followings). In six ridings, Conservative candidates received less than 10 percent.

Vote Received by Conservative and Social Credit Federal Candidates in Randomly Selected Ridings in 1953 Compared with the 1949 Conservative vote:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Riding</th>
<th>1949</th>
<th>1953</th>
<th>Socred vote (1953)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver-Burrard</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver South</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Westminster</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanaimo</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Center</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kootenay West</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Scarrow, Canada Votes, pp. 143-44, 159.


Ibid.

Blue Book, p. 16.


Ibid.

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Executive of the B.C. Progressive Conservative Association, Victoria, B.C., April 24, 1954, Ladner Papers, Special Collections, U.B.C.


Ibid.

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting, p. 2. Green would be in charge of the Lower Mainland, Fulton the Interior, and Pearkes Vancouver Island.


Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting, p. 3.

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting, p. 4.

Ibid., p. 5.

Ibid., p. 6.

Blue Book, pp. 18-19.

Chambers with the support of Pearkes attempted to amend the resolution to exclude any mention of Green. The motion was voted down. The brunt of the dispute centered around the organization "jurisdiction" question, but there was also considerable personal animosity as well. Finlayson, for example, said of Green, Fulton, and Drew: "All these guys
seemed to be concerned about was their own ambitions. If they could treat their own bloody people in the party with such contempt, what would they do if they got into power?" Finlayson interview, December 13, 1973.


90 Ibid.


92 Significantly, a secret ballot was used. Finlayson claimed that if it had not been for the secret ballot the resolution would never have passed. Finlayson interview, December 13, 1973.

93 Vancouver Province, July 20, 1954.


CONCLUSION

The history of the Conservative Party since 1928 is the story of a party during the years in which, from being the ruling party in the province, it ceased to be a serious contender for office. When the depression struck Canada, the Conservatives governed British Columbia and held an impressive 35 of the 48 seats in the legislature. Twenty-six years later, in 1954, they did not have a single seat in the legislature and had obtained only 5.6 percent of the vote in the provincial election one year earlier. The party had moved to the very edge of political extinction and as events have shown during the last twenty-one years, this situation has not improved.

This study, using an historical interpretative approach, has attempted to account for the party's varying fortunes during the most critical period in its history. The summary which follows isolates those events and circumstances which set the Conservative Party on a particular course and ultimately culminated in its ruin.

The depression induced economic crisis was the dominant issue during the Tolmie years and the cause of many of the troubles of the Conservative Party then. Probably no political party could have survived the dislocating effects of the 1929 crash. But there were other factors contributing to the severity of the Tory defeat in 1933. A healthy party, strongly led, might have responded more adequately to the challenge of the times. Tolmie, however, proved amazingly inept as party chieftain, a position whose responsibilities he neither wanted nor understood. While his personal prestige, combined with the sagging popularity of the Liberal government, was enough to carry him into office in 1928, his impressive electoral victory
disguised the extremely unstable nature of the Conservative Party and Tolmie's own personal deficiencies as party leader, both of which were important contributing factors in the party's reversal of fortune in 1933. Since the waning days of the McBride administration the Conservatives had been plagued by bitter factionalization, so much so that a group of prominent Tories had bolted in 1924 to form the short lived Provincial Party. Such divisions did not disappear when the Provincial Party faded away. Tolmie, more at home with his veterinary practice than in the role of party leader, did not grasp the real nature of the precarious coalition which made up the Conservative Party. Uncomfortable in the role of political broker, as party chieftain Tolmie set himself up as a kind of chairman of the board and left the managing of the enterprise to his lieutenants or simply to drift. In 1926 he warned impatient Conservatives that he was not the one for the provincial leadership. But few heeded such warning as most were concerned only with finding a person for the leadership who could break the deadlock at Kamloops.

As party leader Tolmie was unsuccessful in neutralizing party factionalism. As premier, lacking new ideas and a sense of direction, he was unable to take the initiative or pursue a course of consistent action. In line with the traditional philosophy of balanced budgets and conservative business government, the policies of the Tolmie administration were ineffective in dealing with depression problems. Factional pressures, weak leadership, and economic crisis combined to produce an astoundingly vulnerable government which, when finally taken to the test in 1933, not only collapsed, but took the party down with it.

The Conservative collapse in 1933 seemed, for a time, to mark the end
of the Tory Party as a force in provincial politics. The Liberals not only capitalized on the fall but with an aggressive new leader and an appealing "work and wages" reform program they successfully blunted the appeal of radical leftism. In 1934 the remnants of the once dominant Conservative Party found themselves in a changed political environment, one in which the center of gravity had shifted to the left. They were not only the "outs" but also a minor party seemingly outside the mainstream of political debate in British Columbia.

The Liberals, however, could not be all things to all people. Success in blunting the C.C.F. meant there existed a vacuum, however small, on the right. The more Pattullo ventured into "socialized capitalism" the more there arose a call for a traditional alternative. But despite this, any party tied to the orthodoxy of the twenties was doomed to minority status. Conservatives faced the dilemma of re-orienting their appeal so as not to be remote from what seemed to be the center of political debate, while at the same time recognizing that a revitalized Tory Party could not afford to ignore those alienated by the leftist orientation of Pattullo Liberalism and C.C.F. radicalism.

By 1937 the rebuilt party with younger and more progressive leadership began the delicate balancing job. Retaining much of their traditional philosophical complexion, there were distinct incursions into social reformism. This was the major significance of Maitland's accession to the leadership. The party's fortunes during this period also were aided by events occurring within the Liberal Party. Pattullo had varying constituencies to please and his aggressiveness in pursuing the "Little New Deal" during his early incumbency, followed later by a distinct shift to a more
moderate stance, led to increased difficulties in the Liberal Party. Moreover, the party's image was tarnished by the health insurance dilemma, the premier's callousness in dealing with the unemployment problem in Vancouver, the wrecked Dominion-provincial conference to discuss the Rowell-Sirois report, and Pattullo's alienating of backbenchers. Thus by Liberal omission as well as Conservative commission the Tories became an alternative for those fed up with the Liberal government but opposed to C.C.F. socialism. This was evident in the 1941 election when the two parties received nearly the same number of votes.

The 1941 election confirmed what the 1937 election hinted. The B.C. Conservatives were back as a major contender. But the election also confirmed the C.C.F.'s status in B.C. politics as a force far stronger than a minor protest party stemming from depression conditions. Despite the upturn of the economy and the patriotic pressures generated by the war, the C.C.F. continued to grow. Liberals and Conservatives concerned with their own survival joined forces. But the C.C.F. demonstrated strengthened persistence and the traditional parties, finding convenience and safety in alliance, chose to continue the partnership. A three party contest portended a possible C.C.F. victory through a split in the anti-socialist vote. Neither party was prepared to risk the possibility of a C.C.F. government. And they did not have to since the political atmosphere generated by the war crisis was highly favorable to the suspension of party politics.

Coalition, however, became a divisive issue for Conservatives. As coalition endured, the conflict sharpened between those wanting to stay in, get out, or make it permanent. Many Tories became concerned with the prospect that the party's identity and future viability were endangered.
Conservative M.P.s felt the arrangement was hurting the federal party's chances in B.C. Increasing numbers of rank and file Tories refused to work for Conservatives and Liberals together and therefore did nothing for the party. Backbenchers were upset about policies being made by the "coalition triumvirate" who bypassed or ignored outright the views of the caucus. In general, by 1950 a large segment of the party had become seriously disillusioned with the partnership government.

The continuation of coalition not only was a major focal point of controversy among provincial Tories, but it was also the major factor causing the split between the federal and provincial wings of the party. Coalition was viewed with alarm by federal members since rank and file provincial Conservatives were told not to work in federal campaigns in the interest of non-partisanship. Moreover coalition embarrassingly required Conservatives to work with the enemy in Victoria while Conservatives and Liberals remained in battle at Ottawa. Most important, federal Tories were deeply concerned that the alliance with the Liberals was impairing the party's chances in the federal field. The losses in the 1949 federal election confirmed, in the minds of many, such fears.

In 1950 the conflict over coalition and the leadership of Herbert Anscomb provided the impetus for a new party, one which would be led by an ex-Tory, staffed largely by Conservative supporters, and even financed by normally Conservative contributors. And it was supported, at least tacitly, by most of the B.C. Tory M.P.s.

In the end, coalition government damaged the party severely. Its continuation beyond the "emergency" led many Conservatives to question the motives of their leaders and provided an issue for divisive debate. The debate over what to do about coalition led to estrangement between federal
and provincial Tories and ultimately to nearly a complete separation between the two wings of the party. After enjoying great popularity and political success during the first few years of coalition in 1952, as dissent about the unnatural relationship intensified and inter-party friction increased, the government was almost completely immobilized. By 1952 the Conservative Party's political situation had hopelessly deteriorated. Internally divided, saddled with a major share of the responsibility for the government's poor performance, faced with a four-party election contest, the Tories took their worst beating since 1933.

At this point it is suggestive to conclude this study by attempting to relate, in a tentative way, the downfall of the Conservative Party to changes in the B.C. party system. After 1933 the B.C. party system changed from a two to a three-party system. The change had significant consequences for the Tory Party's future since the new "left-moderate" party alignment meant that the Conservatives would face stiff competition from the Liberals for the "free enterprise" sector of the electorate. The realignment that occurred in 1933 made it difficult for the Conservatives, the weaker free enterprise party, to carve out a role for themselves. The Conservatives remained the weaker party throughout—although their electoral comeback in 1937 and 1941 was in itself remarkable—and this weakness was accentuated by being the minor party in coalition. In addition to sapping the party's identity, the status of "junior partner" in coalition government restricted the party from "striking out on its own," from articulating a set of ideas and policies which clearly distinguished it from its coalition partner. In fact the opposite seemed to be the case as Conservative and government pronouncements and policies were increasingly tinged with the Liberal brush.
When the coalition fell into disfavor, the Conservatives, internally divided, lacking identity, and faced with large scale desertions to Social Credit, fell with it. Coalition began with the uncertainty as to which of the old parties (or a new party) would ultimately emerge as the alternative to the C.C.F. After ten years of "junior partnership," the Conservative Party was seen as no longer relevant to provincial politics by the vast majority of voters.

The short analysis above views the Conservative Party as a casualty of the new three-party system which emerged with the rise of the C.C.F. According to Professor John Wilson and others, in parliamentary systems with considerable experience with majority governments, three party systems which have been generated by societal changes associated with industrialization eventually will be replaced by the disappearance of the least effective political group. If this hypothesis is accepted, the B.C. party system from 1933 to 1952 can be typed a transitional one. Following Wilson, the transitional period is ushered in by the rise of a social democratic party representing the interests of labor in the industrialized society. There will follow a time when the nature of the party system will be confused as the shift from dominant competition between the two older parties to dominant competition between one of the older parties and a newer party (or between two newer parties) takes place. The pattern of party competition in Western Europe and Canada suggests a major characteristic of this transitional period. It is marked by a general decline in the level of support enjoyed by at least one of the older parties (accompanied by a steady increase in support for the party which purports to represent the laboring interest). As Wilson notes, in Western Canada the rise to prominence of the social democratic
party has always occurred at the expense of at least one of the traditional middle class parties. 3

Obviously a much more detailed analysis of a kind not presented here would be required to establish the above hypothesis without doubt. 4 It seems reasonable, however, to argue that the B.C. party system passed through such a period of transition prior to 1953. The exact relationship between changes in the party system and party decline must remain highly tentative, at least until such time as extensive comparative work is accomplished. But while tentative, such macro explanations are worth venturing as points of departure for further research.

This study has traced the Conservative Party historically from 1928 to 1954. Although interpretative historical description does not constitute an "explanation" according to some of the more demanding standards of contemporary social science, it does contribute to the intelligibility of the phenomena under study by providing a meaningful chronology which highlights the shifting relationships between politicians (actors) and the evolving contexts in which they worked.

This study began with the question, "What happened to the Conservative Party of British Columbia?" Answering this question required focusing on politicians, their activities and maneuverings in the struggle for power. The Conservative Party's fate could only practically be studied through reconstruction and examination of the party's actual experience, and this is the justification for adopting an interpretative historical approach.

In the developing study of B.C. politics one of the first tasks is to provide common sense historical description and interpretation. Such work, if well done, provides a "feel" for the polity under analysis and substantive
knowledge upon which later explanations are built. Obviously studies of this kind will raise questions they do not answer. There is, however, an academic division of labor, and in the end the puzzle of reality is only put together by means of a collective enterprise.

The above considerations have been guiding assumptions of the author. In the conclusion we have ventured some macro, systemic explanations, but these are tentative, not definitive. The claim of the thesis to make a contribution lies in the historical chapters, and the interpretative commentary they provide.
Footnotes

1. Three characteristics of a realigning election, all of which fit the 1933 election in B.C., are: (1) intense disruption of traditional patterns of voting behavior; (2) marked increase in ideological polarization; (3) heavier participation than normal. See, Angus Campbell, et al., The American Voter (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1960), Ch. 19, and W. D. Burnham, Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1970), pp. 5-8.


4. It would be interesting, for example, to relate the socioeconomic changes which occurred in B.C. after the war with the success of Social Credit and the decline of both of the old parties.
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McKelvie, Bruce A. Papers
A collection of speeches, articles, and selected newspaper columns. Contains some information, mostly impressionistic, on the rebuilding of the Conservative Party organization during the 1930s.

Pattullo, Thomas Dufferin Papers
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MacKenzie, Ian Papers
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Manion, Robert J. Papers
A large collection, almost exclusively concerned with federal party matters. Contains some useful material on party policy in B.C., 1937-40.
Meighen, Arthur Papers
A massive collection, but of limited value to the provincial scene.

Stevens, Harry H. Papers
This collection was found to be of exceptional value, especially with regard to federal-B.C. relations in the Conservative Party during the 1920s and 30s, the Provincial Party, and the formation of the Reconstruction Party.

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This collection is mostly concerned with Stevens' years as Minister of Trade and Commerce in the federal government. No useful material was found.

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Most of this collection has yet to be organized, thus the bulk of the papers are closed.

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510 West Hastings, Vancouver, B.C. Virtually all the old party files were either misplaced, stolen, or burned when the provincial and federal offices merged in 1961. Very little useful material was available.

A Note on Additional Manuscript Sources
Many other collections would have been useful for this study. The official Premier's Papers of Byron I. Johnson are locked in the vault in the legislature and I have not been able to gain access to them. All of W. A. C. Bennett's papers are unavailable. The papers of Premier Hart do not exist. The balance of the Ladner papers have not been organized so are not available. The Anscomb papers are in the possession of his secretary and, as yet, unavailable for research purposes.

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Vancouver Sun
Victoria Colonist
Victoria Times

V. Other Sources


Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1916-1935
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*Social Credit candidates were fielded in the 1937, 1945, and 1949 elections but they never received more than 1.7% of the vote.

**No candidate ran with a straight Conservative label.

***Liberals and Conservatives contested election as a coalition.

****Percentages refer to final count since the alternative voting system was used.